

ARCHAEOLOGY



&
THE ISRAELITE
CULT

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE ISRAELITE CULT

RELATING TO THE PERIOD (CA. 1950 - 950 B.C.E)

BY

JOHN GRAHAM PENNEL.

**SUBMITTED IN PART FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF**

MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE SUBJECT

BIBLICAL STUDIES

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR C L VAN W SCHEEPERS.

JOINT SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR W S BOSHOF.

NOVEMBER 1999.

SUMMARY OF A DISSERTATION
ON
ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE ISRAELITE CULT

This dissertation on "Archaeology and the Israelite Cult" covers a period of ca. 1000 years, dating from the time of the Hebrew patriarchs ca. 1950 B.C.E. to the end of the monarchy which is given as ca. 950 B.C.E.

The archaeological findings are related to five significant and major excavation sites in Palestine which have been found to embrace the time span under consideration and point in many ways to the practice of the Israelite or Canaanite cult. These five sites are:-

- a) The Bull Site
- b) Kuntillet Ajrud
- c) The Fortress- Sanctuary at Arad
- d) Shechem
- e) Megiddo

The writings of the Israelite cult are scant and commence mainly with the patriarchs. The time of Abraham and his recognition of a monolatrous god. The beginning of the complex Yahwistic cult introduced by Moses in the Sinai Desert, following Israelite escape from Egypt. The Israelite cultic practices, which are now considered to be syncretistic, are discussed where they relate to biblical texts and archaeological findings of confirmation.

KEY TERMS FOR INFORMATION

RETRIEVAL

**ARCHAEOLOGY, ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION, ISRAELITE
CULT, ISRAELITE RELIGIOUS PRACTICE, YAHWISTIC CULT, ALTARS,
SACRIFICES, HIGH PLACES, SANCTUARIES AND SHRINES.**

933 PENN



0001761046

DECLARATION

"I declare that "ARCHAEOLOGY & THE ISRAELITE CULT" is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references".

Signed *Ernie*

Date. 29th September 1999.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE ISRAELITE CULT.

	PAGES
INTRODUCTION.	1-3
CHAPTER ONE. ARCHAEOLOGY & ARCHAEOLOGISTS	
1.1 ARCHAEOLOGY.	4-6
1.2 ARCHAEOLOGIST.	6-9
1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION.	9
CHAPTER TWO. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN PALESTINE.	
2.1 THE "BULL SITE"	10-13
2.2 KUNTILLET AJRUD	14 - 18
2.3 ISRAELITE FORTRESS - SANCTUARY AT ARAD	19 -24
2.4 SHECHEM	25 -30
2.5 MEGIDDO	31 -37
2.6 EXTRACTS RELATING TO FINDINGS	xiii - xiv
CHAPTER THREE. ISRAELITE RELIGION - CULT	
3.1 WHAT IS RELIGION	38 - 39
3.2 ABRAHAM AND HIS GOD	40 - 43
3.3 MOSES	44 - 49
3.4 THE YAHWISTIC CULT	50-60
CHAPTER FOUR. ISRAELITE RELIGIOUS - CULTIC PRACTICES.	
4.1 ISRAELITE SACRIFICE & RITUAL.	61 -68
4.2 ALTARS	69 -72
4.3 HIGH PLACES	73 -77
4.4 TEMPLES -SANCTURIES- SHRINES	78 -81
CHAPTER FIVE . CONCLUSION.	82 - 83
BIBLOGRAPY	84 -87

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE ISRAELITE CULT

ILLUSTRATIONS

- A1THE BULL FIGURINE FROM THE “BULLSITE”** *(following page 9)*
- B1THE LOCATION OF KUNTILLET AJRUD** *(following page 13)*
- B2THE RUINS OF KUNTILLET AJRUD** *(following illustration B2)*
- B3 DRAWINGS FOUND ON STORAGE JARS AT
KUNTILLET AJRUD** *(following illustration B2)*
- C1.....THE LOCATION OF ARAD** *(following page 18)*
- C2.....ARTISTS CONCEPT OF THE ISRAELITE - FORTRESS
SANCTUARY AT ARAD** *(following illustration C1)*
- C3.....GROUND PLAN OF THE ISRAELITE FORTRESS -
SANCTUARY AT ARAD** *(following illustration C2)*
- D1....JEBEL MUSA, ARABIC “MOUNT MOSES”** *(following page 43)*
- E1.....VIEW OF SACRIFICIAL ALTAR (ARAD)** *(following page 68)*
- F1.....PART OF A SANCTUARY (ARAD)** *(following page 77)*

ARCHAEOLOGY & THE ISRAELITE CULT.

Introduction

Palestine has been the focus of attention of archaeologists and biblical scholars for the last hundred years or so. The basic reason is not difficult to discover or understand. The Bible written and compiled from early writings and oral traditions, deals with the Hebrew/Israelite conception and revelations of God from the beginning of time.

Thus the Bible, with its narratives of revelation has become the pivotal point upon which the Western world by and large, swung in it's progress of civilization and man's ultimate destiny. This book, or library of books, depicts the uniqueness of the life and religious cult of the Israelites who to this day proclaim that they are God's chosen people. This cult/religion has exercised an influence out of all proportion to her political being, being the foundation of two great religions, Judaism and Christianity, whilst contributing much to a third, Islam.

Naturally, man, known as a thinking animal, has queried and will continue to do so in his efforts to understand and interpret the "realia" of the more complex biblical narratives and obscure texts. Man also realizes that there is something far greater than him, made manifest in the world he occupies at present, and the ever present universe. Hence his natural desire to know something more about his early beginnings, his life, and possible after life. What better method than to know of the discoveries of those that preceded him? To a great extent the work of archaeologists and biblical scholars in the Levant have made this possible.

Prior to the efforts of archaeology, all that was known of the Israelite cult was that given in the scriptures, other literary evidence pertaining from the Israelite themselves is somewhat scant. Fortunately an immense amount of literal evidence relating to past events has been discovered in excavations of civilizations contemporary with Israel. It will therefore be the task of this dissertation to research some of the evidence available where it highlights Israelite cult practices in the time frame of the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age I Period (ca 1500 - 900 B.C.E.)

The Israelites after all did not live in an absolute isolation, in fact from time immemorial, their habituation in the land was repeatedly at the cross roads between warring troops, nomads, travelling merchants and migrating nations. All the major powers of the ancient world at some time or another passed through Palestine or even for a time occupied it. Amongst the earliest were the

Canaanites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians who all left an influence on the Israelites in the way of cultural, social and religious development, which is portrayed in Jewish writings and language development. Even though these various alien influences left their mark, Israel's religion displayed an amazing resilience in surviving crises, maintaining its own distinctive character as against that of the cults of neighbouring peoples.

In many aspects archaeology has shed a great deal of light on the events of the Old Testament, but we must not forget that the Old Testament also sheds light on archaeological discoveries, for many would have been much harder to understand if we did not have the Old Testament available to clarify or supplement them. We therefore have it, that biblical evidence can be supplemented by the result of archaeological investigation. One must take into consideration, that archaeology has, as one of its main aims the interpretation and evaluation of evidence of the reconstruction of ancient societies; but it must be realised that archaeological data collected, observed recorded and interpreted is the work of human beings, and as such are neither infallible nor unanimous in all their views. Archaeology has made invaluable contributions towards the understanding of the actual nature of the early Israelite religious practices. Most important what was distinctly Israelite in their religion. In this particular sphere care must be taken however in distinguishing Israelite and other cults, as archaeology has discovered instances of syncretism in Israel.

Archaeological excavations and findings is an ever ongoing process, and since G.F.de Saulcy's pioneering work in Palestine during 1851, at the so called "tombs of the Kings", some 6000 archaeological excavations and surveys of different types and degrees of comprehensiveness have been carried out.¹ According to the Jewish/Israelite Antiquities Authority, there are some 14000 known sites which at one time or another were the dwelling places of Israelite or possibly Canaanite and other people.² This dissertation however concentrates mainly on archaeological discoveries and the aspects of the Israelite cult relating to the period ca 1500 -900 B.C.E. In doing so the focus of attention is primarily on "The Bull Site", Shechem, Kuntillet Ajrud, The Arad Sanctuary and Megiddo. The cult is treated separately, its practice however relates back where ever possible to archaeological findings.

¹ Ariel: *The Israel Review of Arts and Letters* (Number 99 - 100. July 1995).

² Israeliarch. (*Cultural and Scientific Relations Division. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 214 Jaffa Street, Jerusalem 94383*).

It is not the intention of the dissertation to try and emphatically prove the various trends and habits of the Israelite cult, as this could lead to the misapplication of the evidence, rather the intention is to show the importance of the archaeological findings in the areas mentioned and to use the findings to highlight those areas in which factual evidences is lacking. Archaeology should therefore be regarded neither as providing comprehensive corroboration of the biblical record nor as an infallible corrective to it.

The dissertation can be considered to comprise two sections, broken down into five separate chapters. The first section, chapters one and two, deals with archaeology and the excavations carried out on the five sites discussed. The second section , chapters three and four deals with the generation of the Israelite cult, and it's practice. Chapter five covers the conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE. ARCHAEOLOGY, ARCHAEOLOGISTS & ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION.

1.1 Archaeology.

The title of this dissertation ‘Archaeology and the Religion of Israel’ needs a word of explanation regarding the word “archaeology” and secondly those who undertake the work of archaeology, namely the archaeologist’s themselves. Early usage of the word “archaeology” in the English language referred to ancient history in general and is actually derived from the Greek word *archaios* (meaning ancient) and *logos* (meaning discourse, treatise.) from which the English form derives. In the 18th/19th centuries, the word develop a meaning it did not originally bear. The systematic and descriptive study of antiquities, and this is the major task of the archaeologist’s who labour amongst the debris of mankind’s past to discover the origins of his ancestors and their contributions to the ongoing history of the world.

This systematic and descriptive study began to be applied in albeit a diminished form shortly after the formation of the Christian church when devout Christians from many lands and others became interested in Palestine, which was the land or place of the origins of Christianity. Pilgrims thus began to visit and study the places connected with the life of Jesus Christ and the disciples. From the earliest centuries people of note, such as Eusebius (338A.D.), Cyriac de Pizcalli (1391A.D), Felix Schimt (1480A.D.), Johan van Kootwyk (1600A.D.) and many others have searched and contributed in many ways to the location and description of the antiquities of Palestine, mainly to prove the truths of the Bible. However no serious attempts were yet made to excavate ruins on any scientific basis, until the mid 19th century. In the interim searches for treasure and museum antiquities predominated in this era, archaeology being nothing more than treasure hunting , digging a promising site , so as to find and take away as many artifacts considered valuable, as possible. Interest in surveying the land developed, possibly again to find evidence and records of biblical truths. Early in the 1880’s Ulrich Seetzen and Johan Ludwig Burkhart made major contributions concerning the location of sites and inscriptions on monuments, buildings and steles.¹ However these efforts were surpassed by Edward Robertson and Eli

¹Schovelle K.N. *Biblical Archaeology in Focus* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan U.S.A. 1978) p85.

Smith, who made a careful and detailed accurate survey of the topographical formation of Palestine, locating scores of biblical sites for future investigations. Further work in providing the location of all the important features and tells was subsequently carried out by a party of royal engineers under Wilson, through a sponsorship of the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1868.² This development could be recorded as one of the major stages in the development of techniques for excavations in Palestine or any other excavation for that matter.

The Old Testament as it is given to us, refers predominately to Palestine, and so it is ironical though that many of the most important archaeological contributions to our present knowledge of the Old Testament come, not from excavations in Palestine, but from other parts of the ancient Near East. The reason for this is that most of the finds in Palestine have been a part of what is called “mute” archaeology. In other words, tell’s have been excavated, occupation layers observed and recorded, cultural patterns clarified, and with major finds of importance recorded in detail with all data published. Yet rarely has there been any accompanying literary evidence relating to the finds. Exceptions do occur, such as the recent finds at Kuntillet Ajrud and the fortress sanctuary at Arad. By contrast the Near East has provided a rich body of findings, including textual evidence. From Egypt come the Amarna letters discovered in the 19th century; From Iraq, tablets from the excavations at Mari and Nuzi, have provided extensive recordings of legal, administrative and religious documents; From Ras Shamra, in modern Syria, known from ancient times as Ugarit, comes texts closely allied to the Hebrew language; Excavations at Tell Mardik, ancient Ebla, have shown civilizations of a high order dating back to the third millennium B.C.E. Amazingly none of these places are mentioned in the Bible, and none of the textual writings found so far, or interpreted, make any reference to biblical characters or events as such. To counter this, archaeology has made a very positive contribution by the excavations and findings in Palestine. That it was a real world in which the men and women of the Old Testament lived, and in many cases per the Bible’s telling, lived event filled lives.³ However it must be pointed out that archaeology no longer concerns itself primarily with finds relating to Biblical truths, but with the application of a whole range of scientific and technological expertise tries to develop an

² Moorey R. *Excavations in Palestine* (Bok Books International Durban R.S.A. 1988) p 23.

³Coggins Ritchard. *Introducing the Old Testament*. Gen Ed. P.R. Ackroyd & G.N.Stanton (Oxford University Press U.K. 1990) p 44.

understanding and construction of the life of a particular society. It is with this understanding that the life of the society under examination will be explored in all its aspects, which will include social, economic, religious, political and ergonomic conditions under which people of ancient times lived. In other words the range of reference of archaeological finds and knowledge is increasing tenfold, and it is no longer confined to major illustrations of biblical accounts. Archaeological findings can also therefore be said to be less of a series of sensational “discoveries” and more to the point of a gradual unfolding of a history of ancient societies in which people of the Bible had their own significant role.⁴ There has been a sparsity of findings relating to Israel’s religious practices, possibly due to the religious reforms of monarchs who destroyed sanctuaries/shrines and other religious places that did not conform to the ideals of the time. However, archaeological finds have been astonishing and show that syncretism was definitely practiced thus contradicting biblical writings. These findings are discussed in chapter two.

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGISTS

The first modern excavation of a Palestinian site was by F. de Saulcy, who worked in the Jerusalem area in 1850/5. However this work was of little value because of inaccurate excavating methods and recordings.⁵ The first organized investigation as such was sponsored by the “Palestine Exploration Fund” in 1867. They employed a young lieutenant of the Royal Engineers, Charles Warren to excavate in Jerusalem to elucidate certain historical problems, mainly biblical.⁶ Warren’s technique was the elementary mining system of shaft sinking, based on military methods. This method was not over successful and little information of major consequence was gained other than the depth of the Haram enclosure walls.

At this stage in time, dramatic advances in archaeological research began. Excavations by Heinrich Schliemann at the ancient site of Troy, in 1870, showed that mounds or tells as they began to be called, represented the accumulation of debris of successive occupations of ancient cities that had occupied the site. However no techniques for the dating of the various layers of strata was used, and

⁴Ibid. p.54.

⁵Schovelle. 86.

⁶Moorey. p. 21.

secondly the information of tell discovery did not immediately pass on to the Palestinian excavations in progress.

It was left to a brilliant archaeologist, William Flinders Petrie, who when employed by the Palestine Exploration Fund to carry out excavations in Palestine, laid the foundations for the chronology of architectural remains by dating the changing forms of pottery found in the various layers of debris, which indicated the different times of occupations. He was in the course of his work at Tell el Hesi, able to correlate certain strata with Egyptian dynasties, thus arriving at a fairly accurate chronology of the ruins. Thus the technique of two major principles, stratigraphy and typology, became the basis for virtually all modern scientific archaeological research.

These techniques were applied and improved upon by Bliss and Mc Alister, ca 1902/09, at several mounds in the Shephelah, but then were slighted by Mc Alister, when single handed he organised a major excavation at Gezer without regard to sequence and association of buildings with the result that the "dig" was improperly carried out.⁷

Prior to World War 1, another talented field archaeologist, an American by the name of George Reisner analysed the special problem of mound digging in the hill country. His work in Samaria in 1909/10 and his published methods print in 1924 earmarked a major advance in field archaeology. Linked with his name is that of C.S. Fisher who between them evolved the Reisner - Fisher (locus to Architecture) method with its emphasis on trained staff, adequate records, plans and photographs. All these techniques with possible modifications to suit circumstances, are used in today's excavations. Another archaeologist of note was William F. Albright. He plotted in writing the typological and stratigraphic evolutions of the chief forms of pottery/ceramics while fixing their chronology within certain well defined limits. This technique firmly established the chronology of Palestinian pottery. His major excavation work was that of Tell Beit Mirsim, and here his method of recording was somewhat different in that his diagrams show work after excavation. Relationships of different walls are shown in terms of loci producing similar pottery⁸

Mortimer Wheeler (1890/1976) and Kathleen Kenyon (1906/1978) further developed excavation techniques by cutting deep trenches into the mound in order to unravel the chronology of

⁷Schovelle. p.89.

⁸Moorey. p 27.

successive building periods and their associated pottery. A major point of Kenyon's technique/ method is the balk - debris layer approach, correlating all layers of soil in relation to the walls. Another point is that as an absolute principle of excavation, the whole area must not be cleared simultaneously. Her methods became properly known during 1952/58 when she was engaged on the excavations at Jericho. Further applications were subsequently carried out by G.E. Wright at Shechem in 1956/59 and onwards by various American Excavation Teams.

Among the many skilled Israelite archaeologist's who have not always agreed with the techniques practiced by the Wheeler/ Kenyon method are Munja Dunayevsky, Yigael Yadin, Benjamin Mazar, Amihai Mazar, Adam Zertel, Ruth Amiran and others. Possibly their objections are the result of having to carry out emergency excavations when major civil works threaten suddenly discovered antiquities. Recent developments however suggest a growing assimilation of the Wheeler - Kenyon and Israeli approaches. This can be seen at the Tell el Duweir (Lachish) excavations, where a combination of methods were used, thus setting another technique to excavations in Palestine. It must be stated that hand in hand with the continually developing techniques of excavation are the trends in using physical science to analyse archaeological data. Mentioning a few of them by name are the carbon 14 method of dating organic material, which include procedures such as neutron activation - thermoluminescence dating and resistivity testing. Use is also made of Proton Magnetometers, absolute chronology, based upon radiometric readings such as C, K/Ar, Ar/39Ar, Electron Spin Resonance (ESR).⁹ These are but a few of the many technical aspects which archaeology of today has to contend with. No longer is the archaeologist a man with a spade, but a highly educated and trained individual able to use modern day technology to its utmost.

Finally it must be realised that enormous difficulties do exist in correctly determining what the artifacts found are, what they are related to, and what part they played in the lives of the owners. Dating objects found and sites, is also a difficult task, irrespective of the technology existing today, the final answer is still man's. Thus frequent misinterpretations do occur, sometimes with troublesome results. Further not all archaeologists agree with one another as to the interpretations of their findings or the manner or method of excavating a particular site.¹⁰ We have in the Levant, a geographic region in

⁹Ibid.p.34.

¹⁰Shanks Herschel. *Archaeology and the Bible. Volume 1. Two Early Israelite Cult Sites Now*

which a great many schools of archaeologists with different cultural backgrounds participate in uncovering the past. Therefore it is to a large extent understandable that different lithic assemblages or specific structures and findings are named with different concepts by the various excavators. When studying cultic artifacts and structure their interpretation is very crucial. They are unable to speak and to tell what they were used for. Their function and significance are solely left for the archaeologist to decide.

1.3 Archaeological Interpretation.

Archaeological interpretation can and does lead to a great many misunderstandings. In many instances the interpretation of events, buildings, artifacts and other replica are sometimes related to the background or mind setting of the excavator. There have been many misnamed articles or settings, especially by archaeologist's of deeply religious Christian backgrounds, to whom, above every thing else the truths of the Bible are paramount. One has only to look at the narratives of the Old Testament to see the discrepancies that have arisen. It is to archaeology's credit that some of these have been solved through both textual and artifactual discoveries and interpretations. During the course of excavations, finds sometimes are difficult to analyse and present what they represent. Dating of artifacts can be very misleading. The stratification of a site is often disturbed by later occupants who have dug into the old habitation to lay a foundation. Such disturbance may introduce objects of a later period into the level of an ancient structure. Unless this foundation pit or disturbance is identified it can cause untold confusion resulting in utterly wrong interpretation. Further not all archaeologists agree with one another regarding finds, what they are, or methods used for excavating. More so with the disagreement between learned scholars and archaeologists (see the argument presented by Michael Coogan and the Israeli archaeologist's concerning high places/cult sites)¹¹. Possibly to the dismay of biblical students, the modern archaeologist is not out to prove the Bible or it's descriptive events, but to concentrate and concern itself with the application of a whole range of scientific and technological expertise to bring about the understanding and reconstructing of the particular life of a society.

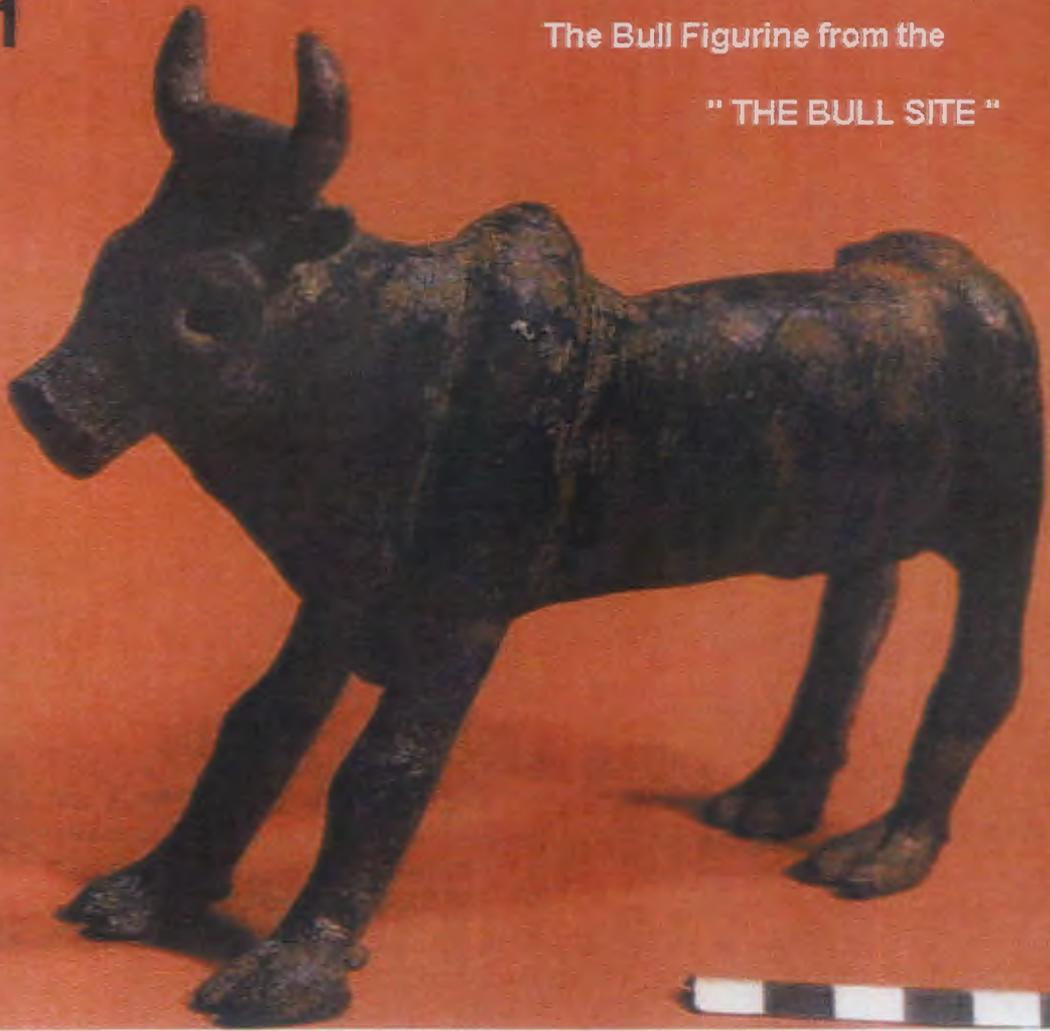
Questioned. Ed. Herschel Shanks & Dan P. Cole (Biblical Archeology Society Washington D.C. 1992) p 116.

¹¹Coogan Michael David. *Of Cults and Cultures: Reflections on the Interpretation of Archaeological Evidence*. (Palestine Exploration Quarterly. January - June 1987. Marylebone Lane London W1M 5RR).

A1

The Bull Figurine from the

" THE BULL SITE "



CHAPTER TWO. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN PALESTINE.

2.1 The “Bull Site”

The reason for including this particular site and its major find of a bronze bull figurine is that it illustrates archaeological findings of cults which possibly were practised both by the Israelites and Canaanites. Further it has been discovered that bull worship existed in the Indus civilisation ca 2000 B.C.E. and from there it might have spread to the Levant.¹

The Bible frequently mentions “high places” (e.g. Le.26:30, Nu.33:52, De.33:29, 32:13), and archaeology in its many undertakings of digging up the past, has discovered a number of Israelite shrines which consist of either large open air cult places or domestic places of worship.

In 1981, Professor Amihai Mazar, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, followed up the chance surface findings by an Israelite soldier, of an outstanding figurine of a bronze bull (refer to the illustration A1).The site is on a small isolated hill top overlooking the ancient road from Dothan to Tirzah, ca nine kilometers east of Dothan. Professor Mazar, inspired by the discovery of the figurine, conducted an archaeological survey of the ridge. Five other sites were discovered within a ca nine/ten kilometer radius of the “Bull Site”.

The sparse findings included a partially dressed boulder, approximately 1.5m by 1m, standing beside a pavement of flat stones. Mazar interpreted this stone as a massebah or altar. In the soil between a few of the stones were found a number of bones, possibly animal. Further minimal finds, were a few fragments of pottery and a typical domestic flint assemblage. Ceramic dating of the sherds points to the Early Iron I period, that is in the first half of the 12th century B.C. E.. The whole area, elliptical in shape was ca 380 sq m, and was originally enclosed by a low stone wall with an entrance facing east².

Mazar also states that the bull statuette is the largest found in the Levant, rather unique in style and manufacture, being some 17.5 cm in length with an overall height of 12.5 cm, and that there are other findings of bull figurines from MB, LB and Iron Age from various parts of the Levant.³

¹Lamberg-Karlovsky C.C. & Sabloff J.A. *Ancient Civilisations. The Near East & Mesopotamia*. (The Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company Sand Hill Road Menlo Park California 94025. 1979) p 204

²Dever W. G. *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research*. University of Washington Press.1990) Chap 4. *Archaeology reconstructs the lost background of the Israelite Cult*.

³Mazar Amihai. *“The Bull Site” An Iron Age Open Cult Place* (BASOR 1982, 247 p 27 - 42).

Finkelstein adds that another important find that should be added to Mazar's list, is that of a silver statuette of a calf, uncovered in a small sanctuary at Ashkelon, sometime after work on the "Bull Site" had been completed.⁴ Mazar postulates that the bull statuette originated from one of the Canaanite centres that were still flourishing in the 12th century. He saw the "Bull Site" as an open cult place that had been erected by members of the tribe of Manasseh who had settled in the area in Iron I. It could also have been a Canaanite site, paralleling the finds of Yadin at Hazor from a late Bronze Age Canaanite complex some 200 years earlier. Another factor possibly pointing to Canaanite worship is the large stone or massebah. Stone worship (following the belief of a supernatural power dwelling in the stone) was a wide spread phenomenon in the ancient world, and sacred pillars were certainly part of Canaanite worship.

Michael D. Coogan, an eminent American scholar, maintains that Mazar's interpretation is open to question, both functionally and politically. Arguing that the sparse finds with the exception of the bronze calf, point to a domestic residence, or a corral for livestock with a possible dwelling for a shepherd. Regarding the presence of the bull calf, Coogan is in agreement with Mazar that it probably did have ritual significance, although not necessarily associated with the stone altar. It could have been used in a domestic ritual. Another point of agreement between Mazar and Coogan is that both state that it is extremely difficult to determine the deity associated with the bull. El, Baal or Yahweh are all possible.⁵

From the findings of various bull statues or figurines in different parts of the Levant, it appears also, that bull worship played an intergral part in Canaanite worship and that there is a connection between this worship and the Canaanite god El. Dever is of the opinion that because El, head of the pantheon of gods at Ugarit, is worshipped because of his power and fertility imagery, so the use of bronze bull figurines is symbolic of the god El.⁶ The Old Testament records perversions of the cult of Yahweh, in which bull worship may have played a part e.g. the bull and calf images set up at Dan and Bethel. Scholars point out however, that these images did not involve a representation of Yahweh

⁴Finkelstein Israel. *Palestine Exploration Quartely* 130. (1998) Two notes on Northern Samaria: The "Einun Pottery" and the Date of the "Bull Site."

⁵Coogan Michael David. *Of Cults and Cultures*. Reflections on the Interpretation of Archaeological Evidence. (*Palestine Exploration Quartely*, January/June 1987 issue,) p 1 - 7.

⁶Dever. op. cit. *Reader BAR* 211-9. p 116 - 119.

himself, for here the bull was thought of as a pedestal upon which Yahweh stood. This however does not explain Aaron's manufacture of a golden calf at Mount Sinai.

Returning to Coogans critique, he lists four points as to what determines a cult site . He does this as he is of the opinion that Archaeologists are guilty of simply naming a site cultic, when they have not been able to ascertain its true function. The points are listed , but it is not to say that in each and every case his criteria will definately name a site correctly. Coogans criteria are:-

1) *Isolation*. In most cultures there is a conscious separation between the holy and the profane. Architecturally this finds expression in a temenos wall which separates a holy place from its immediate context, whether natural or settled. The question to be asked is therefore, whether an allegedly cultic site is isolated in this way.

2) *Exotic Materials*. The special function of cultic sites will normally result in the presence of material not typical of other contexts. The finding of unusual artifacts such as miniature vessels, figurines or expensive objects. If the cultic site was served by personnel on a regular basis, elements of normal repertoires, especially such domestic material as cooking pots will also occur. Nevertheless, the proportion of exotic artifacts to usual ones such as domestic pots, will probably vary as between a cultic site and a non- cultic site.

3) *Continuity*. In a multi period site , the cultic function of the site is likely to be retained from period to period. The outstanding example of this is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which has retained its cultic character for nearly 3000 years.

4) *Parallels* Questionable cultic sites are likely to have parallels, if they are truly cultic, at other unquestionably cultic sites. Building plans, altars, pedestals, and the like should show resemblance to cultic installations known from written or non written sources. Using these criteria, Coogan maintains that the Bull Site, whose cultic character has not been questioned before, is not a cultic site.⁷

There does appear to be a difference of opinion as well as to regarding the dating of the "Bull Site". Mazar dates the site as possible early Iron 1, where as Adam Zertal's survey of the site reveals 90% MB pottery and 10% Iron 1 pottery, mainly of the early phase of the latter period. According to

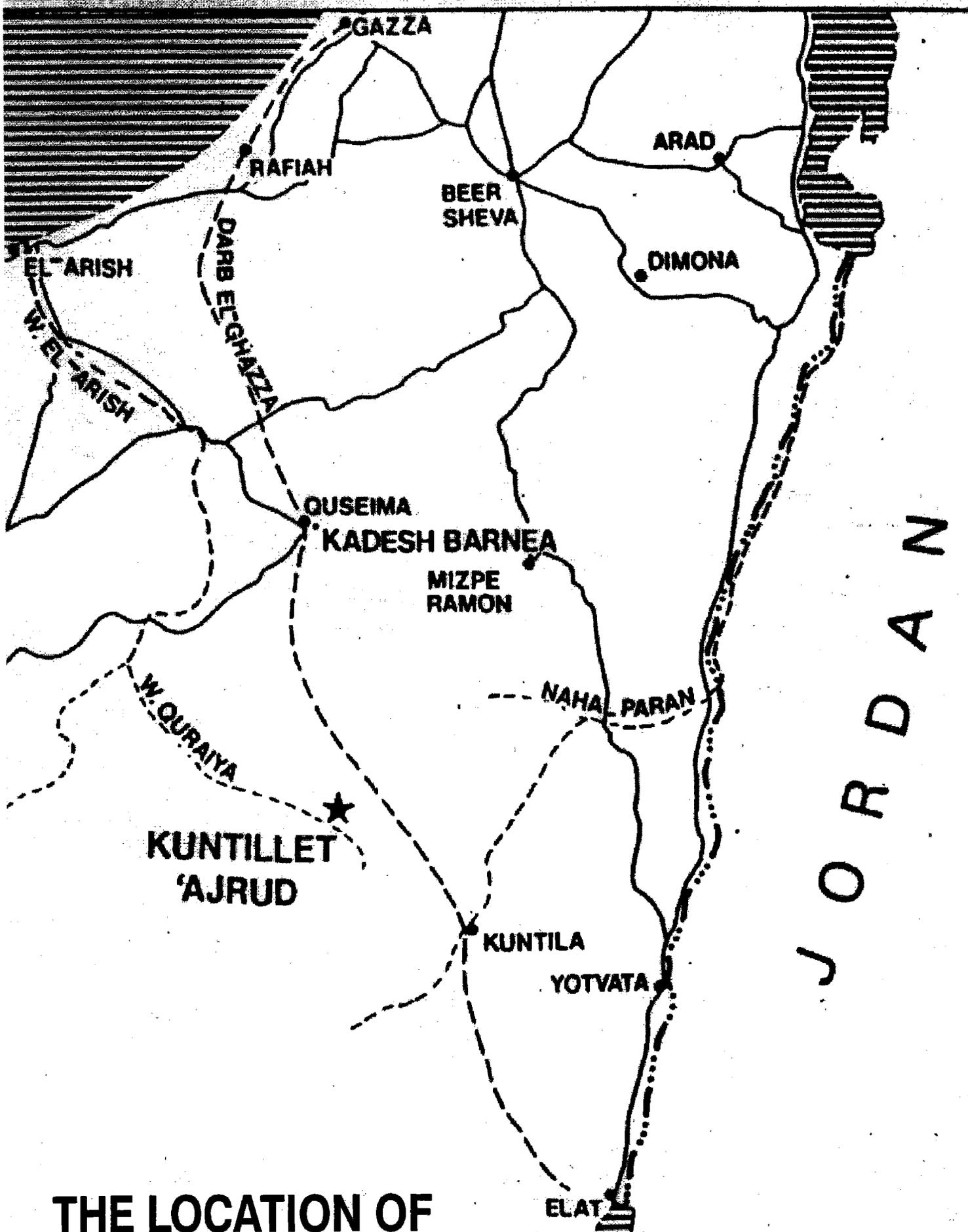
⁷Coogan David p 2.

Finkelstein, the phenomenon of MB sites being reused in the Iron I period is well known in the Highlands and that almost 50% of the hundreds of Iron I sites in the central hill country had been occupied in the MB. By combining the results of Mazar's excavation with that of Zertal's survey, it is possible that the site first served as a high place in the MB Age. The bull statuette, which fits the cultural tradition of the MB better than that of the dating of Iron I which Mazar proclaims could have been in use at the earlier period. Further it appears that there was no activity at the "Bull Site" in the LB Age, though some of the cooking pots uncovered by Mazar could be dated to the LB period. Activity was resumed during the twelfth century B.C.E. It is possible that the bull statue was found from previous use, and at the resumption of activities, reused.⁸

Upon further considerations, it is possible that the early Israelites in the days of the Judges used this figurine of a young bull in a religious ritual. It will be remembered that Aaron as high priest of the Israelites at Mount Sinai cast a golden bull. This yearning by the Israelites at Sinai for "Bull worship," (Ex. 32:1-7), was common in the Near Ancient East. It could have continued later at this site. Scripture, refers to bulls as the images of power and might (De.33:17, Is. 34:7 & Je. 50.:27), it therefore appears that bulls definitely played an important role in the life of the Israelites. A series of small Iron Age I sites has also been discovered in the vicinity during archaeological surveys of the region. The "Bull Site" as such, is located in the middle of a cluster of such small sites which flourished as small agricultural villages. Thus the cultic enclosure could possibly have served as a central ritual place for the villages. In conclusion doubt is cast upon the findings as to whether the ritual carried out was Israelite or Canaanite must remain an open question.⁹

⁸Finkelstein. op. cit. p 130.

⁹Mazar Amihai. op. cit. p 40.



**THE LOCATION OF
KUNTILLET AJRUD**

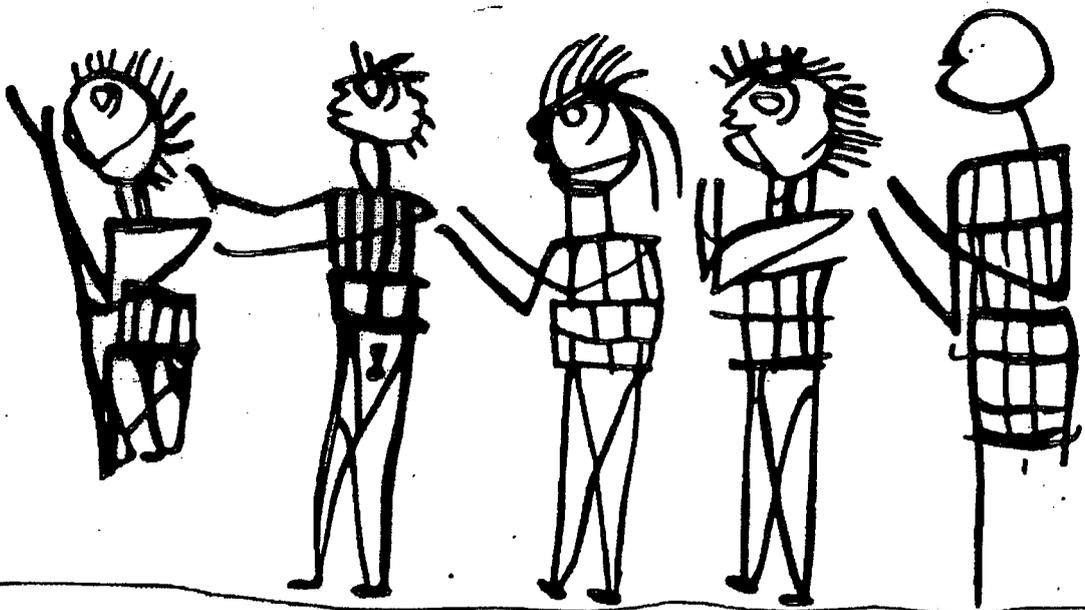
B2



**THE RUINS OF
KUNTILLET-AJRUD**

B 3

Handwritten text in a cuneiform script, likely Sumerian, located above the top drawing.



**DRAWINGS FOUND ON
STORAGE JARS AT
KUNTILLET-AJRUD**

2.2 KUNTILLET AJRUD / HORVAT TEMAN

Geographical Location

The ruins of a small building considered to be a Israelite sanctuary, located at Kuntillet Ajrud (The name meaning “solitary hill of the wells”) which is some 50 kilometers south of Kadesh - Barnea on a trade route road through the eastern Sinai desert to the port/town of Eilat/ Ezion Geber on the Red Sea.. The sanctuary was located on the acropolis of a steep hill which rises beside the Wadi Quraiya. Besides the reasoning that the site was a sanctuary, there is thought that the building could have been a Judahite administrative outpost, the date of possible operation as an administrative post being ca 800 B.C. , but this date is not conclusive. It could have been actively used during the reign of Uzziah, who is known to have extended Judah’s borders to new limits, resulting that the south needed to be protected and settled. Thus Kuntillet Ajrud at this time would have represented a military and religious government outpost. Another thought is that Kuntillet Ajrud could have been established during the short reign of the Phoenician queen Jezebel, wife of King Ahab of Israel. She is known to have been a strong supporter of Baal worship.¹ Biblical refernce to her is in 1 Kings 16:31. The ruins are shown in illustration B2.

Archaeologist

The archaeologist responsible for the excavations at Kuntillet Ajrud was Ze’ev Meshel, on behalf of the Tel Aviv University and Department of Antiquities; the Israel department of Antiquity; the Department for Holy - Land Studies in the Kibbutz Movement and the Israel Exploration Society. He laboured there from 1976 to 1978.

Discoveries.

From the ruins it appeared that the building could have served a number of interests. It could have been a composite fort - hostel providing food and shelter for travellers. On the other hand it could have been an administration center or a religious shrine. The building was found to be rectangular in shape, (15x25m) and consisted of a large courtyard surrounded on three sides by rooms formed by the casement wall of the building or fort. The building also had projecting corner towers.

¹Ze’ev Meshel. *Biblical Archaeological Review* March/April. 1997. p 34.

The bent axis entrance, which faced east, was through a gate room which opened onto a two roomed structure, with white plastered walls, floors and benches. From fragments of frescoes found amidst debris at the entrance is evidence that the walls could have been painted with floral and linear designs. The benches stretched across the width of the building (both sides) and terminate in two small rooms, entry to which was by way of the windows, there being no doors. Mazar is of the opinion that this room formed the sanctuary.² The western side of the building used the casements of the wall, which formed part of the structure, mainly as a storage center, for this is where a number of storage vessels were found. The pithoi in these rooms were so closely spaced that moving between them would have been possible only with difficulty. These vessels were possibly used mainly for the storage of food. Concerning the structure as a whole it was built from unhewn limestone boulders plastered with a straw/mud mixture (with the exception of the entrance and bench room which were white plastered). The ceilings were of tamarisk branches, tamarisk timber beams were also used in acting as binders, both length and crosswise in the wall construction. According to Meshel, the finding of timber in ancient buildings in Israel is a rarity. Further evidence of the site being a religious /administration center concerns the finding on the benches of jars which were considered to be votive offering jars. Other varied finds were unique objects made of organic materials, such as basketry, ropes and textiles, whose preservation is due to the dry desert conditions. That weaving must have been carried out here as well, is evidenced by the loom weights and the remains of a wooden loom found. Ahlstrom makes mention of the fact that it was not an uncommon practice for a cultic place to be involved with textile manufacture; as a parallel he mentions the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem in which woven garments were manufactured for the goddess Asherah (2Kgs. 23:7). His conclusion is that the findings at Kuntillet Ajrud is associated with the same goddess Asherah and served the same purpose as that of the temple at Jerusalem.³

It is Ahlstrom's opinion that the type of bench room found here also existed at other sites. This could explain why comparatively few temples have been found at other sites, as a separate temple building

²Mazar Amihai. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible. 10 000 - 586 B.C.E.* gen ed. David Noel Freedman (Doubleday Publishing Group New York. 1990).

³Ahlstrom G.W. *Archaeological Picture of Iron Age Religions in Ancient Palestine* (Studia Orientalia). Edited by the Finnish Oriental Society. Helsinki 1984.

was not necessary at every location where taxes and tithes were to be paid to the state and its god. It is an example of a similar benchroom which has been discovered at Tell ed Duweir and labeled as a sanctuary.⁴

Important as the finding of the site is, the most fascinating discoveries have been the writings and drawings on the plastered walls and particularly on two large pitho's which were restored from sherds found in the benchroom. These pithos were covered with drawings and inscriptions. On the one large pithos is an inscription which reads in part, "I bless you by Yahweh of Samaria and by his Asherah" whilst the accompanying drawing depicts what is to be considered to be a half nude women (goddess?) seated on a chair playing a lyre. Further drawings being that of a calf suckling a cow, the tree of life flanked by ibexes, and what is considered to be a feathered Bes (the Egyptian dwarf god who was widely represented in the Syro Palestinian world as a god with apotropiac functions), all done in a style common to Palestine in that era. On the broken remains of the second large pithos is a strange processional scene showing what appears to be worshippers approaching a deity. How this figure is known to be a deity has not been clarified. Unfortunately the full scene is not represented due to the incomplete jar (refer to the illustration B3).

A controversy rages at the moment as to the true representation of the seated player with the lyre. Is she just a female lyre player, or is she a goddess?. Dever maintains that as she is seated on a chair resembling a lion throne associated with kings and deities, she is a goddess. There are close parallels to such seated females at Canaan Ugarit, thus we should read the inscription "by his Asherah" literally. This does then signify that this goddess was considered to be the consort of Yahweh.⁵ It is well known that Asherah was a goddess worshipped in Palestine. There are references to her from the tablets found at Ugarit, were she is named as the consort of El. El being the chief god of the Canaanite pantheon of gods. She is also known from the Bible, as a goddess for whom an image was made and who had her prophets (1Kgs. 15:13, 18:19. 2Kgs. 21:7.).

In the benchroom two stone bowls were found. The one being a very large one, weighing ca 400lbs, had an inscription on the rim reading "(Belonging) to 'Obadyau son of Adnah, may he be

⁴Ahlstrom G.W. op cit. p 19.

⁵Dever W. G. *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research*. See Unisa reader for Bar 211-9-1993. (university of South africa Pretoria 1993) p109-113. Understanding the Bible through Archaeology. (University of South Africa, Pretoria1993) p 109 - 113.

blessed by Yahweh.” Meshel considers that the name “Obadyau”, like most of the other private names, has the ending “yau” (common in the northern kingdom and known from the Samaria Ostraca and other finds) and not “yahu” (the common form in Judah). He poses the question which still has to be answered, “ Does the writings/inscriptions come from people who were possibly residents of the northern kingdom of Israel? The second bowl found also has a “yau” name. It reads “Shemayau son of Ezer”. David Ussishkin states that all the large jars followed the typical pattern of Judean manufacture, and that the neutron acceleration tests carried out on samples, proved that the material of manufacture came from the Jerusalem area.⁶

Further finds of interest in the inner courtyard were three ovens found in the southern corner of the building. This was probably the cooking area, but the ovens according to Meshel could not have been used simultaneously due to structural configuration of the floor overlapping the dome of the one below. These ovens were in use for possibly the whole duration of the life of the center. Adjacent to the ovens were steps forming part of the staircase leading to the roof.⁷ Originally a further structure existed, found to the east of the main building. Almost nothing remains of it, as it has been badly eroded by weather to the extent that excavation of it is no longer possible.

Discussion relating to Archaeological Discoveries.

The findings at Kuntillet Ajrud have aroused a great deal of interest and controversy. This applies mainly to the writings and drawings found on the walls and storage vessels. These have highlighted an aspect of Israelite religion which many scholars have long suspected. The subject has made a lot of Israelite and Biblical scholars uncomfortable about the syncretism in the Israelite cult and thus a somewhat minimalist approach has been adopted. Biblical texts refer to furnishings in the Jerusalem temple for the goddess Asherah (2Kgs 21:7, 23:7.). Due to the lack of external and material evidence these were considered out of context. Dever’s opinion is that this knowledge of syncretism was nearly totally repressed by the 6th/8th century B.C.E. reformers.⁸

⁶Ussishkin David. *The date of the Judean Shrine at Arad..* (Israel Exploration Journal 1973). p 142 - 157.

⁷Meshel Ze’ev. op cit p 28.

⁸Devers W.G. op cit p 109-113

Apparently the writings which have raised the utmost interest are those referring to “Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah” and the counterpart “Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah”⁹ Ahlstrom is of the opinion that the northern kingdom’s official cult went its own way, as it could not follow the religion of another nation because the religious system is part of the nation’s identity. As the god is the owner of the country he cannot be the god of another country, hence the difference between the god of Samaria and the god of Teman¹⁰. At the particular time the northern kingdom’s influence could have been such that travelers from the north added the inscriptions referring to Yahweh of Teman. Further consideration is given to the wording “his Asherah”. This is not really in line with the biblical scholar’s interpretation that the word Asherah referred to a wooden cultic object, possibly phallic, and that one of the drawings on a storage vessel of a tree was symbolic of Asherah. Just why the wording should have a direct implication of “his” has not yet been adequately explained, especially if the idea of a wooden object or tree is the symbolic reference to Asherah.

Meshel points out that the travelers who possibly called at this desert religious center were not all followers of the monotheistic religion proclaimed by the Israelite prophets, who may have been pagan worshippers or followers of a combination of Yahwism and other Canaanite beliefs.¹¹ Whatever other interpretation is given to the findings of the archaeologist at Kuntillet Ajrud, it has become clear to most that the goddess Asherah was part of the Israelite - Judahite religion and at this way station Yahweh as well as Baal could be worshipped.

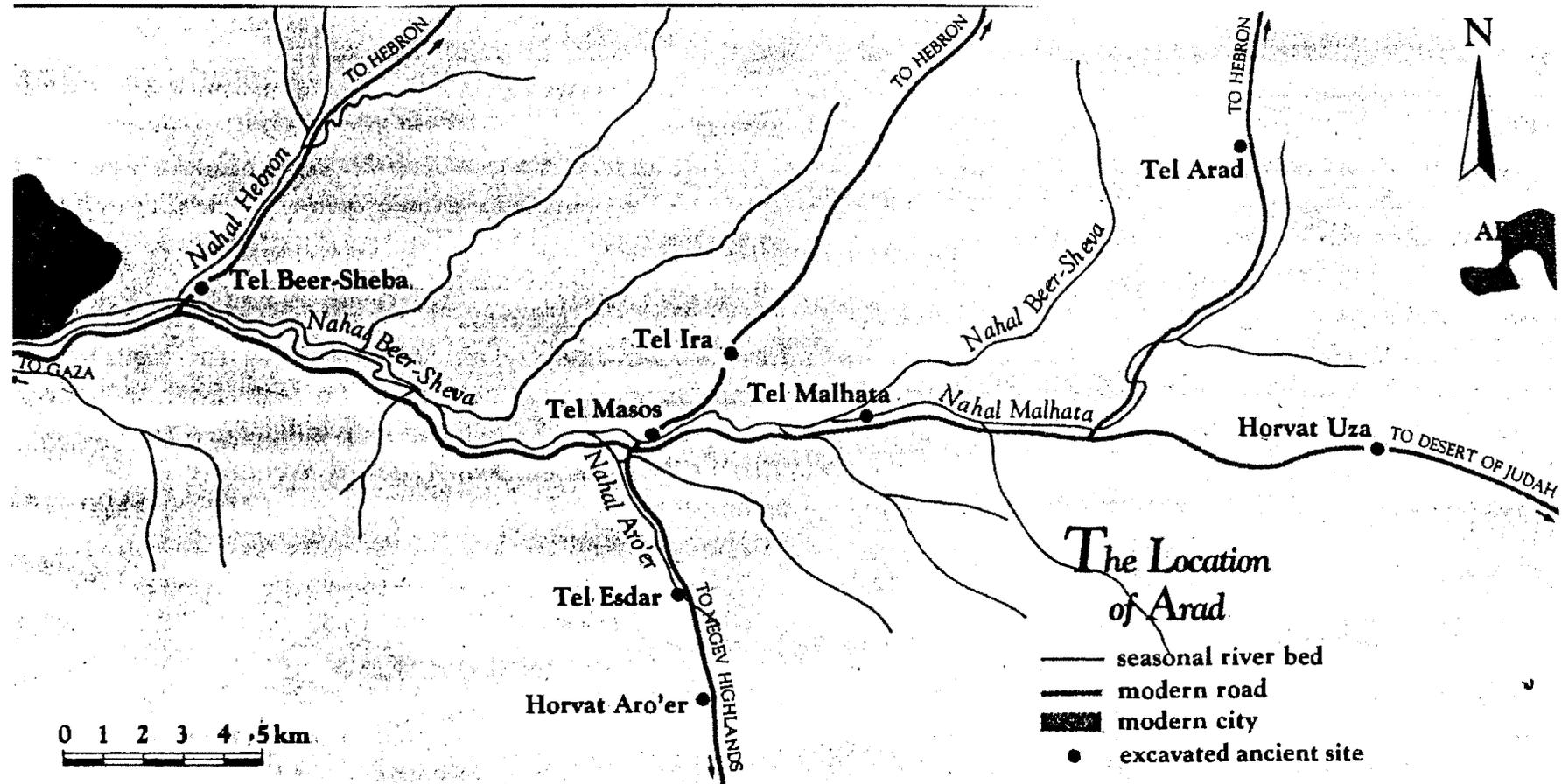
NOTE.

Although the date of these findings at Kuntillet Ajrud maybe 8th/6th century B.C.E., and not the period of Israel which this dissertation covers, it does give an indication of just how strong the Canaanite influence was still at this stage. If this was the case at such an advanced state of the Israelite and Judean kingdoms, Canaanite influence in the Israelite cult could just have been even greater during the time of the Judges.

⁹Ahlstrom, *op. cit* p 21.

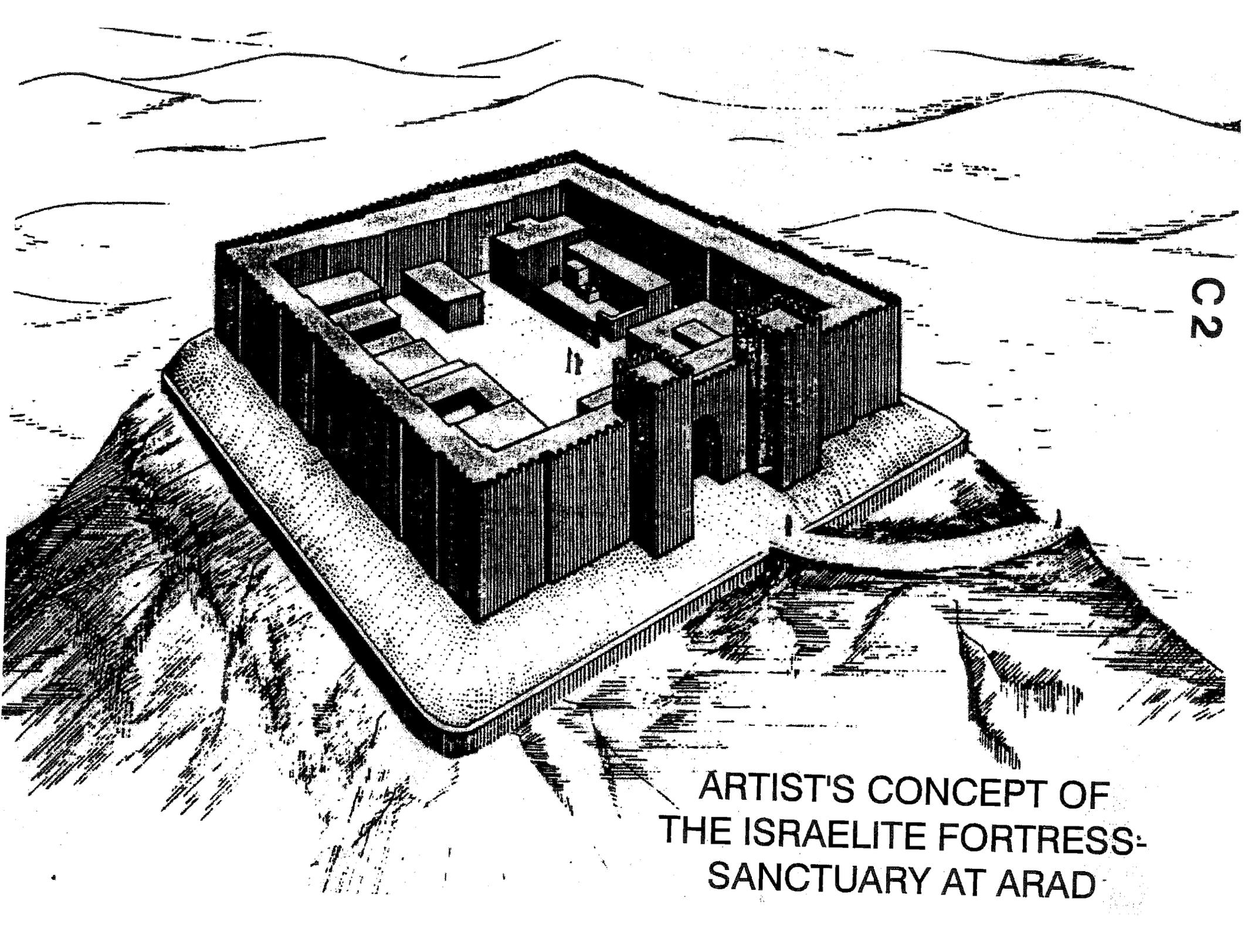
¹⁰Ibid 4. p 20

¹¹Meshel Ze’ev. *Biblical Archaeology Review* 5/79. p 27.



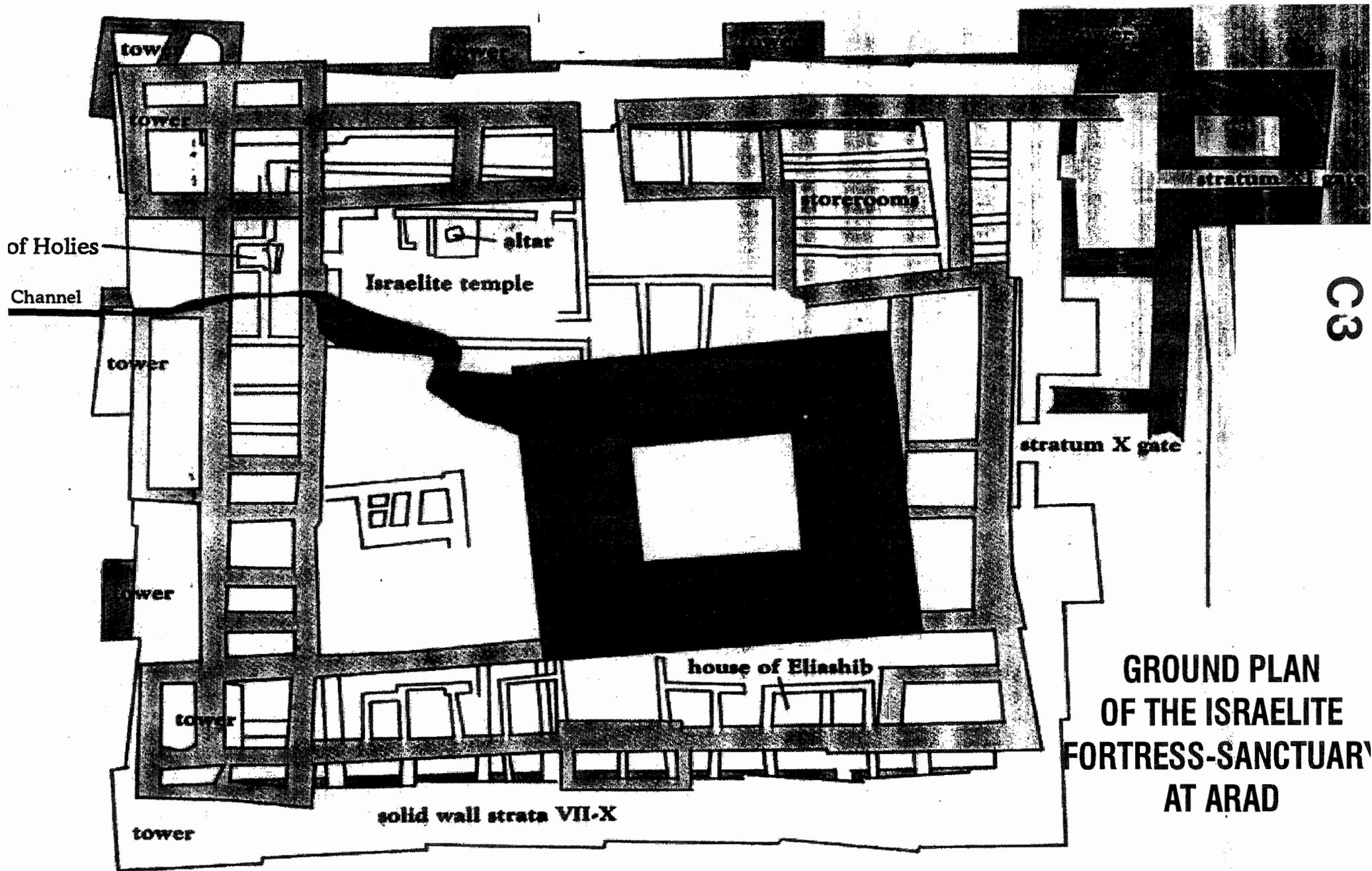
The Location of Arad

- seasonal river bed
- modern road
- modern city
- excavated ancient site



C2

ARTIST'S CONCEPT OF
THE ISRAELITE FORTRESS-
SANCTUARY AT ARAD



03

**GROUND PLAN
OF THE ISRAELITE
FORTRESS-SANCTUARY
AT ARAD**



■ 2nd-3rd century B.C.
 ■ stratum VI (early 6th century B.C.)
 ■ strata VII-X (7th-9th centuries B.C.)

2.3 ISRAELITE FORTRESS -- SANCTUARY AT ARAD

Geographical Location.

Arad, an important city in antiquity was located in the eastern Negev (Biblical spelling for the Negev), some thirty five kilometers north east from Beer - Sheva and 23 kilometers west from the Dead Sea. It was situated near one of the most important roads leading to the Arabah, Ezion - Geber and Eilat (refer to the illustration C1). Possibly from a military command point of view, being on the southern border of Judah as well, added to its value as a fortress. Its locality was known to Eusebius in the 4th century A.D., the site of the tell being confirmed with biblical Arad with the finding of a Hebrew ostrakon inscribed with the name of the city on it.

Archaeologists.

The site was excavated by the archaeologists, Ze'ev Herzog, Miriam Aharoni, and Anson F. Rainey. The director of excavation being Yohanan Aharoni, from the Tel Aviv University's Institute of Archaeology, the Israel Department of Antiquities, and the Israelite Exploration Society.¹ The excavations occupied a period of 5 years, from 1962 to 1967.

History of Arad.

Although Arad is only mentioned three times in the Bible, all three references refer to the entry of the Israelites into Canaan, (Nu. 21:1 - 3a, 33:40, & Jos. 12:14.). Arad was one of the cities destroyed by the Israelites under the command of Joshua on the entry to Canaan proper. It was renamed Hormah, meaning utter destruction. From archaeological evidence, we know that there was a Canaanite village or center at Arad dating back to ca 3200 to 2900 B.C.E. It was followed by a large city some 22 acres in extent and encircled by a stone wall, dating from 2900 to 2700 B.C.E., i.e. that is from the Early Bronze Age I & II. It is apparent from the evidence that this city was destroyed and abandoned long before the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan. Resettlement took place some 1500 years later, after 1200 B.C.E., but on the highest point of the eastern acropolis some distance from the original site. This then became Israelite Arad.²

¹Vos Howard F. *Archaeology in Bible Lands*. (Moody Press Chicago USA. 1977) p 144.

²Herzog Ze'ev et al. *Arad An ancient Israelite Fortress with a Temple to Yahweh*. (Biblical Archaeological Review vol. 13,no. 2.1987.) p 16 - 35.

According to Vos, as the site was unoccupied from 2700 to 1100 or later, it cannot be the Canaanite Arad that Moses and Joshua came against. The present site is recognised as Israelite by the name being found on ostraca during excavations. It has been suggested by scholars that the name Arad may have been that of the surrounding region rather than a particular city. Consideration may also be given to the possibility that Canaanite Arad could be Tell Malhata, some twelve kilometers southwest of Tell Arad. From the ruins at Tell Malhata, evidence points to the fact that it was strongly fortified (refer to the illustration C 2). The possibility of there being two Arads is strong. Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt ca 925 BCE., claimed to have captured two Arad's in the Negeb, naming the one Arad, the Great, and the Arad of the House of Yeroham.³ After its destruction by unknown forces in the year 2700BCE., the site lay abandoned until the 11th century. Evidence has revealed i.e. from ostraca found, that a strong fortress was built on the acropolis in the 10th century, possibly during Solomon's reign.⁴ Over a period of some 350 years, Arad was destroyed and rebuilt six times, serving as an outpost until the end of the First Temple Period. It was subsequently used in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman periods.⁵ The ground plan is shown on illustration C 3.

Yohanan Aharoni has given a table which lists the numbers for the strata uncovered and the approximate dates of each stratum. This table is considered important because it shows the unbroken use of the fort by the Israelites for six centuries. Thus allowing comparison dating of pottery and other similar artifacts excavated elsewhere. It is repeated hereunder for information:-

STRATUM	DATE
I Cemetery	10th - 16th centuries A.D.
II Caravanserai	7th - 9th centuries A.D.
III Roman Fort	1st century A.D.
IV Hellenistic tower & Fort	3rd - 2nd centuries A.D.
V Persian	4th century B.C.
VI Israelite	early 6th century B.C.
VII Israelite	late 7th century B.C.
VIII Israelite	late 8th century B.C.
IX Israelite	early 8th century B.C.
X Israelite	9th century B.C.
XI Israelite	10th century B.C.
XII Kenite	early 12th century B.C.

³Vos Howard F.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Wigoder Geoffer. *Readers Digest Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible*. (Jerusalem Press 1986).

The question may be asked whether the unique sanctuary discovered in the excavated fortress at Arad was definitely an Israelite sanctuary, and at what date did it commence service? Was it used primarily for the worship of Yahweh, the God of Israel, or did it serve other worshippers as well? The 12th stratum, according to Aharoni, was occupied by the Kenites. The Kenites, according to Biblical texts were Yahweh worshippers (Judges 1:16), and may have been the original builders of the altars of the sanctuary. This is said because of some of the finds in the original Arad village were of stone platforms, both circular and rectangular. These platforms could have served the purpose of altars. This is especially likely with the rectangular platform as centuries later, the Israelites built their altar on it, reflecting as is common in the ancient Near East, a continuity of cultic traditions in spite of ethnic discontinuity. Thereafter, the building of the fort and sanctuary point to Israelite involvement, with activity of possible worshippers using the sanctuary from ca 10th century B.C. onwards. Confirmation of this is apparent from the evidence of the relics found in the different strata particularly around the altars.⁶

Evidence has it that the first Israelite fortress, the fortress of stratum X1 was built by king Solomon ca 970 -930 B.C. From then on six successive Israelite fortresses were built or rebuilt on the hill. Each being built virtually on the foundations of the previous one. Changes in the method of construction of the fortress took place virtually after every destruction, however the overall size/area of did not change appreciatively. Water supplies in the Negeb have always been a problem, and for the fortress at Arad, a trying one. Situated on the acropolis, without any known natural springs in its immediate vicinity, Arad had to rely on natural rainfall and a well located outside the fortress's western wall. A one foot wide, rock hewn channel eighty foot long, passing beneath the walls, was used for leading received water from the well, into lime plastered underground cisterns. These cisterns were located partly beneath the sanctuary. On the cistern walls marks still exist of the various water levels.⁷

Discoveries.

The almost continuous destruction of the fortress over a period of 350 years has left six distinct strata containing many pottery relics both broken and unbroken; this has provided a dependable

⁶Herzog Ze'ev et al..p

⁷Ibid. p

and about the end of 600 B.C.E.⁸ Of the many ostraca uncovered, which constitute the largest and most varied group ever found to the date of the Iron Age era. Many are inscribed and belong to the archive of Eliaship, son of Ashiyahu, who was evidently the commander of the fortress in the last phase of the Israelite occupation.⁹

According to Mazar, Arad appears to have been a depot for food supplies, supplies being sent here from towns in the southern Hebron hills, possibly in the way of royal taxes imposed on the local farming community, in turn being allocated to other Negebite forts and troops.¹⁰ Evidence of this supposition is found on one of the ostraca which read when translated, "To Elyashib: And now give the Kittim three baths of wine, and write the name of the day. And from the rest of the first flour, send one *homer* of flour in order to make bread for them. Give them the wine from the *aganoth vessels*"¹¹ In one of the rooms of the casement wall, a later reconstruction from a previous destruction, seventeen ostraca were found in one heap, belonging to the period of the last strata. Nine of these vessels were complete and in an excellent state of preservation. Most of the inscriptions comprise a wealth of varied data. They reveal much about the historical geography of the region, the role of the fortress and the Judean military hierarchy, linguistic usage's, the structure of private names in Judah, quantities of supplies used, and all the aspects of daily life. In addition to the ostraca found, were three ancient Hebrew seals, all made from hard semi precious stone, inscribed with Hebrew names. These seals detail the business conducted by Eliashib. According to Aharoni, these seals are the first ever excavated in situ, with clear indications of their use.¹²

During the course of the excavations of the fortress, the most interesting and most important find was that of an Israelite sanctuary. This makes Arad special, for it is the first Israelite temple ever discovered in an archaeological excavation. As mentioned previously, the temple complex occupied possibly the area demarcated by the original users of the site (thought to be the Kenites). This is definitely so with the altar, it occupying the site of the possible first altar. The initial sanctuary was

⁸Aharoni Yohanan. *The Israelite Sanctuary at Arad*. New Directions in Biblical Archaeology. D.N. Freedman, ed. (Doubleday & Company, Inc. Garden City, New York 1971) p 30.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Mazar A. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*. (Doubleday & Company, Inc. Garden city, New York 1990) p 144.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

orientated east - west, as per the Jerusalem temple, and the desert sanctuary "Kuntillet Arad." The excavators have dated the fortress and temple to 10th Century B.C. It abutted the casement wall in the northwestern corner of the fortress, and was similar in layout to the Jerusalem temple, with the fundamental difference being in the main hall. In the Solomonic temple it was more of a long- room, whilst at Arad it followed the trend of a broad- room, having four distinct units, comprising the courtyard, the inner court or vestibule (*ulam*), sanctuary (*hekhal*), and the Holy of Holies (*debir*). The entrance to the room was on the longside; opposite the entrance is a niche which projects out from the rear wall and represents the Holy of Holies. The *hekhal* measuring 20 by 6 cubits had a three stepped entrance to the Holy of Holies. Within the Holy of Holies on a small platform was found a smooth stele or standing stone. What purpose this platform and stele served is not known. On the second step was found two carved limestone incense altars, laid on their sides, and amazingly, found with traces of burnt matter. Plastered benches, located on either side of the Holy of Holies possibly served as places for the receipt of offerings.

A large forecourt of about 10 square meters (stratum X1 fortress) fronted the sanctuary, with the altar for burnt offerings standing in the center. The altar was crowned with a large rock slab, surrounded by two plastered gutters, which could have been drainage for the sacrificial blood of the animals. In accordance with Biblical writings (Exodus 20:25), the altar was built of unhewn stones in contrast to the dressed stones of the fortress wall. However, the altar did differ from Biblical description as there appeared to be no corner horns. They may have been there originally, possibly made of some material such as plaster or wood and thus have not survived the ravages of time. The altar, like the rest of the sanctuary, and the fortress itself, was destroyed and rebuilt many times, the altar always in the same spot. However, the destruction from outside sources must be added to the specific acts of destruction from the monarchy's religious reforms: The stratum VII1 showed that the altar was abolished, possibly by king Hezekiah, as the excavators found the entire area had been covered with a fill ca 1 meter thick. Usage of the temple continued, whether as a place of worship is open to conjecture. The fortress was again destroyed in the late 8th century BC by the Assyrian Monarch Sennacherib, or by his Edomite and Phillistine allies. Israelite fortress V11 was not rebuilt until the latter part of the seventh century B.C. either at the end of Manasseh's reign or under the young king Josiah. At this period in time i.e. late seventh century, the Arad fortress no longer contained a

temple. The last stratum (stratum VI) of Israelite occupation appears to have been in the early 6th century, with no sign of a temple complex. This Fortress was probably destroyed by the Edomite invasion of the Negeb, at the time of the Babylonian conquest of Judah.¹³

Other than the many ostraca found, the small finds of a cultic nature were few and simple. A bronze lion was found near the altar in stratum IX, (early eighth century). Its use is unknown. In this stratum it was apparent that changes had been made to the temple complex. The courtyard had been reduced in size, from which it appears that changes in the rituals had occurred. The excavators found space for worshippers was considerably reduced and there was not much room left for priests and a few worshippers. Moreover the entrance to the temple was changed to the southeast corner. An ablutions basin, for possible priestly use was found opposite the new entrance. Further finds of a cultic nature in the XI strata (ca 926 B.C.) was a red - slip incense burner and two shallow bowls found on the foot of the sacrificial altar. These bowls bore inscriptions relating to offerings for the priests. In the destruction debris of this stratum, two half bowls were discovered with the inscribed name of Arad. This finding has removed all doubt that this site was indeed ancient Arad. In one of the side rooms further evidence of the cult of Yahweh was found on ostraca relating to names of priestly families well known from Biblical texts. These names are thought to refer to rotation of duties of priest's in the temple.¹⁴ A large bowl was found in the Xth strata, which was marked in three places on the rim with ancient Hebrew writing in reverse order of the name of the city of Arad, for whatever reason is not known. This bowl has become known as "The Arad Bowl".

¹³Herzog Ze'ev et al. p 25

¹⁴Aharoni Yohanan. p34

2.4 SHECHEM TELL BALATHA

Geographical Location.

Ancient Shechem is identified as Tell Balatha, which in turn is situated in the hill country of Ephraim. It lies at the foot of Mount Gerizim, near the pass that separates Mount Gerizim from Mount Ebal, and is approximately 1,6 kilometers East of the modern town of Nablus.

The ruins of the city lie on a saddle or shoulder (hence its name, meaning shoulder) and covers an area of ca 4/5 Hectares. The city dominated routes from different directions, so that a fort as a control point at this locality, could dominate all the main roads in northern central Palestine. In addition, its position fronted a large fertile plain, which enabled the city to produce agricultural produce to support its population.¹

History of Shechem

Shechem seems to have been settled at a very early age, evidence being that it was used as early as 3700 B.C. by nomads, thus dating it back to the Chalcolithic period. Vos writes that the first permanent settlement dates back to the Hyskos period, during the first half of the second millennium, and that they enclosed the city with an immense glacis, some 25m wide by 6m high. On top of this glacis they constructed a further brick wall. On the acropolis of the city a shrine was built with a number of side rooms. During its checkered history of destruction and rebuilding, Shechem with its forts/ shrine, was finally destroyed by the Egyptians in ca 1550.² In the Bible, Shechem is mentioned frequently, especially associated with the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob. There Abraham erected an altar (Ge.12:7) and Jacob a standing stone (Ge.33: 18 - 20). In addition, we have a history of covenants starting there, first between Shechem (i.e. the King of Shechem) and Jacob in the form of a treaty. Joshua made a covenant with the people of Israel at Shechem, and to mark the occasion took a large stone and set it up under the oak tree which was the sanctuary of the Lord. (Jos. 24: 25 - 26). Later, in the time of the monarchy, King David assigned to the levites, Shechem, as a city of refuge (Jos. 21:21: 1Chr. 6:67). During Solomon's reign the city served as an administrative center for the

¹Schovelle Keith N. *Biblical Archaeology in Focus* (Baker Book House Grand Rapids, Michigan 1978) part 3, p 473.

²Vos Howard F. *Archaeology in Bible Lands*. (Moody Press Chicago 1977) p.199.

district of Mount Ephraim. The Bible tells that after its destruction by Abimelech, son of Gideon, it became his capital (Jud.9). Later it became the capital of the Northern Kingdom under Jereboam 1; after Rehoboam, son of Solomon, failed in his attempts to validate his succession to the throne of his father.³

According to Mazar, Shechem for many years was a major Canaanite center in Palestine. In fact the story of Abimelech (Jud.9ff) portrays the fact that the city at that time had a large Canaanite population, and in the eyes of the excavators, the Canaanite element lasted until ca, the 11th century B.C.⁴ In the Bible, 2 Chronicles 12: 1-12, we are told that the fortified cities of Judah, possibly including Shechem, was destroyed by Pharaoh Shishak during a military campaign into Palestine during 926 B.C.. Shechem was again destroyed by Shalmaneser the V. during 724 B.C.. Thereafter it was abandoned until the 4th century B.C.. Alexander the Great, during his military campaign in Palestine, turned Shechem into a military rest camp for his troops, and when they left, the Samaritans subsequently occupied it.⁵ In external historical sources, Shechem is referred to on an Egyptian inscription during the Middle Kingdom (1878 - 1834 B.C.) as Sekmen. Labashi - Hadad, a ruler of Shechem, is also cursed in the execration texts (19th.18th century B.C.). In the Amarna letters, the city of Shechem (Sikmi) and its ruler, Labayu with his sons are mentioned several times.⁶

Archaeological Discoveries.

Apparently a controversy raged for many years as to whether the actual location of Shechem lay under the modern city of Nablus or under Tell Balatha. However during construction work at Balatha, a horde of bronze artifacts were discovered . This put an end to the controversy as to just where ancient Shechem lay. Following the discovery of the artifacts , Professor Ernst Sellin commenced work excavating the site which did prove to be ancient Shechem. The first major discovery was the evidence of an extremely complex fortification system. Although we do have it that the city as such, in the first phase of the MB Age 11, was an unfortified Canaanite town , the fortifications apparently followed in the next phase of the MB Age (1750 - 1650 B.C.). Aharon

³Schovelle op cit p 478.

⁴Mazar A. *Archaeology of the land of the Bible* (The Anchor Bible Reference Library. Doubleday New York 1990) p 333.

⁵Vos Howard F. p 200.

⁶Wigoder Geoffrey. Gen Ed. *Illustrated Dictionary and Concordance of the Bible* (G.G. The Jerusalem Publishing House Ltd. Jerusalem 1986)

Kempinski details two components of the system, namely a rampart wall designated Wall C and a wall designated Wall A. Wall C is the northern wall, its outer slope was revetted with stones which took on the aspect of a slanted support wall. This rampart appears to have been approximately 30 meters wide and on the interior was bordered by a wall. It appears that during the later phase of Middle Bronze Age 11, the rampart was raised and a new external revement ,Wall A, was constructed. The height of this wall, which was built of huge boulders was ca six meters, and still exists today.⁷ Two gate complexes were discovered, known as the east gate and the other, which was the larger of the two, the north west gate. These gates are reputed to date back to the Hyskos period. These gates were massive structures, the main gate, ie the north gate comprised two guard chambers with double doors. It is thought that with double doors, the gateways could become forts on their own, and defended as such if the need arose. Stairways to an upper floor led from the guard rooms. The eastern gate differed in respect that it contained only one guard room.

Although evidence has it that Shechem was occupied from a very early period . i.e. late Chalcolithic, the excavators maintain that the city proper was founded in the MB11B period. Concurrent with this period a large urban compound was unearthed beneath the MB11B temple. This complex was surrounded by extremely thick walls and included various courtyards and large rooms which may have been a palace or administrative center. According to the excavators, this complex was known as a "court yard temple." The temple architecture of the Mb11b period is one of uniformity, that of Shechem being no different to that found at Hazor, Ebal, Alalakh, Ras Shamra and other excavated sites. Most of them were rectangular with thick walls which according to the excavators indicated considerable height. According to Kempinski the temple was built on the inner slope of the rampart, a portion of which was leveled to create a raised platform. The temple it self comprised a longroom design with a double row of octagonal Egyptian style pillars, the entrance as per the Hazor temple, faced southeast.⁸ Mazar adds that the entrance was flanked by two massive stone towers, with the cultic niche opposite the main entrance.⁹ However it does appear from the gleanings of various archaeologists that originally a sacred area or platform existed outside of the city. Here various

⁷Kempinski Aharon. *The Middle Bronze Age in the Archaeology of Ancient Israel* ed by Amnon Ben Tor. (The Open University of Israel 1992) p 198.

⁸Ibid p 188.

⁹Mazar. op cit p 212.

“massebot” and temples were erected. With the expansion of the city, this sacred area or platform became incorporated into the built up section of the city, and became enclosed by the defence wall. This view tends to be confirmed by the fact that Abimelech, son of Gideon, is supposed to have attacked the city and destroyed the temple tower within the city walls.

G.E. Wright, after examination of the stratigraphic remains left by the excavators in the 1920's came to the conclusion that the temple went out of use towards the end of the MB11. This could have been as a result of resumption of Egyptian rule over Palestine, when both the fortifications and temple were destroyed. The city was subsequently rebuilt in the 15th century B.C.. The following period, i.e. following the 15th century, was one of apparent prosperity as new buildings and a temple were erected, including a sumptuous palace, where 19 superimposed floors testify to its continuous use throughout the 13th and 12th centuries B.C.¹⁰. In the courtyard of the new temple, stood the sacrificial altar and a huge polished standing stone (Massebah), which no doubt formed a very important part of the cult. Wright has suggested that this stone is the one referred to by Joshua 24: 26 - 27, as the great stone at Shechem.¹¹ This temple stood until Iron Age I and can possibly be identified with the temple of El-Berith, also called the “tower of Shechem”, and could be the house of “Baal - Berith” destroyed by Abimelech (Jud. 9: 3 - 4).

After Jeroboam was made the first king of northern Israel, he made Shechem his first capital, and archaeological evidence exists that he fortified it with a casement wall and buildings of storage facilities in the form of granaries which were situated on the top of the temple. In addition archaeologists have been able to correlate the textual evidence in the Bible as regards the various periods of destruction of Shechem such as the wars with the Arameans (1K. 20, 11 K. 16 : 5-7) and the conquest of Israel by the Assyrians, and the weakness of the city in the days of King Manasseh (11 Chr.33:11 ff).

Edward Campbell Jr. was involved in an intensive regional survey of the Shechem area during 1964 onwards, and a significant number of finds relating to cemeteries and rock hewn cave tombs were discovered and investigated. A large number of tombs contained numerous artifacts, such as bronze weapons, pottery, tools of various kinds, jewelry and seals. Some of the tombs contained

¹⁰Wiggoder G. *Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible*

¹¹Campbell E. jr. *Shechem 11*. (Scholars Press Atlanta Georgia U.S.A. 1991) p 251.

multi burials, and as such accommodated a large number of bodies. In the middle bronze period it was common practice to push the bone of earlier burials to the side of the cave or tomb, and to inter the newly deceased in the center. This practice led to the walls being lined with bones and burial offerings which were moved with the bones of their owners. Jar burials for infants was also common practice, the jars normally being buried under floors of houses. Tombs were also found on the flanks of Mount Ebal, mostly relating to the L.B. 11 period, as well as a large cave tomb which from all aspects seems to have been heavily used throughout the period of the Late Bronze era. This particular tomb was excavated in 1976.

Regarding the Amarna letters, Campbell brings to the fore just how textual finds and archaeology can be related and bring about a better understanding of historical events than either provides by itself. He shows this by a number of examples (see Shechem 11 by Edward Campbell Jr p 99), one of which is given here. "Now shall we do as Lab'ayu, who made the land of Shechem Apiru - territory?" (Amarna letter 289). This question from Abdu - Kheba, the ruler of Jerusalem to Egyptian Pharaoh is prime evidence that a man named Lab'ayu was the ruler of a state in the central hill country of Canaan and that city was Biblical Shechem.¹² From the very beginning, the excavations here have shown it to have been an important cult place throughout the time span of the Middle Bronze Age to Iron Age 1. It is however extremely difficult to comprehend the character and the date of Israelite infiltration and in some cases the verification of the biblical narratives. Scripture does not record the conquest of Shechem at the time of Joshua. A possible reason for this is that the site at that time was inhabited by a very limited population.¹³

Confusion as to whether Shechem in the time period considered (L/Bronze - Early Iron 1) was still a Canaanite city has not been completely resolved. The Bible with genealogical texts of Numbers 26:30-33, and Joshua 17:2 - 3, testifies to the strength of the Canaanite element which existed. This could also be the reason why Shechem was never considered a suitable place for a central shrine or cult place. Further confusion arises as to whether there ever was complete and utter destruction of the city by Abimelech. From archaeological observations of the East gate, the Late Bronze city never suffered a

¹²Campbell Jr. op cit p 99.

¹³Finkelstein Israel. *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*. (Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem. 1988) p 81.

destruction, and Courville is of the further opinion that one of the first places where total destruction would be apparent, is in the protective towers of the city. However, in the south tower there was observed an uninterrupted sequence of undamaged floors, beginning in the L/Bronze and extending deep into Iron I, providing evidence that the city was not thus destroyed as biblically stated.¹⁴ Of further confusing significance, is the absence of any evidence for the rebuilding of the city of Jeroboam. Understandably, if this was his capital, there should be more evidence of buildings and cultic objects than just the find of a possible granary erected on the top of a temple.

CONCLUSION

From the very beginning excavations of Shechem by various teams of archaeologists has brought to light reality of some events that the Bible has so vividly portrayed. In the texts of the books of Joshua, Judges and Kings we have an understanding of what possibly occurred. In addition archaeology has given us greater insight into the complexity of the religious cult of the Israelites during the periods of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Apparently not all archaeological reports of the excavation have been published, possibly the outcome of these will contribute and hopefully clarify some of the more confusing aspects of our understanding of the early cult.

¹⁴Courville Donovan A. *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*. (Challenge Books Loma Linda California. U.S.A. 1971) p 184.

2.5 MEGIDDO TELL el - MUTESELLIM

Geographical Location.

Megiddo, the site of which has been identified with the modern mound of Tell el Mutesellim, lies on the North side of the Carmel ridge some 30 km SSE of the modern port of Haifa and some 9 km to the N/E of Afula. The tell stands ca 21 m high and covers an area on the summit of over 5 hectares. The earlier cities lower down in the mound covered a more extensive area. Megiddo, situated at the head of a mountain pass was in a commanding position to control the Jezreel valley plus the great trunk roads from Egypt in the south to Mesopotamia and Syria in the north. The roads which connected central and eastern Palestine with the Mediterranean coast in addition to access to the ancient port of Acco were virtually under Megiddo's control. However the cost of commanding the gateway to northern Israel was high, in that it had to be continually on the alert for attacks of the contending empires through the ages, right up to the First World War in 1914. The Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, Israelites, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans were all offenders in the dramatic battles fought at Megiddo in ancient times.¹

History of Megiddo

Excavations on the site of Megiddo show that its history can be said to have started in the Chalcolithic era, ca in the early 4th millennium B.C.E. As a result of its unique position at the top of a pass it was continually occupied until the 4th century B.C. It suffered destruction and rebuilding some 20 times as the various occupation levels have shown. To clarify the occupation levels which are current, a table is given with the various identifications here under:-

Current Identification of occupation levels at Megiddo

Level No	Contemporary Era by Current Views.
I.	Babylonian and Persian Occupation
II	Assyrian Occupation
III	Assyrian Occupation
IV	9th /8th century

¹Moshe Pearlman & Yaacov Yannai. *Historical Sites In Israel*. (Chartwell Books Inc. Secaucus. New Jersey 1978) p 103.

Level No.	Contemporary Era by Current Views.
1VB - VA	Era of Solomon, later moved to the era of Ahab
V	Israelite occupation under David
V1	Philistine phase of Iron 1; Late judges and Saul
V11 - 1X	Late Bronze; c 1580 - 1100 B.C. Includes era of Dynasties
XVII1 to XX inclusive	
X	Late Middle Bronze; Early D -XV111
X1 - X11	Middle Bronze 11B
X111 - X1V	
XV	Middle Bronze 11A, Middle Bronze 1, Hiatus
XV1 - XV11	Early Bronze 1V (111B)c. 2500 - 1950
XV111	Early Bronze 11; Dynasty 1f.
X1X	Early Bronze 1; Predynastic into Dynasty 1.
XX	Chalcolithic; Predynastic.

Note: Definitions of the levels are at best only approximate.²

There is a great deal of history to Megiddo prior to the Late Bronze/Iron Age 1, but as this dissertation covers only the period of Israelite settlement in Palestine up to the end of the United Monarchy, this prior period will largely be ignored except where it might throw light on subsequent events.

Considered to be one of the most important cities in ancient Palestine, it does also feature in a number of texts in the Bible. We are told, Biblically, that it was one of the cities vanquished by Joshua (Jos.12:21), and at some time later, the Canaanite occupants were put under "tribute". The actual time that the Israelites took over the site for their own occupation is disputed among biblical scholars. It appears that Megiddo was repossessed by the Canaanites after the death of Ehud and a second conquest was necessary. This came about under the judgeship of Barak and Deborah (Jud. 4:2ff) It is also considered that David did conquer Megiddo, as it appears to have been in Israelite hands from his time

²Courville Donovan A. *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications. Volume 2.* (Challenge Books Loma Linde, California. U.S.A 1971.) p 196.

through to Solomon. He made it into a garrison town for his chariots and horses (1K.9:15 - 19), including it in his administrative districts under the command of Baana, the son of Ahilud (1K. 4 - 12).

Archaeologists

The first archaeologists of repute who were engaged in the excavation at Megiddo were the German group under leadership of G. Schumacher, his subordinates being C. Steuernagel and C. Watzinger. Work started in 1905 and carried on until 1907, under the patronage of the Deutsche Orient- Gesellschaft and the Deutsche Palestinavereen. Further work was carried out under G. Reisner, an American from the University of Harvard for a period of two years (1908-1910). In the year 1925, The Oriental Institute of Chicago, under the patronage of John D. Rockefeller, sent out J.H. Breasted to the Tell to carry out further excavations with the overly ambitious plan to completely excavate the Tell to bedrock over a period of some 25 years. Breasted left the work after a trial dig and was succeeded by C.S. Fisher, who carried forward the excavation for a further period of two years (1925 - 1927). Other American archaeologists on the scene were P.L.O. Gay (1927 - 1935) and prior to World War II, G. Loud (1935 - 1939). the war brought an end to work on the mound and though the layout of the Iron Age city had been revealed, the early levels were still unknown, except for a small area. Nothing further appears to have been done until 1958 when the Department for Landscaping and the Preservation of Historical sites of the Israelite government commenced work to clear the site of vegetation that was threatening to overgrow the matchless relics of Megiddo.³ Yigael Yadin, an Israelite professor and archaeologist of the university of Israel carried out further work on the site again in 1960 and in 1965 to 1967 with the assistance of I. Dunayevsky. They carried on in the years 1969, 70 and 71. Recently another two Israelite archaeologists, Finkelstein and Ussiskin, have commenced further large scale excavations on the site of Megiddo. To house some of the important artifacts that have been found at Megiddo, the modern buildings which originally housed the American excavating teams, have now been converted into the "Megiddo Museum" for the benefit of all who visit the site

Discoveries.

³Pearlman & Yannai . p 103.

As the tell consisted of ca 24 cities virtually pancaked on top of one another, distinction of the various cities as excavation progressed became a matter of course as the archaeologists cut down through the layers to bedrock, a depth of ca 72 feet. The summit of the mound covered an area of ca 15 acres, with its slopes of fortification walls adding another 35 acres. The perimeter of the walls measured ca 3000 feet, with an average thickness of 11 feet. All the corners of the walls (those assumed Solomonic) were of dressed masonry. The straight or offset sections being of brick with coarse rubble. Traces of earlier fortifications was that of a wall surrounding the mound at the foot of the slope.⁴

An ancient roadway has been discovered some distance from the foot of the slope of the northern side of the mound. This roadway is considered to be one that was laid down in the reign of David, and is considered to be the main approach to Megiddo. Another road of rubble was later added to the original road in Solomon's time, but this was removed during excavations.

The oldest known gateway, which lies to the right of the main Solomonic gateway, served the city during the Hyskos period, and was discovered at the bottom of a deep archaeological cut, which ran through several layers of strata. This particular gateway (stratum X111 considered to be M/Bronze period) consisted of two narrow entrances, standing at right angles to one another, so that it was suitable for pedestrian traffic only. The Solomonic gateway, a massive six chambered building with two towers is associated with the casement walls. Another city complex was discovered in stratum IVA, which according to Yadin, was the work of king Ahab. Findings here were of a four chambered gateway connected to offset- inset walls, palaces, two stable complexes and a watering system. The watering system here was probably only used in peaceful times as it led beyond the city fortifications.

The importance of Megiddo can be recognised from the large palaces that were constructed for the Canaanite kings and of the monumental tombs under large public buildings. In excavating/removing one of these palaces, archaeologists discovered one of the most impressive finds of 200 carved ivory artifacts, belonging in most cases to the 13th and 12th centuries. These palace complexes are considered to be of the Late Bronze Era. In the Iron Age, possibly from the time of Solomon, was attributed a number of public buildings, together with buildings which were originally

⁴Vos Howard F. *Archaeology in Bible lands* (Moody Bible Institute of Chicago 1977) p 190.

thought to have been the stables of horses, but a controversy has arisen that these buildings were not stables, but granary store rooms or barracks for troops. Of the public buildings on this stratum were two palaces which were considered contemporary with Solomons palace at Jerusalem. These palaces are known as “*bit - hilani*”, being the Akadian term referring to a building having a colonaded entrance porch⁵.

A large circular stone platform ca 25 feet in diameter, which was ascended by a series of seven steps, dating back to the Early Bronze Age, was discovered in the area considered to be holy or sacred. The platform, seen as a “bama or high place,” was covered with animal bones, and broken pottery. It was considered to be in use up to the Middle Bronze Age. This “bama or high place” became the nucleus of three megaron shaped temples with altars. Each of the temples measured 27ft by 41ft and consisted of one room with a porch in front of it. The actual dating of the stratum covering these finds is in dispute. They were included as their dating might extend to the Late Bronze Age. Whether all the temples were used at the same time is questionable. Further no artifacts were found in any of the temples, thus nothing is known of the cultic rites practiced or by whom. A fortified sanctuary was found in a stratum dating possibly to the 13th century, built on the site of the earlier altars. This temple consisted of a single room (9.6 by 11.5 meters) with the entrance facing north. Orientation of most temples and cult structures found in the Levant were with the entrance facing east. The Megiddo temples followed this pattern with the exception of the above. Consideration of this fact points to a possible difference in the nature of the cult. Cult traditions were normally binding, no detail such as this is accidental or without definite cause. In this particular temple, a niche was cut out in the south wall, directly opposite the doorway which was flanked by towers on both sides. The walls of this sanctuary were ca 3 meters thick, which indicated that the building could have had more than one storey. This structure is considered to be a special type of fortified temple similar to the one at Shechem⁶. The basic plan of this temple appeared unchanged up to ca the 11th century. In various places its walls were repaired with large hewn stones and the niche was replaced by a 1.1 meter high plastered altar that extended the entire length of the south wall. A large number of stone slabs and basins were found on the floor of this temple.

⁵Mazar A. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*. (Doubleday, New York. 1990) p 379.

⁶Yadin Y BA 23, (1960)

Another temple was built on the ruins of the above fortified temple dating possibly to the late Middle Bronze or early Late Bronze. It was similar in design, but there were important differences. It was poorly constructed, the walls being of rubble and only half the width of the previous temple. In the south wall, a holy of holies was added. The niche was now supported by a buttress added on the outside. A bhama (platform built of stone and mud) stood in front of the niche. Worshippers ascended this platform by a stairway. Which worshippers, Canaanite or Israelite? is a moot point.

Of the various temples discovered in the era considered, i.e Late Bronze to Early Iron, it is extremely difficult to discover whether the existing places of worship were used by the Israelites or not. On the Solomonic levels of strata, a cultic place was found in what was considered to be a residential building. The finds included horned altars, offering bowls and cylindrical stands with bowls, which may have been used for incense offerings or other religious purposes⁷. This at least does point to Israelite usage. It is known that Solomon and Ahab both embarked on extensive building programs, but scripture or outside literary sources make little mention of temple/sanctuary construction.

To provide the city with water not only in normal times, but also under siege conditions, the ancient engineers sank a shaft to a depth of 120 feet. From this shaft, a tunnel ca 66 meters long was cut through the rock to the springs outside the city walls. To prevent the supply from being discovered by attackers of the city, they covered the springs over so that they were invisible. Following on Yadin's 1960 excavations, this water supply was possibly started by Solomon and completed by Ahab, ca 9th century.

Tombs have always provided important information as regards the lifestyle of the inhabitants of early cities. The burial gifts placed alongside of the deceased consisted chiefly of pottery and occasionally small amounts of jewelry, weapons and other personal goods. These finds usually provide most of the data concerning the culture of the period. In the case of Megiddo , before excavations began, a site on the east side of the mound was chosen for dumping the excavated material. However before dumping began, an investigation of the site showed many burial caves of different periods, giving rich and varied findings which were valuable additions to the findings on the mound. The shaft tombs found at the bottom of the mound slopes were amongst the most elaborate discovered in Israel.

⁷Mazar A. op. cit. p 500.

Just how the differences between Israelite and Canaanite remains are identified in the latter period when both nationalities were at Megiddo is not known or ever likely to be.⁸

Summary/Conclusion

The mound at Megiddo, filled with the rich relics of almost continuous occupation for a period of nearly 4000 years, through the destiny of ca 24 cities, has given modern man a great deal of information as to what, where, and how our early ancestors lived and coped with the problems of every day life.

Concerning the religious/cult aspects of finds at Megiddo we have something of a “Pandora’s Box”, the cult remains and buildings are mute and little evidence exists as to what belonged to whom, especially in the Late Bronze/Early Iron 1 Era. Syncretism could easily have been practiced.

It must be pointed out that even though the Megiddo excavations rate as one of the most important ever carried out in Israel, the very multiplicity of the excavators, the timing of the excavation reports, and even the form and method of publications make them one of the most problematic sources of information in archaeology.⁹ The diverse opinions of the excavators has given rise to raging debates and ongoing controversies. That there were discoveries of the cultural differences of the various occupants of Megiddo over different periods of time has also added to our knowledge, but at the same time has led to misunderstandings, incorrect dating, and controversies as to what different artifacts, structures and obtuse findings meant. One major example being the controversy of whether the possible ruins of stables found at Megiddo were constructed by Solomon or Ahab. At times re-excavations have taken place and are still taking place, not only to further knowledge, but also to prove theories and opinions of archaeologists and scholars.

⁸Gophna Ram. *The Intermediate Bronze Age*. Edit. Amnon Ben Tor. *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*. (The Open University of Israel) p 139.

⁹Stern Epraim. *Hazor, Dor and Megiddo in the Time of Ahab and under Assyrian Rule*. (Institute of Archaeology. Hebrew University of Jerusalem.) p 15.

Extracts From

CHAPTER TWO. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN PALESTINE

The five major archaeological excavations sites chosen, and how they relate to the Israelite cult are dealt with hereunder, each under the individual chapter headings of "Chapter Two. Archaeological Excavations in Palestine."

2.1 The "Bull Site."

The findings at this excavation are very controversial centering around whether the site was a cultic site, and secondly whether the finding of the bronze bull related to Israelite or Canaanite cultic practices. The other sparse findings consisting of broken pottery and bones, are said not to relate to Israelite cultic practices. No official finding has yet been made.

2.2 Kuntillet Ajrud.

Controversy also reigns at this excavation site. Drawings and writings found on the walls and storage vessels relate very much to syncretism. The building complex is deemed to be Israelite, but the art work on the storage jars and wall writings may be graffiti made by passing travellers from other parts of Palestine. If not, the findings relate to cultic practices, other than that of Yahwism .

2.3 Israelite Fortress - Sanctuary at Arad.

At this site, which dates back to the Kennites of the Bible, ostrica relating not only to Israelite occupation of ca 500 years, but also to Roman, Hellenistic and Persian periods. The most significant finds at Israelite Arad have been the sanctuary, ostrica, and writings which throw a great deal of light on the Israelite Cultic practices over a long period of time. That the cult of Yahwism was practiced here follows the tennets given in the Bible. Archaeology has been able to vindicate some of these practices.

2.4 Shechem

Shechem is associated with the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob, thus there being a very early Israelite claim on the city (Ge.44:22). Archaeological excavations have shown the traditions of the city follow a continuity in the covenant and cultic traditions, both Canaanite and Israelite. Highlighting the excavations has been the findings of what is known as the sacred area. This area possibly housed the important cultic places and practices referred to in the Bible. Archaeological evidence at this site gives greater understanding of the biblical events in the era covered by this dissertation.

2.5 Megiddo.

The stratigraphy of the Megiddo excavations is complicated and has caused some confusion in its interpretation of discoveries. Excavations show that Megiddo was during its long history occupied by Canaanites, Israelites, Egyptians and Philistines. That part of the excavations which relate primarily to the Israelite occupation, start probably from David's reign continuing to that of Ahab. Archaeological findings of the Israelite period relate to buildings, palaces, barracks, storage facilities and temples and a host of small cultic objects (Ceramic figurines etc). These objects in many ways again relate to syncretism, the last biblical reference to Megiddo alludes to this (Ze. 12:11). Archaeology, at Megiddo has brought to man a deeper and more profound understanding of the Israelite cult.

CHAPTER THREE. ISRAELITE RELIGION

3.1 What is Religion - Cult ?

Before the Israelite religion can possibly be discussed or researched, it is evident that some thought should be given to the meaning of what religion cult is. Just what is religion? What part does it play in the life of mankind that so much attention is given to it? All scholars of human culture will readily admit that religion - cult is one of the most important factors in our culture. Academically, the word is Latin, meaning a binding or obligation, and religion or cults is in itself found in every known human society. It expresses itself in every aspect of our human behaviour. It interacts with all known human endeavors in matters of art, science and technology, government and politics. It has also been used in the formenting of great rebellions, disastrous wars, migrations and conquests. The Crusades were in the main, religious - cultic wars. The rapidity with which the Muslims overran a large part of the world can be explained only by reference to a zeal to spread their religious views.¹ However this still does not tell what religion is, other than it appears to be the existence of powers beyond the normal comprehension of human ability and outside the regular process of nature. It appears to be a system of faith and belief to those who acknowledge a spiritual power which is responsible for the creation of the cosmos. This maybe called a personal god or a whole collection of supernatural beings or gods. Rausch and Vos, in their book "World Religions" write that "religion is the awe one feels in the perceived presence of a higher power, the communion with that which is greater than one's self, the concern for ultimate reality and destiny."²

Foremost, among the beliefs, sentiments, and values of humankind, religion also has the ability to arouse intense feelings for that which is considered sacred, binding together members of a group in unity and setting them apart from others of different views. From monotheism (one god) to animism (spirits in all), from monism (reality is one) to magic (extraordinary powers), religion forms a way of life around proclaimed church doctrines and beliefs about the sacred. This form of religion or cultic belief usually has a set of complex rituals through which piety is expressed, a set of beliefs, and

¹ *Consolidated Encyclopaedia. Volume VIII, Religion.* (Consolidated World Research Society Ltd. London 1946).

² Rausch D.H.and Voss C.H. *World Religions* (Trinity Press International. Valley Forge U.S.A.) p xi

a code of ethics, all directed by a hierarchy of religious - cultic functionaries who set standards for the community as a whole.

To define it more simply in the way of a definition, it can be said that religion or cults is a belief binding the spiritual nature of man to a supernatural being, as involving a feeling of dependence and responsibility, together with feelings and practices which naturally flow from such a belief.³ Referring back to the definition, we have that religion is thus based on culturally shared beliefs in supernatural powers. How this supernatural power originated in primitive man is not known, or ever likely to be. Relating to this belief, a set of practices, either ritual or of ethical behavior, or both became attached to it, bringing about a relationship or response to the object or power which early man acknowledged to be greater than himself. This relationship, possibly developed in a very general sense, to the adoration of objects, or service of a god or gods. It appears that early man's thought process centered around the contention that the supernatural powers had complete control of his well being, his habitat, his animals and his family. He therefore possibly reasoned that it was in his interests to remain supplicant to these powers and gain their approval by means of worship and dwellings for them, so that they might be near in times of need and defense against enemies. This acknowledgment can therefore be expressed in devotion or faithfulness to any object which could be pointed to "the out of the ordinary". More specifically it can refer to some particular system of faith and worship, for example in the carrying out of sacrifices or in modern parlance worship by means of liturgy. To be religious then is to be aware, or conscious of the existence of a supreme being. From a purely Biblical point of view, religion - cults was not invented, evolved or discovered by man. Adam as a representative of all men, knew his one Creator, God who had made him. It is considered that from the time of his fall man has worshipped this God through sacrifice. Monotheism and the practice of animal sacrifice are believed to clearly show from a biblical point of view, the twin characteristics of original religion - cult. God was God and man could not approach Him in his own righteousness.⁴ Can we not therefore postulate that the whole the nature of man of man has somehow been created for religion - cult and is expressly engaged and exercised in religion - cults of various sorts.

³*Practical Standard Dictionary*. Funk & Wagnalls. Ed J.G. Fergusson and Associates.

⁴Brow Robert. *The World's Religions*. (Struik Christian Books Pty Ltd. Cape town 8000. 1982) p 30.

3.2 ABRAHAM AND HIS GOD

When can we say the Israelite cult began? Some argue that it was with establishment of the monarchy, some with the settlement of the tribes of Israel in Canaan, others with the Exodus of Israelites from Egypt. However, from a purely biblical view Israel stems from a common ancestor, Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (Ge.32:28;35:10). Looking back slightly further, we come to possibly the main originators, Isaac, the father of Jacob and his paternal grandfather Abraham.

The beginning of the Israelite cult with Abraham is shrouded in myths about gods, in some instances it has been supposed that the association of individual patriarchs with particular sanctuaries (Abraham with Hebron and Shechem, Isaac with Beersheba, Jacob with Bethel) point back to a stage at which they were the gods of these holy places and thus controlled the lives of the members of the clans. However this theory is very controversial, and is at variance with the spirit of the narratives.¹ Although it is almost impossible to describe the religion of Abraham in great detail, it was clearly the type practised in the land at that time. Whatever personal religious experience the patriarchs may have had, we can add nothing further other than what the texts of the Bible infer. From the book of Joshua, 24:2, 14, we have it that Israel's forebears had once been pagans; What gods they worshipped is left to conjecture. We do know that from Ur - Haran tradition, the moon cult was prominent. Possibly Abraham and his family had been devotees of the goddess Sin². What caused the changes from pagan worship to a monolatrous god who was considered supreme is unknown, other than the claims of the patriarchs that God spoke directly to them.

During the age of the Patriarchs, it is probable that this awareness of a supreme being, other than the sophisticated pantheon of gods, serviced and worshipped at that time in the wealthy city of Ur, Mesopotamia, made itself manifest in Abraham's life.

From the biblical perspective, this awareness of a supreme being is an account of the direct, intimate relationship between the early leaders of the Hebrew people and God. Enlarging on this, the

¹Andersen G.W. *The History and Religion of Israel*. (Oxford University Press, Ely House, London. W.1 1971) p 15.

²Bright J. *A History of Israel*. 2nd Edition (SCM Press Ltd. Bloomsbury Street, London.1972.) p 99-100.

Genesis narratives have it that each of the patriarchs is represented as choosing his own personal method and reason for the worship of his god, to whom he there after trusted himself. We do have from texts of widely separated periods, and from different parts of the ancient Near East which show that in the clans or communities such as that of Abraham's, it was common for the cult to be traced back to a special relationship between the deity and the head of the clan or founder.³ The closeness of the intimate tie between the patriarchs and their god is further illustrated by the names given e.g. "the God of Abraham", *elohe Abraham* (Gen.28:13; 31:42.), "the kinsman of Isaac", *pahad yisshaq* (Gen.31:42, 53.). It is however almost impossible to know whether Abraham, in leaving Ur, a city of consequence in those days, was responding to a subconscious urge he felt and believed. This may have been instituted by God in his plans for the further evolution of mankind's religious beliefs. We must also not overlook the materialistic possibility that economic factors could have played a part in his leaving the city of his birth. However whatever is believed, its compulsion appears to have been religious. There are traces in the Bible that indicate that religion in the time of the Patriarchs did involve the worship of other gods as well (Jos. 24:2). Possibly the monotheistic principle was at this stage in time beginning to slowly gel in Abraham's mind, and his leaving the civilisation of Mesopotamia, was because of spiritual impasse that had become about through the worship by the populace of many gods. Accurately, we could describe his religion as a henotheist, a believer in a sole god, attached to a particular people, but who also recognised the belief and practice of other nation's religion and cultures.

Just who was Abraham, what was his background in Mesopotamia, was he a nomad from the beginning, how did he derive his living in a fairly well organised civilization?; has been some of the questions asked by many a biblical scholar. According to Genesis 11, Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees and spent his early life there, until after his marriage, Genesis also speaks of Abraham's greatness in other terms. It describes his defeat of the kings of the East, his rescue of Lot before the destruction of Sodom, and his great material possessions. It implies that Abraham gave up much in leaving the civilization of Ur and Haran for the unknown wilderness. It describes the abundant material rewards God bestowed on Abraham in exchange⁴. But other than the biblical writings we have no

³Andersen. op.cit. p 20.

⁴Vos Howard F. *Genesis & Archaeology* (Academic Books. Zondervan Publishing House. Grand

other direct information. We also know that these narratives of Genesis were written and compiled by priestly redactors ca 1000 years after Abraham's possible lifetime and contain a number of irregularities. However we do have it from these narratives inconsistent as they maybe, that Abraham is the immediate ancestor of the Hebrew people and the founder of the nation. That he is the founder of the nation because of his obedience to divine command (Gen. 22:12, 26:5). Not only was he the founder of the nation, but also the founder and originator of the religion of the Hebrews. This came about, according to the narrative in Genesis, with the inaugurating of the covenant, a binding agreement with God, sealed with the sacrifice of an animal. That this covenant was not only binding on the patriarch alone, but also on his family and hence the clan. Patriarchal religion can therefore be said to be the religion not only of the particular patriarch, but also of the clan, and his god was their god as well.

The teachings of Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) dominated the biblical studies scene for almost half a century, with a rather skeptical approach to the narratives of the Old Testament, regarding them as myths or wholly fiction. Some outstanding twentieth - century scholars, such as M.Noth and A. Alt retained this approach of Wellhausen's and argued that Israelite history, does not acquire a substantial basis of truth until the age of Saul and David, when the biblical texts begins to reflect the activity of court histories and records, e.g. "the book of Kings".

Although we have this skeptical approach to the narratives, there have been some archaeological findings at Ur by Sir C. Leonard Woolley (1922 - 34), when it became clear that Abraham was a product of a highly developed culture.⁵ Cyrus Gordon advances the idea that Abraham was not only a strong and influential patriarch, but also a wealthy merchant prince⁶. Genesis 13:2 and 25:35. seems to confirm this by stating that Abraham was rich in gold and silver. It is possible that not every one will agree that the life of Abraham was consistent with that described in the literature of Ras Shamra, it does appear that Abraham with God's blessing was more than just a Bedouin nomad. Further evidence of the writings from the archives of Mari, Ebla and Nuzi does appear to tie in with the probable dates of the patriarchs. It also appears that Mari's sphere of influence included Haran, and

Rapids Michigan U.S.A.1985) p 50

⁵Ibid. p 50.

⁶Cyrus Gordon, *Abraham and the Merchants of Ura*. Journal of Near Eastern Studies (January 1958) p 28 - 30.

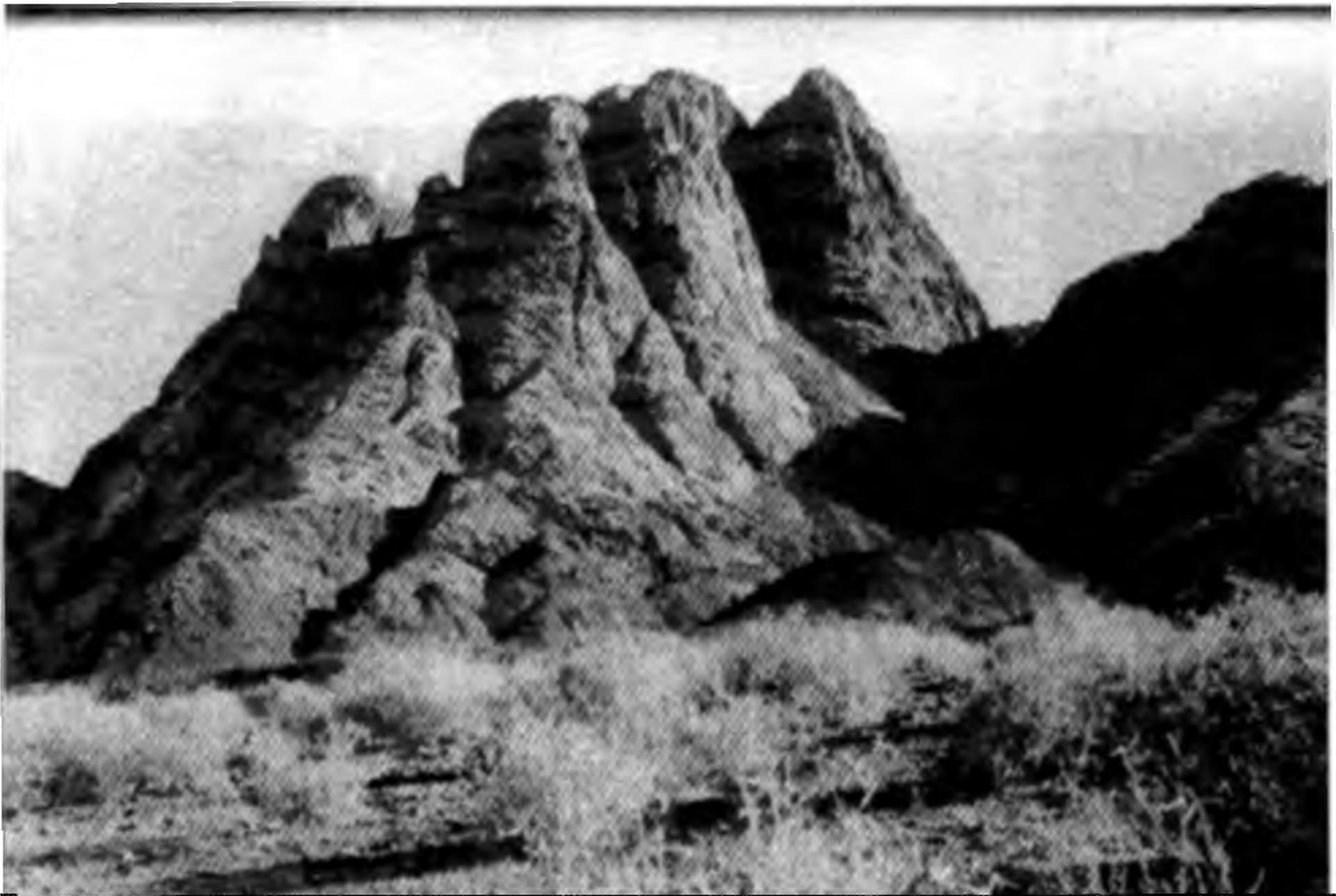
some of the clay tablets on which were recorded events correspond with the “Amorite” names of the relatives of the patriarchs e.g.. Benjamites.⁷ We also have the name Abram (Abraham) recorded in Babylonian texts of the First Dynasty, and possibly from the Execration texts, whilst names containing the same components are again found at Mari.⁸

In the book of Genesis 11:31 it is given to us that Terah took Abraham his son and departed from Ur of the Chaldees. This suggests that it was Terah and not Abraham that led the departure that led to the acknowledgement of the supreme God. This raises a controversy. Did Abraham persuade his father to accompany him or was it the other way round?. A question that really has no answer.

We have scattered throughout the Old Testament references to Abraham. During the crisis in the period of exile, he epitomized the hope that of the exiles to one day to return to their promised land and to the rebuilding of their nation. In psalm 105, Israel’s national identity is rooted in God’s selection as his special servant, and in the covenant established between them. He (the Lord) is mindful of his covenant for ever, writes the psalmist, “ of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, a covenant which He made with Abraham” (Psalm 105: 8-9). Abraham, the fore runner of Moses, was without doubt one of God’s great men.

⁷Andersen. op.cit. p 17 - 18.

⁸Bright John *A History of Israel* (SCM Press LTD. 2nd Edition. Bloomsbury Street London U.K. 1972) p 77.



Jebel Musa, Arabic "Mount Moses" the traditional Mount Sinai

3.3 MOSES

Possibly the greatest person in the narratives of the Old Testament is the prophet Moses. He dominates the early writings of the Pentateuch from the second chapter of Exodus to the end of the book of Deuteronomy. Yet because he was an amazing figure, the events of his life in some instances have become mythological and legendary. Throughout the Old Testament he is portrayed as the founder of Israel's religion, instigator of the law, organiser, and leader of the tribes, both politically and military, from the escape of Egypt, the covenant at Sinai, the wilderness wanderings, and up to the point when the Israelites were ready to enter Canaan.

From biblical sources we have it that Moses was a shy humble man who sought obscurity. But when exhorted by God to lead the persecuted Israelites to freedom, he showed his true character. He had the courage, tenacity and moral fervour to build a nation out of what must have been an undisciplined rabble who had forgotten their beginnings and lacked, possibly through Egyptian slavery, all sense of community. All that is known about Moses himself comes from the first five books of the Bible and a few scattered references in both the Old and New Testaments. He is not mentioned in any writings outside of scripture, but there are numerous legends and conjectures concerning the first forty years of his life in the Egyptian royal court¹.

Moses was the son of Amran and Jochebed from the tribe of Levi (Ex. 2:1-2, 6:20), and the younger brother of Miriam and Aaron (Nu.26:59, Mi.6:4). Born at a time when severe acts of oppression were being carried out against the resident Israelites because of their rapidly increasing numbers, great care had to be taken to ensure survival of male offspring. Pharaoh, having reduced the Israelite to bondage (Ex.1:8 - 21) went one step further and issued his infamous edict; "Every son that is born to the Hebrews/Israelites you shall cast into the Nile" (Ex. 1:22)².

When Jochebed gave birth to a son, (Ex. 2:1-2) she carried out an escape plan, by placing him in a waterproofed basket made of bulrushes in the reeds of the Nile. He was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, who named him Moses. Miriam, Moses' sister, watching from nearby, offered to find a foster mother for the suckling infant. In this way, Moses landed up with his own mother in his formative

¹Phillips Graham. *Act of God*. (Sidgwick & Jackson 25 Eccleson Place, London SW1W9NF 1988) p 177.

² Pope John A. 1994. s v *Who's Who in the Bible*. (Readers Digest General Books).

years, graduating to an education in the royal palace. Through this education, which included the proclamation of the traditions of his own people, as well as knowledge of the Egyptian way of life, Moses became extraordinarily well equipped for his future tasks. In the New Testament, this is affirmed by the writer of Acts as he says: “ And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.” (Ac. 7: 22). We also have it from the writings of Josephus that not only was Moses well educated, he was also a military commander of the Egyptian army. One of his exploits being an expedition up the Nile and at the junction of the Blue and White Nile, captured the city of Meroe.³ The bible makes absolutely no mention of this exploit. Regarding the story of the baby in the basket of bulrushes (Ex.2:1-10) is also similar to the legend about Sargon of Akkad (ca 2300 B.C.). In an inscription , Sargon comments that his mother gave birth to him in secret, placed him in a basket of rushes, sealed with bitumen, and cast it into the river. Akki, the drawer of water rescued him and reared him as his son: later this son became Sargon the Great, king of Agade.⁴ The birth story of Cyrus the 11 of Persia, followed similar lines. It might mean, that for many years this was one way of saving the lives of infants who were destined for greater things, (30 such cases survive today): alternatively, biblical redactors might have used this story to merely embellish the narrative of Moses.

Even though Moses was given possibly the best education that Egyptians provided for their royalty, Moses never forgot the solidarity with his own people. This is particularly apparent when in his 40th year he was involved with an Egyptian overseer who was beating an Israelite worker. Enraged, Moses killed the man, resulting in his having to flee the country (Ex.2:14 -15). He fled from Pharaoh to the land of Midian in the Sinai desert east of the gulf of Suez. In Midian, Moses came into contact with a nomadic tribe of Midianites who treated him with friendliness. Many biblical scholars are of the opinion that it was from the Midianites (Kenite) clans that Moses learned of Yahweh, especially from the Midianite priest Jethro.⁵ Jethro, also called Reuel, became Mose’s father in law when he, Moses, married Zipporah, one of the seven daughters of Jethro. Another opinion is that Moses could have been influenced by the ideas of the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten. It was Akhenaten who disowned

³Petersen Mark E. *MOSES Man of Miracles*. (Desert Book Company Salt Lake City, Utah U.S.A. 1978) p 39.

⁴Andersen Bernhard W. *The Living World Of The Old Testament* 4th Edition (Longman Group U.K. LTD. Longman House, Burnt Mill Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE England. 1988) p 56.

⁵Bright John. *A History of Israel*. (SCM Press LTD.Bloomsbury street, London U.K.1972).p 124.

the many gods of his predecessors and instituted the worship of one god, in his case, the light of the sun. This was the nearest Akhenaten could come to comprehending and conveying the idea of an invisible, omnipresent, all providing god⁶. It was in Midian however, that Moses received his direct call from God. God manifested himself to Moses as a fire burning in a bush, but not consuming it. Intrigued by the phenomenon, he approached closer, only to be told to remove his sandals as the place where he stood was a holy place. Moses at this command became terrified, and hid his face when the Lord explained that he was “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” (Ex. 3:6). It was traditional belief that to look directly at divinity was fatal. His awe did not prevent Moses from stubbornly refusing to comply with God’s request to liberate the Israelites and lead them out of Egypt. After a further argument in which God promised Moses divine power as assistance, plus the help of Aaron his elder brother, who was still resident in Egypt. Aaron was to be the spokesman, as Moses proclaimed he was “slow of speech and of tongue” (Ex. 4:10). Agreement was reached and Moses began the journey westward to Egypt with his family, carrying the shepherd’s rod with which he would perform signs before Pharaoh.

Initially the outcome was nothing short of disastrous. However Moses had been informed by God that Pharaoh would not easily accede to their demands, because he had deliberately hardened the monarch’s heart. In bringing about a conflict between Moses and the Pharaoh, God was setting his strength against the strength of an entire pantheon of deities, and asserting that his power extended not only over all of them but over man as well. Hence the calamities that the Lord visited on Egypt, the ten plagues. The infestations of frogs, lice and locusts; the cattle epidemics, disease and infectious boils; the pollution of waters; hailstorms, were in many ways not uncommon in that part of the world but on this occasion they served a special purpose.⁷ The chaotic conditions caused by the nine plagues mentioned were still not enough to release the Hebrews. The tenth plague, which involved the death of all the Egyptian first born males, was the ultimate that finally released the Hebrew slaves. As a preamble to this plague, the Hebrews were instructed to save their children and flocks by sacrificing an unblemished young lamb in the evening and daubing its blood on the doorpost and lintels of each house

⁶Phillips op.cit. p 163.

⁷*Great people of Faith and Wisdom.* (Published by Readers Digest Services Pty LTD Waterloo street, Surrey Hills, NSW 2010.. 1984). p 16

so that the angel of death would not strike a house so marked. The compliance of this would be commemorated in the Passover of an annual feast in the new nation (Ex. 12:14). Terrified at the events that occurred Moses and Aaron were summoned before sunrise by pharaoh and urged to leave with the people and all their possessions. The departure was so hurried that the bread of the day was unable to be leavened and thus became a symbol in the annual seven day feast that begins with the Passover. The Hebrews did not leave empty handed; they demanded silver and gold from the Egyptians, in compensation for the oppression that they had suffered. Not all that left were Hebrews, there were many of mixed blood or of non Israelite origin. Moses had to contend with leading a rabble out of Egypt which began at Rameses and eventually ended in the land of Canaan (Ex. 12:37-43).

The route that Moses followed in leading the Israelites out into Sinai is a contentious one, and although the Bible does give the names of the many encampments, few have been identified. Led by the Lord with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night, the Exodus was still a journey of difficulties. The Israelites days were compounded of travail, danger and uncertainty and many were the occasions when they wanted to return to the fleshpots of Egypt (Ex. 16:3). Not only were there the daily travails, but there was always the possibility of attack by marauding groups and warlike clans. The Bible tells of an attack against them by the Amalekites, a group which claimed control of the Southern peninsula. Possibly here, Mose's early Egyptian military training came to the fore. The Amalakites were decisively beaten (Ex.17: 13). Once free of the Egyptians, Moses headed the Israelites towards Mount Sinai ,stopping on the way at a place called Rephidim. Here Moses was visited by his father in law, Jethro, who amongst other things gave Moses valuable advise in administrative and judicial matters(Ex.18: 13 - 26) This visit resulted in Moses appointing assistants to help control the day to day problems of the camp.

The next major stop after 3 months of travelling was at Mount Sinai, traditionally known in Arabic as Jebel Musa, however it must be stressed that the naming of this mountain can only be referred back to the 4th century A.D, some 1500 years after the event. It was at this stop that the all important steps were taken to seal the covenant and the giving of the law, that formed the religious and ethical foundation of the nation of Israel. It was also here that Moses revealed his great talent as a leader, acting against travesty of given commandments without mercy, yet still ready to intercede with God on his peoples behalf, irrespective of their shortcomings. This great narrative of the Israelites

before Mount Sinai is fully covered in the biblical book of Exodus, our only real source of the events that took place (Ex.19:3 - 24; 32:1 - 34: 35.).

It was nearly a year later, after the covenant had been made between the God and the people, an organisation established, and the first shrine (tabernacle)built, that the people were ready to move again. Moses now led the people on the last leg of their journey to the promised land. The journey to Kadesh- Barnea, close to the borders of Canaan, took almost two years in which the leadership of Moses was sorely tried by an incalcent people. It was to Mose's everlasting credit that with the Lord's help and guidance he was able to maintain his leadership. Four instances stand out in this journey, severe complaints and discontent (Nu. 11:1 - 33; 12:1 - 15); the appointment of seventy elders to act as Moses assistants in a higher capacity than those appointed before (Nu.11:4 - 30); Complaints regarding the lack of meat and the ensuing provision of quail (Nu.11:31 - 34); the fourth problem was one of insubordination by none other than Aaron and Miriam. It appears that Moses took a Cushite women as wife which led to jealousy. This incident led to God's direct intervention making known his appointment of Moses as being privileged to speak direct to him. (Nu.12: 1 - 15).

Although the Israelites arrived at Kadesh-Barnea a year after leaving Mount Sinai, a further period of 38 years would elapse before the actual entry to Canaan commenced. Biblically the reason for the prolonged delay is given as failure of the people to summon courage to proceed after hearing the report of the 12 spies that Moses had sent out to reconnoiter the land. In punishment, God at first was about to destroy the Israelites, but Moses and Aaron interceded on their behalf. Their punishment was that they would spend another 40 years in the desert before being allowed into Canaan (Nu.14: 11-20). Archaeology has put forward the argument that the Israelites were not yet ready to wage successful war against the well fortified cities and strongly armed people of Canaan. This assumes that their was an Exodus, which at this stage, archaeology cannot prove. The country consisted of many competing kingdoms and thus were in a state of readiness for any armed conflict. Moses followers were mostly unarmed, a band of brickmakers turned shepherds, hardly qualified them for military action.⁸ Thus it was a long interval before Moses appointed successor, Joshua, had the opportunity for leading the Israelites across the Jordan and into Canaan (Nu.27:15 - 23).

⁸*Great People Faith and Wisdom.* op. cit p 25

Moses had now completed the work that God had given him to do, and in his 120 year he now faced the inevitable end that faces all mankind. Yet of all the extraordinary events in Moses' biblical story, the hardships of the people, the many miracles by which the hand of God saved them, the revelation of God's name, the cloudy pillar with which God made his presence known, the many travesties suffered on the long journey, and the final arrival at the borders of Canaan, none seem so devastating than Moses death on Mount Nebo.⁹ Moses was gifted and trained as no other man, and possibly entrusted with a task greater than any person of any day, yet was only allowed to view the promised land before being led away by God to die somewhere on the mountain, his grave known only to God. Perhaps God had reasons other than Moses' indiscretion on striking a rock for a supply of water instead of speaking to it, is a reason for not allowing him to enter the promised land, but it does seem a grave injustice to a man who gave his all to God.

Note.

Although our Western culture is virtually based on the mosaic laws provided by Moses at Mount Sinai, archaeology has not been able to provide any evidence of his existence, or that of the Exodus. Bearing an Egyptian name, the possibility of his origins as described in the Bible are correct, however there is no literary Egyptian mention of him, nor for that matter the enslavement of the Israelites. Certain anomalous events such as the crossing of the Red Sea (possibly the Sea of Reeds), the escape route taken by the Israelites, the guiding cloud by day and the pillar of fire at night plus the other miracles which took place are possibly legend, embellished at a later stage by the redactors of biblical writings. Consideration must however be given to the fact that the writings of Moses (he was owing to his Egyptian tutelage, a very educated man) plus the experience of the desert sojourn of the Israelites, could not have been entirely the figment of some later writers imagination.

⁹Ibid p 36.

3.4 THE YAHWISTIC CULT.

The Origin

In considering the origin of the Yahweh cult, it is deemed necessary to pay attention to exactly where the name came from and what it implied. By cult we mean all those acts which give an outward expression of religious life in all aspects by which contact is sought and achieved with God. Mankind from his earliest beginnings is apparently spiritually aware of a superior being or deity at express times, hence his obeisance or following of a religious practice. The name Yahweh we are told in Genesis 4:26, reached back to a period prior to the flood, to the generation of Enosh, the grandson of Adam. later at the call of Moses by God he is told, "I am Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but my name Yahweh, I did not make myself known." We have it from the Bible that Abraham's first stop in the land of Canaan, was at Shechem, at the oak of Moreh, which in fact was a Canaanite sanctuary. God appeared to Abraham at this point, and promised the country to his descendants (Gen.12:7). Here Abraham built an altar, this then is possibly the beginning of the Yahwistic cult. Just how God contacted or spoke to Abraham is not known; it might have been through Abraham's subconsciousness when he was still in the city of Ur. This spiritual awareness was common to the Patriarchs, and in their case, the name of it was a deity which took a variety of forms. We have for instance El- Shaddai, (Ex. 6:3), El Elyon (Gen.14:18 - 24), El Olam (Gen.21:33) including Yahweh. Scholastic thought has it that if a God named Yahweh was known before the time of Moses, it was from the Midianites, but no evidence exists to show that the Midianites did indeed use the name or an explanation of it. Thus it does appear that the actual practice of the worship of Yahweh possibly began with the appearance of his name. Of the practice of the rites of worship very little is known, but it is possible that it could have been very similar to that of the surrounding nations. Archaeology has brought to light tablets describing rituals, i.e. the Ebla tablets, those from Ugarit at Ras Shamra and others. The actual choice of the place of worship was not left to man's discretion, the place had to be indicated by a manifestation of the god's presence or by his activity. This could happen in two ways: by an explicit manifestation, or a sign.¹ We have it from the Bible that Moses was the founder of the Israelite nation and also the Yahwistic cult. According to

¹De Vaux Roland. *Ancient Israel. Its Life and Institutions*. (Darton, Longman & Todd LTD. 89 Lilee Road London SW6 IUD 1984) p 276.

Buck, either Moses became an enthusiastic worshipper of Yahweh, following on from the monotheistic ideas of the Patriarchs, or from possible influence of an Egyptian pharaoh Ahkenaten who implemented the idea of one supreme deity. Whatever source Moses adopted, he was the mainspring which gave the Israelites the religion of Yahweh.²

It was at Mount Sinai after the escape from Egypt, that this form of religion was firmly entrenched, with the people accepting Yahweh as their God. It was here that the Israelites, encamped before the mountain, awaited the descent of Moses after his momentous discussions with God. The message that Moses brought back was that, "if the Israelites obeyed the voice of God and kept his covenant, they would be his people." Three days were set aside for the ritual cleansing and preparation for the presentation of the law (The ten commandments) and the covenant. In this covenant, Israel binds herself to absolute obedience to the stipulations set forth, ratified by the symbolic blood sacrifice, the implications of which were perfectly obvious. Regarding the understanding of the covenant, Gottwald's opinion is that a theory has arisen that argues for the origin of the covenant with Moses and for its political derivation and significance. This theory is that the covenant adopted by the Israelites to formalise its treaty with God, was that of the of the ancient Near Eastern international suzerain - vassal treaty. It concludes the agreement between an imperial overlord and a subject ruler. Although these texts (Suzerain - Vassal) do exist, i.e. From Hittite, Aramean and Neo - Assyrian writings, that they were actually used by Moses is a moot point.³

The practice of the Cult.

Cultic worship in all its various forms is basically a social event, as when ever an individual or community involved itself in worship, it followed laid down procedures at fixed places, and at certain times. In other words cult, also embraces rituals or rites. By rites or rituals we mean the outward form which the worship takes.

Israelite rituals may have been similar to those of her neighbours. Or in all likelihood stemmed from other religions, especially that of the Canaanites, and possibly to a lesser extent that of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The most important part of the ritual of worship was carried out at the altar, which had particular significance in that it was the sign of God's presence. De Vaux writes that in the

²Buck M. Harry. *People of the Lord*. (The Macmillan Company, New York. 1st Printing 1966) p 138.

³Gottwald Norman K. *The Hebrew Bible* (Fortress Press Philadelphia. U.S.A. 2nd Printing 1986).

earliest period of Israel's history, it commemorated a theophany (Gen. 12:7; 26:24 - 25), or was called by some name which reminded men of God.⁴ For instance we have it that Jacob called the altar he erected at Shechem, "El, God of Israel." Further the altar was to be consecrated yearly, on the day of Atonement (Ex. 30:10), on which day it was endowed with holiness. The ritual of using the altar was primarily that of sacrifice, which was any offering, animal or vegetable which was wholly or partially destroyed upon the altar as homage to God. The actual procedures of sacrifice are given to us in Leviticus chapters 1 - 7. As to the construction of altars and the various sacrifices offered on them, these are fully detailed in 4.21 of this dissertation. Most of the more established altars were constructed with horns on the corners and formed part of the sacrificial ritual when the priest daubed them with some of the blood of the sacrifice, thus consecrating the altar. It is not known for surety what purpose the horns served, but mention is made in the Bible that fugitives could seek sanctuary by grasping the horns of the altar, and thus avoid capture. From the various altars that archaeologists have discovered, the horns do not appear to be designed for the purpose of grasping.

Most of the shrines or places of worship according to Biblical readings were open air cult places, and in all likelihood had been taken over from their Canaanite predecessors. This has made the work of identifying cult sites by archaeologists difficult, as it is possible that various cultic sites or high places were used by both parties; as there were still Canaanites inhabiting the land even after the ingress of the Exodus Israelites. In 1981, Professor Amihai Mazar following up on the find of a bronze bull figurine, came to excavate a small hilltop shrine near Dothan. The site featured a large altar like stone installation, with a few shreds of Iron Age I pottery. Further such shrines have been discovered, primarily at Mount Ebal and at Dan. The mount Ebal shrine is of particular interest, as according to Adam Zertal, this installation may be the very altar that Joshua built and used for burnt offerings to Yahweh (Jos. 8:30 - 35).⁵ Archaeologists have also brought to light smaller Israelite domestic areas or household shrines. In the shrines have been discovered small horned altars, ceramic cultic stands, chalices and other vessels.⁶ It is apparent then that worship was carried out both in the open and at times indoors at home shrines. Another 10th century B.C.E. Israelite domestic shrine was

⁴De Vaux p 277.

⁵Zertal p 92-100.

⁶Dever W. G. *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research*. See Unisa reader Bar 211-9-1993 (University of South Africa) p 109 - 113.

found at Tell - el - Farah (N), Biblical Tirzah, by De Vaux in the 1950s.⁷ This shrine, of small size featured an oil pressing installation from which fine oil was pressed and processed for use in cultic practices as is suggested in several Biblical passages.

Worship by the patriarchs did not appear to have officiating priests, however from the time of Moses, worship and sacrifice necessitated the use of priests for certain sacrifices. Aaron, elder brother of Moses was the forebear and founder of the Israelite priesthood, his position being officially established when God ordered Moses to consecrate him and his two sons as priests (Ex. 28:1 - 29). The duties of the priests were that they were to be the guardians of both the regulations concerning the covenant and also the holy rites and practices involved in sacrifice and worship.

Prophets also played an important part in the practice of the cult in that they tried to preserve a living relationship with God, who was a living God and not a figure as the religions around them worshipped. These men did not receive their office by inheritance, but through a special call of God. Prophets were far fewer in number than priests, but also being particularly selected, were men of unusual gifts, vision, and dedication. Less concerned with the order of worship or types of sacrifice offered, they took their inspiration from the patriarchal traditions, using the exodus and wilderness experiences both as warnings and as examples. Baly in his writings says “ we need to remember that the prophets whose teachings we have today are only a handful out of all the many prophets who spoke in the name of Yahweh throughout the four centuries of the monarchy. We know the names of only a few, such as Elija, Uriah, and Isaiah, but there must have been quite a number, for prophets were an important part of Israel’s society”.⁸ Over the many centuries of the practice of the cult, changes were introduced to meet the continually changing patterns of lifestyle, so that the post-exilic worship that was carried out with the centralised temple at Jerusalem (really initiated by David) bore only the original core of the mosaic faith.

Kingship also played an important role in the Israelite cult as it did with her neighbours. Like priests, kings also claimed to be the direct intermediaries between gods and community. The book of Kings makes it clear that the king really was the effective head of state, and this control extended to the

⁷As per footnote 6. Dever W. G. *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research* refers to De Vaux’s findings p 136, of Unisa Reader for BAR 211-9, 1993.

⁸Baly Denis. *God and History in the Old Testament*. (Harper & Row, Publishers. London and New York. 1976) p 57 - 63.

area of religious practice: he could, and did at times, take on the duties of the priest and officiated at sacrifices. Further, the building of the temple was an initiative taken initially by David, but was actually the work of his son Solomon. Various kings carried out religious reforms, whether in a manner condemned by the author of the book of Kings (e.g. Ahaz, 2 Kgs. 16ff) or approved by him (e.g. Josiah, 2 Kgs. 22 : 3ff), however most information given regarding the kings role in the cult is given according to Coggin, in the Psalms, e.g. Psalm 2:7 describes the king as God's son , Psalm 110: 4, claims priestly rights on behalf of the king, Psalm 89: 3f., 19 - 37, pictures the king as one who makes his covenant, to be mediated through divine favour to the people at large⁹. It is difficult to know if in all cases, where the king's role is lauded, as given in the psalms, was generally accepted by the people at large. There is no doubt that the king was head of state in more than a formal sense and that his calling as son of the deity was a natural phenomena of that era.

In summing up, the pre Monarchic Israelite cult covered basically the following:- Worship was prior to the monarchy, a local affair, with open air sanctuaries or simple household shrines serving ordinary folk in everyday practice. There were few actual temples (the Bible indicates 12) and no centralised worship. In the absence of priests, any Israelite male could officiate in worship. Any one could build an Altar, plant a sacred tree, erect a stele or offer sacrifices, other than those which definitely required the services of a priest e.g. Sacrifices on the day of Atonement.

Traditional view has it that in Canaan, the ways of the various indigenous people influenced Israel, especially in the religious field. Entering the land as nomads or ex slaves, they had to adapt to the nature of the land by becoming farmers, builders and artisans, learning from the beginning all the necessities required in a land of advanced culture. Inevitably they absorbed some of the features of the religions paramount in the country, especially that of the original inhabitants who had a lot of similarity in their worship and sacrifice. However the particular character of those Israelites who underwent the unique desert sojourn obtained a direct experience of Yahweh which prevented them from becoming Canaanites or other pagan peoples. The above view has now been superceded by the reasoning of Dever, and recent archaeological findings. These reasonings and findings are discussed in the sub section which follows.

⁹Coggins Richard. *Introducing the Old Testament*. (Gen Ed. P.R.Ackroyd and G.N Stanton. Oxford University Press, Walton Street Oxford Ox2 6DP. 1990) p 137.

The Yahweh Cult and its mixture.

Up and until the Exodus, Israelites entered and settled in Palestine, and the tenants of the Yahweh cult as introduced by Moses was practiced without any great variations. However, the Israelites were now learning a new lifestyle, which to a large extent embraced agriculture. Their nomadic wanderings were a thing of the past, they were now farmers and their lives depended on and was intimately connected with the soil. Dever's contention at this point is that not all of the original Israelites emigrated to Egypt, only the "The House of Joseph". A large body of peoples stemming from the patriarchs were in the land and over the years formed part of the indigenous population. The possibility exists that these original Israelites formed the basic core of the later Canaanites, and could be said to be the blood brothers of the returning Exodus Israelites. That these Canaanites had been farmers for centuries, had developed their own lifestyle, and to them the mysteries of growth and fertility of the soil were dependent, upon the favour of their gods. Their belief was that the harvest would not be plentiful if the fertility powers of the gods were ignored, or not worshipped with laid down rites and sacrifices. Thus a clash occurred with the proponents of the Yawhistic cult and that of Baal worship.

To the band of Israelites who had the desert experience and had infiltrated the land were now mingling with the Canaanites, the cultic acts of the latter were anathema to the judges, prophets and those loyal to Yahweh. Obviously there were Israelites who broke away and revered Canaanite gods. The archaeological excavations and findings at Kuntillet Ajrud prove this. Although the Bible hints at, but downplays, syncretism. This syncretistic cult can be be illustrated directly by archaeological finds that antedate most of the Biblical texts, which in turn constitute primary evidence of the cult.¹⁰

It was therefore only a matter of time before the Israelites began to turn to the gods of the land. They did not intend to abandon Yahweh, but tried to reach a compromise by serving the God of their fathers and Baal, the god of the Canaanites. It could also be possible that many of the Baal worshippers turned to Yahwism in view of the prophets ministrations and entreaties. The observation in Judges 17:6, 21: 25, "that in those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes.", could very well apply to the religious aspect a well. We also have it from another

¹⁰Dever op cit p 111

verse, “the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and served the Baals; and they forsook Yahweh, the God of their fathers , who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them”. (Jud. 2:11 - 12).

With the introduction of the Monarchy with its single pattern of worship carried out initially only in Jerusalem and the temple, popular expressions of religion or worship by the masses, was carried out in the houses and the many small cities with their bamah’s scattered throughout Israel. These expressions as such, were influenced by their close living neighbours, and because of the agricultural content, involved seasonal devotions and celebrations as well. The Israelites took over some of these seasonal festivities, adopting them for the timing of their pilgrimage festivals at Shiloh, Gilgal, Dan, Jerusalem, and other sanctuaries in the land. (Ex. 34:22 - 23). Former Canaanite sanctuaries, at Bethel, Shechem, and possibly Gilgal were rededicated to Yahweh. Included in the religious practices, as discovered by archaeology, was the worship of sacred images known as teraphim which were considered as household gods. With these findings it is apparent that worshipping of deities other than Yahweh had been practised for a very long time. It is possibly unfair to say that this was a direct influence of the Canaanites, as we have mention of these types of gods from Jacob’s time (Gen31:32 - 33). Further mention is made of them in Saul’s household (1 S. 19:13). Volkmar Fritz also mentions that finds of clay figurines are numerous, and have definite cultic purpose, serving as some kind of idol. Most of them come from houses, and therefore point to a possible domestic cult.¹¹

What may be considered as further evidence of syncretism was that parents were naming their children after Baal, possibly not with the thought of abandoning Yahweh, but never the less absorbing Canaanite culture. What also may be beyond our understanding in this period of time , is the fact that one of Israel’s Judges, Gideon, was named Jerub Baal, which we are told means “let Baal contend”, or possibly “may Baal multiply”. Further both Saul and David , both strong defenders of the Yahweh cult gave Baal names to their children. Mixing of the cult is further evidenced by the cries of Hosea, who proclaimed that the Israelites were actually addressing Yahweh as Baal, and worshipped Yahweh according to the rituals of Baal in order to obtain the blessing of fertility on the land (Ho.2)¹².

¹¹Fritz Volkmar. *Introduction to Biblical archaeology*. (JSOT Press, Sheffield England.1994) p 165.

¹²Andersen W.Bernard. *The World of the Old Testament*. (Longmont Singapore Publishers Pty LTD,

Solomon, although the builder of the temple in Jerusalem, added to the mixing of the cults by his construction of different temples for his many wives who were of foreign birth, and practiced beliefs other than that of Israel. This action promoted the worship of other gods by the populace as well. Solomon also stands guilty of building a “bama” (high place) at the gates to Jerusalem, as 1Kgs.11:7, mentions this as his work. This act also emphasises the strength of the Baal cult at this stage of the monarchy.

With division of the kingdom into two separate states, worship of Yahweh as a single pattern was weakened, with the result that popular religion again became the norm. Kings of the time were really only interested in the populations political loyalties because of the incessant warfare carried out amongst the various city states or kingdoms. The net result was that the populace followed that which influenced them most, and thus in Ahab’s and Jeroboam’s time, Baal worship which obviously never ceased, was again practiced.

“ High places”, the shrines which according to Biblical tenants, were the shrines of pagan worship, were now further instituted by Jeroboam and he established a new capital for the separate kingdom of Israel at Dan. Here he set up a rival sanctuary to that of Jerusalem with a golden calf as a symbol of Yahweh. There seems to be some controversy here. The calf, according to hypothesis of scholars, was only meant to portray the pedestal upon which Yahweh stood. Secondly his idea of a rival sanctuary was to not to divide worship of Yahweh, but to unify the people of the northern states. His move seems mainly to have been political. Archaeological excavations in the 1970’s by Avraham Biran at Tel Dan have brought to light what might be the cultic high place of Jeroboam’s.¹³ Other archaeological finds have been cultic sanctuaries (possibly Canaanite) in which numerous cultic artifacts such as moulds for the casting of Asherah or Astarte, mother goddess figurines and other cultic furnishings relating to mixed Israelite and Canaanite rituals. Further findings which clearly relates to the mixture of the cults, is the small Israelite sanctuary at Kuntillet Ajrud, excavated by Ze’ev Meshel (1976-1978). Painted on the walls were numerous Hebrew/Israelite inscriptions relating to both Yahweh and Baal. This syncretism in Israelite worship is further shown on storage jars which revealed the Egyptian Ithy Phallic dwarf god Bes. What is more astounding, is a Hebrew blessing on one of the

4th Edition.1988) p 190.

¹³Dever. op cit p 133 - 134.

jars reading, "I bless you by Yahweh our guardian and by his Asherah", in other words God's consort.¹⁴ The cult of Asherah or Astarte, penetrated ancient Israel, but fortunately not prominently. In the early days of Judges she is worshipped with Baal (Jud.10: 6, 1S. 7:3 - 4), later her cult was introduced into Jerusalem in the time of Solomon under the influence of one of his foreign wives (1Kgs.11:5, 33). It is almost unbelievable that this cult survived in Jerusalem for some 350 years, before being purged in Josiah's religious reform (2 Kgs.23:13.)¹⁵ The book of Chronicles records that he rejected the gods of his Assyrian overlords, and set in motion a series of reforms that were to rid the nation of Judah, the mixed format of popular religion with its Canaanite practices (2 Chron. 34:3 - 7). He issued instructions for the dismantling of all idols, destruction of all sacred vessels and implements used in worship , as well as the destruction of Asherahs and similar phallic symbols. These were burnt and the ashes scattered over potters fields. Cult prostitution was banished and the priests involved in this type of worship removed. Evidence of Josiah's reforms and his destruction of pagan centers have been highlighted by archaeologists discovery whereby altars and such implementa were used as building material in construction projects. It is also possible why archaeologists have discovered so few of actual cultic buildings and artifacts, they were mostly all destroyed in the reforms of the religious leaders of Israel.

Although it is known that the Canaanites religious practices did on occasions involve human sacrifice, its influence might have spread to Israel, for there was a shrine in the valley of Hinnom which was said to be used for child sacrifice to the god Molech. It is also possible that human sacrifice was known and possibly practiced in the time of the patriarchs. Abraham's action could be said to belie the fact that sacrifice of humans was not necessarily out of the question. That the Israelites were guilty of this practice later is born out of the reference given us in Jeremiah 32:35. We are also told that Solomon also built a high place for the god Molech (1Kgs. 11:7). Just what this sacrificial site was for is unknown.

Some of the nations surrounding Israel followed religious practices of the Canaanites, but with differing ideas and names of their gods, the influence of their practices did not penetrate too deeply into

¹⁴Refer to the Note at the end of the conclusion.

¹⁵Wigoder Geoffrey. *Illustrated Dictionary and Concordance of the Bible* (The Jerusalem Publishing House LTD.1966).

that of the Israelites, except where they concurred with that of the Canaanites e.g. sacrifices. Regarding religious cults and practices of the Egyptians, possibly some of these practices might have influenced the Israelites indirectly through Moses. This is of course adopting the thought that the advent of the Exodus did take place because nowhere in the records of the Egyptians is there any record of the fact that the Israelites were slave people involved in building construction of their cities. Secondly archaeology has found nothing of the wilderness adventure of the Israelites. However this is a very controversial subject, and if Moses was brought up and educated in Egypt, his leadership skills, religious concepts and basic ideas of moral law, influenced and guided the Israelites, inter alia the "Egyptian Influence." Prior to the Exodus, when the Israelites were sojourners in Egypt, the ideas of prayers and hymns which the Egyptians carried out daily could have brushed off on them as well, to become later the basis of the psalms. Several of the Egyptian wisdom books encourage their readers to live according to a moral and ethical code of piety, which bears to some degree on that of the Israelite wisdom books. It is known that the Egyptians had a strong belief in an after life, their tombs all contained evidence of food and equipment for the dead to use in the hereafter.

Israelite practice of the burial of their dead never approached that of the Egyptians in all aspects, but leaving of food and utensils for use in a possible after life was common practice in nearly all races, as archaeological findings have proved.

Conclusion.

Recent archaeological findings have identified various deities and rituals as practiced in Israel from the time of the conquest of the land of Canaan to the return of the exiles from Babylon. These findings now confirm what the Bible has only hinted at, that deities other than Yahweh, especially the Canaan fertility gods, were revered in ancient Israel. Chief among them were the mother goddess "Asherah" and the "Storm God" Baal, who was regarded as her consort. These gods were potent rivals of Yahweh himself. For the laity, the popular cult of the Canaanites with its promise of integration with the life forces of nature, was a very attractive alternative to the austere and ethical demands of Yahwism. It has long been suspected that the early cult was monolatrous and not monotheistic. Archaeological finds that antedate most of the Biblical texts, now prove conclusively that the syncretistic approach that Israel used, was to reach a compromise and definitely mixed the religion of Yahweh with that of the Canaanites where it was suitable, and also borrowed from the other

surrounding nations as well. Consideration should also be given to the fact that syncretism was not only one sided according to the findings of archaeology, The Canaanites, possibly influenced by the exhortations of the prophets, could have had great difficulty in accepting the worship of Yahweh; in spite of the influence and stories of those Israelites who had come into contact with Yaweh in their desert wanderings.

Notes.

The small Israelite sanctuary at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, excavated by Ze'ev Meshel (1976 - 1978) yielded a number of large pithoi which relate to Asherah as the consort of Yahweh, of these findings Dever writes:-

“ the silence” regarding Asherah as the consort of Yahweh, successor to the Canaanite El, may now be understood as the result of the near total suppression of the cult by the 8th to 6th century reformers. As a result, reference to “Asherah”, whilst not actually expunged from the consonantal text of the Old Testament, were misunderstood by later editors or reinterpreted to suggest merely the shadowy image of the goddess. In this “innocent deception” they were followed by the translators of the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Targumin, and the King James and most other versions, including the Revised Standard. Indeed, by the time of the mishna, the original significance of the name Asherah had probably been forgotten, not to be recovered until the goddess emerged again in the texts recovered from Ugarit. Yet the very fact of the necessity for reform in ancient Israel reminds us that the worship of Asherah, the Mother Goddess, sometimes personified as the consort of Yahweh, was popular until the end of the Monarchy. The archaeological record has preserved for us an alternate version of events as portrayed in the received text - parallel, but not necessarily, contradictory. Indeed Ajrud and El Qom enhance our appreciation of the prophetic message, for they provide for the first time a milieu in which we may understand just how intergrated the worship of the Canaanite fertility goddess actually was”.¹⁶ Dr Frederick Ide, in his book “Yahweh’s Wife”, concurs with similar thought patterns to that exercised by Dever.¹⁷

¹⁶Dever. p 112 - 113. 9 (Reader for Bar 211-9 1993 Unisa).

¹⁷Ide Arthur Frederick. *Yahweh's Wife*. (Monument Press, Las Colinas, Texas U.S.A.1991)

CHAPTER FOUR. ISRAELITE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

4.1 Sacrifices & Ritual

As a definition “Sacrifice” is the act of worship expressing submission to the deity and seeking his/her express favour. In the biblical context the sacrificer was also atoning for his sins. Altars were the place of sacrifice, and sacrifice was the principle act in Israel’s cult. Acts of sacrifice covered the offering of animals, vegetable or liquid, i.e. wine, which was wholly or partially destroyed upon an altar.¹ It is known that the nations around Israel also practiced sacrifice in a similar way, specifically the Canaanites, but they included in their ritual, human sacrifice. The story given in the book of Genesis, about God’s instruction to Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac and his obedience, does suggest that human sacrifice could also on occasions have been practiced by the Israelites. There is a school of thought however, that the instructions given to Abraham was to show God’s displeasure at human sacrifice, and that a substitute such as an animal to be used thereafter.²

Sacrifice is first mentioned in the Bible with the story of Cain and Abel. Abel being the first to offer an animal in sacrifice (Ge. 4:4). After the subsidence of the flood we have it that Noah offered his thanks to God for deliverance from the waters by means of a sacrifice (Ge. 5:29). Sacrifice was also an accepted form of worship by the patriarchs and during this (ca 1800 B.C.) time all the surrounding nations practiced sacrifice in the worship of their chosen deities. There is a school of thought that the custom of burning the whole or part of the victim upon an altar originated in Canaan long before the Israelites came into Palestine. There is no certain proof that the Israelites practiced the custom when they were semi nomads. Possibly the oldest type of sacrifice that survived was the offering of the paschal lamb. Sacrifices of the Israelites appear to have been closely linked with their sojourn in the desert, however it appears that they followed the Arabian method of sacrificing. No part of the victim was burnt, though the blood played an important part. The flesh of the victim was eaten.

¹De Vaux Roland. *Ancient Israel its Life and Institutions*. (Darton, Longman & Todd London sw6 iud 1984) p 415.

²Wigoder Geoffrey *Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible*. (The Jerusalem Publishing House LTD 1986).

During settlement in Canaan, the Israelites began adopting certain Canaanite rituals with regard to sacrifices. They combined their sacrifice with the “Olah and Zebah” sacrifices in which the victim was burnt upon the altar, combined with the ancient rites about the use of blood.

As regards the rituals of sacrifices the Israelite law, covered mainly in the book of Leviticus, stipulates different types of sacrificial offerings. These are listed as follows:-

Dedicatory Sacrifices/Offerings.

- 1) The Burnt or Holocaust Offering.
- 2) The Meal Offering.
- 3) The Peace Offering.

Expiatory Sacrifices/Offerings.

- 1) The Sin Offering.
- 2) The Trespass Offering.

Complementary Sacrifices/Offerings.

- 1) The problem of Disease.
- 2) The Problem of Defilement.

The Burnt or Holocaust offering (Le.1:5-17; 6:8-13.) could be regarded as the main sacrifice offered for the people collectively and was made by individuals themselves as the necessity arose. It symbolised complete consecration of life to God, being consumed entirely on the altar. For the people collectively, a lamb was offered /sacrificed every morning and evening, two lambs on the Sabbaths, and still more on feast days (Ex.29:38-46; Num. 28:3-29; 39). For individual sacrifice lamb, goat, bullock, or in the case of poverty, birds were used and were brought as an act of consecration to God.³

The ritual followed was that the sacrificer slit the throat of the victim away from the altar, skinning, dissecting and washing the animal before presenting it to the priest for placement and burning on the altar. Everything, including the head, intestines, hooves and feet were burnt. The blood of the victim was poured around the altar. Reasoning in the pouring of the blood around the altar was because the Hebrews believed blood was life: the life of all flesh is in its blood, and therefore, the

³ Wood Leon. *A Survey Of Israel's History*. (Zondervan Publishing House Grand Rapids Michigan U.S.A. 1970.) p 198.

blood belonged to God alone. (Le.. 17:14; cf. Ge. 9:4). The altar was also the symbolic object of God's presence.

Sacrifices involving birds which were normally offered by the poor who could not afford to present animals for sacrifice, followed a different procedure. The man bringing the offering did not lay hands on it, nor did he cut its throat. Everything involved in this type of sacrifice was done by the priest (Le. 1:14).

The Meal Offering/Sacrifice as given in Leviticus 2:1-16; 6:14-23. is a sacrifice that symbolised full dedication of one's material possessions to God. It was a unique sacrifice in that it did not involve the shedding of blood. It consisted of grain (in different forms) oil, frankincense, and salt. This offering as per the burnt offering, was burnt upon the altar. If the presentation was by an individual, only a portion of the grain was destroyed, the rest was retained by the priest for Tabernacle use. It was custom to provide a drink offering of wine with the meal offering.

The Peace Offering/Sacrifice comprised three distinct types which were:-

- 1) A thank offering/sacrifice for unusual blessings.
- 2) A votive offering/sacrifice in payment of a vow.
- 3) A freewill offering to express love of God.

The readings given in the Book of Leviticus concerning peace offerings/sacrifices are, Le.3:1-17; 7:11-34; 19;5-8; 22:21-25. A feature of this type of sacrifice was that a sacrificial meal was taken in which portions of the sacrificed animal was eaten in symbolism of fellowship between God and the person. Individual peace offerings or sacrifices were given voluntarily, and a person might bring any of several different types of animals.⁴

The Expiatory Sacrifices/Offerings.

The sin offering/ sacrifice was basically to atone for the sins of ignorance, committed without deliberation. The person or persons guilty of deliberate sin, called presumptuous sin or sin with a high hand, was to be disowned by his people. (Nu..15:30-31.) On feast days, collective sin offering were to be presented and were dealt with by the priest's in attendance. In the case of individuals, they were expected to bring their sin offerings at any time appropriate. The victim of

⁴ Ibid. p 199.

sacrifice depended upon the economic situation, the position of the individual, and the severity of his sin. The higher the rank of the person, the more appropriate the sacrifice had to be. In the case of a priest, nothing less than a bullock was acceptable. The poor could offer a tenth of an ephah of flour instead of an animal.

The ritual for sin offerings/sacrifices was different from that used in other sacrifices by two things. These were the ways the blood was used and secondly the way in which the victims flesh was disposed of. The blood played a more important part than other sacrifices in that when the sacrifice was offered for the high priest or of the people as a whole, three successive rites were carried out. These were a) the collection of the blood by the priest, sprinkling of the blood on the veil in the Holy of Holies by him. b) the rubbing of the horns of the incense altar with blood. c) the pouring of the remainder of the blood at the foot of the altar of holocausts. For the head of the community or individuals, the blood was put on the horns of the altar of holocausts, and the rest poured out at the base of the altar. Nothing was taken into the tabernacle. Meat of this sacrifice was not allowed to be used by the individual who admitted his guilt, everything reverted to the priests. If the sinner was a priest or the community, no part was allowed to be retained, and the remains were carried out to the ash heap.⁵ The biblical texts referring to sin offerings/sacrifices are LV.. 4:1-35; 6: 24-30.

The Trespass offering was for a similar purpose as the sin offering, atoning for particular sins, whereas the sin offering/sacrifice referred to the individual himself as the sinner. Certain sins were specified as requiring trespass offering and these are detailed in the following texts of Leviticus and Numbers. Le. 5:15,17; 6:1cf;14:12; 19:20-22; Nu. 6:12.

The Complementary offerings/sacrifice.

There were two in number of this type of sacrifice, the offering which covered the problem of disease (mainly Leprosy) and that of defilement, through which ceremonial uncleanness was removed. This sacrifice could also be used for the consecration of priests, or when women were purified. The sacrifices covering these situations is covered in the following biblical texts Ex. 29:15; Le. 9:12 (for the consecration of priests), when women were purified Le. 12:6-8.,and for defilement Le.15:14 -15,30 .⁶

⁵De Vaux. op. cit. p 419.

⁶Wood. op. cit. p 198.

Archaeology has discovered many different altars in Palestine, some probably having been used by both Canaanites as well as Israelites. Discoveries at the "Bull Site", Arad, Shechem, Megiddo and other sites have revealed rock, platform, pillar, incense, and singular stone altars which all point to the significance the Israelites and other surrounding nations paid to the cult of sacrifice. As for examples of this we have the sacrifices of Balaam, the prophets of Baal and Naaman. In addition we have biblical texts which state that kings performed important cultic rites; Saul at Gilgal (1S. 13:9f). Solomon at Gibeon (1K. 3:4, 8:5). David also sacrificed and performed a cultic dance before the ark on its way to Jerusalem, wearing a priestly vestment (2 S 16:14). The request of Naaman needs special mention as he requested from Elisha two mule loads of earth to build an altar; possible proof that earth altars were used as well as rock altars and others.

Accompanying the rituals of sacrifice there were other rituals which formed part of the worshipping act. These were the ritual of giving oracles and instructions in the "Law", the ritual of purification, both for the priests and members of the congregation, the ritual of prayers, the ritual of liturgy, and the ritual of circumcision.

The ritual of giving oracles involved the priests in using certain items of divination, which were the ephod, Urim and the Thummim. Just exactly what these objects were and how they functioned is not known. What is known, is that they were supposed to give answers or guidance to questions posed by individuals requiring answers to perplexing problems. This mantic disappeared after the destruction of Solomon's temple.

Instructions in the Law to the lay people was another ritual the priests had to carry out prior to sacrifices commencing (De. 17:11; 33:10; Je. 18:18; Mal.2:6-7). According to the biblical text in Deuteronomy 33: 8-10, the priest of Levi, "were to teach Jacob thy ordinances and Israel thy Laws" plus the duties of burning incense and whole burnt offering upon the altar.

As a nation to whom religion was a national activity, prayer was a fundamental expression of religious sentiment in turning the mind and heart to God. Ritual of prayer at the sacrifice was the establishment of immediate personal contact between a human being and its deity. The Bible gives certain ritual prayers or formulae which were practiced at sacrifices, some of these being for blessing (Nu.6:22-27), for cursing (De. 27:14-26), The ritual of "bitter water" (for jealousy) (Nu.5: 21-22.), and a rather strange one covering the non apprehension of a murderer. (De.21.:7-8.). Possibly one of the

most important rituals to be carried out, was the sacrifice of first fruits, which was in reality, thanks offering for bringing the Israelites out of Egypt to Canaan. The rituals laid down for prayers does not contain any prescription how the prayer formulae were to be used during the offering of sacrifices, such formulae certainly existed and were in all events commonly used. They are found in every religious ritual in the world. Regarding the where and how prayer was to be carried out, we do have it that the most common posture was standing erect. Solomon however, knelt in prayer (2 Chr.6:13.) We also have it that the prayer ritual could be carried out by kneeling with one's arms being thrown open towards heaven (1K. 8:54; Is. 45:23). As regards the place where prayer should be carried out, the Bible gives that the Temple precincts are the most suitable (Ps. 28:2;138:2.).

The ritual of liturgy also played an important part in the activities of the Israelites. We are told that they (the Israelites) were a particular musical people, the evidence coming not only from the Bible e.g. (Am.5:23, and various psalms, some with headings referring to Choir masters). but also from inscriptions on Assyrian monuments⁷. It is believed that no ceremonial meal could be thought of without either vocal or instrumental music. In addition, in all ancient reports, men and women singers are named together, therefore it does appear most probable that these singers took part in ritual services in ancient Israel. Although it is an assumption, the development of liturgical chants possibly kept pace with that of the ritual and increasingly specialised priesthood.

Musical instruments used in the temple were of three kinds; cymbals, harps and lutes. The Levites were the main players under David's singing master Asaph, who also played or clashed the cymbals (1 Chr.16:5). Trumpet blowing was the ritual of the priests, and were to serve the people as "a memorial before God." (Nu. 10:9-10). they also were used to provide signals for the various rite being carried out at the services. In 2 Chronicles 29:26-30, which covers the first year of king Hezekiah's reign, the ritual of the sacrifice of burnt offering with the liturgy and trumpeting of the priests is given in very moving detail.

The purification rituals of the Israelite played a very important role in their lives. Their main contention was that they belonged to an all pure god, and they had to in all circumstances reflect this holiness. Therefore, irrespective of who he was, king, priest or layman, if he had in any way

⁷ Albright W. F. *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Oxford University Press. 3rd Edition 1953.) p 60.

transgressed the law, he had to purify himself before approaching his god. The priest particularly, were subjected to strict laws of ritual purity. In the event of any defilement they were barred immediately from the Temple service. Ritual cleansing had then to take place before he was allowed to resume his duties. Israel, as the covenant people of God is called a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:5-6).

Circumcision was a sacred ritual which was practiced on all male Israelites 8 days after birth. The Bible presents circumcision as having originated with Abraham and was commanded by God (Ge.17.) ; it was to be the sign of the covenant between God and the people of the Israelites. Not to be circumcised was to be cut from the people. This rite of circumcision was to be applied to any who became or joined the Israelites. The practice did fall away in the desert years, but was re-introduced by Joshua en masse, following the crossing of the Jordan in the conquest of Canaan. Moses almost met death from God, when he failed to circumcise his son, being rescued by his wife Zipporah, who performed the rite herself with a flint knife/stone (Ex 4: 24-26).

Possibly the greatest and most important ritual in the Israelite religious calendar was the ritual of practicing the “Day of Atonement”. This was a solemn festival involving an elaborate ceremony, the ritual which was carried once per year of the High Priest entering the Holy of Holies. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled and incense offered. It was the day of purgation for the Temple and the people, The sacrifices on this day consisted only of “sin” offerings (Ex 30: 10; Nu. 29:11) and the three sacrificial animals offered are on behalf of the priests and the people (Le. 16:5,15, 16:6, 11). The biblical text expressly declares that the slain bull and the goat purge the shrine of the (physical) pollution of the Israelites and their brazen sins. In this particular ritual, not only were the sins of the people purged but also that of the nation.

There were other purification rituals over and above those mentioned, covering every possible defilement to such a degree that fear of impurity became an obsession with them. The writers of the Priest’s Code in an attempt to prevent defilement, wrote all the correct remedies. In so doing, they multiplied the instances of impurity to such an extent that the law became too complicated to be practical. Rituals which at first had served to signify the Holiness of God and His people, became a very narrow system of formal observance.

Though sacrifice was of central importance in the Israelite religion, it is to be noted that there was condemnation of it in the Old Testament. This condemnation comes from the prophets, Isaiah, Jerimiah, Hosea, and Amos (Is 1:11-17, Jr :21-22, Hos. 6. Am 5:21-27). These prophets all operated after the fall of the monarchy, possibly pointing to the time when sacrifice would be no more. However, one of the earliest prophets, Samuel, expressed the attitude of the prophets clearly with the following words, "Does the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For it is better to obey than offer the fat of rams" (1S. 15:22).



**VIEW OF
SACRIFICIAL ALTAR
(ARAD)**

4.2 Altars.

An altar may be described as a surface or structure upon which a religious sacrifice is offered. The Hebrew word for an altar is *mizbeah*, from a verbal root meaning “to slaughter”, and therefore “to slaughter with a view to sacrifice”.¹ The altar, for the Hebrews, was used as an instrument of mediation. The offerings of men were to be placed upon it and burnt: By this ceremony, the offerings were taken out of man’s domain and given to God, and God replied by bestowing blessings (Ex.20:24.) Thus the covenant itself, between God and His people was maintained in force or re-established upon the altar of sacrifice.

Thus for the Israelites the altar was the sign of God’s presence and in the earliest period of Israel’s history it commemorated a theophany (Ge. 12:7;26: 24-25.) or was called by some name which reminded men of God. For instance Jacob called the altar he erected at Shechem “El, God of Israel”. Moses’ called the altar he erected after the defeat of the Amalekites “Yahweh - Nissi”. Jacob is also tasked with having constructed an altar of loose stones on Mount Gilead, and he called this altar “gal - id”, meaning a heap of witness (Ge. 31:46 - 54). The Bible also tells that altars were constructed by most of the leaders of Israel in various centers, i.e. Saul, Jacob, Gideon, David and Solomon and others. From the book of Exodus, chapter 20, verses 24 to 26, strict instructions are given to the Israelites just how altars of sacrifice are to be structured. The above verses give instructions as to two different type of altars that may be used. The first is an altar constructed purely from earth, and the other from unhewn stones. Regarding the unhewn stones these are to be stones which are not to be dressed or shaped in any manner whatsoever with metal tools. The use of metal tools on the stonework profanes it. However, not all the altars mentioned in the Old Testament conform to the instructions given in Verses 24/26. In Exodus chapter 27, 1ff. instructions of an entirely different type of altar are given. These instructions refer to the construction of an altar for burnt offerings that was to stand in front of the tabernacle. This altar was to be constructed of wood covered with bronze. H.M. Weiner

¹De Vaux Roland. *Ancient Israel Its Life and Institutions* (Darton, Longman & Todd. LTD London) p 406.

gives the name of "cairn altars" to those described in Ex. 20 and to the altar described in Ex.27 as the 'tabernacle altar'.² Further he relates the comparisons of the altars as follows:-

1. From the nature of the materials cairn altars could have no fixed pattern or measurements: the tabernacle altar had both.

2. Cairn altars could have no horns since none could be made without working the materials: the tabernacle altar had horns.

3. Cairn altars had no gratings or ledge: both distinguish the tabernacle altar.

4. Cairn altars could be served by laymen who wore no breeches: the cults of the tabernacle altar was under the supervision of dressed priests.

Although the altar construction given in Ex.20 could be said to cover all types of stone altars, singular rocks or stones have also been used as altars. In Jg. 6:19-23, we have the story of Gideon and his sacrifice for the visiting angel. This was on a singular rock. Further in Jg 13:19-20, Manoah, the father of Samson, offered up a goat as a burnt offering to Yahweh on a rock which in subsequent verses was named an altar. With the return of the Ark by the Philistines, the wooden chariot/wagon that was used for transporting the Ark, together with the cows that were drawing it were placed upon a large rock and burnt as a whole burnt offering (1Sam 6:14). Thus it is apparent that a large stone or rock could be used to serve as an altar. Archaeological findings relating to singular rocks as altars are at hand. However those singular rock altars which have distinct steps are considered to be Canaanite.

Two examples of such altars which could be either Israelite or Canaanite are, firstly, the large piece of cubic shaped rock found near Sar'a . It is rough shaped, about one and a half meters high with steps near the top. It has hollowed sections on the top in various places. It is called the altar of Manoah, although no proof exists as to why it should be called Manoah's altar. Secondly excavations at Hazor have unearthed a very large rectangular block of stone, weighing about five tons. This stone has a basin hollowed out on the one surface. The site in which it was found was a Canaanite temple of the 13th century B.C.³ At the "Bull Site", i.e. a site on a ridge in northern Samaria, at which a bronze bull was

² Wiener H.M. *The Altars of the Old Testament*.(Leipzig/Hinrichssche Buchandlung 1927) p 2.

³Ibid p 407.

found, a large rock in the vicinity has also been proclaimed a *massebah* or altar. The findings have been named as an Israelite cult site, but this is open to conjecture. It could easily have been Canaanite.⁴

Altars also served to receive offerings such as grain, wine and incense; in addition they could serve for non sacrificial functions , such as a place of testimony and of asylum. Horned altars are mentioned in several Biblical texts and numerous finds of small horned altars were common at Israelite site's from the tenth to the seventh century. These small altars were thought to be domestic altars used in private worship.⁵ In 1Kings 1:50 we are told that Adonyah took sanctuary by grasping the horns of the altar. This asylum or sanctuary at the altar is part of the early legislation of Israel, details of which are given in Ex. 21:14. The altar which Adonyah sought sanctuary was possibly similar to the one discovered at Beersheba, which measures some six feet square.⁶

Altars discovered in Petra have steps which do not lead up the whole way, confirming the fact that animals were not slaughtered on the altar. (Le. 1). Other features of horned altars are that they are fairly high. The possible reason for this is that if people were to participate in the ceremony by viewing the events at the altar, it had to be visible to all. Thus the most easily achieved method would be to raise the height of the altar or mount it on a platform.⁷

Platforms of stones which are construed to be a form of altar have been found at different excavated sites, such as Megiddo, Hazor, Mount Ebal and Arad. At Mount Ebal , just northwest of the Shechem pass on the highest peak in northern Samaria, is the huge open air altar excavated by Adam Zertal, of the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University (1982-1984). With the findings of the altar, were small stone installations with quantities of burnt animal bones, proving beyond doubt that the installation was an altar.⁸ Zertal is of the opinion that this altar could be the very one built by Joshua as described in Joshua 8:30 - 35. In other pre- Israelite sanctuaries, altars have been discovered standing against the back wall, built of large stones and earthen mortar, or built of plain bricks; De

⁴Mazar Amihai. "**Bronze Bull Found in Israelite HIGH PLACE from the Time of the Judges**" Biblical Archaeology Review_Vol. 1X No 5 Sept/Oct. 1983.

⁵Dever G.W. *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research*. See Unisa reader Bar 211-9-1993 (University of South Africa) p119-166.

⁶Ibid p 115.

⁷Wiener. op. cit. p13.

⁸Zertal Adam. *Has Joshua's Altar Been Found on Mt Ebal* .Biblical Archaeological Review.11. no.1:38.January/February 1985.

vaux mentions Megiddo⁹ At Arad, an important city in antiquity, the Israelite fortress- sanctuary built there in Solomon's time, was excavated in 1967. In the sanctuary was discovered both incense altars and a stone altar in the courtyard. The archaeological findings of this site are presented in Chapter Two, 2.3 of this dissertation.

The Bible introduces us to some altars which were not intended for sacrificial use. According to Weiner the purpose of such structures seems to have varied, and it is often impossible to determine whether an altar was built for sacrifice or for some other purpose. The best example of this is that erected by the Israelites as given in Joshua 22:10 - 34. This altar was built for purpose's of reminder. Another example of a memorial altar is given in Ex.17: 14 -16. With this altar Moses is making a solemn asseveration relating to future acts against the Amalakites.¹⁰ Altars of incense appear to have played an important part in the ritual of the sanctuary. From Lev. 16 or Neh. 9 - 11, it is apparent that incense altars were used to burn sweet smelling incense to raise a cloud of intense smoke, for what particular purpose is done is not really known. In Exodus 30:1 - 10, a command is given to make an altar of incense, detail as regards construction (it had to have horns), materials and measurement being given, its use being for the exclusive use of burning incense by the High Priest, its position being in front of the veil over the ark.¹¹

⁹De Vaux. op. cit. p 407.

¹⁰Weiner. op. cit. p 23.

¹¹Wiener. op.cit. p 24.

4.3 High Places.

Frequently in the Old Testament mention is made of high places which in most cases referred to Canaanite holy places or sanctuaries. They were an essential part of Canaanite worship from as early as the second half of the 3rd Millennium. The Bible accords the name bamah which on translation, means high place, but De Vaux maintains that this is not strictly correct. He gives it a meaning that it is something which stands out in relief from its background, and that the idea of a mountain, or hill, or high place, is not contained in the word itself.¹ Albright gives the meaning of bamah, as a Canaanite word meaning back or ridge.²

The origins of Canaanite high places are a matter of speculation. One suggestion is that they were originally erected as funeral installations which later took on other cultic functions. Whatever their original function was, they were a feature of the Canaanite city and were usually venerated by or through association with ancestors of the community. Gray is of the opinion that the holy places of the Canaanites were the sanctuaries of the primitive nomad, who still venerated it as the burial place of his ancestors.³ The sacred (Canaanite) significance of the area at Gezer is also indicated by the archaeological discovery of the burial of young infants in jars in the subsoil. These remains, almost all of infants a few days old, are thought to be the offering of the first born, either in fulfillment of a vow or a version of the Hebrew conception that the first born males of man and beast were to be dedicated to God⁴. Usually at sacrifices or feast days, a sacramental meal took place. Through this, solidarity of the community was maintained. These holy places' or high places, were on a raised platform of squared stones, and comprised three important features of Canaanite worship, the altar, the stone pillar (massebah) which represented the male divinity and the wooden pole (asherah) which represented the

¹De Vaux Roland. *Ancient Israel. Its Life and Institutions*. (Darton, Longman & Todd LTD. London SW6. 1984) p 284.

²Albright W. F. *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*. (Oxford University Press London. U.K. 1953). p 105.

³Gray J. *The Canaanites*. Gen Ed. Dr Glyn Daniel. (Hazell Watson and Viney LTD, Alesbury, Bucks U.K. 1965). p 66/67.

⁴Ibid p 67.

female divinity, although in the book of Jeremiah 2: 27, the reverse is proclaimed.⁵ However in some instances the standing stones or monoliths, are thought to be the memorials of great leaders of the community, and were possibly the patron saints (“welis”) of the people. This type of raised platform, usually complete with an altar, if with nothing else, is considered to be one of the high places (bamah) referred to in the Old Testament. The Israelites, on entry into Canaan, continued with using them. Sacrifices and worship continued to take place at the high place. The reason for this is that possibly the tradition of once a holy place, always a holy place, irrespective of ethnic differences. Additional bamoths were also built by the Israelites. It is known that Solomon built a bamah (high place) on the crest of a hill, near Malhah, east of Jerusalem, for Kemosh and Milkem, who were pagan gods, as well as one outside the Jerusalem gates (2K.23:8). Excavations at Malhah led to discoveries of two large high places. The one is in a better state of preservation than the other, and is some 25 yards in diameter. Constructed of earth and stone held in position by a polygonal wall with a flight of stairs to the top. Further archaeological evidence of high places comes from Nahariyah, near Haifa, where a small sanctuary beside a heap of circular stones, roughly 6 yards in diameter which was later increased to 14 yards⁶. Possibly the best find of a high place has been the one discovered at Tel Dan. This site was excavated by Avram Biran in 1970. The Dan structure is a large magnificent stone platform, or Canaanite -style high place of the sort so often mentioned in the Bible. It is ca 60 feet square and approached by a flight of steps. The cultic nature of the Dan structure is confirmed by the finds made in the vicinity, which include animal bones, miniature horned Altars, seven sprouted oil lamp, offering stands, bronze shovels and other implements.⁷ In the majority of cases, these high places were situated on isolated hills or outside of cities. However there are instances of them being located inside cities as well (1K.13:32; 2 K. 17:29, 23:5.). Canaanite reference of this is the high place discovered at Megiddo. This drystone slightly oval mound is ca 6 feet high and from 8 to 10 yards across. A flight of seven steps’ facing eastwards leads to the top of the platform, which is enclosed with a temenos wall.⁸

The bamah itself was not a temple, sanctuary or a house of a god. As a sacral construction it

⁵Anderson G.W. *The History and Religion of Israel*. (Oxford University Press, Ely House London W.1. 1971) p 69.

⁶De Vaux. op. cit. p 285.

⁷Biran Avram. *Tel Dan* Journal of the Biblical Archaeologist Vol 37-2. 1974. P27-34.

⁸Gray. op.cit. p 68.

is best understood as similar to an open air altar. As per the early altars raised by the patriarch's, it was usually devoid of a sanctuary, and could be used without the intervention of a priest. However, when sanctuaries were built within or close to the high place, the service of a priest were required.(1K. 12:31.). Prophets and seers could also be in attendance at these places. (1S. 10:5, De. 9 :11,12.), and some priests even resided at the high place (2K.23:5), as did the prophets (1S.5:13.). At high places sacrifices and incense were offered. It was not unknown for worshippers to eat, weep and pray at these places (1S. 9:19-22; Is. 15:2, 16:12).

The legitimacy of the use of these high places in Israelite monotheism is problematic; there were frequent moves to rid the country of high places. In fact, in various texts of the Bible they are condemned and were to be destroyed on the Israelites entry into Canaan (Nu. 33:52, De. 33:29). They were the object of the Lord's wrath (Le. 26:30). Yet we have cases in the Bible where their legitimacy is not questioned, and even has the Lord's approval, the occasion being Solomon's offering of a thousand sacrifices at the great high place of Gibeon (1K.3:4). Another example is when the Ark was recovered from the Philistines, the cows drawing the cart with the Ark were sacrificed at a high place in thanks giving for the return of the Ark. Partial attempts at their removal were carried out by kings Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah (2Chr.14:3. 2K. 18:4, 23:8). No less than six kings were admonished for not having removed the high places during their reigns. These were Asa (1K. 15:14.), Jehoshaphat (1K.22:43.), Jehoash (2K. 12:3), Amaziah (2K.14:4), Azariah (2K. 15:4) and Jothan (2K. 15:35). It appears that in possible defiance of the instructions given for destruction, Solomon and Rehoboam built high places (1K. 11:7, 1K. 14:23), and many of the kings of the northern kingdom did likewise. King Manasseh is also cited as being responsible for the restoration of destroyed high places. This defiance of instruction gives an indication of how familiar the Israelites were, to using high places.

One of the major ear marks of high places appears to be the standing stones which have been the discoveries of archaeologist's in excavations of high places. These standing stones might also be memorials of theophanies, as per the pillar which Jacob set up and anointed at Bethel (Ge. 35:14,15.) On the other hand they might be memorial stones, the erection of which is not unknown. Absalom, the 3rd son of king David, for example, erected a memorial stone to himself, as he had no sons to keep his name in remembrance (2 S. 18:18). Albright dismisses the idea, that these standing stones could belong to mortuary sanctuaries, in the same category as the Israelite bamah, and turns to Petra for

parallels. He specifically refers to the Conway high place, which was excavated by him in 1934, and which was of the circular processional type. The others discovered, varied in detail and according to Albright were meant as places for sacrificial feasts. Here animals vowed to a god might be eaten in an appropriate sacred place. Referring to the Great High Place of Petra, discovered by George Robinson in 1900, and other less impressive sites were, he maintains, clearly intended for sacrificial feasts in the open.⁹

Archaeology has discovered, and excavated numerous sites throughout Palestine which give evidence of "high places". Of stone construction they have been found both in rectangular and round form. Professor Amihai Mazar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem excavated in 1981, a small isolated hilltop to discover a large altar like stone installation. This site, which is five miles east of Dothan in biblical Manasseh, has been named the "Bull Site" because of the chance finding of a bronze bull. Besides the altar like stone construction, a few sherds of Iron Age pottery were found with the sparse remains of an enclosure wall. This according to the archaeologist was most certainly an Israelite open air cult site. Another massive altar discovered during an archaeological survey by Adam Zertal on Mt. Ebal. is also claimed to be an Israel high place. There is however, a difference of opinion regarding which of the two are definitely Israelite, and secondly if they are at all, high places. Michael David Coogan, an American scholar of high repute, has queried the findings of Israelite archaeologists as to whether the sites discovered as high places are indeed early Israelite. He maintains that the findings are not all that conclusive from the evidence produced. In the closing remarks of his critique he stipulates that it would be wise to avoid labels such as Israelite or Canaanite, unless there is conclusive evidence for them.¹⁰

It appears that the majority of high places used were generally located on hills or under trees, the reason being that on hill tops activities were easily observed by those attending, and secondly the cool westerly wind in the summer months with the shade of the trees made life more bearable. As evidence that the high places were in most cases on hills or elevated ground, the Bible refers to the going up and down from high places. The texts from 1 Samuel 9:13,14,19. tell of people going up and

⁹Albright. op. cit. p 106

¹⁰Shanks Hershel. *Two Early Israelite Cult Sites Now Questioned*. Biblical Archaeological Review, Vol. 14. 1988 p 48-52.

down from the high place. Saul was invited to partake of a meal with Samuel, and to do so had to accompany Samuel up to the high place. There does seem to be a controversy here, as in 1Samuel 9: 22, the meal is partaken of in a hall, not an open area.

In conclusion it does appear that the first bamoths were places for worship by the Canaanites, and the last ones for the Israelites. The high places which appeared to fill a necessary need of the Israelites in the beginning of their sojourn in Canaan were eventually destroyed by the words and action of the priests and prophets. Doubtless because of the view that one temple should be the sole legitimate place of all worship requiring priestly service.¹¹ However it is also possible that not only religious ideas were behind the moves, but also political, so as to bring into effect the uniting of a fragmented people into a universal whole.

¹¹*New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Student Edition 1993. Gen/Ed's Ramond E. Brown. Joseph A Ftzmeyer & Roland E.Murphy. (Publisher Geoffrey Cahapman London U.K.) p 1267.

F1



**PART OF A SANCTUARY
(ARAD)**

4.4 TEMPLES SANCTUARIES SHRINES

Professor Menahen Haran considers that biblically speaking, the English language has preempted the word temple for the “Temple of Solomon”, which Solomon had built on the site selected and purchased by David for 50 shekels of silver (2 S. 24:24). Other temples which historically preceded the Jerusalem temple and were in existence prior to the Israelite’s settlement in Canaan, have in most cases been given the names of shrines or sanctuaries¹ This hypothesis appears to be common, as the Jerome Biblical Commentary, the Illustrated Concordance and Dictionary of the Bible (Readers Digest issue), as well as other publications, all follow suit, in naming most of what was considered to be temples, shrines or sanctuaries. However as much as what has been said about the naming of temples as sanctuaries and shrines there are cases where temples stand as temples e.g. Temples at Tel Kattan, Kition, Megiddo. It appears that there is some controversy as to what constitutes a temple or a sanctuary/shrine. Translation of wording could also play a part, and possibly our understanding of temple and sanctuary is of one and the same thing.

De Vaux defines a temple as “a building in which public worship is performed, erected on a holy place”. Holy places as such, were sacred sites distinguished by the manifestations of the god’s presence or by his activity.² Thus sanctuaries founded by the patriarchs had features which nature manifested the presence of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These sanctuaries are considered to be open-air sacrificial sites; near trees, on natural heights or at water sources. Erected principally in places where God had shown himself in a theopany, many of these sanctuaries are to be found along the route the patriarchs followed in their travels through Canaan.

A number of literary works use a different terminology for “temple” and define it as bet Yahweh, “the house of Yahweh”, or bet Elohim, “the house of God”. The name “house of God” arises from the concept of a divine residence built to serve as the dwelling place for the deity. This format of temples/sanctuaries being the dwelling place of the god was common to the religions of the East. A house of God was a building, a roofed structure, and was comparable to the palace of a king or noble. It

¹Haran Menahen *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times*. (Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology. Jerusalem Israel.1977) p31

²De Vaux Roland. *Ancient Israel. Its Life and Institutions*. (Darton, Longman & Todd LTD. 89 Lillie Rd. London SW6 1984) p 276.

stood in a special compound which separated it from the outer world, as per the dwellings of kings or those in authority. In most cases it appears that the laity were debarred, on account of its particular holiness, from entering its inner recesses. Because the temple was considered to be a dwelling place it was furnished and had accessories which symbolised the divine presence in that house. The accessories were mainly those used for daily cult purposes (Incense altars, lampstands and bread tables). Activities which took place at the temple were construed to have been “conducted in the presence of the Lord.” All temples had altars, (sacrificial altars), which in reality formed the major part of the worship service, and would be found in the adjoining court, but not every altar would necessarily be attached to a temple.³ Temple worship due to its many rituals, necessitated priests; most coming from priestly families, where as with solitary altars (usually found in an open -air cult site) any adult Israelite could serve. Altars were numerous, and could be constructed anywhere where the spirit of God manifested itself, or when natural effects were ascribed to the power of a god. The Bible gives indications, both explicit and implicit, that in ancient Israel there existed 12 temples. With these twelve temples there must have been altars as well. Moreover since an altar at a temple designated that temple was more prestigious than an altar by itself, because not every sacrifice was suitable for a solitary altar. The service of priests were required e.g. sin offerings, or purification rituals. Another example is that of a person who wanted to make a pilgrimage on a pilgrim-feast, he had to journey to a temple and make his offerings there; it was not enough for him to offer up sacrifices on a solitary altar.⁴ To date no archaeological remains of any of the temples mentioned in the Bible has been discovered with the exception of the one at Arad (refer to the illustration F 1 which shows part of the Arad sanctuary). This particular temple although of great importance because it tells us much of the activities of the Israelites in the period ca 1200 B.C. is only mentioned briefly in the Bible, and then only in connection with the Israelites entry into Canaan. (Nu..21: 1-3a,33:40, Jos. 12:14). Papyri from the Persian period ca 539 B.C. makes mention of the existence of a temple which served the Jewish community of Elephantine, in Egypt. When this community originated is not known, and according to De Vaux the temple was in existence in 525 B.C. But shortly after the end of Persian rule in Egypt ca 402 B.C. the

³Haran op.cit.p 32.

⁴Haran. op. cit.p 32.

Jews were scattered and the temple disappeared.⁵ Possibly the tabernacle which accompanied the Israelites in the desert, can be described as the forerunner of the temples subsequently used by the Israelites. This temple structurally adapted so as to be portable, was in use whenever the Israelites were not on the move. In fact it was where God conversed with Moses “Face to Face” (Ex.33: 11), thus contradicting some biblical texts that no man has seen God. De Vaux states that no ancient texts refer to the actual construction of this tent. However the Priestly tradition gives a very lengthy description of the design of the Tabernacle. God gave Moses full instruction regarding how and when it was to be built (Ex. 26). It does appear that most of the description is an idealization, copied possibly from the writings regarding the design of Solomon’s temple.⁶

Of all the temples mentioned in the Bible, that of Solomon’s in Jerusalem is the one that achieved the most prominence. However here again we have only the literal works given to us in the Bible (1 K. 5-8.) to go by. Archaeology has been unable to discover any possible ruins or findings of this temple which ruled the lives of the Israelites from its inception in the 11th year of Solomon’s reign. From the writings, the overall design appears to be that similar to typical Near Eastern royal buildings, reports of which are found in numerous Mesopotamian inscriptions from the early 2nd millenium. The prestige of the Temple in Jerusalem overshadowed that of other Israelite temples by the proximity to the kings palace and the patronage of the royal family. Their are exegetes that hold that Solomon’s temple was nothing other than a royal chapel, built for the kings convenience. It also housed the ark of the covenant, which designated it as the successor of the temple at Shiloh.⁷

Every village and town in Israel had its own sanctuary which served the community. These sanctuaries more often than not, were open air cult places which may have had a temple or not. They did however have altars, and formed the “bamah” or high place so often referred to in the Bible. Further information regarding “high places” is given in 4.22 of this dissertation . As many of the Israelite sanctuaries were taken over from the Canaanites, they had the well known tradition as holy

⁵De Vaux. op.cit. p 340.

⁶De Vaux. op.cit. p 296.

⁷Wigoder Geoffrey. s v Temple. *Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible.* (The Jerusalem Publishing House Ltd 1986).

places, and legends were treasured which recounted how, by divine appearance, the site had been marked out as being especially sacred.⁸

The central religious activities of the Israelites was the congregating of the federation of the twelve tribes around a central shrine or sanctuary on festal or holy days. Shrine being given the same meaning as sanctuary. Albright considers that Shiloh was the central sanctuary of the Israelites, as Shiloh is stated repeatedly to be the place where the tabernacle was set up and lots cast for the places to be occupied by the various tribes. It was also the place where the annual festival of Yahweh was celebrated.⁹ It is almost certain however that Shiloh was not the only sanctuary of Yahweh, as mention is made in the Bible of sanctuaries/shrines at Gibeon (the great high place where Solomon offered up a 1000 sacrifices and prayed for wisdom, 1K. 4ff refers), at Bethel, at Gilgal, and presumably also at Beersheba. Possibly all these places were open air sanctuaries/shrines, as it is difficult to believe that all the tribes of Israel could congregate at a temple. Heaton is also probably correct in saying that before night fell, the entire company would be singing and dancing, for in the period before the Exile, to offer sacrifice was essentially to "rejoice before the Lord".¹⁰

In conclusion it can be stated that archaeology has not been overly successful in discovering the finds of Israelite temples, with the exception of that of Arad. Illustration C 3 details the ground plan of this fortress with its temple. The reason for the lack of discovery could possibly be that all the high places and local sanctuaries/shrines were destroyed in the religious reforms of the various kings egged on by over zealous prophets, who condemned the worshipping practices held there. It is fortunate that archaeology has been able to unearth temples, sanctuaries/shrines which although Canaanite, do point the use of these centers by both Canaanite and Israelites.

⁸Heaton E. W. *Every day Life in Old Testament Times*. (B.T. Batsford LTD. 4 Fitzhardinge street, Portman Square, London W.1. 1957) p 216.

⁹Albright W F. *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*. (Oxford University Press U.K. 1953) p 104.

¹⁰Heaton. op. cit. p 217.

CHAPTER FIVE. CONCLUSION

Finkelstein has commented that the settlement of the Israelites in the 12th & 11th centuries and their transformation into an organised kingdom is one of the most exciting, awe inspiring and at the same time controversial chapters in the history of Israel.¹

The truth of the statement has been proved beyond doubt in many of the archaeological findings relating to this period. The controversial aspects which relate to evidence, interpretation and dating, have led to raging debates, heated exchanges between archaeologists themselves and the learned fraternity. In some cases, re-examination and re-excavation has been resorted to elucidate theories or interpretations which have been considered inconclusive or invalid.

From the time of the said conquest of the land of Israel by Joshua, to the end of the monarchy, and beyond, archaeologists have presented in some case's evidence in contradiction of the writings of scripture. Prior to archaeology's findings, no other means or writings existed to validate the scripture of the Old Testament. In addition, archaeologist have unearthed and identified various deities and rituals as were practiced at that time. These findings confirm what the Bible has hinted at, that deities other than Yahweh, especially the Canaanite fertility gods were revered in Israel. Chief among these were the Canaanite mother goddess "Asherah" and her consort the "Storm God Baal." These gods were the potent rivals of Yahweh himself and for the masses, the popular cult of the Canaanites was a very attractive alternative to the austere and ethical demands of Yahwism.² It has long been suspected that the early Israelites were monolatrous and not monotheistic; archaeological finds that antedate most of the biblical texts, prove conclusively the syncretic approach appears to be conclusive that Israel tried to reach a compromise; and definitely mixed the religion of Yahweh with that of the Canaanites, and other neighbouring religions where it was conducive to their own needs.

That the Exodus Israelites were affected by their neighbours is obvious. Coming from a simple desert environment, they had no option but to borrow, where necessary the Canaanites culture, technology, and patterns of speech in order to survive. From nomadism to agriculture, on which their

¹Finkelstein Israel. *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*. (Israel Exploration Society Jerusalem 1988.) p 15.

²Dever W.G. *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research*. See Unisa Reader Bar 211-9-1993 (University of South Africa) p 119-166.

new life depended, they adopted some of the Canaanite festivals of the land. They anointed kings, but never deified them; They sacrificed, but not to for the purpose of feeding gods; They may have used high places and built tripart temples, but did steer, clear of idol usage; they may have referred to God as “Rider in the storm” as an epithet of the Canaanite Baal, but he is never the storm, as Baal is; they may have called him “Bullish one of Jacob”, but he is not a bull³

When we look back on Israel in the time span considered, there must have been some concept of divine transcendence, probably not in all, but certainly in the prophets who did try to convince both king and laity, and the Canaanites, who could possibly be called the blood brothers of the Israelites, the reality of Yahweh. This principle, that in one form or another must have existed and guided Israel from the time of the patriarch’s onwards to her destiny, that of becoming a nation.

³Harrison K. Roland. Ed. by Avrahan Gileodi. *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration*. (Baker Book House Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516 U.S.A. 1988) p 17.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE ISRAELITE CULT

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AUTHORS	TITLES
Aharoni Yohanan	<i>The Israelite Sanctuary at ARAD.</i> , in <i>New Directions in Biblical Archaeology</i> . Ed. D.N. Freedman. Doubleday & Company Inc. Garden City, New York. U.S.A. 1971.
Ahlstrom G.W.	<i>Archaeological Picture of Iron Age Religions in Ancient Palestine</i> . (Studia Orentalia). Ed. Finish Oriental Society Helsinki. 1984.
Albright W. F.	<i>Archaeology and the Religion of Israel</i> . Oxford University Press. 3rd Edition 1953.
Andersen W. B.	<i>The World of the Old Testament</i> . Longman Singapore Publishers PTY LTD. 4th Edition 1988.
Ariel.	<i>The Israel Review of Arts and Letters</i> . (Number 99-100, July 1995.
Baly D.	<i>God and History in the Old Testament</i> . Harper & Row, Publishers, London and New York. 1976.
Biblical Dictionary	<i>Mercer Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Gen. Ed. Watson E Mills Mercer University Press. Mocan Georgia. U.S.A. 1990
Bright J.	<i>A History of Israel</i> . SCM Press LTD. Bloomsbury Street London U.K. 1972.
Biran A.	<i>Tel Dan, Journal of the Biblical Archaeology</i> Vol 37.2. 1974.
Brow R.	<i>Origins of Religion-</i> The Worlds Religions. Struik Christian Books PTY LTD. Cape Town. 8000.
Buck M. H.	<i>People of the Lord</i> . The Macmillan Company New York. 1st Printing 1966.
Campbell jr E.	<i>ShechemII</i> (Scholars Press Atlanta Georgia U.S.A.1991)
Coggins R.	<i>Introducing the Old Testament</i> . Gen Ed. P.R. Ackroyd & G.N.Stanton. University Press. Walton Street Oxford, OX26DP 1990.

- Consolidated Encyclopaedia** *Volume VIII Religion.* Consolidated World Research Society Ltd. London W.1. 1946.
- Coogan M. D.** *Of Cults and Cultures. Reflections on the Interpretation of Archaeological Evidence.* Palestine Exploration Quarterly. January- June 1987. London WIM5RR.
- Courville D. A.** *The Exodus Problems and its Ramifications.* Volume 2. Challenge Books. Loma Linde, California.U.S.A.1971.
- De Vaux R.** *Ancient Israel. Its Life and Institutions.* Darton, Longman & Todd LTD. 89 Lilee Road,London SW6 IUD 1984.
- Dever W.G.** et al, *C.L vanW Scheepers & J.H Roberts. Understanding the Bible Through Archaeology* Unisa Reader Bar 211-9-1993.University of R..S.A. .
- Finkelstein I.** *The Date of the Bull Site.Palestine Exploration Quartely 130. 1998.*
- Gophna R.** *The Intermediate Bronze Age.* Ed. Ammon Ben Tor. The Archaeology of Ancient Israel. The Open University of Israel.1992.
- Gottwald N.K.** *The Hebrew Bible.* Fortress Press. Philadelphia. U.S.A. 2nd Printing 1986.
- Gray J.** *The Canaanites.* Gen Ed. Dr. Glyn Daniel. Hazel Watson & Viney LTD. Alesbury, Buks U.K. 1965.
- Haran M.** *Temples & Cultic Open Areas as reflected in the Bible.* Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology. Jerusalem Israel.
- Heaton E. W.** *Every day Life in Old Testament Times.* B.T.Batsford Ltd. 4 Fitzhardinge Street, Portman Square. London W.1. 1957
- Herzog Z.** *Synopsis of Lecture.* Basor 225.Tel Aviv Jerusalem.1977.
- Ide A.F.** *Yahweh's Wife.* Monument Press. Las Calinas, Texas. U.S.A.1991.
- Israeliarch** *Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cultural and Scientific*

Relations Division. 214 Jaffa Street Jerusalem, 94383.

- Kempinski A.** *The Middle Bronze Age in the Archaeology of Ancient Israel*. Ed. Amnon Ben tor. The Open University of Israel. 1922.
- Mazar A.** *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* Doubleday, New York. U.S.A. 1990.
- Meshel Z.** *Biblical Archaeology Review*. March April 1997.
- Moorey R.** *Excavations in Palestine*. Bok Books International. Durban R.S.A. 1988.
- New Jerome Biblical Commentary** *Student Edition 1993*. Gen Ed. Ramond E Brown. L.C. con't, Publisher Geoffrey Chapman London. 1993.
- Pearlman M & Yaacov Y.** *Historical Sites in Israel*. Vanguard Press. New York U.S.A. 1978.
- Petersen M. E.** *Moses, Man of Miracles*. Desert Book Company. Salt Lake City. Utah, U.S
- Phillips G.** *Act of God*. Sidwick & Jackson. 25 Eccleson Place. London SW1 W9NF. 1988
- Pope J.A.** *Who's Who in the Bible*. Readers Digest Association, Inc. Pleasantville, New York. U.S.A.
- Pritchard J.B** *The Megiddo Stables*. A re- Assesment. The Near Eastern Archaeology in the 20th Century. Ed. James A Sanders.
- Rausch D. A & Voss C.H.** *World Religions*. Trinity Press International Valley Forge U.S.A.
- Schovelle K.N.** *Biblical Archaeology in Focus*. Baker Book House. Grand Rapids Michigan. U.S.A. 1978.
- Shanks H.** *Archaeology and the Bible*. Journal volume 1. Ed. Herschel Shanks & Don Cole. Biblical Archaeology Society. Washington.D.C. U.S.A. 1992.
- Ussishkin D.** *The date of the Judian Shrine at Arad*.

Israel Exploration Journal. 1973.

- Volkmar F.** *Introduction to Biblical Archaeology.*
JSOT Press Sheffield England. 1966.
- Vos H.F.** *Archaeology in Bible Lands.*
Moody Bible Institute of Chicago U.S.A.1977.
- Weiner H. M.** *The Altars of the Old Testament.*
Leipzig & J.C. Hinrichsche.
Buchhandlung 1972
- Wigoder G.** *Illustrated Dictionary and Concordance
of the Bible.* Jerusalem Publishing House 1996.
- Woods L.** *A survey of Israels History.* Academie Books.
Zondervan Publishing House. Grand Rapids
Michigan. U.S.A.
- Yadin Y.** *EI 12. (1975). p57-62.*

Note.

All the Biblical texts and references quoted in this dissertation have been taken from the *NIV Study Bible, New International Version.* Gen Ed. Kenneth Barker. Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan 4906 U.S.A. 1985.

Biblical abbrevations where cited are as per the standards used in the "The Thompson" *Chain - Reference Bible*, fourth improved edition, B.B. Kirkbride Bible Co., Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana U.S.A. 1964.

The words religion and cult appear to be synonymous, and have been used in this dissertation as such. Modern usage of the word cult has changed, often being used in a derogative manner, and in some instances, indicative of beliefs of an esoteric nature e.g. the "Silva Mind Control". However this is not the case in this work. Reference to the similarity of the words is taken from the *Readers Digest Great Illustrated Dictionary*, first edition, The Reader's Digest Association Limited, Berkeley Square, London. U.K. 1984.