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WARS OF THE ISRAELITE AMPHICTYONY

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Old Testament Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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CHAPTER I

THE INTRODUCTION

The research which resulted in this thesis was done for the purpose of determining the place which united military undertakings had in the Israelite tribal league prior to the establishment of the monarchy. The Old Testament describes a number of wars which took place during the era known as "the period of the judges." Although the victories won in these battles were usually ascribed to "Israel" in general, there are indications in some cases that the actual participants in the battles were limited to a small number of the Israelite tribes. This study seeks to discover the tribal participation in each of the wars; in this way a general conclusion regarding the importance of united military action in the league of tribes can be reached.

Some scholars have laid a great deal of emphasis on the part played by common military undertakings in binding the Israelite tribes together and holding them together subsequently. Wellhausen in fact called the war-camp "die Wiege der Nation."¹ It was in these united military undertakings, according to von Rad, that the very Yahweh-faith characteristic of the early Israelite tribal league came into being.²

¹See Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel (Zürich: Zwingli-verlag, 1951), p. 14.

²Ibid., p. 31. Von Rad even says, "Perhaps it was in the Holy War more than in the Covenant Festival at Shechem that ancient Israel really first entered into her grand form"; Gerhard von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, translated by David Stalker (London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1953), p. 45.

If this were true, one would expect full participation by the Israelite tribes in the wars that were fought in the name of the federation. If, however, it can be demonstrated that concerted military undertakings played only a small role in the life of the tribes, then that which bound the tribes together in the federation must be sought in other areas.

This early period was a very important period in the history of the people of Israel, for here the traditions of the mighty acts of Yahweh so recently experienced in the exodus, at Sinai, and in the conquest of the land took definitive shape. During this period the clans and tribes began their settled life together as a people that was to have such a unique history for the next millenium. Yet the period of the judges was a very troubled and complex era, and the historical information given by the Old Testament is not always complete with regard to the specific details of that time. However, this study seeks to show that the historical information from this period does in fact suffice to demonstrate that the wars of the league of Israelite tribes were not a major factor in uniting the tribes or giving them their common faith.

The historical period under discussion in this study is limited specifically to the era following the settlement of the tribes in Canaan and preceding the establishment of the monarchy under Saul. The wars to be discussed are only those for which the account specifies a concern of Israel as a whole. It is recognized that the wars of conquest are presented as wars of the tribal league; yet these are omitted from the present study both because of their different character and because of the historical problems involved in them. It is further recognized

that the period of the tribal federation did not suddenly cease when Saul was proclaimed king, but that there was rather a transitional period as the tribal league gradually became a kingdom. Therefore the wars under King Saul are discussed insofar as they pertain to the subject under discussion. The term used for the tribal league in this study is "the Israelite amphictyony." The term "amphictyony," taken over from Greek tribal leagues that were united around a central sanctuary, is used to designate the sacral character of the bond which held the Israelite tribes together. It is not necessarily assumed that the expressions "Israel" and "sons of Israel" (bēnê yisrā'ēl), when used in the accounts of the wars, equal precisely the Israelite amphictyony. Yet the terms are general designations of the federation as a whole, rarely used for individual tribes or even groups of tribes.³ Therefore it is assumed, in cases where the term "Israel" is applied to the victors, that the account wishes to apply the action to the Israelite amphictyony in general.

The study consists of a discussion of the wars of the amphictyony, beginning with four "minor" wars, those which apparently concerned only a quite limited number of tribes. These wars are those under Othniel (Judg. 3:7-11), Ehud (3:12-30), Shamgar (3:31) and Jephthah (10:6-12:7). Next is a discussion of a war of major concern to the amphictyony, the one against the Canaanites under the leadership of Deborah and Barak (Judg. 4-5). The prose and poetic accounts are com-

³Martin Noth, The History of Israel, translated from the German by P. R. Ackroyd (second edition; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 5.

pared, and the place of each account is discussed. The war against the Midianites under the leadership of Gideon (Judg. 6-8) comes next in this study, showing the reaction of the amphictyony to a devastating invasion by camel-riding nomads. The wars of the transitional period include the first encounters with the Philistines (1 Sam. 4-7) and the war against the Ammonites under Saul's leadership (1 Sam. 11); the early monarchy was still a part of the transitional period, so the battles of Saul against the Amalekites and Philistines (1 Sam. 13-31) are likewise briefly discussed. Several wars of a different character are presented as wars of the amphictyony: the action against Reuben and Gad (Josh. 22) and the war against Benjamin (Judg. 19-21). These are discussed especially with reference to their sacral character. The conclusions drawn from the study of the wars are used in a short discussion of the nature of the Israelite amphictyony; here especially the sacral unity in the amphictyony is defined. The study closes with a discussion of the military organization of the amphictyony and the concept of a "holy war."

The primary sources used in this study are the biblical books of Joshua, Judges, and 1 Samuel. Material from the Pentateuch is used where there are some indications that it could possibly apply to the Israelite amphictyony; and other books of the Bible are used where some light is cast on the period of the amphictyony. Scholarly studies on the biblical material are used where relevant. An attempt is made to present the biblical evidence objectively and fully. In some cases, due to the paucity of the material, analogies from similar cases or from extra-biblical material are introduced to help in the understanding of the

particular event. Therefore the results of the study must be viewed as probable, not assured, results.

The study of the amphictyonic wars demonstrates the probability that in none of the wars against foreign aggressors did all or even the majority of the tribes take part; in most cases it was only two or three tribes which fought the actual battle. However, the victory achieved by these few tribes was in every case understood as a victory of the amphictyony as a whole, made possible by the God of the amphictyony. When the amphictyony gradually gave way to the kingdom of Israel, the participation of the tribes in the wars became greater; this, however, was for political considerations which did not exist during the greater part of the period of the amphictyony. The two wars fought within the amphictyony were distinct from the others in that they were fought for a specific sacral reason: to purge evil from Israel; in these wars the tribes were bound by the covenant to participate. Therefore this study shows the probability that the Israelite amphictyony was a sacral group, united because of its common faith and cultus. Its corporate feeling allowed victories won by a smaller group of tribes to be applied to the whole amphictyony. These wars were holy because they were undertakings of the sacral league.

CHAPTER II

MINOR WARS OF THE AMPHICTYONY

The War Under Othniel

A number of the wars during the period of the Israelite amphictyony apparently concerned only a limited number of the tribes, even though the report ascribes them to Israel as a whole. These minor wars are those under Othniel (Judg. 3:7-11), Ehud (Judg. 3:12-30), Shamgar (Judg. 3:31 and 5:6) and Jephthah (Judg. 10:6-12:7). This chapter shall attempt to discover the historic backgrounds of these wars and determine the participation of the amphictyonic tribes in them.

The first story concerns Israel's servitude to kûsan ris'atāyim, king of 'āram nah'rāyim, and its deliverance by the judge Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. The story is clear enough and conforms well to the framework of the Book of Judges as outlined in chapter 2:11-3:6. The "people of Israel" did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and He sold them into the hand of the foreign king. After eight years of servitude, Yahweh heeded their cries and sent Othniel to deliver them. Yahweh's spirit made him able to judge Israel, and he defeated kûsan ris'atāyim. Missing from the usual scheme is the burial place of Othniel.¹

There are several difficulties in this story which have led some

¹Yet Hertzberg feels Othniel belongs in the list of judges; Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth, Vol. IX of Das Alte Testament Deutsch, edited by Volkmar Hertrich and Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), p. 164.

scholars to discount the historicity of the episode. The main difficulty concerns the identity of the foreign king who oppressed Israel. It seems strange that a king from as far away as Mesopotamia (1^aram nah^arāyim) could have subdued Palestine for eight years without being mentioned in other historical records; and it seems equally strange that Othniel, of the small tribe of the Kenizzites in Kiriathsepher (Judg. 1:11-15; Josh. 15:15-19), would have been able to defeat the king of Mesopotamia. Taubler concludes that kūšan is a fictitious personage and has no place in the era of the judges; he feels

Kusan Eponym der midianitischen Kusaniten ist und das Cognomen Risathaim in Verbindung mit Aram-Naharaim sich als eine aus bestimmten Motiven entstandene Parallele zu 'ereš m^eratayim für Babylon (Jer. 50:21) erklärt.²

Moore likewise would refer kūšan to a Bedouin tribe of Midian; this story would then refer to the incursion of these people and their expulsion by the Kenizzites of Debir.³ Garstang sees this story as reminiscences of a local struggle between the tribes of Cushan and Kenaz, who opposed each other across the Jordan.⁴

Another group of scholars feels that 1^aram is a mistake for Edom (1^edôm), as is the case in 2 Kings 16:6. This would then bring the

²Eugen Taubler, Biblische Studien: Die Epoche der Richter (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958), p. 10.

³George F. Moore, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges, Vol. VII of The International Critical Commentary, edited by Alfred Plummer (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), p. 88. Moore finds little historicity in the account.

⁴John Garstang, Joshua Judges (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1931), pp. 264-65. Garstang feels that this story was combined with a story of a conquest of all of Palestine by the Hittite king of the Land of the Rivers.

locale of the battle to the neighborhood of the Kenizzites. In support of this Hertzberg treats nah^arāyīm as a later addition and supposes kūšan to come from kūš, Ethiopia; thus the whole name would mean a "doppelböse Neger."⁵ Lods explains the name as being a corruption of the name of the third king of Edom mentioned in Genesis 36:34-35; he would reconstruct it as "Hushan rôsh teman," "Cushan, prince of Teman," or, according to the reading of the Septuagint, "Hushan rôsh ittayim," "Cushan, prince of the city of Ittaim."⁶

All these reconstructions have one thing in common: they presuppose a local battle which concerned only the clan of the Kenizzites. If this were the case, one would hardly be justified in calling this an amphictyonic war; it would rather belong to the tribal skirmishes during the period of the settlement, some of which are recorded in Judges 1. There is evidence, however, against equating kūšan ris^aatāyīm with either Midian or Edom. Those who champion the Midianite tribe take only the name kūšan and necessarily delete the locale of his kingship, ᵝ^aram nah^arāyīm. Those who suppose that ᵝ^aram is an error for Edom do not satisfactorily explain how a far off country like Mesopotamia could be mistaken for the neighboring, familiar Edom.

There are other possibilities which tally better with the biblical presentation of the story. A district of Qusana-ruma is known in northern Syria from the list of Ramesses III, so it is possible that the invasion

⁵Hertzberg, op. cit., pp. 163-64.

⁶Adolphe Lods, Israel From Its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century, translated by S. H. Hooke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1932), p. 335.

could have come from that quarter.⁷ Or kūšan could be connected with the Cassites, who dominated Babylonia from the seventeenth to the twelfth century B. C., although they probably never approached Palestine.⁸ Malamat points to what appears to be the most likely historical background of this story. The mention of Othniel would place the incident at the end of the conquest, in the latter part of the thirteenth century B. C. Egyptian history is confused after Merneptah, who ruled from about 1234-1224 B. C. But it is clear that the Nineteenth Dynasty ended in anarchy and the rule of a foreign usurper, called "Irsu a certain Syrian." Malamat thinks it is possible that kūšan ris'atāyim is the same person as this Irsu; he could have conquered some of the tribes of Israel on his way from Aram to Egypt. He was expelled from Egypt by Set-Nakht, but Othniel could also have fought against him, and the Old Testament would be interested only in this phase. ʿAram nah'rāyim can also refer to the western bank of the river, as is seen from the Septuagint, syrias potamōn.⁹ Even if the identity of kūšan ris'atāyim with Irsu of Syria could be disproved, still there is no reason to doubt that there was a ruler from Mesopotamia or Syria who oppressed Israel at this time. The simultaneous decline of the Near Eastern powers, before the Twentieth Dynasty and the entry of the Sea Peoples, left Syria

⁷John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 156. Bright considers the name a manufactured one, meaning "Cushan of Doublewickedness."

⁸A. Malamat, "Cushan Rishathaim and the Decline of the Near East around 1200 B. C.," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XIII (October, 1954), 231. Perhaps kūš in Gen. 10:8, the father of Nimrod, should be connected with the Cassites.

⁹Ibid., pp. 233-35. The reference to Irsu is in the Great Harris Papyrus. Other suggestions for kūšan include Tusratta of Mitanni and Suppiluliuma the Hittite; but these antedate the settlement.

and Palestine a political vacuum.¹⁰

The biblical account describes this incident as a sacral war of the Israelite amphictyony. It was the b^enê yisrâ'el, the "people of Israel," who were involved. Yahweh delivered His people to servitude, and He is also the one who raised up a deliverer (môšîa'), placed His spirit upon him, made him judge over the people of Israel and gave the enemy into his hand. However, this does not mean that all or even most of the tribes took part in the war. The account itself gives no indication of the number of tribes which took part, although the absence of a tradition concerning a unified action would indicate that the actual participants in the battle were limited to Othniel's own tribe of the Kenizzites or perhaps the southern amphictyony which later emerged as the tribe of Judah.¹¹ Yet the battle was of concern to the whole Israelite amphictyony. The oppressor, whether he was identical with Irsu or whether he was ruler in some other area of Syria or Mesopotamia, was a threat to the amphictyony as a whole. Although his defeat was dealt by the Kenizzites, this could be understood as a victory of the amphictyony, the "people of Israel."

The War Under Ehud

Judges 3:12-30 contains the account of another battle which is presented as a war of the Israelite amphictyony. Again it is the b^enê

¹⁰Ibid., p. 242.

¹¹See the discussion of the southern tribes and clans and a possible six tribe southern amphictyony infra, p. 41.

yisrā'ēl who are involved (3:12,15,27), and their God Yahweh is the one who is directing the events (3:12,15,28). The "people of Israel" did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and He strengthened a foreign ruler against them. When they cried to Him, He raised up a deliverer and gave their enemies into their hand.

The facts of the story are generally clear. Eglon, the king of Moab, with help from the Ammonites and Amalekites, defeated Israel and took possession of the "city of palms," which is evidently Jericho,¹² the modern eriha. After Ehud managed to kill Eglon, the people of Israel came out from the hill country of Ephraim and subdued Moab by seizing the fords of the Jordan and killing ten thousand from the Moabite garrison that had been west of the Jordan. The only difficult geographical locale in the story is the place of Eglon's residence and, subsequently, his murder. The biblical account does not make it clear whether Moab had a secure enough hold in the land west of the Jordan so that its king could safely live there, or whether Ehud had to cross the Jordan in order to bring tribute to him.¹³ Codex Vaticanus of the Septuagint understood that the murder took place in Transjordan and adds, after Ehud escaped to Seirah, kai egeneto hēnika ēlthen Aōd eis gēn Israēl. However, there are indi-

¹²This is seen from Deut. 34:3 and 2 Chron. 28:15; Judg. 1:16 is somewhat questionable. Auerbach argues that 'ir hattēmārîm means not Jericho but Tamar on the southern border of Judah; thus Moab came on the south end of the Dead Sea against Judah; Elias Auerbach, "Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch. II. Ehud," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LI (1933), 49. To support his contention he must delete much of the biblical evidence.

¹³Martin Noth, The History of Israel, translated from the German by P. R. Ackroyd (second edition: New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 156, note 1.

cations in the account which imply that all the events described took place west of the Jordan. That Moab had a firm grip on the land west of the Jordan is indicated by verses 13 and 14: they "took possession" (yir^esu)¹⁴ of Jericho, and the people of Israel served Eglon for eighteen years. The fact that Ehud went to the p^esilim near Gilgal¹⁵ before turning back seems to argue against a locale in Transjordan; that would have involved several additional fordings of the Jordan. Ehud's speedy escape to the hill country of Ephraim leaves little time for a fording of the Jordan.¹⁶ Likewise, the fact that Israel seized the fords and killed ten thousand Moabites who tried to escape to Transjordan implies a considerable part of Eglon's army was stationed west of the Jordan. Therefore the story seems to indicate that during this period the Moabites were strong enough in the land west of the Jordan for King Eglon to make his dwelling there, presumably in the ancient city of Jericho.

This episode of Moabite superiority over the Israelite amphictyony presents historical problems when compared with the list of tribal possessions in Joshua 13-19 and elsewhere. The usual territory of Moab was

¹⁴Roehrs points out that, at least in the conquest stories in Joshua, there appears to be a distinction between taking the land (lqh) by warfare and actually possessing it (yrš); Walter R. Roehrs, "The Conquest of Canaan According to Joshua and Judges," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXI (December, 1960), 748.

¹⁵Kraeling interprets this to mean that Ehud went to the first sanctuary of Benjamin at hand; Eglon apparently thought he was returning with some message from God which he had received there; Emil G. Kraeling, "Difficulties in the Story of Ehud," Journal of Biblical Literature, LIV (1935), 206.

¹⁶Compare Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 166.

on the southeastern end of the Salt Sea, extending northwards as far as the River Arnon, the modern sēl el-mōgib, while the area north of the Arnon was ascribed by the biblical tradition to Reuben and Gad (Josh. 13:15-28). That Gad at least actually dwelt in this area is confirmed by the Mesha inscription: wyṣ gd yṣb b'rs 'trt m'lm wybn lh mlk ysr'l 't 'trt, "And the men of Gad dwelled in the land of Ataroth from of old, and the king of Israel built Ataroth for them."¹⁷ However, the king referred to here must be Omri, and m'lm could simply mean, according to Taubler, "etwa vor dem gegenwärtigen Menschengedenken liegend." Thus the Mesha inscription does not necessarily refer to events that took place any earlier than David's conquest.¹⁸ In this story there is not the slightest suggestion that Moab was occupying territory that really belonged to Reuben and Gad; on the contrary, Moab dwelt directly across the Jordan from Jericho, and, when the battle was all over and the situation restored to normal, Moab remained there. "The possibility of crossing over to the eastern side of the Jordan is not envisaged at all in the story of Ehud."¹⁹ This brings up the question of the existence of Reuben and Gad in Transjordan at this time. Von Rad construes these facts to mean that the Ehud-Eglon battle took place before Reuben and Gad pressed

¹⁷Lines 10-11. The inscription is reproduced in W. F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine (revised edition; Bungay, Suffolk: Richard Clay & Co., Ltd., 1956), p. 134. Ataroth is probably hirbet 'attārūs, about ten miles north of the Arnon; Taubler, op. cit., p. 242.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 243. Yet the Pentateuchal narrative in Num. 32:34 reports that Gad built Ataroth, although the time when this happened is not indicated.

¹⁹Noth, op. cit., p. 156. See also Martin Noth, "Israelitische Stämme zwischen Ammon und Moab," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LX (1944), 17ff.

into this territory.²⁰ This view is supported by various Pentateuchal stories in which Moab occupies this territory. In the Balaam stories the 'arbôt mō'āb, where Israel encountered Balak, are "beyond the Jordan at Jericho" (Num. 22:1). The incident in Numbers 25:1-5 shows that Israelites and Moabites met at a shrine at Baal-Peor; at the time Moabites were living in the immediate vicinity.²¹ Bright, on the other hand, feels that Reuben had possessed this land, only to be permanently crippled when Moab regained this territory at the time of Ehud.²² The history of this territory is too complex to be unraveled with certainty. It seems, however, that the tribes of Reuben and Gad were of no significance in this area at this time. Moab and Ammon had full control east of the Jordan, and even after the battle the Israelites made no attempt to drive them out.

Apparently Benjamin was the tribe directly concerned in the Moabite occupation, since Ehud was safe when he escaped to Mount Ephraim (Judg. 3:26-27).²³ Yet it is characteristic of the amphictyony that

²⁰Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951), pp. 21-22.

²¹Noth places these incidents during the period of the judges, thus contemporary with Ehud; Noth, The History of Israel, p. 155; see also Noth, "Israelitische Stämme," op. cit., pp. 17f., 23f. Alt concludes that the kingdom of Heshbon also belongs to this period; Albrecht Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 159.

²²Bright, op. cit., p. 157. Yet in the Song of Deborah Reuben is considered to be a tribe capable of sending representatives. For the location of Reuben at the time of the Song of Deborah, see infra, p. 35.

²³Taubler, op. cit., p. 24, locates hasse'irah at the foot of the mountains of Ephraim.

Ehud, a Benjaminite, laid claim also to help from the other tribes by sounding the trumpet in Mount Ephraim (3:27). Judah and Simeon probably did not respond, because they were separated from Benjamin by a chain of Canaanite cities,²⁴ or because they had not yet developed their political independence.²⁵ Most likely it was only the men from the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim who killed ten thousand of the Moabite garrison west of the Jordan. Yet Moab had presented a threat to the whole amphictyony, and the events had been directed by Yahweh; thus the people who participated in the battle could bear the common amphictyonic name, b^enê yisrā'ēl, the "people of Israel."

The Episode Under Shamgar

Judges 3:31 contains a brief notice about Shamgar ben 'anāt, who killed six hundred Philistines. This episode comes into consideration here because Shamgar is placed in the series of the judges of Israel, and it is expressly stated that "he also delivered Israel." A person by the name of Shamgar is mentioned also in Judges 5:6 in connection with the lawless days which preceded the war against Sisera and the Canaanites.

It is impossible to reconstruct the history of this deliverance of the Israelite amphictyony with any amount of certainty. The fact that Shamgar killed six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad would seem to suggest that he was a charismatic figure of some sort. Scholars

²⁴Moore, op. cit., p. 102.

²⁵Garstang, op. cit., p. 276.

are generally agreed that the name is Hurrian and that he came from Beth-anath in Galilee.²⁶ The location of this city is disputed;²⁷ but it seems possible that Shamgar was king of this city and perhaps the leader of an alliance of Canaanite kings who banded together to ward off the Philistines. In the process of this he saved Israel and was counted as one of the deliverers of the amphictyony.²⁸ The notice in Judges 5:6 indicates that perhaps later Shamgar became an oppressor of Israel. Sisera could have been his successor as head of the Canaanite alliance, under whom came the battle with the Israelites.²⁹

Therefore the indications are that this episode should not be counted as a war of the Israelite amphictyony, even though it was considered to be a deliverance for them. Apparently none of the tribes took part in this battle.

²⁶Bright, *op. cit.*, p. 157; see also Täubler, *op. cit.*, p. 170. Beth-anath is named in the New Kingdom Egyptian texts and is placed in Galilee in Josh. 19:38. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 105, supposes Shamgar is a Hittite name, and he connects him with Shammah ben Age, who slaughtered the Philistines as described in 2 Sam. 23:11ff.

²⁷Albright places it at el-ba'ne near the border of Asher, while Alt would rather place it at el-eb'ene in Naphtali; cited by Täubler, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

²⁸Bright, *op. cit.*, p. 157; Albrecht Alt, "Megiddo im Übergang vom Kanaanischen zum israelitischen Zeitalter," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 261, 266. Alt sees Shamgar as a fighter for the old Canaanite "Herrschaftssysteme" against its new enemies.

²⁹W. F. Albright, "The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, LXII (April, 1936), 27. H. H. Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua: Biblical Traditions in the Light of Archaeology (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 80. Ernst Sellin, Geschichte des israelitisch-jüdischen Volkes (Leipzig: Verlag von Quelle & Meyer, 1924), pp. 102-3. Alt, "Megiddo im Übergang," *op. cit.*, pp. 261-62.

The War Under Jephthah

Another minor war of the amphictyony is found in Judges 10:6-11:7. It is a minor war in that, although it concerned the amphictyony as a whole, the actual battle was rather confined. The oppressors in this case were the Ammonites, whose center was in Rabbah, the modern ‘ammān. The incident is again presented as a matter in which the whole amphictyony was involved. The b^enê yisrā’ēl did evil against Yahweh, and He sold them into the hand of the Ammonites for eighteen years (10:6-8). The Israelites who lived east of the Jordan bore the brunt of the oppression, but the Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to distress Judah, Benjamin and the house of Ephraim (10:8-9).

In spite of the other tribes that were concerned, the actual participants in the battle were quite limited. The feud was basically between the people of Gilead and the Ammonites (Judg. 12:2). Although the people of Gilead were possibly relatives of Ephraim (12:4),³⁰ still Ephraim refused a request for help from Gilead (12:2). Of help from Judah or Benjamin there is no mention. Although the "people of Israel" encamped against the Ammonites in Mizpeh, it was the sārê of Gilead who took it upon themselves to look about for someone to lead the battle against the Ammonites, apparently after Ephraim had refused to send help (10:17-18).³¹ The man they found, Jephthah, had a home in Mizpeh (11:34) but was an outcast of Gilead because of his illegitimate birth

³⁰Noth, The History of Israel, p. 158; Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 218.

³¹Moore, op. cit., p. 307.

(11:1). He had gathered a band of raiders around himself and roamed the land of Tob, possibly the high plains southwest of Hermon, between gōlān and legā down to the Yarmuk.³² Thus Jephthah roamed in the area of Aramaean domination and perhaps already became known as a fighter against Ammon.³³ It is quite probable that it was not only Jephthah's personal reputation, but also the renown of his band of raiders, that prompted the leaders of hard-pressed Gilead to call for him.³⁴

Despite the circumstances of his call, Jephthah was clearly a charismatic leader in a sacral war. He "spoke all his words before Yahweh at Mizpeh" (11:11), and the spirit of Yahweh came upon him (11:29). No doubt his own band of raiders formed the nucleus of his army, but Judges 11:29 indicates he also went to and fro in Gilead and Manasseh, possibly for the purpose of raising the clans for war.³⁵ That he also recruited men from the land west of the Jordan is seen by the use of the verb 'br (11:32; 12:3); Jephthah "crossed over" to fight against the Ammonites. Perhaps at this point Ephraim refused to send men to help in the battle (12:2-3). The battle itself is described in two verses, Judges 11:32-33; apparently Jephthah made a full circle in

³²Täubler, op. cit., p. 284, places it here on the basis of references in 2 Sam. 10:6,8; 2 Macc. 12:17; and the Palestine list of Thutmosis III.

³³At the time of David the Aramaeans and the Ammonites were banded together (2 Sam. 10:6-8); see Täubler, op. cit., p. 285.

³⁴Ibid., p. 288.

³⁵Moore, op. cit., p. 298, takes it in this sense. Von Rad, op. cit., p. 23, overlooks this in stating that there was no summoning of the tribes in this story.

Ammonite territory and destroyed twenty cities.³⁶ Yet the war seems to have been mainly defensive, and no attempt was made to take possession of Ammonite territory.³⁷

The anger of the Ephraimites at Jephthah for proceeding to the battle without them shows that the event was considered to be an affair of the amphictyony.³⁸ Von Rad's arguments for excluding this from the holy wars of the amphictyony are not convincing.³⁹ Although Jephthah and Gilead are the active participants in this war, they are interchangeable at every point with the b'enê yisrā'ēl.⁴⁰ The result of the battle is that the Ammonites fell before the people of Israel (11:33). Yahweh, the God of the amphictyony, controlled the events throughout (10:7,16; 11:29,32). The actual participants in the battle were only a fraction of the total federation: Jephthah's band, Gilead, and perhaps Manasseh. Conspicuous by their absence were Reuben and Gad; Ephraim definitely refused to take part. Yet it was a war and a victory of the "people of Israel."

³⁶Taubler, op. cit., p. 287.

³⁷Noth, The History of Israel, p. 158.

³⁸Von Rad, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

³⁹Ibid. Von Rad makes it clear that "die jetztige Darstellung von Jephtha als einem Charismatiker, die geschichtliche Wirklichkeit zugunsten eines Schemas übermalt hat."

⁴⁰Judg. 10:6,8,10,15,17; 11:4,5,13-17,33.

CHAPTER III

THE WAR AGAINST THE CANAANITES

The Historical Background of the War

Judges 4 and 5 present two independent accounts of the war between the Israelite amphictyony under Deborah and Barak and the northern Canaanite coalition under Sisera. There are some small problems which arise in a comparison of the two accounts, but the two basic difficulties are these: Judges 4 presents Sisera as Jabin's general, while Judges 5 knows only Sisera; and Judges 4 describes the battle with only Naphtali and Zebulun taking part, while Judges 5 names a considerably larger group of tribes.

Judges 5, the Song of Deborah, is different from any of the other accounts of the wars of the amphictyony in that it consists of archaic poetry;¹ its special function shall be considered later in the chapter. The prose account of the war in Judges 4 is set in the same type of theological framework as the other battle accounts in Judges: the people of Israel did evil against Yahweh, and He sold them into the hand of Jabin and his general Sisera; when the people of Israel cried to Him for help, He raised up Deborah the judge and Barak and routed Sisera before them. "On that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel." (Judg. 4:23).

¹The archaic character of the song is seen in a comparison of it with the Ugaritic literature; see, for example, W. F. Albright, "The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, LXII (April, 1936), 26-31.

It seems that Judges 4 is a combination of the battle against Jabin of Hazor (Josh. 11:1-14) and a later battle against Sisera.² The account in Joshua 11 states expressly that the coalition led by Jabin was defeated and completely wiped out, that all the kings were killed, and that Hazor was burned. To be sure, the account in Joshua appears to be generalized and made to fit into a certain structure; yet its historical basis is too strong to pass it off as Möhlenbrink does: "Die Schlacht 'am Wasser von Merom' is sicher nur ein Reflex der Deborkämpfe von Jdc. 4 und 5."³ Täubler likewise sees little historical worth in Joshua 11; he feels that Jabin and Sisera were contemporaries, and Jabin was fighting with Barak and Naphtali while Sisera was battling some of the other tribes of Israel. In Judges 4, according to him, "die alte Volkserzählung, der die früheren Kämpfe Baraks bekannt waren, blickt durch," thus explaining the references to Jabin.⁴ But this reconstruction is unnecessarily complex and fails to do justice to the biblical tradition that Jabin and Hazor were destroyed before this time. Archaeological evidence shows Hazor was destroyed in the thirteenth cen-

²Thus, for example, Peter R. Ackroyd, "The Composition of the Song of Deborah," Vetus Testamentum, II (1952), 162; Eugen Täubler, Biblische Studien: Die Epoche der Richter (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958), p. 142; Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951), p. 19; H. H. Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua: Biblical Traditions in the Light of Archaeology (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 42; George F. Moore, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges, Vol. VII of The International Critical Commentary, edited by Alfred Plummer (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), p. 109.

³Kurt Möhlenbrink, "Die Landnahmesagen des Buches Josua," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LVI (1938): 266.

⁴Täubler, op. cit., pp. 150-52.

tury and was not revived until Solomon's time.⁵

Some scholars explain the second difficulty, the fact that only two tribes are mentioned in Judges 4, by referring also this part of the account to the earlier battle with Jabin:

In Jd. 4 the account of a victory over Jabin, king of Hazor, achieved by the two tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, is combined with the story of the victory over Sisera of Harosheth, achieved by a much wider combination of tribes. . . . That a victory actually won by a united people under Joshua was later ascribed to Zebulun and Naphtali is far less probable than that a local victory of these tribes has been magnified into the exploit of the whole people under Joshua.⁶

However, the prose account in Judges 4 corresponds in so many details with the Song of Deborah that a more favorable verdict must be given to the historical reliability of Judges 4 than the above theories do.⁷ Judges 4 obviously intends for the ten thousand men from Naphtali and Zebulun (4:6,10) to be understood as those who routed Sisera and his chariots and army (4:14-16). Noth recognizes that the original tradition of the battle against Sisera had only Naphtali and Zebulun as participants.⁸ And Weiser points out that Judges 4, with its marked tendency to ascribe the events

⁵For the archaeological evidence in summary form, see Yigael Yadin, "The Fourth Season of Excavations at Hazor," The Biblical Archaeologist, XXII (February, 1959), 2-20. Alt shows from an Amarna letter that the prince of Hazor had a leading role in northern Palestine, and the memory of this may have connected his name with Sisera; Albrecht Alt, "Neues über Palästina aus dem Archiv Amenophis' IV," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959), III, 165-68.

⁶H. H. Rowley, op. cit., p. 42. See also Moore, op. cit., p. 109.

⁷Von Rad, op. cit., p. 19.

⁸Martin Noth, The History of Israel, translated from the German by P. R. Ackroyd (second edition; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 150.

to all Israel (4:1,3,4,23,24), would certainly indicate that more tribes took part in the battle, if such a tradition were present.⁹ Thus the evidence from Judges 4 seems to indicate that, while Jabin is secondary in this story, the participants in the battle with Sisera were understood to be only Zebulun and Naphtali. Here again a victory achieved by a limited number of tribes is without further ado made a victory of the whole amphictyony, the "people of Israel."

Although Joshua 11 is the only account of an Israelite conquest of Galilee, yet at the time of the battle against Sisera this region appears to be rather strongly Israelite. Bright feels this is an indication that Israel had absorbed kindred people who were already present in the land.¹⁰ In some unknown way tension arose between these Israelites and the remaining Canaanite city-states,¹¹ leading to open conflict. The Canaanites were lead by Sisera, possibly the successor of Shamgar,¹² who was ruler in Harosheth-hagoiim, probably the modern tell 'amr at the end of the plain of Jezreel.¹³ His name is possibly Illyrian, and as such he may have been a member of the ruling class of the "Sea Peoples,"¹⁴

⁹Artur Weiser, "Das Deborahlied--Eine gattungs- und traditionsgeschichtliche Studie," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LXXI (1959), 67-68.

¹⁰John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 123.

¹¹See infra, p. 82.

¹²Supra, p. 16.

¹³Albrecht Alt, "Galiläische Probleme," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), II, 372.

¹⁴Noth, op. cit., pp. 150, 162.

or he may have made an alliance with them.¹⁵ The battle itself took place "at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo" (Judg. 5:19), after Barak waited until the rain would make the position of the enemy army in the plain untenable.¹⁶ Bright reconstructs the battle: "Victory was won when a torrential rainstorm bogged the Canaanite chariots down, enabling the Israelite footmen to slaughter their occupants."¹⁷ The results of the victory are difficult to assess. Kaufmann feels this was the end of the Canaanites in the territory of Israel,¹⁸ while Noth thinks it unlikely that Israel took possession of the Canaanite cities of the plain.¹⁹ The excavations at Megiddo prompted Albright to suppose that the Israelites began dwelling in that city during the break between strata VII and VI;²⁰ Alt feels that the excavations show Israel did not

¹⁵W. F. Albright, "The Biblical Period," The Jews, Their History, Culture, and Religion, edited by Louis Finkelstein (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949), I, 20. Also Albrecht Alt, "Megiddo im Übergang vom kanaanäischen zum israelitischen Zeitalter," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 266.

¹⁶Täubler, op. cit., pp. 154-56.

¹⁷Bright, op. cit., p. 158.

¹⁸Yehezkel Kaufmann, The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Canaan, translated from the Hebrew manuscript by M. Dagut (Jerusalem: At the Magnes Press, 1953), p. 87.

¹⁹Noth, op. cit., p. 151.

²⁰After a change of mind, Albright went back to his original position; see, e.g., Albright, "The Song of Deborah," op. cit., pp. 27-29; W. F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine (Bungay, Suffolk: Richard Clay & Co., Ltd., 1956), pp. 117-18; Robert Engberg, "Historical Analysis of Archaeological Evidence: Megiddo and the Song of Deborah," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, LXXVIII (April, 1940), 4-9; and finally Albright, "The Biblical Period," op. cit., p. 58, note 52.

occupy Megiddo until the time of King Saul or David, the Canaanites in the meantime living under the pax Philistaea.²¹ At any rate, effective Canaanite opposition to the Israelite tribes was ended with this victory.

The Cultic Character of Judges 5

Although many scholars feel the Song of Deborah belongs to the literary genre of victory songs,²² there are numerous indications in the song that it arose in a cultic environment.²³ The structure of the song is not logical or chronological. "Instead, we find a great many scenes placed side by side with no coherent relationship evident between them."²⁴ Although the logical sequence of events in Judges 4 requires over forty instances of the waw consecutive imperfect, Judges 5 uses this only in verse 28. Likewise, there is no trace of the regular use of the tenses in Judges 5; the song moves freely between the perfect and imperfect.²⁵ The song

aus verschiedenen Gattungen gemischt und in verschiedene Szenen mit wechselnder Blick- und Gedankenrichtung aufgeteilt ist, deren dramatischer Charakter durch eine merkwürdige, oft unvermittelte Abwechslung in den Anrede-, Aufforderungs-, und Aussageformen zutage tritt.²⁶

²¹Alt, "Megiddo im Übergang," op. cit., pp. 268-70.

²²Albright, "The Song of Deborah," op. cit., pp. 30-31.

²³Details in Weiser, op. cit., pp. 67-97.

²⁴Gillis Gerleman, "The Song of Deborah in the Light of Stylistics," Vetus Testamentum, I (1951), pp. 171-72.

²⁵Ibid., p. 178.

²⁶Weiser, op. cit., p. 69.

The structure tends to indicate a liturgical composition, composed for a plurality of voices; this is borne out by the language and concepts in the song. The root pr⁴ in verse two is used as a passive participle in Exodus 32:25 for cultic ecstasy. Words elsewhere in the Old Testament from the root ndb are overwhelmingly used in a cultic sense, as is also the incitement to "bless Yahweh." The sentence, "I to Yahweh, I will sing, I will make melody to Yahweh, the God of Israel" (Judg. 5:3) certainly places the song in a cultic situation. The same can be said of the theophany in 5:4-5.²⁷ Weiser thinks Judges 5:6-8 is a ritual of confession of guilt and denouncing of foreign gods, as in Joshua 24,²⁸ while Sellin feels these verses indicate the acceptance of Yahweh-worship on the part of the northern tribes after the battle.²⁹ The fact that Deborah is called "mother in Israel" points out her role in initiating the assembly after the battle; this could be for the purpose of renewing the amphictyony after a period of Unterbrechung.³⁰ The hōq^eqê of verse nine could be the tribal leaders who came as delegates to the

²⁷Other passages which describe a theophany in a cultic situation include Ps. 18:8ff.; 50:2f.; 68:8f.; 77:17ff.; Deut. 33:2; Micah 1:3f.; Nahum 1:3; Hab. 3:3ff. See Weiser, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 75-76.

²⁹Ernst Sellin, "Seit welcher Zeit verehrten die nordisraelitischen Stämme Jahwe?," Oriental Studies Published in Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary (1883-1923) of Paul Haupt As Director of the Oriental Seminary of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md., edited by Cyrus Adler and Aaron Ember (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1926), p. 132; Sellin would place "die Begründung des Jahwebundes mit Israel an das in dem Liede gefeierte Ereignis."

³⁰Weiser, op. cit., p. 77.

festival to complete the free-will offering of the people; they came on asses and sat on garments that were spread out.³¹ y^etannû in verse eleven is the same word used in Judges 11:40 in a cultic situation; Weiser would translate it, "wiederholen in antiphonischen Vortrag."³² The sidqôt y^hwh to be repeated in this cultic situation would certainly include the recent victory; quite probably also previous mighty acts of God would likewise be remembered. Weiser feels that Judges 5:11c indicates the close of the cult scene and the beginning of the victory celebration, consisting of a victory procession by the 'ām y^hwh, with 5:12b being a summons to Barak to open the procession by leading forth the captive train.³³ According to Weiser's interpretation, the song portrays the victors following the captives in the procession, with representatives from Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir, Zebulun, and Issachar. After the description of the battle (5:18), the cultic character of the song is further seen in the act of blessing and cursing (5:23-24).³⁴

³¹Ibid., p. 78. mitnadd^ebîm seems to mean a free-will offering.

³²Ibid., p. 79. The Ugaritic texts often use a root tny in the sense "repeat": Baal I* ii 9; II vi 3; vii 30; viii 31; III* A 8; B 14; V iii 27,37; vi 22; Keret I i 27; II vi 28. The references are to the texts in G. R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956). The difficulty would be in the change from the Ugaritic tha to Hebrew tau; usually it would become Hebrew shin.

³³Weiser compares the scene in Judges 5 with Ps. 68:12ff., where a battle seems to be described, and where Yahweh comes from Sinai, leading captives in His train and receiving gifts among men (Ps. 68:18); Weiser, op. cit., pp. 81-83. Tournay feels that these verses of Ps. 68 actually refer to the events in the battle against Sisera; R. Tournay, "Le Psaume LXVII et le livre des Juges," Revue Biblique, LXVI (1959), p. 368. The similarities are indeed striking, and they help to confirm the thesis that Judges 5 arose in a cultic situation.

³⁴Weiser, op. cit., p. 89.

The "Verspottung der Feinde" in 5:28-30 appears

als menschliche Reaktion der Kultteilnehmer auf die göttliche Heilstat, ja geradezu als Mitwirkung an der letzten Vollendung des göttlichen Gerichts über den Feind.³⁵

The last verse of the song likewise fits well into a cultic situation.

Weiser sums up the evidence: The Song of Deborah

is not an actual song of victory, but a liturgical composition which presumably had its place in the framework of a cultic celebration by the tribal union after a victory and it must be understood in this context. With dramatic vivacity and lively alternation of voices and scenes it glorifies the God who appeared from Sinai; it outlines the circumstances before the decisive battle; it is addressed to those who were present at the celebration; it remembers those tribes who were not there as well as those who took part in the struggle; it represents the battle as the judgment of God on the enemies; it demands a curse on the city of Merom [sic] because it did not honor its obligation to help in the fight, and a blessing on the woman who struck down the hostile general. . . .³⁶

The evidence cited above points strongly toward a cultic Sitz im Leben for the Song of Deborah. Eissfeldt suggests that perhaps the song arose soon after the battle in the manner of the Philistine festival described in Judges 16:23-25.³⁷ Here the "lords of the Philistines" gathered to celebrate their victory over Samson by sacrificing to Dagon and rejoicing. The people recited, "Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has slain many of us," and they made sport of Samson. In perhaps somewhat the same way the leaders of the Israelite tribes gathered together to celebrate the extremely important victory over

³⁵Ibid., p. 93.

³⁶Artur Weiser, The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development, translated from the fourth German edition by Dorothea M. Barton (New York: Association Press, 1961), pp. 30-31.

³⁷Otto Eissfeldt, Einleitung in das alte Testament (2. Auflage; Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1956), p. 118.

the Canaanites, and it seems possible that the Song of Deborah was the product of this cultic festival.

The Amphictyony According to the Song of Deborah

The tribes of Israel are definitely described as belonging to a sacral confederation in the Song of Deborah; they are the 'ām yhw (5:11; 13). On the basis of the song the question will be posed whether a different picture of tribal participation in the war is given from Judges 4.

Ephraim heads the list of tribes as given in the Massoretic text in Judges 5:14a. minnî 'eprayim probably means "some from Ephraim." Thus it could mean either some Ephraimites who joined in the battle, or the delegates from Ephraim at the victory festival.³⁸ šāršām ba'amālēq is difficult and often emended to šārû šām bā'ēmeq, "they set out thither into the valley." Täubler suggests understanding the Massoretic text in the sense of a comparison: "die von Ephraim, dessen Sprösslinge solche wie die Amalekiter sind."³⁹ However, in view of Judges 12:45, where the "hill country of the Amalekites" is "in the land of Ephraim," perhaps some relationship between Ephraim and Amalek is expressed by this verse.

Benjamin is apparently in the lead, ahead of Ephraim. Täubler uses this to show that the description of Benjamin as a wolf in Genesis 49:27 applies to this period.⁴⁰ The description in Judges 5:14, however, would

³⁸Weiser, "Das Deborahlied," op. cit., p. 86.

³⁹Thus they would be compared with the people of Amalek, who were ever ready for war: Täubler, op. cit., pp. 136-37.

⁴⁰For Benjamin, this is "das verbindende Mittelstück in seine Heldenrolle zwischen Ehud and Saul"; Täubler, op. cit., pp. 138-40.

fit a victory procession perhaps better than an advance into battle.

Machir follows next in the list: "Some from Machir marched down, the commanders." Here those who came are expressly called m^eh^og^eqⁱm, the same word as is used in Judges 5:9 for those who made free-will offerings. This verse would tend to indicate that it was a festival they were coming for instead of a battle, where the fighting men also would be mentioned (Judg. 4:14). Machir, according to the genealogical lists, was the son of Manasseh and father of Gilead.⁴¹ The combination with Gilead would place Machir's locale in Transjordan, although the connection with Manasseh would indicate that Machir's original home was in the land west of the Jordan.⁴² The mention of Machir in the list following Ephraim and Benjamin and preceding Zebulun would suggest that, at the time of Deborah, Machir still was living west of the Jordan, in the northern part of the mountain of Ephraim. The verb yrđ would further support this. Täubler thinks that Machir originally had no relation at all with Manasseh but was rather a small clan that had been in the land previously; sometime after the Song of Deborah it migrated to Transjordan in order "nicht als kleine Gruppe in die Bildung des neuen Stammes einbezogen zu werden."⁴³ Alt reconstructs the history of Machir somewhat differently: after the House of Joseph took the mountains of Ephraim (Judg. 1:22ff.), Manasseh (Machir) went north to begin a separate existence, living in contact with the non-Israelite cities

⁴¹For example, Num. 26:28-29 and Josh. 17:1. Moore, op. cit., p. 150.

⁴²See Noth, op. cit., p. 160.

⁴³Täubler, op. cit., pp. 176, 246.

such as Shechem and Tirzah.⁴⁴ Noth follows this up by asserting that Joshua 17:1 indicates that originally Machir and Ephraim made up the House of Joseph. Sometime after the battle against Sisera most of Machir migrated to Transjordan north of the Jabbok, and the people who remained behind formed the tribe of Manasseh. In time "Manasseh" became greater in importance, and Machir was made the son of Manasseh and the father of Gilead.⁴⁵ There is a good amount of guesswork in such a reconstruction; but the evidence seems to indicate that Machir was indeed an early form of the tribe of Manasseh,⁴⁶ living in the mountains of Ephraim at this time.

Zebulun sent out mōš^ve kîm b^všēbet sōpēr, "those who bear the marshal's staff," again adding weight to the theory that these verses describe a procession of the leaders from various tribes in a victory celebration. Zebulun is mentioned again in 5:18, where obviously its participation in the battle against Sisera is remembered; this also would indicate that mention of this tribe in connection with the other tribes in 5:14 is for a different purpose than that of describing the battle. The prose account in Judges 4 also mentions Zebulun as one of the two tribes that took part in the battle (4:6,10). This is to be expected, since its border must have been very close to Harosheth, tell 'amr

⁴⁴Albrecht Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 127-28.

⁴⁵Noth, op. cit., pp. 61-62. Also Martin Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1930), p. 36.

⁴⁶See also Adolphe Lods, Israel From Its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century, translated by S. H. Hooke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1932), p. 338.

(Josh. 19:10-16). And its border sanctuary with Issachar (Deut. 33:19) was probably on Mount Tabor,⁴⁷ which was the point of assembly for the battle against Sisera (Judg. 4:6,14). The tradition in Genesis 49:13 that Zebulun lived on the coast probably does not mean that the tribe had to perform compulsory work in the harbours of the northern coastal plain in payment for its settlement,⁴⁸ but it can rather be seen as a result of the victory over Sisera.⁴⁹

Issachar likewise sent its leaders as representatives (sārê); this again conforms to the above interpretation. This was apparently Deborah's tribe (Judg. 5:15).⁵⁰ Yet Deborah had left them and was judging Israel in the hill country of Ephraim (4:5).⁵¹ In spite of Issachar's proximity to the battle, still apparently this tribe did not take part in the battle itself, although certainly it was affected by it. The reason for this is perhaps seen in the situation of Issachar at this time. The towns of Issachar included Shunem (Josh. 19:18), the modern sōlem, which was one city in a belt of Canaanite cities that stretched from Dor to Beth-shan in the Amarna age. An Amarna letter indicates that this city was destroyed by Labaja, and apparently it

⁴⁷Thus Noth, The History of Israel, p. 66; also Täubler, op. cit., pp. 125-26.

⁴⁸As maintained by Noth, The History of Israel, p. 79.

⁴⁹This is maintained by Täubler, op. cit., p. 122.

⁵⁰Moore, op. cit., p. 108, thinks Judg. 4:5 indicates that her home was in the heart of Mount Ephraim.

⁵¹It is interesting that another of the judges, Tola, also came from Issachar but judged Israel in the hill country of Ephraim (Judg. 10:1).

was not rebuilt again by the Canaanites.⁵² Perhaps the people of Issachar, after settling first in the hill country above the Jordan valley,⁵³ pressed westward and took over the area of sōlem, thus breaking the belt of Canaanite cities and becoming the only Israelite tribe at this early time to set firm foot in the plain.⁵⁴ Another of the Amarna letters, probably from Biridija of Megiddo to Amenophis III, casts more light on sōlem:

Siehe, ich lasse in (dem Gebiet) der Stadt Sunama pflügen (irrišū is explained by the Canaanite gloss ihrišū), und ich führe mazza-Leute hin. Aber siehe, die Fürsten, die bei mir sind, handeln nicht wie ich; sie lassen in (dem Gebiet) der Stadt Sunama nicht pflügen und führen keine mazza-Leute hin.⁵⁵

This forced labor at sōlem was apparently carried over to the settlement there by Issachar; Genesis 49:15 says Issachar saw that the land was pleasant and becoming a "slave at forced labor" (lemas 'ōbēd).⁵⁶

The name Issachar itself would bear this out; it apparently means "hired

⁵²See various works by Alt such as Albrecht Alt, "Die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 122; Alt, "Neues über Palästina," op. cit., pp. 170-73; Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme," op. cit., p. 167. Also W. F. Albright, "The Topography of the Tribe of Issachar," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, XLIV (1926), p. 226.

⁵³Ibid., p. 234. Albright feels Issachar became subject to the Canaanites after the Song of Deborah, not being freed until the time of Saul and David; ibid., p. 235.

⁵⁴Alt, "Die Landnahme," op. cit., p. 123; Alt, "Neues über Palästina," op. cit., p. 174; Noth, The History of Israel, p. 79.

⁵⁵Alt, "Neues über Palästina," op. cit., p. 169; Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme," op. cit., p. 167; also see Taubler's discussion of Alt's material; Taubler, op. cit., p. 101.

⁵⁶Alt feels this took place soon after the Amarna age; Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme," op. cit., p. 168; Alt, "Megiddo im Übergang," op. cit., pp. 265-67.

laborer,"⁵⁷ although Albright seeks to derive it from yistakar el, "God gives reward."⁵⁸ Thus it seems possible that Issachar acquired its territory around sōlem by giving up its independence to its Canaanite neighbors. If this condition still prevailed at the time of the battle against Sisera and the Canaanites, Issachar would have been in no condition to join in the battle; after the battle, with its independence assured, the tribe could have sent delegates to the victory festival.

Naphtali is not mentioned in this list of the tribes, although there is a reference to that tribe's feats in the battle in Judges 5:18. This is another indication that the list in 5:13-15 is not a list of tribes that took part in the battle. Täubler concludes from this omission that Naphtali did not take part in this battle; the mention in 5:18 simply refers to previous battles of this tribe.⁵⁹ The Latin translation of 5:18 would tend to support this: "in regione Merome," which would seem to refer to Joshua 11:7. However, this is based on an ungrammatical translation of the Hebrew 'al m'êrômê sādê. Some scholars substitute Naphtali for Issachar in Judges 5:15b.⁶⁰ This would make sense, since Barak was

⁵⁷Noth, The History of Israel, p. 78.

⁵⁸Albright, "The Topography of the Tribe of Issachar," op. cit., p. 234, note 4.

⁵⁹Täubler, op. cit., pp. 146-49, places Jabin contemporary with Sisera; Naphtali was busy fighting Jabin at this time, although Barak could slip away and come against Sisera.

⁶⁰Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth, Vol. IX of Das Alte Testament Deutsch, edited by Volkmar Hertrich and Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), p. 179. See also Ernst Sellin, "Zu Jud. 5:15aß," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LIX (1942/43), 218.

from Kedesh in Naphtali, and he naturally would be with his own tribe (4:7). The Hebrew of 5:15 is very obscure; at least Barak is mentioned in the place where his tribe would be expected. This could indicate that he came as the representative of his tribe, just as the other tribes sent delegates to this festival.

The taunt-song scorning those tribes who stayed away (5:15d-17) does not mention the leaders of the tribes but rather the tribes as whole units.⁶¹ Reuben is picked out for special taunting; apparently the clans (p^elaggôt) of Reuben were in such a situation at this period that they could have been represented at the amphictyonic meeting, even though they lead a shadowy existence otherwise in this period.⁶² The Old Testament usually connects Reuben with Gad and places both in Transjordan (Num. 32:1ff.; Josh. 13:15ff.). Yet the Song of Deborah seems to imply that Reuben was west of the Jordan, for Gilead's home beyond the Jordan is singled out as something special (Judg. 5:17). There is some scattered evidence in the Old Testament for this state of affairs: the "stone of Bohan the son of Reuben" (Josh. 15:6; 18:17) is near Jericho; Hezron is among the clans of Reuben and also a subdivision of a clan of Judah (Num. 26:6,21); a Reubenite-Gadite altar was built west of the Jordan (Josh. 22:11); Achan was of the family of Carmi of Judah (Josh. 7:1,18), which was perhaps a Reubenite family (Num. 26:6) which later joined Judah; and Reuben's violation of Bilhah apparently

⁶¹Weiser, "Das Deborahlied," op. cit., pp. 84-85.

⁶²Noth, The History of Israel, p. 65. See also Moore, op. cit., p. 154.

took place west of the Jordan (Gen. 35:21-22).⁶³ Thus it seems that Reuben existed at this time, possibly even west of the Jordan; yet the tribe showed no interest in a war of the amphictyony, and for this it was taunted.

Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan. That Gilead was substantially the same as the tribe of Gad seems to be indicated both by the absence of Gad elsewhere in the Song of Deborah and by the strong Old Testament tradition regarding Gad's place east of the Jordan.⁶⁴ Noth uses Judges 12:4 to show that Gilead was of Ephraimitic descent;⁶⁵ however, the land designated as "Gilead" seems to have been populated by a variety of peoples at this time. Bergman counts up Machir, Jair, Nobah, Segub, and Gilead among the various clans he thinks lived in this territory.⁶⁶ The name in Judges 5:17 seems to imply such a larger group of clans:

Der Landesname bezeichnet an dieser Stelle die Gesamtheit der in dem Land sitzenden Sippen, unabhängig von dem Mass ihres tatsächlichen Zusammenschlusses in dem sich weithin erstreckenden und in seinen Teilen sehr auseinandergerissenen Landstrich.⁶⁷

⁶³For this point of view, see Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, p. 70. Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 63-64; Lods, op. cit., pp. 331-32; Täubler, op. cit., pp. 226-27; and also L. B. Paton, "Israel's Conquest of Canaan," Journal of Biblical Literature, XXXII (1913), p. 16.

⁶⁴Täubler, op. cit., p. 121.

⁶⁵Noth, The History of Israel, p. 61. He places the land of Gilead in a wooded district on the south side of the Jabbok, the modern nahr ez-zerqa.

⁶⁶Abraham Bergman, "The Israelite Tribe of Half-Manasseh," Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society, XVI (1936), pp. 252-53.

⁶⁷Täubler, op. cit., p. 231; also Bright, op. cit., p. 143.

The tribe of Dan receives scorn for staying with the ships. This expression is strange, since neither in its southern nor its northern position was Dan near the coast. Scholars are evenly divided on the position of Dan at this time, with no convincing evidence on either side. Alt feels that Dan's existence in the south had been a nomadic one, so the report in the Song of Deborah suits its northern location better.⁶⁸ Noth thinks that Judges 18:28 establishes some connection between Laish and Sidon, and, following the example of Issachar, Dan bought its settlement by accepting compulsory labor in the southern Phoenician seaports.⁶⁹ Täubler points to a Nuzi tablet which describes work at a ship lying in harbor and feels Dan could have done such work at Tyre between the harvest and the beginning of winter seeding.⁷⁰ Albright feels this refers to a time before the Philistines forced Dan out of the south,⁷¹ and Moore likewise thinks Dan did not migrate until the Philistines pressed hard upon them.⁷² Rowley points out the difficulties involved in either position and suggests that the whole tribe need not have migrated to the north.⁷³ In support of this latter

⁶⁸Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme," op. cit., p. 160, note 5.

⁶⁹Noth, The History of Israel, p. 80.

⁷⁰Täubler, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

⁷¹Albright, "The Song of Deborah," op. cit., p. 27.

⁷²Moore, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

⁷³See his detailed discussion; Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 81-84; also H. H. Rowley, "The Danite Migration to Laish," Expository Times, LI (July, 1940), 466-71. See also R. Kittel, A History of the Hebrews, translated from the German by Hope W. Hogg and E. B. Speirs (London: Williams and Norgate, 1896), II, 71-72.

suggestion would be Dan's designation as mīšpāhā instead of šēbet (Judg. 13:2; 18:2,11), the small number of men who went to the north (18:11,16), and the fact that Dan never seemed to occupy more than a city and its environs in its northern position. At any rate, it seems impossible to decide on the meaning of Dan's situation as described in the Song of Deborah; it was still recognized as a tribe of the amphityony, but it failed to show interest in this important battle.

Asher likewise had something to do with the sea. Noth again feels this indicates Asher accepted compulsory labor in the seaports in return for its settlement.⁷⁴ Täubler would rather think that the miprāšaw of 5:17 refer to ravines leading down to the sea.⁷⁵ Genesis 49:20 and Deuteronomy 33:24-25 imply that Asher was prospering with dainty food and oil; perhaps this was a result of some type of business relationship with the Canaanites and the seaports. The tribe's lack of interest in the battle against Sisera might have stemmed either from a fear of antagonizing these people or from a more unfavorable position than the other tribes, with Harosheth between its area and the field of battle.⁷⁶ The same concerns might also account for Dan's absence, if that tribe was in its northern location at the time. Asher and Gad were the sons of the maid Silpa in the usual genealogies, and Dan was the son of the maid Bilhah; it is possible that this indicates a more distant related-

⁷⁴Noth, The History of Israel, p. 79.

⁷⁵Täubler, op. cit., p. 118.

⁷⁶H. Wheeler Robinson, The History of Israel: Its Facts and Factors (London: Duckworth, 1938), p. 44. See also John Garstang, Joshua Judges (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1931), p. 305.

ness and offers another explanation for the aloofness of these three tribes from the common concern of the amphictyony.⁷⁷

While these tribes are merely taunted for staying away, one place is singled out for a bitter, sacral curse for not coming "to the help of Yahweh" (Judg. 5:23). The curse on Meroz is apparently part of a cursing-blessing ritual, the blessing on Jael (5:24) being the other part. The location of Meroz is uncertain; Eusebius testified to Merrhus in the vicinity of Dothaim, Abel proposed hirbet mārūs near Hazor, Alt feels it was probably in Manasseh, and Weiser prefers a location in Zebulun or Naphtali.⁷⁸ It is strange that Meroz received a special curse while the Israelite tribes who did not participate were not cursed. Alt feels that Meroz had been a Canaanite city incorporated into Manasseh, since the song names its "inhabitants," an expression often used in the Old Testament for the possessors and rulers of the aristocratic Canaanite cities. Then the lords of Meroz, in the time of battle against the Canaanites, remained neutral; in such circumstances neutrality had to be answered by expulsion from the tribes and possible destruction of the city.⁷⁹ The analogy of Jabesh-gilead in Judges 21:5-12 might be introduced; yet this would not explain why the

⁷⁷Täubler, op. cit., p. 122; J. W. Jack, "The Israel Stele of Merneptah," Expository Times, XXXVI (October, 1924), 43. See also John Bright, Early Israel in Recent History Writing (London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1959), pp. 118-19.

⁷⁸Albrecht Alt, "Meros," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 276-77; Weiser, "Das Deborahlied," op. cit., p. 92.

⁷⁹Alt, "Meros," op. cit., pp. 274-76. Weiser thinks somewhat along the same lines; Weiser, "Das Deborahlied," op. cit., p. 92.

other tribes also were not cursed in the Song of Deborah. Perhaps the explanation is that, in contrast with the neutrality of the other tribes, "eine positive Fehltat" should be ascribed to Meroz. Possibly this city refused supplies to those engaging in the battle; the curse it received would be parallel to Nabal's punishment for refusing bread to David (1 Sam. 25:10ff.) and the destruction of Succoth and Penuel for refusing bread to Gideon's army (Judg. 8:4ff.).⁸⁰

Three of the traditional tribes of Israel are not mentioned in the Song of Deborah: Judah, Simeon and Levi. It might be possible to read Judah in 5:13b:⁸¹ the old orthography would omit the vowel letter, and the change from ywhh would be slight: יחזקל יחזקל in the older script, or יהה יהה in the later script. However, although 5:13a is obscure, it seems impossible to read Simeon here, and the parallelism would weigh against reading yhdh in the second half of the verse. The political history of Judah, Simeon and Levi in this early period appears to be extremely complicated, and only its broad outlines can be given here.⁸² There was apparently a close relationship between

⁸⁰Taubler, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-94.

⁸¹Suggested by Prof. Norman Habel, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

⁸²The Old Testament reports but little concerning the activity of these three tribes during the period of the amphictyony. Among the many studies on this subject some of the more useful treatments are H. H. Rowley, "Early Levite History and the Question of the Exodus," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, III (April, 1944), 73-78; Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, *passim*; Noth, *The History of Israel*, pp. 55-59; Y. Aharoni, "The Negeb of Israel," *Israel Exploration Journal*, VIII (1958), 26-38; Albrecht Alt, "Bemerkungen zu einigen jüdischen Ortslisten des alten Testaments," *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), II, 289-305.

these three tribes. Besides being "Leah" tribes, they are tied together by biblical traditions: Simeon's territory is in the midst of Judah (Josh. 19:1-9), and the few Levites that appear in this period likewise are related to Judah (Judg. 17:9; 19:1). Judah and Simeon are pictured together during the conquest in Judges 1; and two of Levi's clans in Numbers 26:58 can be equated with Judah's cities of Libnah and Hebron.⁸³ Some very early traditions show Simeon and Levi as warring tribes fighting with Shechem (Gen. 34); perhaps they were related to the habiru in this area in the Amarna age.⁸⁴ For this treachery they were condemned to be scattered in Israel (Gen. 49:5-7).⁸⁵ Perhaps at this time they fell back on Judah.⁸⁶ A number of other clans were also associated with Judah in this early period: the Kenites, who took the wilderness of Judah (Judg. 1:16); the Calebites, who took possession of Hebron (Judg. 1:20); the Kenizzites, who took Debir (Judg. 1:11-15); and the Jerahmeelites, who also lived in this area (1 Sam. 27:10; 30:29).⁸⁷ The references to a southern invasion of Canaan (Num. 13; 21:1-3) seem

⁸³See S. A. Cook, "Simeon and Levi," American Journal of Theology, XIII (July, 1909), 375; also Leroy Waterman, "Some Determining Factors in the Northward Progress of Levi," Journal of the American Oriental Society, LVII (1937), 377.

⁸⁴Among those who think Gen. 34 describes the tribes of Simeon and Levi are Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 122-23; Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme," op. cit., p. 143; Noth, The History of Israel, p. 71; and Rowley, "Early Levite History," op. cit., p. 75.

⁸⁵Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, p. 25; Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 8, 113-14.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 123.

⁸⁷For details concerning these clans see Robinson, The History of Israel, p. 41; Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 56-57, 76; Aharoni, "The Negeb of Israel," op. cit., pp. 27-31; Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 5, 153-54; Moore, op. cit., pp. 22-23, 29-31.

to fit this group of clans which later occupied southern Palestine.⁸⁸ Perhaps these clans even joined together in a southern amphictyony.⁸⁹ All these clans appear to make up the later Judah as it emerges under David.⁹⁰ This brief review of the complex history of the southern tribes suggests that, at the time of the battle against Sisera, Judah, Simeon and Levi, together with the other clans related to them, were in their own political throes, making it impossible for them to send representatives to the battle or victory celebration.⁹¹ In addition, the belt of Canaanite cities separating their territory from the central tribes may have been another factor in their lack of interest.⁹² Perhaps this situation was the occasion of the prayer in Deuteronomy 33:7.⁹³

In summary of the evidence and indications discussed in this chapter, the battle against Sisera was apparently fought by the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, although the victory was ascribed to all Israel.

⁸⁸The entrance by some of these tribes into Palestine from the south is supported, among others, by Bright, A History of Israel, p. 123; Alt, "Bemerkungen zu einigen jüdischen Ortslisten," op. cit., p. 293; and Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, p. 111.

⁸⁹This is supposed by Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, p. 126; he follows Mowinckel in enumerating as members the Kenites, Kenizzites, Jerahmeelites, Simeonites, Levites and Judahites. Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, pp. 107-8, thinks of Judah, Simeon, Caleb, Othniel, Jerahmeel and Kain; perhaps this amphictyony made David king in Hebron.

⁹⁰Noth, The History of Israel, p. 58.

⁹¹Garstang, op. cit., p. 305; also Arvid Bruno, Gibeon (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923), p. 4.

⁹²Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, pp. 102-4.

⁹³Ernst Sellin, "Zu dem Judasspruch im Jaqobssagen Gen. 49:8-12 und im Mosesegen Deut. 33:7," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LX (1944), 65.

The archaic, cultic Song of Deborah rehearses the events at the victory festival, enumerating the tribes which sent delegates and taunting those which did not.

Geschichtlich gesehen war die Schlacht ein Sieg der beiden Stämme Sebulon und Naphtali unter charismatischer Führung des Barak; in der Perspektive der Kulttradition, die im Deboralied vorliegt, wird dieses Geschehen zur Sache des gesamten Stammesverbandes in Rahmen einer weitgespannten heilsgeschichtlichen Überlieferung.⁹⁴

Ten of the traditional tribes of Israel were members of the amphictyony at the time, according to the Song of Deborah, while Judah, Simeon and Levi were not counted.⁹⁵ The amphictyony was not "a religio-national entity, a supra-tribal subject of history, action, creation," as Kaufmann supposes.⁹⁶ The ties that bound it together were not in the political but in the cultic and sacral sphere; yet for that reason the victory achieved by Yahweh, the God of the amphictyony, was a victory of "the people of Israel."

⁹⁴Weiser, "Das Deboralied," op. cit., p. 89.

⁹⁵Moore, op. cit., p. 134; also J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel: With a Reprint of the Article "Israel" From the Encyclopaedia Britannica (New York: The Meridian Library, 1957), p. 232. Weiser feels that the amphictyony consisted of only ten tribes at this time; Weiser, "Das Deboralied," op. cit., p. 87.

⁹⁶Kaufmann, The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Canaan, p. 66.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR AGAINST THE MIDIANITES

The story of the war against the Midianites under the leadership of Gideon is one of the longer accounts of the wars of this period of the Israelite amphictyony, yet it is one of the least unified. There are factors within Judges 6-8 which point toward the composite character of the story as it is extant. The usual framework for the war stories appears here: the b^enê yiśrā'ēl did evil against Yahweh, and He gave them into the hand of Midian for seven years. When the people of Israel were brought low, they cried to Yahweh, and He sent His messenger to call Gideon to deliver Israel from Midian. Once again the situation is presented as a concern for the "people of Israel" in a generalized way, and it is the God of the Israelite amphictyony, Yahweh, who remedied the situation.

The composite nature of this story, in addition to the editorializing framework, is seen in the account of the call of Gideon, which is the main topic in Judges 7. Whitley attempts to find the classical Pentateuchal sources in the account and assigns 6:7-10 and 6:25-26 to E, while 6:11-24 would belong to J. Material of E in a passage like Exodus 20:2 and material of J in the stories about Abraham in connection with the angel of Yahweh and the oak at Mamre (Gen. 16:7f.; 18:1-8) form the basis of Whitley's division.¹ It is very questionable, however,

¹C. F. Whitley, "The Sources of the Gideon Stories," Vetus Testamentum, VII (1957), 159.

whether J and E material can be distinguished with any certainty in this story.² Yet the fact that there are at least two different traditions here is suggested by the two versions of Gideon's call: Judges 6:11-24 would seem to form one unit, and 6:25-32,36-40 would form the other unit. In each of these traditions Gideon received a message from Yahweh and confirmed it by a special sign. Another section in this story which perhaps shows two different traditions is 6:34-35, which portrays Gideon both as a local warrior of Abiezer and as a national hero.³ In 6:14 Gideon is called to deliver Israel, but in 8:18-21 his motive for pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna has a suggestion of blood-revenge connected with it.⁴ Most telling are the two traditions about the leaders of the Midianites: according to 7:25 and 8:3 they are Oreb and Zeeb, while according to 8:5 and 8:12 they are Zebah and Zalmunna.⁵ Already in 1835 Studer called attention to the fact that 8:4ff. is not a sequel of what precedes; 7:24-8:3 implies that the Midianites had been successfully intercepted and the chiefs were killed, while in 8:4ff. Gideon and his three hundred were still in the battle, with their prospects of success, according to 8:6, still quite uncertain,

²Aage Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament (third edition; Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1957), II, 89-90.

³Whitley, op. cit., p. 158.

⁴Bentzen, op. cit., p. 88. See also Eugen Täubler, Biblische Studien: Die Epoche der Richter (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958), p. 255.

⁵Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951), p. 22.

at least in the eyes of the officials of Succoth.⁶ Therefore it seems that two different sources underlie the present form of the story of Gideon, and these two sources may be characterized as follows; one source concerns Gideon and a small band from his own tribe seeking to avenge the slaying of his kinsmen; the other source pictures Gideon as the charismatic leader of a united group of tribes in a war to deliver Israel. Quite naturally the second tradition presents the incident more as a war of the amphictyony; whether the first tradition is incompatible with the second will be discussed below.

The opponents of Israel in this war were the Midianites,⁷ the most important of the northwestern Arabian group of tribes reckoned by Genesis 25:1-6 with Israel's own race, although they were not relatives of full blood.⁸ This eruption of camel-riding nomads into the Fertile Crescent, later known as the bedouin "razzia,"⁹ threatened the fertile plains of Palestine, especially the plain of Jezreel (Judg. 6:33). That the Midianites got as far as (ad bō)akā 'azzâ, "to the

⁶George F. Moore, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges, Vol. VII of The International Critical Commentary, edited by Alfred Plummer (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), pp. 174-75. See also R. de Vaux, Les Institutions de L'Ancien Testament (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1960), II, 16.

⁷Zimmermann explains the statement that the captives were Ishmaelites (Judg. 8:24) as describing the style the Midianites adopted; Frank Zimmermann, "Reconstructions in Judges 7:25-8:25," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXI (1952), 113.

⁸Moore, op. cit., pp. 177-80, thinks Midian worshipped Yahweh at Horeb before Moses; he finds Midianite clan names in Judah and Reuben.

⁹W. F. Albright, "The Biblical Period," The Jews, Their History, Culture, and Religion, edited by Louis Finkelstein (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949), I, 21.

entrance to Gaza" (6:4), seems to be a general statement showing their raids took them to the road going south from Carmel. In light of this statement, Hertzberg thinks they entered the plain of Jezreel from the coastal plain.¹⁰ Not enough geographical detail is given to explain how the Midianites traveled from Arabia to north central Palestine. Yet it appears that, in addition to the tribes east of the Jordan, the Israelite tribes most directly affected would be Ephraim, Manasseh, Zebulun and Issachar, with Naphtali and Asher also close to the events.

The battle itself took place on the border of the plain of Jezreel, at the northern end of Mount Gilboa. The Midianites fled eastward; Abelmeholah was probably in the vicinity of Beth-shan (1 Kings 4:12), ten Roman miles south of it according to Eusebius.¹¹ Beth-shittah was therefore probably šatta on the southern end of nebi ed-dahi, seven kilometers east of the spring of Harod and nine kilometers northwest of Beth-shan. And Tabbath was perhaps rās abu tabāt on the other side of the Jordan.¹² This indicates that the Midianites scattered east and southeast, down the ravines leading toward the Jordan, especially the nahr gālūd. Some of them crossed the Jordan and headed down the commerce route along the east shore to Succoth (Judg. 8:5), while others went down the western side of the Jordan, with the result that the men of Ephraim could seize "the waters as far as Beth-barah and also the Jordan"¹³ and cut off

¹⁰Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth, Vol. IX of Das Alte Testament Deutsch, edited by Volkmar Hertrich and Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), p. 190.

¹¹Täubler, op. cit., p. 257.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Beth-barah is not identified with any certainty.

their escape (7:24-25). Meanwhile, Gideon and the men who were with him went in pursuit of some of those Midianites who escaped to the land east of the Jordan (7:25; 8:4ff.). Täubler imagines that Gideon probably went from Harod across the Samaritan ridge-way to the wādi fār'a and down this to the Jordan; he then crossed the Jordan at the mouth of the Jabbok and went on the Succoth, where he could wait for the escaping Midianites on the caravan route.¹⁴ A short-cut of this type may have been involved, if Gideon could pursue and overtake the camel-riding nomads. However, the account in 8:10-12 seems to show that Gideon pursued the Midianites for quite a distance and attacked them after they were far enough away to feel secure. The Midianites were encamped in qarqōr, and Gideon went up by the caravan route which is east of nōbah and yogb^ohâ. nōbah was the Israelite name for Kenath (Num. 32:42), which was later one of the Hellenistic cities of the Decapolis, situated on the western slopes of the ġebel haurān. The name yogb^ohâ survives in aġbehāt, northwest of 'ammān. These points seem to be mentioned only to identify the course of the "road of the tent dwellers." There is a natural gateway between the southeastern spurs of the Hauran mountain range and the hills in which the Jabbok originates, and the road through this gateway is known as "the way of the nomads." The Midianites could have fled by this road into the wādi sirhān, and qarqōr is perhaps to be found along this great route into north Arabia at the wells of qerāqer or qarqar, one hundred and eleven miles southeast of 'ammān, at the junction of important desert routes.¹⁵

¹⁴Täubler, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

¹⁵Rand McNally Bible Atlas, edited by Emil G. Kraeling (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1956), p. 157.

The requirements of such a trek into the Arabian desert explains the urgency which Gideon and his men felt in getting provisions from Succoth and Penuel and the seriousness with which their refusal was viewed (Judg. 8:4-9,13-17).

The question of the participation of the Israelite tribes in the war against the Midianites is particularly involved because of the different sources that seem to be woven into the story. In 6:35 Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali were called out; this group was reduced to three hundred, but after the initial rout only Naphtali, Asher and Manasseh were again called out (7:23). Ephraim blocked the escape of some of the Midianites, yet this tribe upbraided Gideon for not calling them out earlier (7:24-25; 8:1-3). In spite of all this, Gideon still had only three hundred men to pursue the Midianites east of the Jordan (8:4ff.).

Gideon himself was from Ophrah, of the clan of the Abiezrites of the tribe of Manasseh (6:11,15). Some scholars place Ophrah at tell el far'ah at the head of a fertile valley leading down to the Jordan, although this site perhaps fits better for Tirzah.¹⁶ Albright would place it on the edge of the northern plain of Sharon,¹⁷ while Alt thinks et-taiḡibe half-way between Tabor and Beth-shan is the best location.¹⁸ In view of the allusion to the slaughter of Gideon's brother at Tabor (8:18-19) et-taiḡibe seems to be preferable as the home of the clan of the Abiezrites.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁷See Jacob M. Myers, "The Book of Judges," The Interpreter's Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1953), II, 731.

¹⁸Albrecht Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 160, note 2.

This would also place Gideon close to the scene of the battle, which took place at the spring of Harod.

The question now arises concerning the men who made up Gideon's army: were they merely members of his own clan, out to get blood-revenge on the Midianites,¹⁹ or did they represent a larger segment of the Israelite amphictyony? The reduction of the thirty-two thousand men of Gideon's first army to three hundred creates problems, in view of the fact that apparently these same men had to be called back again to complete the rout (7:2-8; 7:23-25). Hertzberg points out that Judges 7:3 recalls Deuteronomy 20:8, which bids the officers of the army to send home those who are fainthearted. He thinks that this idea was brought into the Gideon story because of a "volksetymologische Verbindung": the name hārōd, the place of Gideon's encampment, has the same consonants as hārēd, "to tremble" (Judg. 7:1,3).²⁰ This is quite speculative; yet it suggests that perhaps the story of the reduction of Gideon's forces came from a later interpretation of the events. Mendenhall points out that the word 'elep seems to have been used to designate a military unit in a tribe during the period of the judges. Thus, for example, the list in Numbers 1 would give the tribe of Manasseh thirty-two 'alāpîm with a total of two hundred fighting men.²¹ Mendenhall feels the thirty-two 'alāpîm of Gideon's first army (Judg. 7:3) are identical

¹⁹Thus Täubler, *op. cit.*, p. 255. He feels that all the other details in the story are legendary.

²⁰Hertzberg, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

²¹See the discussion of the military organization of the tribes, *infra*, p. 98.

with the three hundred men who succeed in defeating the Midianites and who pursue them into Arabia (7:8ff.; 8:4ff.). Thus Gideon succeeded in mobilizing all thirty-two 'alāpîm of his tribe of Manasseh, with a total of three hundred fighting men. The folk tradition of the reduction of the size of Gideon's army would then rest upon a misunderstanding of this old military organization which had long since been discontinued, but which had been operative during the period of the judges.²² Noth would concur in believing that it was only the tribe of Manasseh which made up Gideon's army.²³

However, the biblical tradition refuses to allow one to pass off the incident as a private, blood-revenge affair. It is presented as a matter of the amphictyony. The threat from the Midianites was, to be sure, a threat to Manasseh first of all; more specifically, Gideon's own clan appears to have borne the brunt of the Midianite raids (8:18). "Dennoch ist sie [the threat] mit Recht als eine ganz Israel betreffende angesehen worden."²⁴ Moore shows how the personal and the general strands of the Gideon story can be reconciled:

That Gideon had a wrong of his own to avenge, is not incompatible with the representation that he was called of God to deliver Israel from the scourge; the sharp severing of natural and religious motives is more in the manner of the modern critic than of the ancient story-teller.²⁵

²²G. E. Mendenhall, "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXVII (1958), 64.

²³Martin Noth, The History of Israel, translated from the German by P. R. Ackroyd (second edition; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 162.

²⁴Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 188.

²⁵Moore, op. cit., p. 176.

The tradition is inescapably present that other tribes besides Manasseh were active in this battle. Although the calling of the tribes described in Judges 6:35b seems to anticipate the summons mentioned after the initial battle (7:23ff.), still the Kollektivhandeln of three or four amphictyonic tribes did take place.²⁶ "Wir haben hier also, ähnlich wie im Deborahlied, im wesentlichen den Bestand des westjordanischen Reiches Israel."²⁷ A parallel might be drawn between the response of the Israelite tribes in the war against Midian and their response in the war against the Canaanites. It has been seen that the war against Midian was essentially a battle of the Ḍalāpîm of Manasseh; the men of the other tribes were called out to join in the victorious pursuit after the Midianites had been decisively routed, while the more long-range continuation of the battle was left up to the Ḍalāpîm of Manasseh. In the war against the Canaanites it appears that the battle itself was fought by Naphtali and Zebulun, while the other interested tribes of the amphictyony were summoned to participate in a victory celebration afterwards.

Just as there were conspicuous absences in the ranks of the amphictyony in Judges 5, so also in the Gideon story several of the tribes were unaccountably not concerned. Issachar in particular, which usually dwelt in the plain of Esdraelon and its neighborhood, was missing from the pursuit of the Midianites after the battle. Garstang assumes that

²⁶Von Rad, op. cit., pp. 22-23. See also de Vaux, op. cit., p. 11; and Moore, op. cit., pp. 196-97.

²⁷Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 194.

this tribe had been constrained to find a refuge in the highlands, while he excuses Judah, Simeon and Benjamin on the basis of the pressure of the Amalekites on their borders.²⁸ The Israelite tribes east of the Jordan seemed to offer no resistance whatsoever to the Midianites; the hostility of Succoth and Penuel indicates that the people in this area did not feel strongly bound to come to the aid of the amphictyony. Yet one is justified in calling this a war of the Israelite amphictyony. Gideon himself is described as a deliverer of Israel and one of whom the spirit of Yahweh took possession (Judg. 6:14,34). That this battle was considered a sacral war is demonstrated especially by the sounding of the trumpet to summon the fighting men of Manasseh (6:34-35a)²⁹ and the battle-cry, "A sword for Yahweh and for Gideon" (7:18,20). As Moore remarks concerning this battle-cry:

The cause of the Israelites against the foreign foes is Yahweh's cause; and he who smites for Gideon, smites for Yahweh. It is a historical misapprehension, however, to describe the conflict with the Canaanites (ch. 4-5) or Midianites (ch. 6-8) as a religious war; and especially to compare it with the wars of Islam.³⁰

Therefore the war against the Midianites demonstrates the same tendencies concerning the amphictyonic wars as the wars previously discussed. Historically seen, this war was a battle of the ḏalāpîm of Manasseh, with later help from Naphtali, Asher, Ephraim and perhaps Zebulun. Since, however, it was a battle for the God of the amphictyony, fought in order to pre-

²⁸John Garstang, Joshua Judges (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1931), p. 319.

²⁹See infra, p. 101.

³⁰Moore, op. cit., p. 210.

serve the amphictyony, the summary is fitting: "So Midian was subdued before the b^enê yisrā'ēl" (8:28).

The sequel to this war should be discussed briefly: "the men of Israel" asked Gideon to rule (māšal) over them, but Gideon rejected this request on the basis of Yahweh's rulership. If the yîš yisrā'ēl actually represented all the people of Israel, this would have been a remarkable instance of unified political activity by the tribes. Some scholars feel that, although Gideon is made to reject the request, actually he did become a king. His son's name, y^abîmelek, possibly means, "my father is king"; Judges 9:2 reports that a dynasty of the sons of Gideon (Jerubbaal) ruled over Shechem; the raising of the ephod in Ophrah seems connected with the royal election; and the same is true of Gideon's harem,

the political meaning of which evidently was 1) the securing of the dynasty, and (2) the establishing of valuable connections, for example with Shechem. Gideon's harem is one aspect of the religious and cultural symbiosis between Israelites and Canaanites, Abimelech's election with support from Shechem another.³¹

Wellhausen would therefore propose, "We see besides from 9:1ff. that Gideon really was the ruler of Ephraim and Manasseh."³²

The points raised in support of the kingship of Gideon are hardly convincing. The name y^abîmelek could just as well mean "melek (a god) is my father," or it could be the result of a fanciful dream of Gideon's concubine in Shechem. Jerubbaal's dynasty merely furnished the leaders

³¹E. Nielsen, Shechem: A Traditio-Historical Investigation (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1955), p. 143, note 1. See also R. Kittel, A History of the Hebrews, translated from the German by Hope W. Hogg and E. B. Speirs (London: Williams and Norgate, 1896), II, 82.

³²J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel: With a Reprint of the Article "Israel" from the Encyclopaedia Britannica (New York: The Meridian Library, 1957), p. 239, note 1. See also Myers, op. cit., p. 748.

of the people in the area around Shechem (9:2). And the material that went into making the ephod could have been simply the spoil of Gideon's three hundred men.³³ Even if Gideon did become a ruler, his rule could hardly have comprised more than Manasseh, Succoth and Penuel; Ephraim was hostile to him (8:1-3).³⁴ Therefore the question of the kingship of Gideon seems to have no direct bearing on the political state of the amphictyony after the war against the Midianites. It does, however, attest to the kingship of Yahweh in the tribal league, besides showing that, even after an amphictyonic victory, there were strong temptations to have a king after the manner of the Canaanites.

³³Moore, op. cit., p. 232. See also John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 158.

³⁴Adolphe Lods, Israel From Its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century, translated by S. H. Hooke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1932), p. 343. Also Täubler, op. cit., pp. 267f.

CHAPTER V

WARS OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

The First Encounters With the Philistines

The several wars described in the first part of 1 Samuel bring the period of the Israelite amphictyony to its close: the first battles with the Philistines (1 Sam. 4-7) and Saul's war against the Ammonites (1 Sam. 11). Other wars in the remainder of 1 Samuel will be discussed with regard to the bearing they have upon the amphictyony.

In an old story about the ark of the covenant (1 Sam. 4-7) is reported the first known large-scale conflict between the Israelite amphictyony and the Philistines.¹ The Philistines gathered at ḏāpek for the battle (1 Sam. 4:1). This was probably tell el-muḡmar on the upper course of the river now called nahr el-ʿanḡa, which flows into the Mediterranean north of yāfa. This was probably at the northern border of Philistine territory; it was a very suitable position for an attack on the central mountains of Palestine. "Israel" gathered at hāʿeben hāʿēzer, on the edge of the mountains opposite Aphek, roughly on the site of the modern meḡdel ḡāba.² It is clear that the Philistines did not present simply a limited threat that concerned only the adjacent

¹For a convenient summary of the early history of the Philistines in Palestine see Martin Noth, The History of Israel, translated from the German by P. R. Ackroyd (second edition; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), pp. 35-38.

²Ibid., p. 165.

tribes, nor one that a tribal rally could deal with at a blow; they aimed to conquer the whole land and threatened Israel's very existence.³ Noth attempts to determine the tribal participation in this first battle:

It is impossible to say for certain who actually took part on the Israelite side. The main participants were probably the militia of the tribe of Ephraim which was most immediately threatened from Aphek. But some of the neighbouring tribes of the central Palestinian mountains will also have been involved in some measure, and, in view of the enormous danger, reinforcements from other tribes may also have been present.⁴

Israel was defeated in this first battle rather decisively, losing four thousand men (1 Sam. 4:2). Although the brief account of the battle has nothing to say about the sacral side of the undertaking (unless 4:1a is intended for this purpose), the leaders of the people immediately resolved to place this war into the sacral sphere. The "elders of Israel," zīqnê yiśrā'ēl, recognized that Yahweh's hand was operative in their defeat and decided to bring the ark of the covenant of Yahweh into the camp from Shiloh, "that He may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies" (4:3). That the presence of the ark symbolized the presence of Yahweh Himself at the battle-front is evident from 4:3-4 and especially from the statement of the Philistines: "The gods have come into the camp" (4:7). Noth draws a generous deduction from this concerning the number of Israelite tribes that now took part in the second battle:

³John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 164.

⁴Noth, op. cit., p. 166.

The transporting of the ark to the camp could only mean that the whole association of Israelite tribes was being deployed against the Philistines. So far as we know from the tradition, it was the first time the whole tribal confederation had come forward in defence of Israel, the reason being that this was the first time the existence of Israel as a whole in Palestine had really been threatened by the power of the Philistines.⁵

It does not necessarily follow from the presence of the ark that the "whole tribal confederation" took part in the second battle (4:10-11). The wars discussed in previous chapters have shown that a victory won by a comparatively few number of tribes could easily be considered to be a victory of the amphictyony. Therefore it is conceivable that, although the ark was considered to be the unifying symbol of the amphictyony,⁶ still it could be used by a few of the tribes in the name of the whole amphictyony. The second part of Noth's statement is more accurate; the greatness of the threat from the Philistines would lead one to suppose that most of the available Israelite fighting men were called out for this battle. The account itself merely speaks of "Israel" as fighting the battle. Hophni and Phinehas, apparently Ephraimites from Shiloh, were killed (4:11), and a man from Benjamin escaped to tell the news to Eli (4:12); this demonstrates that at least these two tribes sent fighting men to the battle. The extent of the defeat of Israel would tend to show that the main backbone of Israel's army had been broken.

The defeat of Israel was decisive. The Philistines had free access to the amphictyonic shrine at Shiloh, the modern sēlūn; along with cap-

⁵Ibid.

⁶See the discussion of the amphictyony, infra, p. 89.

turing the ark they probably also destroyed the shrine at Shiloh. Jeremiah 7:12,14 and 26:6,9 reports that the "temple" in Shiloh which had housed the ark was destroyed, and the ruins could still be seen; excavations there have borne this out.⁷ At this time the Philistines probably installed garrisons in Israel's territory; 1 Samuel 10:5 and 13:3 speak of such a n^esîb in Gibeah, the modern tell el-fûl. The Philistines occupied most of the territory in this way, disarming Israel by allowing no weapons to be made (13:19-22).⁸ Yet the Philistine occupation was not complete, for in Galilee and in Transjordan Israelite movement was relatively free; in the mountains the people were able to organize resistance. However, that Philistine domination was fairly complete is shown by the failure of Israel to restore the ark as the central shrine of the amphictyony; it lay in neglect at Kirjath-jearim for a generation (1 Sam. 7:1-2; 2 Sam. 6:2).⁹

Another encounter with the Philistines, this time under the leadership of Samuel, is described in 1 Samuel 7:3-14. The fact that this account is mainly interested in the sacral side of the incident, in addition to the obvious difference in outcome when compared with 1 Samuel 4, has lead scholars to doubt the historicity of this particular battle. Smith thinks it is really an account of what happened later under Saul

⁷Bright, op. cit., p. 164; also Noth, op. cit., pp. 166-67. See also W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process (second edition; New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), p. 290.

⁸Noth, op. cit., p. 167.

⁹Thus Bright, op. cit., p. 165. Bright reads "ephcd" with the LXX in 1 Sam. 14:18.

and David.¹⁰ Weiser contends:

Der offene Widerspruch zu anderen Nachrichten, die von einer Fortdauer der drückenden Philister-Herrschaft wissen (1 Samuel 9:16; 10:5; 13:2f., 19ff.) lässt kaum einen Zweifel darüber, dass, historisch gesehen, die Erzählung von Samuels Philister-Sieg als Fiktion beurteilt werden muss.¹¹

Rather, he thinks,

Wir es nicht mit einem reinen Geschichtsbericht zu tun haben, sondern mit einer Erzählung, in der gottesdienstliche Interessen und Motive stärker zu Worte kommen als die historischen Einzelheiten und Ausblicke.¹²

Yet it is possible to conceive of many skirmishes with the Philistines during this period, and this account may preserve the occasion for one of these. The fact that "all Israel" gathered at Mizpah (1 Sam. 7:5) would no doubt be taken by the Philistines as an attempt to renew the amphictyony, although the former shrine at Shiloh had been destroyed. That Israel momentarily threw the Philistines into confusion is likewise conceivable. The report that the Philistines were subdued and did not come into Israel's territory again, along with the statement that the cities of the Philistines were returned to Israel (7:13-14) seems to reflect the time of David. The account of this skirmish with the Philistines is of particular interest in that it describes the sacral character of the Israelite amphictyony. Even though all political ties between the tribes

¹⁰Henry Preserved Smith, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel, Vol. IX of The International Critical Commentary, edited by Alfred Plummer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 50.

¹¹Artur Weiser, "Samuels 'Philister-Sieg.' Die Überlieferungen in 1. Sam. 7," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, LVI (1959), 257.

¹²Ibid., p. 261. See also Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, Die Samuelbücher, Vol. X of Das Alte Testament Deutsch, edited by Volkmar Hertrich and Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), pp. 52-53.

had been destroyed, and even though the amphictyonic central shrine at Shiloh had been destroyed and the ark lay forgotten, still "all Israel" could gather at another shrine to renew their relationship with Yahweh by putting away foreign gods, participating in a ritual of pouring out water before Yahweh and confessing their sins, and being judged by Samuel (7:3-6). It was this common covenant with Yahweh, not any political ties or enemy pressures, that held the amphictyony together.

The War Against the Ammonites

While the Israelite amphictyony was under Philistine domination in the land west of the Jordan, Nahash the Ammonite saw an opportune time to gain a victory over the tribes east of the Jordan (1 Sam. 11).

Möhlenbrink has demonstrated that this was more far-reaching than just another local battle:

Nun soll aber die Vernichtung von Jabesch nach dem Willen des Nachasch nicht nur Gilead-Gad, den Stamm, dessen Hauptstadt Jabesch doch wohl war, treffen, sondern "ganz Israel" schädigen.¹³

The fact that the men of Jabesh wanted to make a covenant with Nahash indicates that the Israelite amphictyony had been disrupted by the Philistines, and no help could be expected from west of the Jordan. Perhaps the Ammonites even had made some kind of agreement with the Philistines in the west, making a two-front war for Israel.¹⁴ They occupied the land of Gilead south of the Jabbok and attacked Jabesh. Noth

¹³Kurt Möhlenbrink, "Sauls Ammoniterfeldzug und Samuels Beitrag zum Königtum des Saul," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LVIII (1940-41), 58. Also Noth, op. cit., p. 168.

¹⁴Möhlenbrink, op. cit., p. 59. Also Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951), p. 20.

places Jabesh in the land of 'aḡlūn, in the area of the wādi yābis, on the site of the modern tell el-maqlūb; however, Glueck would place it at the lower end of the wādi yābis in the Jordan valley at tell abu ḥaraz.¹⁵ Noth's placement would tally best with Eusebius' statement that "Iabis" was six Roman miles from Pella (ḥirbet faḥil) on the road to Gerasa (ḡeras).¹⁶ Either of these two places would be suitable for an attack started from Bezek, the modern ḥirbet ibzīq.

In view of the relationship between Jabesh and Benjamin (Judg. 21:8-14), perhaps the messengers which the elders of Jabesh sent to find help went directly to Gibeah.¹⁷ It is questionable whether the messengers knew that Saul had been anointed; he is described as an unknown farmer. Wildberger feels:

Was in Kap. 11 berichtet wird, kann sich also Jahre, wenn nicht gar Jahrzehnte, vor der Erhebung Sauls zum König abgespielt haben.¹⁸

Yet Saul had only been anointed as nāḡīd (1 Sam. 10:1). In 11:6-7 he is described as a charismatic leader, on whom the spirit of God came, and he continued to use what appears to have been the amphictyonic method of gathering troops for a battle: he divided a yoke of oxen in pieces and sent them throughout the territory of Israel with the words, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!" (11:7).

¹⁵Noth, op. cit., p. 167.

¹⁶Rand McNally Bible Atlas, edited by Emil G. Kraeling (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1956), p. 179.

¹⁷Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 72.

¹⁸Hans Wildberger, "Samuel und die Entstehung des israelitischen Königstums," Theologische Zeitschrift, XIII (November-December, 1957), 466-67. See also Smith, op. cit., p. 76.

This same method of summoning the tribes was used in Judges 19:29-30, where the Levite cut up his concubine and sent the pieces throughout Israel; there the curse words are missing, but the intent appears to be the same. A parallel to this has been found in a Mari letter, which suggests how a particular bedouin tribe can be made to assemble for a campaign. The letter states:

Jetzt, wenn es nach dem Belieben meines Herrn ist, soll man einen Verbrecher im Gefängnis töten und sein Haupt abschlagen und in dem Raum zwischen den Städten bis nach Hudnim und Appan umhertragen, zu dem Zwecke, dass die Leute sich fürchten und sich schnell sammeln.¹⁹

The same kind of threat is seemingly behind the use of this gleichnis-hafte Handlung²⁰ in Judges 19 and 1 Samuel 11. The judgment by Noth is substantiated:

The method of the summons to arms described in 1 Sam. 11:7, with conjuration expressed in an oath, makes an impression of great originality.²¹

Later Saul went over to more effective means of gathering an army (1 Sam. 14:52), but in the battle against the Ammonites he still acted within the tradition of the amphictyony.

Upon receiving the summons, "the dread of Yahweh fell upon the people, and they came out as one man" (11:7). Saul assembled them at

¹⁹Gerhard Wallis, "Eine Parallele zu Richter 19:29ff. und 1. Sam. 11:5ff. aus dem Briefarchiv von Mari," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LXIV (1952), 57-58.

²⁰Ibid., p. 59.

²¹Noth, op. cit., p. 169. Also Albrecht Alt, "Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), II, 26.

Bezek, the modern hirbet ibzīq; from this town, on the road between Shechem and Beth-shan, a ravine leads down to the Jordan, called the wādi el ḥašneh.²² Thus Bezek was an excellent jumping off place for an attack on the Ammonites, who had surrounded Jabesh. That Saul's attacking force was not too big is seen in his surprise attack on the Ammonite camp in the morning watch. The numbers given for his troops, three hundred thousand from Israel and thirty thousand from Judah, seem to be out of proportion considerably (11:8).²³ The Septuagint shows the tendency toward increasing these numbers by reading six hundred thousand for Israel and seventy thousand for Judah, while Josephus goes up to seven hundred thousand.²⁴ Perhaps here again the number was intended originally to give the number of ʾalāpîm, the military units of the tribes, which sent fighting men to this battle.²⁵ A total of three hundred and thirty ʾalāpîm would compare fairly well with the five hundred and ninety-eight ʾalāpîm given in Numbers 1 for the whole people of Israel, taking into consideration the disruption of the tribes caused by the Philistines.

Concerning the actual tribes that took part, Möhlenbrink argues that Judah and Simeon were cut off by hostile cities, the northern tribes likewise were cut off by the Philistines, and even Manasseh and

²²Noth, op. cit., p. 169. Also Rand McNally Bible Atlas, p. 179.

²³These numbers are Phantasiezahlen, according to Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 73.

²⁴Smith, op. cit., p. 79.

²⁵See the discussion supra, p. 50; infra, p. 98.

Ephraim were so threatened by the Philistines that they did not take part. This leaves only Benjamin, Gad and Reuben to save Jabesh; and these are precisely the tribes for which Möhlenbrink posits a three-tribe amphictyony at Gilgal.²⁶ This argument fails to give any weight to the mention of Bezek as the mustering place for the attack; to reach this point, the tribe of Benjamin would have had to go through a considerable amount of Philistine territory, according to Möhlenbrink's theory. Noth rather feels this is an example of "the employment of the whole tribal association to defend their existence against danger from outside."²⁷ Three tribes certainly had men at this battle: Saul was from Benjamin (1 Sam. 9:1-2), Samuel was from Ephraim (1 Sam. 1:1, 20), and Judah is expressly mentioned (11:8). In view of the "dread of Yahweh" that fell upon the people, it would seem that all the tribes who were in a position to do so would have sent fighting men in this desperate attempt to save the remnants of the amphictyony.

The victory seemed to have a psychological effect on the hard-pressed Israelites. Samuel gathered the people at Gilgal to "renew the kingdom" (11:14). Here Israel made Saul king, bringing to an end the era of the amphictyony.

Israel was acting as a "people," no longer as a sacral confederation of tribes. It was embarking, though to begin with in quite a modest way, on the road to political power and thereby making a decision which was to have a quite fundamental determining influence on the further course of its history. . . . It is clear that

²⁶Möhlenbrink, op. cit., pp. 60-64.

²⁷Noth, op. cit., p. 169.

the new king, who had proved his worth in the victory over the Ammonites which had just been won, was expected to deliver Israel from this threat to its whole existence and to wage a successful war against the Philistines. . . . Against the Philistines a permanent and stable military command seemed to be necessary and the new king was no doubt intended to act primarily as leader of the levies of Israel, and it was in such a capacity that he did in fact come forward.²⁸

Wars of the Early Monarchy

Saul's first act as king was to choose three thousand men from those gathered at Gilgal. He made a successful surprise attack on the Philistine garrison in Gibeah and destroyed it (1 Sam. 13:1-3). The Philistines gathered their forces near Michmash, the modern muḥmas five miles northeast of Gibeah. Saul and Jonathan camped near Geba, ġeba', separated from Michmash by the wādi eṣ-ṣuwēnīṭ.²⁹ At this time Saul's fighting force numbered only six hundred men (13:15). Amid sacral overtones³⁰ the Philistines were again routed; this time the "Hebrews" who were with the Philistines deserted to the Israelite side, and "all the men of Israel" who had hidden themselves in the hills of Ephraim joined in the pursuit (14:1-23). Although this success was apparently not over the main body of the Philistines, and although the results of the victory were short-lived, still Israel began to act as

²⁸Ibid., pp. 170-71. See also Martin Buber, "Die Erzählung von Sauls Königswahl," Vetus Testamentum, VI (1956), 164. In addition, see Eduard Meyer, Geschichte des Altertums (dritte Auflage; Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1953), II, part 2, 246.

²⁹Noth, op. cit., pp. 173-74.

³⁰Von Rad, op. cit., p. 21, points out the different phenomena which indicate that this battle should be placed among the holy wars.

a united people behind her chosen leader.

Taking advantage of Israel's submission to the Philistines, the Amalekites from the desert of Kadesh chose this time to make raids into the Negeb. After his initial success against the Philistines, Saul summoned two hundred thousand men, plus ten thousand from Judah,³¹ and he utterly defeated the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:1-7). This episode showed Saul's freedom of movement, and also it "indicates that his authority and responsibility were national in scope."³² Von Rad points out that this story shows that the tension between the old Yahweh-faith and the kingship came first in the sphere of the holy war.³³ Saul's rash taking of the spoil shows that he had by this time become more a king than a charismatic leader of the amphictyony; it was Samuel who performed the task of slaying Agag (15:8-33).

The notice that Saul reigned over Israel for two years (1 Sam. 13:1) possibly indicates that the Philistines hurriedly went into action against him in the year following his success against them.³⁴ They gathered at Aphek again, while Israel was encamped at Jezreel (1 Sam. 29:1). The Philistines marched north through the plain of Esdraelon to the city of Jezreel (29:11), the modern zer'in; they did not attack the central mountains directly but marched instead between the central part of Palestine and Galilee, possibly with the intention

³¹Again the numbers appear rather high; infra, p. 98.

³²Bright, op. cit., p. 168.

³³Von Rad, op. cit., p. 52.

³⁴This is the suggestion of Noth, op. cit., pp. 176-77.

of cutting Saul off from the Galilean tribes.³⁵ That they succeeded is seen from 31:7, where it is stated that "the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and those beyond the Jordan" fled from their cities after seeing Saul's defeat.

Although Saul became king of Israel and thus brought the period of the amphictyony to an end, still he did not break with amphictyonic tradition. He made no change in the structure of the amphictyony; he had no bureaucracy or harem.³⁶ The nucleus of his forces appears to have been fellow Benjaminites (22:7), so he can be seen as an extension of a tribal leader.³⁷

Though he probably never led all Israel in battle (nor had the judges!), he probably came closer to it than any of his predecessors, if only because the emergency was a national one.³⁸

It was a period of transition from the old amphictyony to the political kingdom; therefore it was a temporary phase which could not last:

Though temporary charismatic leadership was compatible with the traditions of a tribal association subject to a divine law, a "secular" monarchy was not; and, on the other hand, it was impossible to base the institution of monarchy on the sacral association of the tribes.³⁹

³⁵Ibid. Coinciding with this opinion are Bright, op. cit., pp. 173-74; and Albrecht Alt, "Die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 117.

³⁶Bright, op. cit., p. 169.

³⁷Adolphe Lods, Israel From Its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century, translated by S. H. Hooke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1932), p. 356.

³⁸Bright, op. cit., p. 170.

³⁹Noth, op. cit., p. 175. See also Alt, "Die Landnahme," op. cit., p. 117.

CHAPTER VI

WARS WITHIN THE AMPHICTYONY

The Treachery of Reuben and Gad

Twice during the period of the Israelite amphictyony occasion arose for the tribes to join together in a war against one or more members of the sacral confederation itself. One such action was brought about by the treachery of Reuben and Gad (Josh. 22:10-34), and the other was occasioned by the wantonness of the men of Gibeah of Benjamin (Judg. 19-21). Naturally, these wars were somewhat different from the other wars in which the amphictyony engaged. Yet they also give an opportunity to see the extent to which the tribes took part in amphictyonic wars. And, perhaps better than any of the other wars, they demonstrate the sacral character of such undertakings by the tribal confederation.

The action against Reuben and Gad never came to blows, but preparations were made for war: "And when the people of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the people of Israel gathered at Shiloh, to make war against them" (Josh. 22:12). It was to be a war of the amphictyony against some of its own members, Reuben and Gad. But what was the cause? It is difficult to ascertain from the account of the incident just what it was that constituted the treachery against the God of Israel (22:16) that made such an undertaking necessary. As the story stands, the building of an unauthorized altar of sacrifice seems to be the treachery against Yahweh (22:16,23-29). Yet such presuppositions apparently did not exist otherwise during the period of the

amphictyony, and perhaps even until the time of Josiah's reform local altars and sanctuaries were condoned.¹ This is only one of the knotty problems connected with this story. The locale of the altar built by Reuben and Gad, whether on the east or west side of the Jordan, is uncertain. The western position is rather clearly stated in Joshua 22:10; however, a place east of the Jordan seems to be indicated by 22:11 ('el 'ēber bēnê yiśrā'ēl),² and also by 22:15,19,25,32. The tribes involved in building the altar are Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh in 22:9,10,11,13,15,21, and the "sons of Manasseh" are brought in in 22:30-31; but only Reuben and Gad are concerned in 22:25,32,33,34. To add to the difficulty, the decisive name of the altar in 22:34 is missing.

From these considerations it would appear that there are several different sources to be found in this story. It would be impossible to define the sources with any certainty; yet some of the material appears to belong to the Pentateuchal P source: the presupposition that Phinehas the priest was the leader of Israel, while Joshua was completely forgotten; the description of Israel as the "congregation of Yahweh" ('adat yhw); and the excessive concern about sacrificing burnt offerings or cereal offerings or peace offerings upon this altar.³ The

¹This reform is reported in 2 Kings 23. See Martin Noth, Das Buch Josua, Vol. VII of Handbuch zum Alten Testament, edited by Otto Eissfeldt (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1938), p. 103.

²Ibid., p. 105. Also Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth, Vol. IX of Das Alte Testament Deutsch, edited by Volkmar Hertrich and Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), p. 126.

³Ibid., p. 125. See also Noth, op. cit., p. 103.

deuteronomistic insistence on the centralization of the cultus would appear to belong to a later source which used this story to make its own theological emphasis.⁴ This material so predominates that it appears to be impossible to understand the sense of the original tradition.⁵ Yet some suggestions may be offered in an attempt to understand the concern of the amphictyony in this matter.

Concerning the location of the altar, the Massoretic text states it was in g^elîlôt hayyardēn, usually understood to mean, "in the region about the Jordan" (Josh. 22:10-11). Codex Vaticanus of the Septuagint reads galgala in place of this; and the Syriac also apparently understood the Hebrew text to mean Gilgal, a name which comes from the same root as g^elîlôt. A third possibility suggests itself. The place name "Gilead" plays an important part in this story (22:9,13,15,32), and the explanatory words concerning the altar speak about its use as a witness (22:24-28,34). In Genesis 31:45-54, in the covenant between Jacob and Laban, a heap of stones was set up as witness to the covenant and was called gal'ēd. It is possible that this etymology for Gilead also played a part in the story in Joshua 22. So there appear to be three possibilities for the locale of this altar: in the region about the Jordan (either east or west), in Gilgal near Jericho, or in Gilead. Hertzberg suggests that perhaps there were altars on both sides.⁶ Since

⁴Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 126. Hertzberg thinks the basic story remained known at Gilgal, perhaps at a feast in which the eastern tribes crossed over the Jordan to celebrate.

⁵Noth, op. cit., p. 103.

⁶Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 126.

the name of the altar is missing, also in the Septuagint (although the old Syriac translation reads madhbeha desandutha),⁷ and since there are two traditions concerning the number of tribes that took part, it seems possible to discern two different stories that have been combined here. One story would concern Reuben and Gad, who built an altar west of the Jordan; the other would concern an altar in Gilead (perhaps the heap of stones of Genesis 31), to which the names of all three eastern tribes would be attached.

If it is supposed, then, that the original incident which brought on the amphictyonic preparations for war revolved around an altar built by Reuben and Gad west of the Jordan, the original question still stands: why was this considered treachery against Yahweh? Möhlenbrink offers a fanciful interpretation which supposes a rivalry between the cultic centers of Gilgal and Shiloh. He thinks Gilgal was the center of a three tribe amphictyony consisting of Reuben, Gad and Benjamin, who arrived in the land earlier than the other tribes.

Wir sehen also die Traditionsgrundlage unseres Textes dann richtig, wenn wir erkannt haben, dass es hier um die Rivalität zweier Amphiktyoniezentren in Israel geht. . . . Sollte nicht in dieser merkwürdigen Altarbaugeschichte von den Geligot des Jordan ein Hinweis auf einen kleineren Stämmebund und seine Eingliederung in die Zwölfergruppe gegeben sein?⁸

Kraus rightly remarks that the tradition of twelve stones connected with Gilgal (Josh. 4) scarcely allows for a three tribe amphictyony

⁷Ibid.

⁸Kurt Möhlenbrink, "Die Landnahmesagen des Buches Josua," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LVI (1938), 246-49, 268. Möhlenbrink thinks this story tries to explain the tie between Reuben, Gad and Benjamin, which originated in the time when Reuben and Gad were still west of the Jordan.

at Gilgal.⁹ Instead, the occasion for the action of the amphictyony should perhaps be sought in the reference to the sin at Peor, to which the treachery (ma'al) of Reuben and Gad was likened (Josh. 22:16-18): "Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor from which even yet we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which there came a plague upon the congregation of Yahweh?" In their feeling of corporateness the people of Israel were afraid that the sin of some few would implicate the whole people; prompt action had to be taken, lest Yahweh do what He did at Peor (Deut. 4:3). That the treachery of Reuben and Gad was similar to that at Peor is supported by several other references: Psalm 106:28ff. says Phineas interposed to stay the plague at Peor, and that is his position also in Joshua 22. The prophet Hosea has some things to say about Peor (Hosea 5:2; 9:10); it is possible that the reference in Hosea 6:7 concerns the incident in Joshua 22:

But at Adam they transgressed the covenant;
There they dealt faithlessly with me.

Kraeling would make this identification, placing Adam at tell ed-dāmieh just east of the Jordan at the Jabbok.¹⁰

It is not completely clear what the "sin of Peor" was to which the treachery of Reuben and Gad was compared. It apparently consisted of some cultic rituals connected with Baal worship, including cult prostitution, bowing down to pagan gods, and eating sacrifices to the dead.¹¹

⁹Hans-Joachim Kraus, "Gilgal. Ein Beitrag zur Kultusgeschichte Israels," Vetus Testamentum, I (1951), 192-93.

¹⁰Rand McNally Bible Atlas, edited by Emil G. Kraeling (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1956), p. 142.

¹¹Cf. Num. 25:1-2; Ps. 106:28.

It would seem that the altar built by Reuben and Gad also had some connection with the cultus of the agrarian society of Canaan. Such treachery against the God of the amphictyony would amount to a transgression of the covenant with Him, and this would bring Yahweh's anger against the whole amphictyony. As in the incident at Peor (Num. 25:4) and also the case of Achan (Josh. 7:25-26), the other members of the confederation took steps to turn Yahweh's anger away by removing the cause of the offense. Habel has called attention to the probability that there was a covenant renewal following the incident at Peor, described in the usual covenant terminology in Deuteronomy 4:1ff.¹² In Josuah 22 it seems there was also a kind of covenant renewal: the phrase kōh 'ām^erû 'adat yhw (22:16) could be a variant of the more usual kōh 'āmar yhw (Josh. 24:2); the confession of Reuben and Gad, 'el 'ēlohim yhw 'el 'ēlohîm yhw (22:22), appears to indicate they have chosen to serve Yahweh as their God (as in 24:21); the 'im clauses (22:22) and the use of the altar as "a witness between us that Yahweh is God" (22:34) likewise suggest a covenant renewal ritual of some sort.¹³

The incident evoked by the treachery of Reuben and Gad therefore serves to underscore the sacral character of the amphictyony, including also the military sphere. The wars against outsiders were fought by

¹²Norman C. Habel, "Conflict of Religious Cultures: A Study in the Relevance of Ugaritic Materials for the Early Faith of Israel" (Unpublished Doctor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1962), pp. 35-42.

¹³The usual formulations of the suzerainty covenants in the ancient Near East are given by G. E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburg: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), passim.

the tribes most directly concerned, and the victories were ascribed to the amphictyony. But here a breach of the covenant by several tribes becomes a matter of the amphictyony, "the whole assembly of the bēnē yisrā'ēl."

The Wantonness of the Men of Gibeah

A similar incident is reported in Judges 19-21. The background of the incident is described in Judges 19: a Levite of Ephraim had a concubine from Bethlehem of Judah; while spending the night in Gibeah of Bethlehem, his concubine was abused and killed by the men of the city. The Levite summoned the tribes of the amphictyony by the old method¹⁴ of cutting up her body and sending the pieces throughout the territory of Israel. This atrocious act by the Benjaminites of Gibeah was considered to be zimmâ ûn^ebālâ b^eyisrā'ēl, "abomination and wantonness in Israel" (20:6); and "all the people of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead" (20:1), to "put them to death and put away evil from Israel" (20:13). The Israelite amphictyony was at war, not to defend itself against foreign aggression nor to enlarge its territory, but to purge evil from its midst.

Noth has convincingly shown that n^ebālâ b^eyisrā'ēl, "wantonness in Israel," was an expression which stemmed from the period of the amphictyony. The word "in Israel" shows

¹⁴Martin Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1930), p. 102. See the discussion in connection with 1 Sam. 11:7, supra, pp. 62-63.

dass die jeweils in Frage stehende nblh die Amphiktyonie "Israel" als solche etwas angeht, dass die Amphiktyonie selbst die Ahndung dieses Vergehens also in die Hand nehmen muss, dass mithin eine bestimmte Satzung des allgemein verpflichtenden Amphiktyonenrechtes verletzt worden ist.¹⁵

This same formulation is used almost as a technical term in describing Shechem's affair with Dinah (Gen. 34:7), in the covenant law code (Deut. 22:21), and in the story of Achan (Josh. 7:15), all of which seem to be related to amphictyonic times.¹⁶ The word itself usually refers to sexual perversion. Yet Noth sees a deeper significance to this formula; the probability is

dass es sich in diesen Fällen nicht um einen eindeutigen Verstoss gegen eine Satzung des kodifizierten Amphiktyonenrechtes handelt, sondern um Verletzungen eines ungeschriebenen Gewohnheitsrechtes, eben um Dinge, die "man nicht tut in Israel," deren Vorfällen aber doch ein Eingreifen der Amphiktyonie als solcher herausforderte, wohl weil sie den Grundsätzen der Amphiktyonie und ihrer Ordnungen widerstritten.¹⁷

Deuteronomic theology prescribed the burning of a whole city as "a whole burnt offering to Yahweh" in cases where the city had committed abomination (Deut. 13:16); in Judges 20 Gibeah became the whole burnt offering, and Benjamin received the ban, showing the earnestness with which the amphictyony purged this evil from its midst.¹⁸

Noth points out that incidents similar to the events in Judges 19-20 occurred also in the Greek amphictyonies (where the name "amphictyony" originated). In the Delphic amphictyony, the best known of the many

¹⁵Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, p. 105.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 104-5. Noth feels, however, that only in Judg. 20:1ff. does this formulation still stand in its Sitz im Leben.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 106.

¹⁸Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 253.

amphictyonies in ancient Greece and Italy, the individual tribal members had a great deal of freedom. War between the members was not prevented. It was the duty of each member of the amphictyony to protect the central sanctuary from enemies and also from "ein frevelndes Mitglied" of the amphictyony itself, against which holy war would be declared. It was not allowed, in case of war within the amphictyony, to completely destroy an amphictyonic city or (in war or peace) cut it off from flowing water.¹⁹ The latter point helps to explain the concern of the tribes, after the battle, to see that the tribe of Benjamin did not cease to exist (Judg. 21). There is also a Greek parallel to the responsibility which was placed on Benjamin to punish the men of Gibeah: in 339 B. C. the dwellers of the city of Amphissa of the tribe of Lokrer wrongfully claimed some temple land. The tribe of Lokrer, a member of the amphictyony, was required to punish the city; when they did not, an amphictyonic war was declared against them, and they finally were shut out of the amphictyony.²⁰ In the light of this, the n^ebālâ committed by the men of Gibeah may be understood as a violation of the sacral, unwritten laws of the Israelite amphictyony. And since Benjamin refused to accept the judgment spoken by the "assembly of the people of God" (20:2,13), the amphictyony was bound to go to war against Benjamin.

The report indicates that all Israel acted together in this war against Benjamin, something which did not happen in any of the wars against outsiders until the time of the monarchy. Perhaps this unified

¹⁹Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, p. 56.

²⁰Ibid., p. 102.

action occurred just because of the nature of the incident:

This singular unity, it is to be observed further, is not political, but religious; it is not as a nation or a people that Israel acts, but as a general assembly of the church; the only officers named are the "elders of the congregation."²¹

Some scholars think that only Mount Ephraim and Benjamin were involved in this incident, or that "Israel" only designated Ephraim and Manasseh.²² However, in view of the corporate feeling in the amphictyony, in which the whole group was responsible for the sin of an individual or a few,²³ it seems preferable to accept the statement of the biblical account: "Then all the people of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead" (Judg. 20:1). As Hertzberg comments:

Das geschehene Verbrechen is "an Israel" begangen worden und muss deswegen von ganz Israel geahndet werden. Diese Hineinflechtung des Einzelschicksals in die Gesamtverantwortung steht überhaupt als selbstverständliche und wichtige Tatsache hinter der ganzen Erzählung.²⁴

It would appear that all the tribes of the amphictyony did actually take part; Jabesh-gilead was the only place from which no one came to the assembly before Yahweh (21:8). Yet the numbers given for the troops

²¹George F. Moore, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges, Vol. VII of The International Critical Commentary, edited by Alfred Plummer (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), pp. 404-5. Moore admits a historical basis for Judges 20-21 but states, "in the whole description of the war there is hardly a semblance of reality."

²²Eugen Täubler, Biblische Studien: Die Epoche der Richter (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958), p. 8. See also Arvid Bruno, Gibeon (Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923), pp. 111-13, 122-24.

²³Cf. Josh. 7:1ff.; Num. 25:1-5; Josh. 22:16-20.

²⁴Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 252.

on both sides seem very high: four hundred thousand men from Israel and twenty-six thousand men from Benjamin (20:15-17).²⁵ This meant, according to 20:10, that no less than forty thousand men would scour the countryside as foragers to find provisions. In view of this, the suggestion of Mendenhall concerning the organization of the tribes into ʾalāpîm may perhaps solve some of the difficulty here.²⁶ In 20:2 it seems that the "four hundred thousand men" are actually identical with the chiefs (pinnôt) of the people, who perhaps formed a type of council for the amphictyony in this incident. The actual business of calling up the troops appears to come up first in 20:9-10, where it is decided to call up ten per cent of the people to fight against Benjamin.²⁷ In the first two routs by Benjamin, the report states that twenty-two thousand and eighteen thousand, respectively, were killed; yet in the third rout (which was, to be sure, a ruse) only thirty men were killed (20:21,25,31). And how would ten thousand men lie unseen in ambush, rushing in to take Gibeah unawares (20:34)? These considerations might possibly indicate that Israel's fighting force was actually made up of four hundred units (ʾalāpîm), which were ten per cent mobilized for the battle; some forty of these units were wiped out in the first two routs; and ten crack ʾalāpîm hid in ambush to take

²⁵Moore, op. cit., p. 424, points out that in 1870 the Germans besieged Paris, a city of 1,750,000 people, with only two hundred forty thousand men.

²⁶G. E. Mendenhall, "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXVII (1958), 52-66.

²⁷Mendenhall, ibid., p. 60, gives examples of partial mobilization; at Sparta there could be either one-third, two-thirds, or complete mobilization.

Gibeah. This figure of four hundred units would show a drop from the five hundred ninety-eight of Numbers 1 or the five hundred ninety-six of Numbers 26, although it would be somewhat higher than the three hundred twenty-nine ʾalāpîm listed in 1 Chronicles 12; the drop might have resulted from a tendency of various units to merge with one another.

The figures listed for Benjamin's troops in Judges 20 might be explained in a similar way. Perhaps 20:15 indicates that Benjamin mustered twenty-six ʾalāpîm with a total of seven hundred men. The report in 20:35 seems to say that twenty-five of these units were routed, with one hundred men killed; the doublet²⁸ of the story of the final victory (20:36b-48) likewise lists a total of twenty-five ʾalāpîm which fell, besides giving the information that six hundred men escaped (20:44-47). Thus this picture of Benjamin's defeat emerges: from a total of twenty-six ʾalāpîm with seven hundred men, Israel routed twenty-five of the units and killed one hundred men; the remaining six hundred men scattered and fled. These figures accord fairly well with the lists in Numbers 1 and 26; there Benjamin had thirty-five ʾalāpîm with four hundred men (Num. 1:37) or forty-five units with six hundred men (Num. 26:41).

The sequel to the battle against Benjamin demonstrates again the corporate feeling in the amphictyony; the sympathy of the tribes for Benjamin comes from "der gleichen Verantwortung für die Gesamtheit des Zwölfstammesbundes wie die Strafhandlungen."²⁹ The lack of women in

²⁸Judg. 20:30-36a and 20:36b-48 tell the same story twice; the second account resembles the account of the ambush at Ai (Josh. 8:1-23).

²⁹Hertzberg, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

Benjamin (apparently the result of the laying waste described in Judg. 20:48) threatened the existence of one tribe of the amphictyony, so the other members took steps to remedy the situation (21:1ff.). This story is complicated and need not be discussed here, except for the military action against Jabesh-gilead;³⁰ this shows again the amphictyonic requirement of participation in the sacral assemblies (22:5,8). Twelve of the bravest ʾāḷāpîm were sent to this city, destroying it because of its refusal to "come up to Yahweh to Mizpeh" (20:5,8).

³⁰See Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951), p. 26. Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, pp. 163-64, feels Judg. 21 is an attempt to explain the relationship of Jabesh with Gibeah in the time of Saul.

CHAPTER VII

THE NATURE OF THE ISRAELITE AMPHICTYONY

Political Separatism Among the Tribes

The preceding discussion of the wars of the amphictyony has shown that usually only a small percentage of the tribes actually participated in any given battle against outsiders, even though the outcome would be of concern to the federation as a whole. There is much evidence present in the Old Testament which shows that the factors which held the amphictyony together during this period are not to be sought primarily in political ties or foreign pressure.

Many forces were operating which tended to keep the tribes separate. "The nature of the land itself was more apt to separate the inhabitants from one another."¹ The Israelites apparently settled mainly in the mountainous areas, leaving the plains and cities to the Canaanites, with their chariots and fortifications (Judg. 1). This meant there was a chain of Canaanite cities from Dor to Beth-shan, separating the Galilean tribes from the tribes of central Palestine; and likewise there was a belt of cities from Gezer and Ajalon to Jerusalem, separating

¹Martin Noth, The History of Israel, translated from the German by P. R. Ackroyd (second edition; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 17. For this point of view see also W. F. Albright, "The Biblical Period," The Jews, Their History, Culture, and Religion, edited by Louis Finkelstein (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949), I, 19. Also John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 155.

Judah from the central tribes.² For these reasons, the Israelite tribes did not develop an organized state for several centuries; in the meantime, the various tribes lived exclusively their own lives. This was a period that was characterized politically by an "absolute Zusammenhanglosigkeit."³ This is borne out by the evidence that the tribes fought their own individual wars in order to take possession (yrš) of their territory.⁴ Thus Simeon (and Judah) took the city of Zephath (Hormah), while Judah defeated the Canaanites at Bezek and took Jerusalem (Judg. 1:4-8,17). The House of Joseph took Luz (1:22-26), and Dan found its possession by defeating Laish (Judg. 17-18). The Calebites took Kiriath-arba (Hebron), the Kenites took the Negeb near Arad, and the Othnielites took Kiriath-sepher (Debir) as their possession (Judg. 1:11-20).⁵ As Wright points out, speaking from archaeological

²R. Kittel, A History of the Hebrews, translated from the German by Hope W. Hogg and E. B. Speirs (London: Williams and Norgate, 1896), p. 63. See also Albrecht Alt, "Die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 123. Also Albright, op. cit., p. 19.

³Martin Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1930), p. 61. See also R. de Vaux, Les Institutions de L'Ancien Testament (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1960), p. 10; W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process (second edition; New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), p. 283; Albrecht Alt, "Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), II, 3ff.

⁴Walter R. Roehrs, "The Conquest of Canaan According to Joshua and Judges," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXI (December, 1960), 748, makes a distinction between lqh and yrš in the conquest account.

⁵See Albrecht Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 130-31.

considerations:

The period of the Judges was an exceedingly disturbed age. Every town containing excavated ruins of the time was destroyed at least once; yet so far none of the destructions can be correlated with one another. This suggests that the fighting which went on was largely local in nature—precisely the picture that the Book of Judges, including the present form of its first chapter, presents.⁶

It appears that the local struggles of the individual tribes were not a concern of the federation as a whole. The fact that in almost every tribal possession Canaanite cities remained (Judg. 1:21,27-34) was not seen as an occasion to call out other tribes to help, with the lone exception of the war against Sisera; it was left up to the individual tribes either to develop a modus vivendi with them or absorb them into the tribe.⁷ Even when territory was lost and some of the tribes were reduced to the point of non-existence, as in the cases of Reuben, Dan, Simeon and Levi (and perhaps Manasseh and Asher),⁸ the amphictyony was not called out. Noth sums it up:

It is very characteristic that the struggle for consolidation in the land which took place with the earlier inhabitants and neighbouring peoples after the Israelites had occupied the land was not regarded as a concern affecting Israel as a whole. The individual tribes had to guard their possessions for themselves and, where necessary or desirable, to try to extend their settlement on their own. In certain cases neighbouring tribes may occasionally have combined to protect their common interests. But in this early period we hear nothing at all of joint undertakings by the whole association of the twelve tribes for the

⁶G. Ernest Wright, "The Literary and Historical Problem of Joshua 10 and Judges 1," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, V (April, 1946), 113.

⁷Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 145-47; Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, p. 279; Bright, op. cit., p. 121.

⁸Albright, "The Biblical Period," op. cit., p. 18.

protection or expansion of their property and life, and evidently nothing of the kind in fact occurred.⁹

It is true that the struggle of the Israelites with the surrounding peoples, especially with the mighty Philistines, did eventually hammer them into national political unity.¹⁰ Yet this kind of political unity came only very late in the period of the amphictyony. It is not true to say, as Kaufmann says of the period immediately following the Israelite settlement in Canaan:

The Kingdom of Israel is a completely new creation. It arises from the will of the tribes for national unification. It appears as a politico-national unity, in contrast to the political separatism of the Canaanites.¹¹

The biblical witness would rather support this statement by Noth:

It does not appear from the tradition that has come down to us that the twelve-tribe association was a political and military institution concerned with external affairs except in so far as a federation of twelve tribes inevitably implied a power complex, even though the aggressive development of power was not one of its intrinsic tasks.¹²

It was not political ties, geographical phenomena, or foreign pressure which formed the tribes into an amphictyony and kept this federation going for over two centuries. Yet the wars discussed in the preceding chapters are presented in principle as wars of the amphictyony,¹³

⁹Noth, The History of Israel, p. 163.

¹⁰Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, p. 286.

¹¹Yehezkel Kaufmann, The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Canaan, translated from the Hebrew manuscript by M. Dagut (Jerusalem: At the Magnes Press, 1953), p. 90.

¹²Noth, The History of Israel, p. 105. Also Alt, "Die Staatenbildung," op. cit., p. 7.

¹³Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951), p. 26.

presupposing a group of tribes with a deep feeling of unity. To understand this feeling of unity in spite of political separatism one must turn to the sacral side of the federation.

Sacral Unity in the Amphictyony

It has been recognized by many scholars that the Israelite tribal league was a federation of distinct tribes, grouped around a central sanctuary and a common faith.¹⁴ Greek history of a slightly later period provides many examples of such bands; the individual states or cities which were members of the band were called amphiktyones, and the federation was called an amphiktyonia. The word itself is first found in 380 B. C. in an inscription; however, some of these amphictyonies probably reached back at least to the eighth century B. C.¹⁵ Among these Greek amphictyonies were those of Argos, Onchestos, Kalauria and Corinth; two better known amphictyonies were the Delphic league and the Pylaeon-Delphic federation. The latter possessed two central sanctuaries, the temple of Demeter on the Pyle and the Delphic sanctuary of Apollos; most of the other leagues had only one central sanctuary. An outstanding characteristic of these amphictyonies was the strictly observed number of twelve tribes (ethnē) which constituted the

¹⁴Albright, "The Biblical Period," op. cit., p. 18. See also W. F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), pp. 102-3.

¹⁵Ibid. See especially the detailed treatment of the Greek amphictyonies in Cauer, "Amphiktyonia," Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft, edited by Georg Wissowa (neue Bearbeitung; Stuttgart: J. C. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1894), I, part 2, 1904-35.

amphictyony.¹⁶ There were also old Italian amphictyonies; Levius speaks of a band of duodecim populi of the Etruscians with a sanctuary of the goddess Voltumna in the area of the city Volsinii. Every year they assembled at a cultic festival with a covenant leader (sacerdos).¹⁷ Among Israel's neighbors in the Near East there appear to have been similar bands of tribes: the twelve Aramaean tribes (Gen. 22:20-24), twelve Ishmaelite tribes (Gen. 25:13-16), and twelve Edomite tribes (Gen. 36:10-14). There were also six tribe groups among Israel's neighbors (corresponding to Israel's "Leah" tribes): the six sons of Keturah possibly designate six Arabic tribes (Gen. 25:2), and there were apparently six Horite tribes of Mount Seir (Gen. 36:20-28).¹⁸ Bright suggests that the constant numbers of twelve and six were probably dictated by the requirement of a monthly or bimonthly turn at the maintenance of the central shrine.¹⁹

The Israelite tribal league was similar to the other amphictyonies of this general era; the difference lay "not in its external form but in the nature of the God under whose aegis it was formed. . . ."20

¹⁶Ibid., cols. 1905ff. See also Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, pp. 47-58, who shows that the Greeks occasionally personified the tribes in the eponymen.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 51-52.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 43-44; the Aramaean and Edomite tribes appear with inner arrangement, like the Israelites, resulting from different wives.

¹⁹Bright, op. cit., p. 144.

²⁰Ibid. G. E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburg: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), p. 37, feels Israel's federation was similar to previous ones in Palestine and Syria; it lasted because of the suzerainty treaty with Yahweh.

Like the Greek and Italian federations, the Israelite amphictyony had a central sanctuary and a common cultus. As Alt states,

Wir auf jeden Fall für die Zeit nach der Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina die wirksame Existenz ihres Zusammenschlusses um Jahwe in die historische Rechnung einzusetzen haben, und zwar zunächst und vor allem in der Form der Teilnahme aller zwölf Stämme an dem Kultus eines gemeinsame Jahweheiligums, also eines sakralen Bundes nach der Art jener Amphiktionien. . . . Man wird die Bedeutung dieses Jahwebundes mit seinen regelmässig wiederkehrenden Begehungen für die Erweckung und Erhaltung des zusammengehörigkeitsgefühls der israelitischen Stämme kaum überschätzen können und behaupten dürfen, dass in ihm das israelitische Nationalbewusstsein seine eigentliche Wurzel hat.²¹

Although there was religious freedom in the amphictyony in that there could be local holy places for the worship of Yahweh,²² still there was one central sanctuary as the focal point of Israel's corporate worship life. The Old Testament tradition generally places the amphictyonic central sanctuary at Shiloh, but there are indications that it moved around to a number of holy places (2 Sam. 7:6-7). Some of these places were probably Gilgal (Josh. 3-4; 1 Sam. 11:15; 15:12ff.), Shechem (Josh. 24), and Bethel (Judg. 20:26f.).²³ The traditions best preserved in the Old Testament concern the central shrine at Shiloh, where it even possessed a hêkal, a temple (1 Sam. 3:3; Jer. 7:14; 26:9). Here the tribes gathered and set up the tent of meeting (Josh. 18:1; Judg. 21:12); here Eli and Samuel ministered as the people of Israel made annual

²¹Alt, "Die Staatenbildung," op. cit., p. 8.

²²Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, p. 113. also Bright, op. cit., p. 147.

²³Albrecht Alt, "Die Wallfahrt von Sichem nach Bethel," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), I, 85. See also Bright, op. cit., p. 146; and Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 91-95.

pilgrimages to worship Yahweh (1 Sam. 1); and it was here that the amphictyony fell before the Philistines.²⁴

It appears that the ark of the covenant was the essential feature of the central sanctuary. This was originally conceived of as the empty throne of the invisible God-King (Num. 10:35f.; Jer. 3:16f.); it was probably originally a travelling shrine, a heritage of Israel's primitive desert faith.²⁵ It must have been connected with the shrine at Shiloh, at least, for it was taken from there to help Israel in the battle against the Philistines (1 Sam. 4).

Much stress has been laid on the events described in Joshua 24 as the founding of the Israelite amphictyony. Noth in particular has argued that the "Leah" tribes were in Canaan early, and that the Yahweh-faith was brought in later by the House of Joseph; these two groups²⁶ were united into the twelve tribe amphictyony by the covenant at Shechem. In support of this Noth points to the joining of the Pylaeon and Delphic amphictyonies in Greece, where the Pylaeans took over the cult and temple administration of Apollos of Delphi.²⁷ It certainly is probable, since excavations have shown no destruction of the city of Shechem during this period, that hapiru of the same stock as Israel's ancestors were settled

²⁴Bright, op. cit., p. 146. Noth, The History of Israel, p. 95.

²⁵Ibid., p. 91; also Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, p. 95.

²⁶See especially ibid., pp. 37-38, 70, and 90.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 88-89. This also involved a doubling of the members from twelve to twenty-four; the difference would be that the Pylaeans kept the Demeter cult also, while at Shechem the old gods were put away.

there; these, together with the Canaanite population, could have been absorbed into the Israelite amphictyony in the events described in Joshua 24. However, there is evidence from the Old Testament that there were a number of covenant renewals during the period of the amphictyony, especially at Beth Peor,²⁸ at Mount Ebal (Josh. 8:30-35), with the Gadites and Reubenites (Josh. 22),²⁹ in addition to the one described in Joshua 24. Noth's statement that Joshua 24 "refers to a regular observance which took place before the sacred stone in the oak shrine at Shechem"³⁰ perhaps correctly reflects the situation during the period of the amphictyony; no doubt there were many covenant renewal ceremonies, especially at times of crisis.³¹ This means, however, that the origins of the Israelite amphictyony must be pushed back into the period preceding the settlement in Canaan. Bright's conclusion on this matter appears to agree with the biblical tradition:

We are driven, therefore, to assume that the origins of the amphictyonic system, like those of Yahwism itself, reach back to Sinai. The amphictyony was a sacral league formed in covenant with Yahweh, perfectly expressive of primitive Yahwistic faith. If Yahwism originated in the desert (as it certainly did), we must conclude that the covenant society did also, for Yahwism and the covenant are coterminous! . . . To be sure, the community formed at Sinai was not the Israelite amphictyony in normative form, but a confederation of smaller family units. We may suppose, however, that as this nucleus wandered, split and proliferated in the manner described in the preceding chapter, it gained considerable accessions of converts till it grew into a formidable union of clans.

²⁸See supra, p. 74.

²⁹Supra, p. 74.

³⁰Noth, The History of Israel, p. 92, feels that Deut. 11:29ff.; 27:1-26; and Josh. 8:30-35 all refer to this.

³¹Perhaps the Song of Deborah arose from such a background; see supra, pp. 25ff.

When this group then thrust its way into Palestine and established itself there, elements already sedentary were drawn into its structure, and the amphictyony normatively constituted in the covenant at Shechem.³²

Noth points out that the Israelite amphictyony differed from other amphictyonies in not being particularly concerned with the obligations of the individual members toward the central sanctuary, or with their relations with one another or foreign powers. Rather the Israelite amphictyony was concerned primarily with Israel's relationship to its God, and the sacral league "was intended to safeguard the inviolability of this relationship in every respect." And the cultus was not a simple process of gathering around the shrine with a common ritual; rather the great traditions of Yahweh's mighty acts were preserved in their common tribal cultic tradition.³³ Thus it was Israel's relationship to Yahweh, not the tribal political ties or the common danger from foreign foes, which gave the Israelite confederacy its feeling of unity. In the covenant, each clan became a vassal of Yahweh, and at the same time they were bound to each other in a sacral truce.

No clan was sovereign, and at the same time, the terms of the covenant left each clan free to regulate its internal affairs so long as the religious covenant obligations were protected.³⁴

The "primitive Pansakralität"³⁵ of early Israel's life made no sharp

³²Bright, op. cit., pp. 145-46.

³³Noth, The History of Israel, p. 110.

³⁴Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 38; other suzerainty covenants show that the tribes could not have outside political ties, for in rejecting foreign relations with other gods, they also had to reject other political groups with their gods.

³⁵Martin Buber's phrase, quoted in von Rad, op. cit., p. 29.

distinction, it is true, between the purely sacral side of the amphictyony and the secular concerns. Thus some of the wars of the amphictyony can be described as "holy wars," in which Yahweh was seen as a warrior-God, fighting for His people in battle. Yet this military unity in certain cases must be seen as a result of, not a constitutive factor in, the Israelite amphictyony.

The Twelve-Tribe System

Martin Noth in his basic study on the subject³⁶ has shown that the list of Israelite tribes in Genesis 49, Numbers 1 and Numbers 26:5-15 are the most important witnesses for the Israelite twelve-tribe system, which was seen as the proper organization of the amphictyony. The basic question for the purposes of this paper concerns the extent to which the twelve-tribe system accurately reflects the make-up of the amphictyony at any given time. There appear to be three strong traditions concerning the make-up of early Israel: a six-tribe group, composed of the "Leah" tribes; a twelve-tribe system including Levi; and a twelve-tribe system excluding Levi.³⁷

The tribal lists of the Old Testament are very consistent in the tribes placed in the first six spots; they are always the sons of Leah (Gen. 29:31ff.), except when Levi drops out to be replaced by Gad (Num. 26). Since the Leah tribes played virtually no part as a group in the Old Testament tradition, they must be viewed as an older band of tribes which had ceased to function as a separate unit by the time of the

³⁶Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, pp. 23ff.

³⁷Ibid.

amphictyony.

If one remembers, finally, that outside Israel six-tribe associations can be proved to have existed alongside numerous twelve-tribe associations, one must conclude that the "Leah tribes," Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun and Issachar, had once formed a six-tribe association at a time when the first named of these tribes were still in full possession of their original position and Joseph and Benjamin had not yet completed their occupation, and that this six-tribe association was the fore-runner and basis of the later twelve-tribe association.³⁸

This would explain why Reuben, Simeon and Levi were still included as tribes in the amphictyony, while in actuality they had become scattered and absorbed into the other tribes. Thus it would be true that, in any given war, one should not expect all traditional twelve tribes to be active.

The twelve-tribe system which includes Levi (Gen. 49) is apparently older than the system which excludes this tribe:

Die Entstehung jener ersten, Levi einschliessenden Form des Systems setzt die Existenz des Stammes Levi noch voraus, und es ist weiter daran zu denken, dass diese einmal geschaffene Form sich noch weiter in ihrer Geltung behaupten konnte, auch ohne den tatsächlichen Verhältnissen in bezug auf Levi noch zu entsprechen, bis man schliesslich doch einmal sich dazu entschloss, Levi im System auszulassen und diesem so eine neue Form zu geben.³⁹

The twelve-tribe system which excludes Levi (especially Num. 26) shows both the unalterability of the six-tribe number and also of the twelve-tribe number: Gad is brought in to replace Levi in the "Leah" group, while Joseph is split into Manasseh and Ephraim to retain the number twelve. Thus the twelve-tribe system, while basically historical, does not represent the actual make-up of the amphictyony at any given time,

³⁸Noth, The History of Israel, p. 89.

³⁹Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, p. 33.

nor does it take into consideration any of the other clans which might have had a claim for full membership in the amphictyony.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Such clans as the Calebites, the Kenites, and the Kenizzites (Judg. 1); supra, p. 41.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AMPHICTYONY AT WAR

The Military Organization

The tribes of the Israelite amphictyony were free to control their own affairs:

Das Eigentümliche der Stämme-Epoche . . . besteht in der Autarkie des Stammes und der aristokratisch überhöhten Gleichheit seiner rechtlich und wirtschaftlich vollfreien Angehörigen.¹

Yet it seems inconceivable that the tribes could have maintained their existence for over two centuries without the emergence of some kind of "customary military organization" so that troops could be called up in an emergency. This does not mean there had to be a centralized command; Mendenhall compares the system described in the Iliad, where each leader commanded the troops of his own tribe or clan.² It seems probable that, in the Israelite amphictyony, the various tribes did have a simple type of military organization, which could be put into operation either in defense of that particular tribe or in defense of the whole amphictyony.

In specific emergencies a charismatic leader would sometimes arise to lead his tribe or a group of tribes in battle. This, by its very nature, was the exception rather than the rule. It appears that the leader of a tribe was normally the nāsi', and he likewise seems to have

¹Eugen Täubler, Biblische Studien: Die Epoche der Richter (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958), p. 1.

²G. E. Mendenhall, "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXVII (1958), 54-55.

been the military leader of the tribe's forces. There was a nāšî' for each of the twelve tribes (Num. 2:1ff.; 13:2-15; 34:17-28; Josh. 22:14, 30,32). These nēšî'îm formed a council or college for the amphictyony (Num. 1:44; 4:34). And they were connected with the lists of fighting men of each tribe (Num. 1:2ff.).³ It is probable that the troops of the tribe rallied around this leader, rather than around a centralized amphictyonic commander. The Near East offers other analogies: the Mari letters show that a certain Iasmah-Addu was instructed to levy armies from four tribes (subsections of the Banu-Iamina). He left it up to each individual sagāgu to obtain his men. The same situation prevailed in the Abbasid period of Islamic history; in the time of need the chiefs roused their tribes for war, and "it was about its own ra'is that each tribe rallied, marched and fought."⁴

The basic unit within the tribe appears to have been the "clan," mišpaḥâ, and this was perhaps further subdivided (Josh. 7:16-18). The military organization of the tribe corresponded to its structure; the fighting men of a mišpaḥâ formed a unit called an 'elep, "a thousand." That the 'elep was identical with the mišpaḥâ is seen from 1 Samuel 10:19 and 21. Gideon's 'elep was a subdivision of the tribe of Manasseh (Judg. 6:15), Saul sought David from among the 'alpê yehūdâ (1 Sam. 23:23),

³Martin Noth, The History of Israel, translated from the German by P. R. Ackroyd (second edition; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 98, derives nāšî' from ns' qôl, meaning "speaker." It is interesting that also the Ishmaelite twelve-tribe system had twelve nēšî'îm. See also Martin Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1930), pp. 151-62; and Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 54.

⁴Ibid., pp. 56, 59.

and Micah placed Bethlehem among the 'alpê y^ehûdâ (Micah 5:2).⁵ In Numbers 31:3ff. an 'elep from each tribe was sent to the battle against Midian; here mē'ôt, "hundreds," also appear as subdivisions of the 'alāpîm (as in 1 Sam. 22:7; 2 Sam. 18:1,4; and perhaps Judg. 7:16). One further subdivision sometimes appears: the h^amiššîm, "fifty" (1 Sam. 8:12).⁶ From other analogies it seems probable that these units were based more on territoriality than kinship:

It is certain that the usual Aufhebungsbezirke in the Late Bronze Age were not kinship groups, but rather villages; in other words, lineage had largely given way to territoriality so far as military and administrative functions were concerned. Needless to say, the two would largely have coincided in ancient Israel; nevertheless, there can be little doubt that it was the territory (the village), not kinship which was the dominant factor in the functioning of the Federation system; on a higher level it was the "tribe" which must be regarded as an administrative unit rather than a lineage.⁷

It seems highly probable that there were not actually one thousand fighting men in each 'elep of the tribes; the literal interpretation of this term makes some of the figures given for the Israelite troops far out of proportion.⁸ One would expect the Israelite units to

⁵Ibid., p. 60. See also Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 106-8; and Gerhard von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951), p. 26.

⁶Von Rad, ibid., p. 27, explains h^amuššîm of passages like Josh. 1:14 as "gefünfzig," ordered for battle. R. de Vaux, Les Institutions de L'Ancien Testament (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1960), II, 14, does not think the expression means fifty men but rather the design for war in five corps. He compares the Arabic hamis, "five," and thinks the army was composed of a front-guard, a corps, two wings, and a rear guard.

⁷Mendenhall, op. cit., pp. 57, 63. He notes that both in England and Delaware the term "Hundred" survives as a designation of a subsection of the country. Likewise, Alalkh and Ras Shamra census lists show the clusters of dwellings formed the basis for their organization.

⁸Supra, pp. 50-51, 64, 79-80.

correspond somewhat with similar units in the Near East, on which the Mari letters cast some light. Among troops stationed at Suprum were four different groups (gayum) with nine men each; the garrison of Mari had two hundred twenty-two men from nine gayum. The Alalakh lists ranged from six to one hundred sixty-five per village; Terqa, a district capital, had four hundred men for corvee work on a canal and two hundred available for military service. Five hundred men were sent by Mari to Qatna; and Hammurabi of Babylon requested one hundred to two hundred men from Zurra. Six hundred men were to be levied from four tribes of the Banu-Iamina, one hundred fifty from each tribe. In larger groups, the armies of Mari totaled four thousand troops, Shamsi-Adad of Assyria raised ten thousand, and the kingdom of Eshnunna had six thousand.⁹

There is evidence in the Old Testament that the number of fighting men belonging to an average tribe should be figured in the hundreds rather than in the thousands (Judg. 18:11,16; 7:16; 1 Sam. 13:15; 14:2). With this as a starting-point, Mendenhall argues that the census lists in Numbers 1 and 26 are lists of the tribal fighting men:

It is here submitted that the census lists of Numbers 1 and 26 are an authentic list from the period of the Federation which reflects this sort of military organization and mobilization, probably coming from specific occasions when the federation army had to be mobilized to meet a common peril.¹⁰

Other scholars concur in dating these lists from the period of the

⁹Mendenhall, op. cit., pp. 50-60, 64. The Mari, Assyrian and Eshnunna armies totaled twenty thousand, which compares well with David's twenty-two thousand (2 Sam. 8:5).

¹⁰Ibid., p. 60.

amphictyony.¹¹ Such lists, common elsewhere in the ancient Near East, would be for the purpose of registering men in the individual tribes who were subject to military duty.¹² Mendenhall feels that, in the lists in Numbers 1 and 26 (and also 1 Chron. 12), each tribe is listed with its number of units (ḡalāpîm) and its total number of fighting men. On that basis, the following picture would emerge:¹³

TABLE I
CENSUS LISTS OF THE TRIBES

	<u>Numbers 1</u>		<u>Numbers 26</u>	
	<u>units</u>	<u>men</u>	<u>units</u>	<u>men</u>
Reuben	46	500	43	730
Simeon	59	300	22	200
Gad	45	650	40	500
Judah	74	600	76	500
Issachar	54	400	64	300
Zebulun	57	400	60	500
Ephraim	40	500	32	500
Manasseh	32	200	52	700
Benjamin	35	400	45	600
Dan	62	700	64	400
Asher	41	500	53	400
Naphtali	<u>53</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>400</u>
	598	5550	596	5730

The only two big differences in the two lists are the substantial drop in Simeon's units and the jump in Manasseh's units and men, assuming that Numbers 26 reflects the state of the amphictyony at a later time

¹¹Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, pp. 30, 126ff. See also von Rad, op. cit., p. 26.

¹²Mendenhall, op. cit., pp. 53-55.

¹³Ibid., p. 62; the table is substantially the same as that given by Mendenhall, who also adds the list in 1 Chron. 12.

than does Numbers 1.¹⁴ It may be possible that these lists indicate at least in general the relative size of Israel's troops during the period of the amphictyony. The numbers given for the various battles should therefore be seen in the light of these lists.¹⁵

The Holy War

The idea of a "holy war" is widespread in the history of religions. The Greek Delphic amphictyony conducted hieroi polemoi against a member who violated the sacred sanctuary of Apollos. The war of the Islam adherents was called a ġihad; it was the duty of every Moslem to spread the faith through the use of arms.¹⁶ Scholars have applied the term "holy war" to the wars fought by the Israelite amphictyony in an attempt to show the sacral connotations of these wars.¹⁷

It is not easy to define precisely just what constituted a holy war for the Israelite tribal league. It appears quite certain that these wars were not "faith-wars" after the analogy of the Islamic ġihad. "Israel ne combat pas pour sa foi, il combat pour son existence."¹⁸ In none of the wars of the Israelites do they fight explicitly against

¹⁴Mendenhall, ibid., p. 63, explains the smaller number for Manasseh in Num. 1 by referring this list to the time before the incorporation of Zelophehad's daughters.

¹⁵Supra, pp. 50-51, 64, 79-80.

¹⁶De Vaux, op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁷For the most thorough discussion of the Israelite holy war see von Rad, op. cit., passim.

¹⁸De Vaux, op. cit., p. 73.

the gods of the enemy, nor do they fight to protect or spread the Yahweh-faith:

In den heiligen Kriegen stand nicht Israel zum Schutz des Jahwe-glauben auf, sondern Janwe trat zum Schutz Israels auf den Plan, denn seinem Schutz waren die Gleider der Amphiktyonie unterstellt, Israel war Jahwes Eigentum.¹⁹

Since this was the case, there was no incentive for aggressive wars except for the procuring of new territory. For that reason, it appears that all the wars of the amphictyony after the conquest were defensive wars, fought to keep foreign aggression from destroying the sacral league.²⁰

The biblical tradition offers certain recurring factors in connection with the wars of the Israelites which might be seen as characteristics of the holy war. On certain occasions, there was blowing on trumpets, sending of cut-up flesh to the tribes, and sacral ordinances in the camp. The assembled army was called 'am yhw^h, and the men were to arm themselves before Yahweh. Yahweh was asked about the battle; it was His war, and He went before His troops, perhaps symbolized by the ark (Num. 10:33-36). Israel was to believe, not fear; there was a battle cry (t^erû^a), and the enemies were terrified. The Israelites helped Yahweh in the war; the victory cry was, "Yahweh has given the enemy into your hand." The ban (herem) played a part at times; and at the conclusion of the war the ranks were broken and every man returned

¹⁹Von Rad, op. cit., p. 32.

²⁰Ibid., p. 26; de Vaux, op. cit., pp. 57, 78; John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 159-60.

to the tents.²¹ However, these factors form no consistent unity; it is impossible to say which of them were necessary for the war to be considered a holy war.

Wir handeln also hier von einer kultischen Institution, die in ihrer eigentlichen und intendierten Form geschichtlich nie vollkommen in Erscheinung getreten ist. . . . eine sacrale Institution wie diese hat ja ihre Existence wahrlich nicht nur in ihrer äusseren realen Auswirkung. Sie war als solche doch da. Denn wie partiell die Unternehmungen auch gewesen sein mögen, so war in ihnen ideell das Urbild des heiligen Krieges doch jedes Mal mitenthalten.²²

It appears, therefore, that there were no definite regulations concerning a holy war in the Israelite amphictyony. This is not to say that its wars were not considered to be sacral. Every war of the amphictyony was by definition a holy war;

precisement a cause de cette relation essentielle entre le peuple et son Dieu, toutes les institutions d'Israel ont revetu un caractere sacral, la guerre comme la royauté et comme la législation.²³

Perhaps war was looked on as something especially sacral because of its critical nature; "Krieg und Kultus waren die Gebiete, in denen man sich der Gottheit besonders nahe fühlte."²⁴ Yet this does not mean that the holy war of early Israel actually provided the origin for Israel's faith in Yahweh, as von Rad seems to contend:

Es ist so gut wie sicher, dass der Glaubensgedanke, d. h. jenes getroste Vertrauen in das Handeln Jahwes seinen eigentlichen Ursprung im heiligen Krieg hatte, und dass er von daher seine eigentümlich dynamische Prägung erhielt.²⁵

²¹The elements of the holy war are listed in full by von Rad, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-14; also de Vaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-77.

²²Von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

²³De Vaux, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

²⁴Richard Press, "Das Ordal im alten Israel. II," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, LI (1933), 231.

²⁵Von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

The fact that war was considered sacral to Israel likewise does not mean that the war-camp was Israel's cradle, as Wellhausen stated:

Das Kriegslager, die Wiege der Nation, war auch das älteste Heiligtum. Da war Israel, und da war Jahwe.²⁶

If this were true, it would be difficult to explain the apparent lack of interest many of the tribes had in the wars of the amphictyony. If it was their participation in a holy war under Yahweh's leading that was to bind the tribes together into a sacral confederation, that confederation never would have existed. Rather, the binding element in the Israelite amphictyony was first of all the common faith in Yahweh and the participation in a common cultus at a central sanctuary. The results of the sacral covenant with Yahweh permeated the whole life of the amphictyony, making also the wars of the amphictyony sacral undertakings.

The most consistent element in the accounts of the holy wars of the Israelite amphictyony is the ascription of the leading role to Yahweh. In each battle the outcome depended on Yahweh's will for His people. In the common faith of the amphictyony it was recognized that defeat by foreigners and servitude to them was a result of sin and rebellion against Yahweh by the amphictyony. To punish His people and cause them to repent Yahweh would sell them into the hands of the enemy (Judg. 3:7-8,12; 4:1-2; 6:1; 10:6ff.). But the people of Israel also recognized that when they repented and cried to Yahweh for help, He would take steps to bring them victory over the enemy. He would raise up a deliverer (Judg. 3:9,15,31; 4:6; 6:14; 11:29; 1 Sam. 11:6), on whom His spirit would come. Under the guidance of this charismatic leader the victory would be won

²⁶Ibid., p. 14.

for the amphictyony. The people of Israel, in their common faith, believed that the God of the amphictyony was also active in the battles themselves. He was the one who gave the oppressor into the hands of Israel (Judg. 3:10,28; 4:7; 8:3; 11:32). He went out before them in the battle (Judg. 4:14), the enemy was His enemy (5:31), and Israel's task was to come "to the help of Yahweh against the mighty" (5:23). Thus Israel's covenant with Yahweh meant for them that Yahweh took an active, leading part in their history, especially in their battles with enemies. Since Yahweh fought with them, the wars were indeed "holy wars."

There seems to have been no great distinction between the sacral character of a war fought by one or two tribes and a war fought by a larger number of tribes in the name of the amphictyony; Judah's conquest of its territory is presented in a sacral framework (Judg. 1:1,2,4). It seems justifiable, however, to make a distinction between the wars fought against outsiders and those within the amphictyony. The wars fought against outsiders would be sacral because they were undertakings of the people of Yahweh; the wars against members of the amphictyony (Josh. 22; Judg. 19-20) were sacral because they were fought to purge the amphictyony from a sin against Yahweh. Full tribal participation need not be expected in the former; it would, however, be expected in the latter.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to determine the place which unified military undertakings had in the Israelite amphictyony. The study of the individual wars has shown that tribal participation in the actual wars was usually quite limited. The war against Cushan-rishathaim was probably more than just a local struggle between clans; yet the absence of a tradition concerning other tribes that participated seems to indicate that Othniel repulsed the invader with his own people of Debir and perhaps the southern clans which later emerged as Judah. The battle led by Ehud against the Moabites shows that the land of Reuben and Gad was and remained under full control of the Moabites; they were driven out of the land west of the Jordan by men from Benjamin and Ephraim. The battle in which Shamgar delivered Israel was apparently not a war of the Israelite amphictyony. The war led by Jephthah against the Ammonites was basically a feud between the people of Gilead and the Ammonites. Jephthah, with his own band of raiders plus recruits from Gilead and Manasseh, drove the Ammonites away and destroyed some of their cities. Although Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim had also suffered at the hands of Ammon, there is no indication that these tribes helped in the battle; Ephraim definitely refused to help.

In the war against the Canaanites, the actual battle appears to have been fought by two tribes, Naphtali and Zebulun. That this victory was ascribed to the amphictyony as a whole is seen from what seems to be a cultic gathering to celebrate the victory. At this festival there

were representatives from six tribes of the amphictyony: Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir (Manasseh), Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali. Four tribes belonging to the amphictyony were taunted for staying away: Gilead (Gad), Dan, Asher, and Reuben.

In the war against the Midianites, it seems probable that the Midianites were first routed by Gideon with his own tribe of Manasseh. Four other tribes, Naphtali, Asher, Ephraim and Zebulun, joined in the victorious pursuit of the Midianites and kept some of them from escaping. However, the long-range pursuit of the Midianites who fled to Arabia was left up to Gideon and his men from Manasseh.

The wars of the transitional period, as the amphictyony was giving way to the kingdom, are simply described as wars of "all Israel." The seriousness of the threat from the Philistines, the bringing of the ark into battle, and Saul's summoning of the tribes by a sacral sign seem to indicate that the tribal participation in these battles was more complete than previously. Men from Ephraim, Benjamin and Judah are expressly mentioned in the accounts. Still, the scattered information that Saul had only had six hundred men for one battle, that there were Hebrews with the Philistines, that some of the men of Israel had hidden themselves in the hills of Ephraim, and that Saul was cut off from the Galilean and eastern tribes in his last battle would demonstrate that even in the period of the early monarchy all the tribes did not participate in the wars.

The wars within the amphictyony were expressly fought to purge Israel from sin. Apparently all ten remaining tribes sent representatives to the assembly that was preparing war on Reuben and Gad, even

though this "treachery" was purged by a covenant renewal rather than a war. The war that was fought to purge the evil caused by the wantonness of the men of Gibeah likewise appears to have called forth full tribal participation: perhaps ten per cent of the fighting men of each tribe were summoned for the battle against Benjamin. The city of Jabesh-gilead was the only locality which did not send representatives to the assembly, and it was severely punished. Thus it appears that these wars, fought for sacral reasons, were different from the wars fought against foreign aggressors; all the tribes were bound to participate.

In all of the wars of the amphictyony, a leading role is ascribed to Yahweh. He is the one who brings on the foreign aggression as a chastisement for Israel, and He is the one who delivers the enemy into the hand of the Israelites. It appears that, since the victories occurred under the guidance of the God of the amphictyony, the accounts of the various wars are very consistent in ascribing the victories achieved to the amphictyony as a whole. This serves to illustrate the corporate feeling in the amphictyony: a battle fought by several members becomes a concern of all the members. This is underscored especially by the inter-amphictyonic wars: the sin of one member is the responsibility of all, and action must be taken by all. The difference between the two types of wars lies not in the corporate character demonstrated, but rather in the purpose of the undertaking. The wars against aggressors were undertaken to preserve property and land; the wars against members of the amphictyony were for the purpose of purging evil from the sacral league.

The Old Testament presents the amphictyony as a twelve-tribe league, similar to other such leagues in the ancient world. The interchange and

splitting of members of the league in order to retain the number twelve suggests that this number was not necessarily a reflection of the actual state of the amphictyony at a given time. Accordingly, one should not expect to find all twelve tribes mentioned in connection with any given war. The greatest number of tribes mentioned in these accounts occurs in the Song of Deborah, where ten tribes are enumerated, four of which are taunted for their lack of participation. It appears that the southern tribes, Judah and Simeon, along with Levi, play little part in these wars, with the possible exception of the war under Othniel. It is possible that these tribes, plus other clans that settled in that region, were having their own political difficulties during most of this period, before emerging as the tribe of Judah under Saul and David. The tribes east of the Jordan also play little part in these wars. Reuben's only mention is a taunt for not attending the victory celebration after Deborah's victory (at this time Reuben might still have been dwelling west of the Jordan); otherwise this tribe fades from the scene. Gad, if identical with Gilead, is chided for staying away from the same victory celebration and is otherwise concerned only in the battle with Ammon. Thus these two tribes appear to have led a rather precarious and separated life during this period. With the exception of Dan, the main participants in the wars of the amphictyony appear to have been the tribes of central Palestine and Galilee.

Therefore it must be concluded that the wars of the amphictyony were not a basic factor in unifying the tribes into one band. It is true that foreign pressure, especially from the Philistines, did finally force the tribes into political union; yet this spelled the end of the Israelite

amphictyony. For it was a characteristic of the amphictyony that the tribes were allowed freedom to conduct their own internal and external affairs. The political or military actions of one tribe or of several tribes facing a common peril were not interfered with by the other tribes; those directly affected by foreign aggression would fight, and the others would cheer them on, as it were.

The binding element in the Israelite amphictyony was rather its common faith in Yahweh as expressed in the covenant with Him, and in its central shrine and cultus. Thus the tribal unity went back to religious experiences in the exodus and at Sinai, rather than in any military undertakings. The wars were indeed considered to be "holy" wars, but precisely because the sacral confederation existed in the first place. The victories achieved in war were victories given to His people by Yahweh, the God of the covenant; for that reason the battles were considered sacral undertakings.

The results of this study have implications for other areas of Old Testament research. The wars of the amphictyony serve to demonstrate especially the corporate feeling among the members of the tribal league. Several tribes could act as representatives of the amphictyony, and the account could without further explanation refer the action to the whole amphictyony. This same feeling of corporateness could perhaps be found in the Old Testament traditions about still earlier events: the exodus, the covenant at Sinai, and the conquest of Canaan. John Bright applies this feeling of corporateness to the exodus:

It is profitless to ask which of the twelve tribes were in Egypt and participated in the exodus. Although not all of later Israel was there, we shall never find out which elements were by eliminating this or that tribe and settling on others. We should, indeed,

not speak of tribes in Egypt, for there was no tribal system there—only a conglomeration of slaves of various tribal backgrounds. . . . Nevertheless, since the group that experienced exodus and Sinai was the true nucleus of Israel, and constitutive of Israel, the Bible is in a profound sense correct in insisting that all Israel was there.¹

Following the analogy of the amphictyonic wars, the wars of conquest could likewise have been fought by smaller groups of tribes; since the victories and the land were given by the God of the amphictyony, the narrative would certainly be correct in ascribing these wars to the whole amphictyony.

This feeling of corporateness within the sacral sphere, demonstrated powerfully at this early period in Israel's history, became a characteristic element in the later faith of the Old Testament and was carried over into the Christian faith. Thus the servant of God described by Isaiah could be the representative of the whole people, and, even more profoundly, the Christ Himself could be "Israel."

¹John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 125.

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