

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIESTHOOD IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

by Bruce A. Power

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
M.A. in Religious Studies

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IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

BY

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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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To Judy, Jennifer and Heather.

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Abbreviations

AJSL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
BA	The Biblical Archaeologist
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
CAD	Chicago Assyrian Dictionary
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CMHE	F.M. Cross. <u>Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic</u> . Cambridge: Harvard, 1973.
EJ	Encyclopaedia Judaica
ERE	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IDB	Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
Int	Interpretation
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JNSL	Journal of North Semitic Languages
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTC	Journal for Theology and the Church
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
MD	<u>Magnalia Dei</u> . ed. Cross, Lemke, Miller New York: Doubleday, 1976.
MSU	<u>Man, Settlement and Urbanism</u> . ed. Veko et. al, London: Duckworth, 1972.
OTS	Oldtestamentische Studien
PAPS	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
RB	Revue Biblique
SBL	Society for Biblical Literature
SOASB	Society of African Studies Bulletin

SVT	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

The Development of Priesthood in Ancient Israel

Introduction

Much recent research in Biblical studies has been devoted to attempts to clarify the history of the nation of Israel prior to the monarchic period. The purpose of this thesis is to attempt to clarify the early history of the priesthood. The fact that nearly all the Biblical sources regarding the priesthood's earliest history date from the monarchy and later compound the problem we face in attempting to understand ancient priestly history. In order to help us set the context into which we must attempt to place the results of our critical analysis of the text traditions, two introductory chapters have been provided.

The first of these chapters sketches the figure of the 'priest' in comparative studies. The second surveys the early history of priesthood throughout the ancient near east. The purpose of these chapters is to reflect upon how priesthood functions in societies in general terms, followed by a more detailed examination of priesthood in the cultures of the ancient near east. These provide us with a sense of what might be considered as 'priestly', and help us to set a context into which we might place the priesthood of early Israel. While our method is not to provide constant comparison with this material, we will utilize the concepts outlined in the preliminary chapters in the conclusions which we will draw.

The major portion of this work will be an analysis of the Biblical traditions directly related to the question of priesthood in Israel which date from, or refer to, this institution during the period prior to the divided monarchy. We will begin by looking briefly at the terms used in the Hebrew Bible to designate priests, then we will examine the materials according to sources. Finally, we will provide some preliminary observations for a reconstruction of the early history and development of the Israelite priesthood.

Priesthood in Comparative Studies and in the Sociology of Religion

When we begin to look at the data regarding priesthood which anthropological studies provide, a most noticeable feature is the fluidity of roles and functions of cultic personnel. This factor makes the categorization of various religious figures an important task. Sabourin¹ writes:

The priest is the specialist of worship and should not be confused with the magician, the diviner, the medicine man or the shaman, even though the categories are often mixed in practice.

The distinction made by Durkheim between practitioners of magic and religion on the basis of community would appear to be helpful here.² We will include in our sketch individuals who appear to serve community interests as well as individual concerns.³

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1. L. Sabourin, Priesthood: A Comparative Study (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 13.
 2. Cf. E. Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976) 45. T.F. O'Dea, The Sociology of Religion (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966) 7ff.
 3. Eliade outlines the situation well when he describes it as follows:
 "The differences that distinguish shamans from other specialists in the sacred (priests and black magicians) are less well defined. John Swanton has proposed the following bipartition: priests work for the entire tribe or nation, or in any case for a society of some sort, while the authority of shamans depends entirely upon their personal skill. But Park rightly observes that in a number of cultures (e.g., those of the Northwest Coast) shamans perform certain sacerdotal functions. Clark Wissler favors the traditional distinction between knowing and practicing the rituals, which defines the priesthood, and direct experience of the supernatural forces, characteristic of the shamanic function. In general, this distinction must be accepted; but we must not forget that - to repeat - the shaman too is obliged to acquire a body of doctrines and traditions, and sometimes serves an apprenticeship under an old master, or undergoes an initiation by a "spirit" that imparts the shamanic tradition of the tribe to him." M. Eliade, Shamanism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 298. Cf. A. Hultkrantz, The Religions of the American Indians (Berkeley: University of California, 1979) 125.

When we examine priests in a cross-cultural perspective, will a model appear which will help us more clearly to see the priestly figure in our discussion of Israelite priests? Or will we discover that the designation is of a 'generic' nature, requiring specific information to relate the appellation to a particular culture?

Turning now to our task, we must first ask how an individual becomes a priest. Bertholet contends:

The actual historical beginnings of the priesthood cannot be reconstructed with any degree of scientific assurance. Undoubtedly the first priest was a member of the primitive community who happened to give palpable evidence that he possessed the charismatic gift of mana by displaying some form of supernatural power in the presence of the assembled company.¹

While this may reflect an original priesthood the following list provides a further indication of possibilities.

- 1) Persons may be set apart by observable sacredness:²
 - a) experiences of ecstasy,
 - b) thaumaturgical gifts,³
 - c) another display of power or an obvious 'charism'.⁴
- 2) Individuals from other clans, tribes, or societies may be viewed as having special attributes which enable their functioning as priests.⁵

1. A. Bertholet, "Priesthood," Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences 12, New York: Macmillan (1935) 39f.

2. Ibid., 388.

3. Sabourin, Priesthood, 6f.

4. G. Landtman, "Priest, Priesthood (Primitive)," ERE 10, New York: Scribners (1922) 283.

5. Ibid., 280. J. Wach, Sociology of Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1944) 364.

- 3) The figure of a king-priest is frequently found.¹

In some cases it would appear that this figure arises in response to the development from a clan or similar smaller body into a larger society. In other situations the distinct office appears intended to preserve ultimate sacral and profane authority in a single individual. In other situations these two aspects of authority are separated, although the King may retain 'priestly attributes'.²

- 4) The elders of a family, village, or tribe often function as priests.³

- 5) Such roles are often hereditary.⁴

- 6) Selection by lot.⁵

- 7) Sometimes the role is temporary, that is, the appointment lasts for a specified period of time.⁶

1. Cf. E.O. James, The Nature and Function of Priesthood (London: Thames and Hudson, 1961) 105ff.; Wach, Sociology, 364; Bertholet, "Priesthood" 392; Sabourin, Priesthood, 3; A.B. Keith, "Priest, Priesthood (Hindu)," ERE 10 (1922) 311; G.J. Laing, "Priest, Priesthood (Roman)," ERE 10 (1922) 325; Landtmann, ERE 10, 280; Hultkrantz, Religions, 147, 200f., 232f., 251.

2. Bertholet, "Priesthood," 391f.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 3; Keith, ERE 10, 316.

3. Bertholet, "Priesthood," 391; Sabourin, Priesthood, 3; Landtman, Religions, 297; Wach, Sociology, 61f.; W.J. Woodhouse, "Priest, Priesthood (Greek)," ERE 10 (1922), 303.

4. Woodhouse, ERE 10, 305; A. Malefijt, Religion and Culture (London: Macmillan, 1968) 233, 311; E. Edwards, "Priest, Priesthood (Iranian)," ERE 10 (1922) 320; H.J.T. Johnson, "Priest, Priesthood (Chinese)," ERE 10 (1922) 291; S.F. Nadel, "Two Nuba Religions: An Essay in Comparison," Gods and Rituals (ed. J. Middleton; New York: Natural History Press, 1967) 89; R. Benedict, Patterns of Culture (New York: Penguin, 1934) 88.

5. Woodhouse, ERE 10, 305.

6. Benedict, Patterns, 88; Landtman, ERE 10, 279; On part-time functions cf. Malefijt, Religion, 235.

8) The role might be purchased.¹

In any case, it is obvious that the candidate for priesthood must have the necessary aptitude to function in the priestly role, since the well being of the total community depends upon such service.² As Sabourin correctly observes:

The rule of inheritance can rarely be strictly followed, since admittance to the profession remains open to exceptional candidates. In fact the claims of heridity, even when recognized, concern priority rather than exclusive rights.³

As a priestly group solidifies, the basis for admission to the group becomes more structured, and a perceived 'way of doing things' increases in importance. At the same time, it would appear that a common thread between these figures exists. The priest must be an individual who can in some manner mediate between the human and the divine.⁴

Significant to this discussion is the idea that certain individuals are set apart by a particular god. They may have a divine 'call' to reform or renew a movement, to initiate or consolidate sacral response, or to serve in an established system. At the centre of this conception is the idea that somehow the deity has initiated a command to the individual to do service on their behalf.⁵

Mediation is thus the primary priestly function. Priests are to communicate with the divine, interceding on behalf of men, and speaking to man as the representative of god.⁶ Their services are performed for the community or for individuals. Primary are cultic

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1. Benedict, Patterns, 88; Woodhouse, ERE 10, 305.
 2. Landtman, ERE 10, 280.
 3. Sabourin, Priesthood, 9.
 4. Landtman, ERE 10, 279; Bertholet, "Priesthood," 389.
 5. Malefijt, Religion, 231ff.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 9f.; Wach, Sociology, 360, 368.
 6. Sabourin, Priesthood, 4; Wach, Sociology, 363-365; A.S. Geden, "Priest, Priesthood (Buddhist)," ERE 10 (1922) 289; Bertholet, "Priesthood," 390; G.T. Basden, Niger Ibos (London: Cass, 1966) 60ff.; Nadel, "Two Nuba", 85ff.

functions. The priest's ability to perform the rites of the group correctly is of ultimate significance.¹ A course of training or a period of probation or initiation are often a part of assuming priestly roles.² Frequently priests are given new names or titles, as well as special vestments and robes, or other ceremonial equipment. Certain cultures allow a sort of self training, while in other cultures a period of education into the rites and ceremonies of the cult are central, or a combination of individual and traditional preparations may be expected.³ The culmination of these preparations is often a ceremony or rite in which the candidate is formally and/or publically accepted by the established priesthood and/or community.

Restrictions on priestly behaviour of a permanent or temporary nature are often made. Some take effect only when cultic functions are to be undertaken, or when specific rites are to be performed.⁴ A prerequisite to priesthood may be that the candidate have no bodily defects and be in good physical health,⁵ however, some cultures view the abnormal, the physical defect, or an omen at birth important as a sign of the holy individual.⁶ Sexual behaviour is often regulated.⁷ Marriage or celibacy might be demanded of the candidate, or either state may be acceptable.⁸ The gender of those acceptable

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1. Malefijt, Religion, 232, 239; Sabourin, Priesthood, 37, 40; Landtman, ERE 10, 279; Laing, ERE 10, 327; Woodhouse, ERE 10, 303, 306; Keith, ERE 10, 312, 317; Hultkrantz, Religions, 202.
 2. Bertholet, "Priesthood," 388ff.; Eliade, Shamanism, 110ff.; Hultkrantz, Religions, 271f.
 3. Sabourin, Priesthood, 10; Wach, Sociology, 362.
 4. F. Steiner, Taboo (London: Penguin); M. Douglas, Purity and Danger, (Middlesex: Penguin, 1970); Landtman, ERE 10, 283; Bertholet, "Priesthood," 389; M. Weber, The Sociology of Religion (Boston: Beacon, 1964) 38ff.
 5. Sabourin, Priesthood, 31; Bertholet, "Priesthood," 388; Woodhouse, ERE 10, 304; Keith, ERE 10, 313; Laing, ERE 10, 326.
 6. Landtman, ERE 10, 281.
 7. Ibid., 283.
 8. Bertholet, "Priesthood," 389.

as candidates for priesthood also varies. In many cultures males dominate this vocation, but a significant number of cultures allow women to function.¹ Certain foods, actions, relationships, or indulgences might also be proscribed by the dictates of the priestly life.²

The economic status of priests also varies. Some functionaries adhere to a life of voluntary poverty, or asceticism, while others enjoy prestige and wealth.³ Gifts or dues are usually given to the priest officiating at a sacred ritual, or a portion or all of sacrifices might be due to the priest.⁴ Occasionally, a priestly status may entail the receipt of a salary.⁵

The ways in which priests act in a cultic sense are numerous, including administrative duties connected with the temple or cult centre,⁶ listening to confessions of sin connected with the offering of sacrifices,⁷ supervising acts of penance, performing rites of healing,⁸ maintaining the cultic calendar,⁹ and various other tasks.

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1. Bertholet, "Priesthood," 391; Landtman, ERE 10, 284; Johnson, ERE 10, 290; Woodhouse, ERE 10, 302; Wach, Sociology, 367.
 2. Landtman, ERE 10, 283; Eliade, Shamanism, 145ff.
 3. Wach, Sociology, 367f.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 10; Bertholet, "Priesthood," 392f.; Hultkrantz, Religions, 271ff.
 4. Woodhouse, ERE 10, 307; Wach, Sociology, 367; H. Hubert and M. Mauss, Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964) 37ff.
 5. Wach, Sociology, 307; Woodhouse, ERE 10, 307.
 6. Woodhouse, ERE 10, 306; James, Priesthood, 224.
 7. Hultkrantz, Religions, 203, 233; James, Priesthood, 176ff.
 8. Basden, Niger Ibos, 61.
 9. Malefijt, Religion, 239; M. Titiev, "A Fresh Approach to the Problem of Magic and Religion," Cultural and Social Anthropology (ed. P. Hammond; New York: Macmillan, 1964) 285ff.

While sacrificial¹ and other rites are of great importance to the community as a function of the priesthood, other related functions also become important. The very act of careful observation which is required of priests would appear to provide an opportunity for reflection and ordering of data. Weber argues:

At first the priesthood itself was the most important carrier of intellectualism, particularly wherever sacred scriptures existed, which would make it necessary for the priesthood to become a literary guild engaged in interpreting the scriptures and teaching their content, meaning and proper application.²

The important intellectual impact that the institution of the priesthood has had across a broad historical and cultural base makes this final scholarly trend of the priesthood of great importance.³

Several sociological tools have also been employed by scholars seeking to look at priestly origins. A brief sketch of the more important of these approaches is in order at this point. Landtman contends:

The origin of priesthood therefore goes back to a very early stage of social evolution; the first indications of a priest's or sorcerer's office can be traced back almost to the very origin of religious and magical practices.⁴

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1. Cf. James, Priesthood, 145ff.; E.O. James, Origins of Sacrifice (New York: Kennikat, 1971) 221ff.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 20f., 37; Hultkrantz, Religions, 232ff.
 2. Weber, Sociology, 118.
 3. Wach, Sociology, 365; James, Priesthood, 208ff.; Bertholet, "Priesthood," 390; Hultkrantz, Religions, 271ff.
 4. Landtman, ERE 10, 278.

Such views recognizing the basic changes and developments which take place in the history of a society or institution are valid.¹ Yet the problem of determining the manner in which a particular institution evolved remains.² This awareness stresses the importance of carefully collecting and relating data to determine when there are demonstrable cases of evolutionary process and when such a development is merely postulated.

An examination of the functions of the priesthood within a given society provides perspectives that may help reconstructive attempts, either in concert with evolutionary data, or on their own. The identification of functional purposes often helps us to understand a specific priesthood.³

The development of 'ideal types' such as those seen in the work of Max Weber provides a focus for what we have been attempting in our examination of priesthood from a cross cultural perspective. Weber does provide an 'ideal type' of the priesthood which is marked by the general nature of its observations:

The term "priest" may be applied to the functionaries of a regularly organized and permanent enterprise concerned with influencing the gods, in contrast with the individual and occasional efforts of magicians. Even this contrast is bridged over by a sliding scale of transitions, but as a pure type the priesthood is unequivocal and can be said to

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1. O'Dea, Sociology, 7f.; Hultkrantz, 127, 145; Bertholet, "Priesthood," 390; Malefijt, Religion, 229.
 2. Benedict, Patterns, 16f.
 3. In recent Old Testament studies using functional theories we should note particularly N. Gottwald, The Tribes of Yahweh (Maryknoll, Orbis, 1979). In criticism of Gottwald's methodological procedures cf. G.E. Mendenhall, "Ancient Israel's Hyphenated History," Palestine in Transition (ed. D.N. Freedman and D.F. Graf; Sheffield: Almond, 1983) 95-103.

be characterized by the presence of certain fixed cultic centres associated with some actual cultic apparatus.

Or it may be thought that what is decisive for the concept of priesthood is that the functionaries, regardless of whether their office is hereditary or personal, be actively associated with some type of social organization, of which they are employees or organs operating in the interests of the organization's members, in contrast with magicians, who are self-employed. Yet even this distinction, which is clear enough conceptually, is fluid in actuality.

This portion of Weber's description of the priestly 'type' is marked the 'fluid' nature of its description. This accords well with what we have observed in our attempt to define the term 'priest' cross culturally.

In conclusion, it would seem that the following observations regarding priesthood are valid:

- 1) The term 'priest' speaks of an individual connected vocationally with the formalized religious activities of a particular culture or community.
- 2) Various means of attachment to the 'priesthood' obtain. These vary from culture to culture.
- 3) The functions and roles fulfilled by sacral personnel are culturally varied and conditioned.
- 4) Priesthood tends to become 'institutionalized' over time.²
- 5) Intellectual concerns are often connected to the 'priesthood'.

1. Weber, Sociology, 28f.

2. O'Dea, Sociology, 23; M. Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York: Macmillan, 1964) 363ff.

The strongest common thread between all these conceptions of priestly functions is the idea that the priest stands between man and the god(s), acting as mediator.¹

As we have already noted, this section is meant to provide some very basic understandings of what might be considered 'priestly' behaviour, as well as to point to the 'fluid' nature of the concept. The 'priest' is defined to a large degree by the culture in which he (she) functions. While we will not use anthropological or sociological materials to constantly compare and interpret the Biblical sources we examine, a basic 'sense' of priesthood outside of the textual materials which we find in the data is important to our purposes. The next chapter will further define this 'sense' of priesthood by focusing upon the functioning priesthoods of cultures contemporary with ancient Israel. Our examination of priesthood in the ancient near east will provide further insights into the context into which we must set the priesthood of early Israel. The concluding chapter will draw upon the data contained in these preliminary pages to set a context for our conclusions.

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1. Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology ed. Gerth and Mills; New York: Oxford, 1958) 272f.

Priesthood in Ancient Near Eastern Religion

When we examine the texts regarding cultic officials which come to us from the ancient near east it is remarkable that these writings do not take up the matter of origins. One approaches the topic anticipating that the main project will be the analysis of textual material, but this does not even form a major part of the procedure. Instead we must try to determine the earliest ideals of the religious life of the various ancient near eastern cultures, then apply this understanding to the question of priestly beginnings.

In the earliest texts priests appear to function as the guardians of sanctuaries, the housekeepers and the servants of the gods. They are situated in and around temples, and are involved in many varied activities representing the interests of the gods. If the temple is understood as the 'house' of the gods, the priests, or cultic officials, are the individuals who serve the deities in providing care for the image, care of the god's properties, and the administration of other divine concerns. Thus, the 'priest' functions in the same roles as do the servants of a king, and in fact, as we shall see, there is a close correspondence between the functions of a king and god in the material under consideration.

Most texts appear to focus on the service that is provided for the god rather than on the origins of the god's house and servants. The primary concern appears to be that the dwelling place of the god is in their midst, and that they could remain in his/her favour by careful and adequate service being provided. In the cultures which we will survey, the most favoured individual was entrusted with this great honour and responsibility. The king thus assumed the role of 'high priest' of the god.

With this brief introduction to the topic we will now attempt to confirm these preliminary observations. We will examine the question of priesthood in the various near eastern contexts, paying particular attention to the role of the king in the cult. The order in which we will examine the data will be: Egypt, Mesopotamia, Canaan.

Egypt

Although the study of ancient Egyptian religion has been undertaken for many years, the focus of the study has been on the mythology and the gods of Egypt, while the cultic context of these myths has been rarely considered. Only a modest portion of the vast literature on Egyptian religion is dedicated to the functioning of the cult.¹ We can, nevertheless, apply some evidence to our inquiry.

The most important figure in Egyptian life was the king. The king embodied various deities² important to the life and well being of the nation which remains so tenuously situated between the vast seas of sand along the thin ribbon of the Nile. The king bridged the gap between the world of the gods and the world of the Egyptians. As such he was the high priest of the land.³ "In principle the ruler alone was entitled to communicate with the deity."⁴ Ultimate secular and religious authority belonged to the king. It is his obligation to maintain maat, which Frankfort describes as "right order", and "the inherent structure of creation, of which justice is an integral part."⁵

The role of the king as god is most important to his

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1. Cf. C.J. Bleeker, Egyptian Festivals (Leiden: Brill, 1967) 1ff. We should note that the interest of the Egyptian religious systems was not to provide systematic theologies (Bleeker: 14) yet scholar priests do arrange certain systems (C.J. Bleeker, Hathor and Thoth (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 18.
 2. H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1948) 38f., 43, 149, 159ff., 190, 197. Sigfried Morenz, Egyptian Religion (London: Methuen, 1973) 37, 40.
 3. Ivan Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967) 5; C.J. Gadd, Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient Near East (London: Cumberlege, 1948) 39f.; E.O. James, 'The Sacred Kingship and the Priesthood' (63ff., Supplements to Numen IV Leiden: Brill, 1959) "In theory the Pharaoh was the high priest of every god." 65; Jaroslav Cerny, Ancient Egyptian Religion (New York: Hutchinson's, 1952) 99; Sabourin, Priesthood, 79; Morenz, Egyptian Religion, 50.
 4. Morenz, Egyptian Religion, 49.
 5. Frankfort, Kingship, 51. Morenz (Egyptian Religion) notes that maat is constantly restored by the king (114) and that the king is responsible for justice (129).

cultic function. As the embodiment of 'Horus'¹, the supreme god of the land², he is the 'giver of life'³ and the sustainer of all that man has. Through a complex of theological relationships the king is also regarded as the offspring of all the gods and goddesses of the Egyptian systems⁴. Most important, as Horus, he was also the son of Osiris.⁵

It became the central myth of Egyptian religion and of the Egyptian state that Pharaoh ruled and maintained Ma'at as Horus, but on death became Osiris. Horus was all living kings, Osiris all dead ones.⁶

The dead king was the defeater of death.⁷ As overcomer of death, Osiris⁸, who manifested himself in the grain, the Nile, the cycle of life and death,⁹ and was also seen in the lunar cycles,¹⁰ became eventually the centre of the mortuary cult.

Together with Horus [Osiris] is the bearer of the peculiarly Egyptian concept of kingship as an institution involving two generations. As a dead king he is a force in nature, and as a buried king he is seen more especially in the emergence of renewed life."

1. Cf. Frankfort, Kingship, 37ff.; Morenz, Egyptian Religion, 34; J.H. Breasted, A History of Egypt (New York: Bantam, 1967) 39.

2. Frankfort, Kingship, 39.

3. Ibid., 59.

4. Ibid., 43.

5. Ibid., 42.

6. J. Hawkes, The First Great Civilizations (Middlesex: Penguin, 1973) 434; also cf. Frankfort, Kingship, 113.

7. Frankfort, ibid., 197.

8. Ibid., 197ff.

9. Ibid., 181ff.

10. Ibid., 196.

11. Ibid., 211.

Thus Horus ruled the living, and Osiris the dead. Yet 'his death was transfiguration. His power was recognized in that life which breaks forth periodically from the earth, everlastingly renewed. Hence Osiris was the god of resurrection.'¹ As 'king of the dead'² he eventually becomes the "prototype and savior of the common dead".³ The living king provided for the dead king,⁴ and as in the ancient myth, witnessed his resurrection.⁵ This understanding is reflected in the 'Ritual for Offering Food':

Words to be spoken: "O Osiris King Nefer-ka-Re, take to thyself the Eye of Horus. Lift thou it to thy face." A lifting of bread and beer.

Lifting before his face. Words to be spoken: "Lift thy face, O Osiris. Lift thy face, O this King Nefer-ka-Re, whose state of glory has departed. Lift thy face, O this King Nefer-ka-Re, honored and keen, that thou mayst look at that which came forth from thee, . . . Wash thyself, O King Nefer-ka-Re. Open thy mouth with the Eye of Horus. Thou callest thy ka, like Osiris, that it may protect thee from all the wrath of the dead. O King Nefer-ka-Re, receive thou this bread, which is the Eye of Horus." Laid on the ground before him.⁶

1. Frankfort, Kingship, 184f.

2. Ibid., 197ff.

3. Ibid., 197. Breasted traces the process by which Osiris becomes dominant in the funerary cult. Cf. History, 143ff.

4. Frankfort, Kingship, 208f.; Morenz, Egyptian Religion, 194.

5. For a summary of the myth cf. Hawkes, Civilizations, 434; Breasted, History, 47f.; Cerny, Religion, observes our inability to determine the most remote origins of Horus (32f.). We should also note that the sun disk is a symbol of the king and Horus (ibid., 46f.). Cerny also provides an account of the funerary cult based on the relationship between Horus and Osiris (98ff.).

6. ANET 325. This text appears to have been used particularly in the funerary cult, although it is also found as an offering text. The key roles of 'Horus' and 'Osiris' were initially used by the kings, but eventually the rite was used by others as well.

The importance of the relationship between Horus and Osiris was also seen in the succession ritual. Cf. Frankfort, Kingship, 110f., 133.

In his capacity as head of state and high priest of the nation, the Pharaoh was ultimately responsible for the service of the gods. Theoretically every temple was constructed by the king as 'his monument' to a god. Pharaoh was thus the centre of every communication with the god.¹ Yet, except at the earliest times,² it would seem that an active role as high priest of all sanctuaries was virtually impossible. Thus the role of 'priest' was a responsibility delegated by Pharaoh³ to others. Sauneron comments:

All the acts of the religion are performed, theoretically, by the king. If we glance over a wall of the temple, where the offering scenes and the various rites are detailed in long sequences, we will in fact be startled to notice the total absence of priests; the king is performing the religious acts.

Obviously this was only a fiction. If it were possible for a chief of a prehistoric clan to be at the same time captain, administrator, and pope, the king of Egypt could not consecrate his life to administering, in a thousand different parts of the land, the religion of the divinities.⁴

The priesthood was delegated by the king and represented the king. Thus, the sole right to the priesthood remained with Pharaoh to dispense as suited his pleasure. In practice this normally meant that succession

1. Cerny, Religion, 68. Cf. Smith and Kemp (MSU) on the concept that the temple is built on the primeval island (hub of the universe).

2. We cannot be sure of the earliest history of Egypt. The origins of the nation are not completely recoverable. Perhaps at the earliest stages the king could have actually functioned in the daily cult ritual, if in fact there was one. Yet this must remain mere postulation.

3. Cerny, Religion, 115; Frankfort, Kingship, 52; Morenz, Egyptian Religion, 100f.; S. Sauneron, The Priests of Ancient Egypt (New York: Grove, 1969) 34, 43.

4. Sauneron, Priests, 34.

At the conclusion of a text of the daily ritual of the temple a priest recites: "Now I am verily a priest; it was the king who sent me to see the god." ANET 326.

of the office from father to son was unimpeded.¹ Yet it also allowed the Pharaoh to appoint anyone he chose to the sacral office.² During later periods the office might be purchased³, and eventually, power and influence began to determine the appointments to sacral offices.

The most important aspect of the priestly office remained the daily service of the gods. Of this service the care of the image⁴ was central.

To contemplate the god was not an ordinary privilege. In principle only the sovereign, son of the divinity, was able to do so; in fact, in each temple, a small number of priests - the highest in rank - could substitute for the king and see, face to face, each morning, the venerable idol where the divine power came to reside. In placing his hands on the statue, in a sort of embrace, the priest 'rendered his soul' to him; the god, visible in the Egyptian sky, resuming possession of his earthly resting place to reign all day in the temple, representing in the naos what he was in the universe.⁵

The priest then prayed to the god, the offerings of food and incense were left before the image, and later the image is cared for: cleaned and washed, changed and anointed.⁶ This morning service of the god was the most important, and was followed by two other occasions of

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1. Sauneron, Priests, 44f.; F. Petrie, "The Priesthood and Its Teaching," Religious Life in Ancient Egypt (New York: Cooper Square, 1972) 44; Bleeker, Hathor and Thoth, 79.
 2. Sauneron (Priests) comments: "In practice, royal interference was rare." (44). Yet it is important to remember that hereditary succession was only a custom (44). On promotion by the king cf. 45.
 3. *Ibid.*, 45.
 4. *Ibid.*, 85ff.; Bleeker, Hathor and Thoth, 79ff.; Cerny, Religion, 98, 101f.; Morenz, Egyptian Religion, 87f., 95, 100f.; ANET 325f.
 5. Sauneron, Priests, 84.
 6. *Ibid.*, 85ff.; Cerny (Religion) provides an account of the daily ritual (101). While a different ritual might exist from temple to temple, the basic conceptualizations of service were maintained in shrines throughout the country.

service to the image later in the day. Since the service of the god had to be conducted by people who were 'purified', priests had various purification rituals to attend to, and physical purity was a prerequisite to the holy offices.¹ These ritual concerns also made the priests distinguishable by dress.²

We have seen that most priests were not involved in the daily rituals before the cult figures.³ Few priests saw the image, except in procession, a time when the public would also be able to view the figures.⁴ The temple cult was a 'secret',⁵ and the majority of the priesthood concerned itself with other concerns of the god.

The regular Egyptian word for priests was *hom* "servant". Later we find *hom-neter* "servant of the god". These two together with *weeb* "pure ones" . . . form the two main categories of the Egyptian priesthood in all historical periods. There is still another class comprising persons called *yot-neter* "father of the god". In the sacerdotal hierarchy they rank between the "servants of the god" and the "pure ones", but neither the reason of their title nor the exact character of their function has so far been satisfactorily explained.

In the Old and Middle Kingdoms the priests were very much like secular officials and were appointed by the king. It was only in the New Kingdom that they formed a definite class in which the sacerdotal office becomes hereditary. At that time, it seems, the "servants of the god" were professional priests while the "pure ones" were laymen whose functions were limited to

1. Cf. Sauneron, *Priests*, 37-40; Petrie, *Religious Life*, 44; Cerny, *Religion*, 101f.

2. Sauneron, *Priests*, 40.

3. *Ibid.*, 35, 84; Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals*, 48.

4. Cerny (*Religion*) notes that the public "were admitted only as far as the open court where they could 'pour water' as a libation to the god and pronounce a prayer." (119). Even during the "coming forth" of the god the image might remain veiled from public view (121). During certain processions an individual might question the god, anticipating an answer in an "oracular fashion" (122).

5. Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth*, 81. Yet he can also claim there are no "mysteries" in Ancient Egypt (*Egyptian Festivals*, 45).

the privilege of carrying the statue of the god in public procession.¹

The personnel of the temples were numerous, their functions varied, and as time progressed, their offices increasingly specialized. These various classes of priests came to be involved in oracular consultation,² the funerary cult,³ dream interpretation,⁴ wisdom⁵ and scribal activities,⁶ and other unique specializations.⁷

The personnel of the great temples was considerable. To keep up the large properties, to prepare the sacred food, to weave the prescribed fabric, and to provide for the god's processions on ground and water, numerous groups of artisans and workers added the service of their respective competence to the devoted attendance of the priests. A papyrus informs us that under Ramses III (12th.C. B.C.) the temples of Amon in Thebes employed

1. Cerny, Religion, 116.

Sauneron (Priests) argues that although this is customary by the time of the New Kingdom, there is evidence for succession by inheritance in the Old Kingdom (43). As with all ancient cultural practice it is difficult to place the precise origin of a practice. Morenz notes that "we would do well to remember that the service in the sanctuary, except for that rendered to the divine image, rested upon the shoulders of lay priests, who took turns to do it while continuing to earn their living as laymen . . . In small places especially they will have constituted a most vital element. The lay priesthood flourished during the Old and Middle Kingdom. Later it was displaced by a class of priestly officials." (101).

The somewhat confused reconstructions of earliest priestly structures is not overly dissimilar to what we find in looking at priesthood in early Israelite history, nor to what we will find in early Mesopotamian history.

2. Cf. Sauneron, Priests, 95ff.; Petrie, Religious Life, 55ff.

3. Sauneron, Priests, 108ff.; Cerny, Religion, 112, 140ff.

4. Sauneron, Priests, 165ff.

5. Ibid., 139f.

6. Ibid., 135ff., 168ff.

7. Sauneron (Priests) also notes concerns re:

medicine	161f.
animal science	162ff.
pharmacy	167f.
history	140ff.
geography	144ff.
astronomy	152ff.
geometry	156ff.
architecture	156ff.

81,322 people. The temple property included 433 gardens, 924 sq.m. of fields, 83 boats, 46 workyards, 64 market towns, and 421,362 beasts. At Heliopolis and Memphis, in the North, the personnel equalled respectively only 1/7th and 1/27th of that of Thebes, the capital of the united kingdom (New Empire).⁴

The heads of these temple complexes were powerful men. They acted as 'high priests' or, as the texts denote them, "the first prophets of the god."² This individual functioned as the king's representative and as the "chief administrator of the temple property".³ As such they held both secular and religious power.

The Pharaoh was often directed by the consultation of the god in the temple, a rite conducted by the high priest. Evidence from the Eighteenth Dynasty on suggests that this direction of state affairs increased in importance. The growth in size, power, and importance of the temples would serve to confirm this observation.⁴ Finally, the struggle for power between the High Priest of Amon and other priestly rivals is resolved, leaving Pharaoh alone to be vanquished.⁵

1. Sabourin, Priesthood, 82. The large size of the temple properties would suggest that administrative skills were also well developed among the priestly orders. The size and power of these important institutions also came to have a great political impact on Egypt. Cf. Cerny, Religion, 117.

On the papyrus referred to above cf. Sauneron, Priests, 55f.

Small temples would not be as complex to administer, having only a small staff, and limited land holdings. Oversight of religious functions and economic interests could well be handled by the same persons. "There are a number of texts which show priests from small sanctuaries accumulating administrative as well as religious titles, and passing from divine service to counting sacks of wheat." (ibid., 57) A larger temple would possess its own administrative staff, which might or might not include priests (ibid., 57, 60).

Morenz (Egyptian Religion) also states that the Egyptian priests provided "service that appealed to ordinary people in need." (107).

2. Sabourin, Priesthood, 83; Sauneron, Priests, 60ff.

3. Sabourin, Priesthood, 83.

4. J.A. Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1956) 170; Cf. Breasted, History, 204.

5. Wilson, Culture, 170f.

The High Priest of Amon supported the 'kingship' of Hatshepsut when that 'queen' ruled, despite the theological conventions which had dominated Egypt for centuries. Cf. ibid., 175; Breasted, History, 223ff.

By the middle of the Twentieth Dynasty the affairs of state are ruled by the High Priest of Amon.¹ While the income of Pharaoh is high, the Pharaoh is 'bankrupt'.² Wilson points out that the High Priest maintained both political and financial control of the state during this period of time. One family controlled the most important offices in the land, managing state finances for private interests, and controlling the resources of the king. "The divine king had become a prisoner of the temple or of the little clan which held the highest temple offices."³ This political supremacy is finally attested openly in the violation of one of the oldest conventions of Egyptian art.

In a scene in the Temple of Amon at Karnak, we see Ramses IX recognizing the services of the High Priest Amen-hotep with decorations. Pharaoh is shown in his customary heroic size in proportion to the bustling little officials who carry out his instructions, but Amen-hotep had the arrogance to have his figure carved in the same scale as his king. Furthermore, the composition makes him the focus of attention instead of pharaoh. Nothing could illustrate more clearly that reality which the texts piously ignored: that the king was only an instrument of a ruling oligarchy.⁴

In just a few years a temple inscription reads:

Live king Ramses XII! . . . High Priest of Amon-Re, king of gods, commander in chief of the armies of the South and North, the leader, Hrihor, triumphant; he made it as his monument for 'Khonsu in Thebes, Beautiful Rest'; making for him a temple for the first time, in the likeness of the horizon of heaven.⁵

We should also note that important offices were at this time held by a few families, and these were often connected to the priesthood. Cf. Wilson, Culture, 171. Sauneron (Priests) comments: "There were periods, in the New Kingdom, when, the clergy of Amon was richer and more powerful than the king himself." (173).

1. Wilson, Culture, 272.
2. Ibid., 272.
3. Ibid., 272f.
4. Ibid., 273.
5. Breasted, History, 434.

The temple also contains representations of Heri-Hor, who rose from obscurity to become High Priest of Amon¹, actually replacing Pharaoh in the reliefs.² Soon after this temple was completed, Heri-Hor and his allies seized power, and controlled Upper Egypt. The nation was no longer a unity.³

Returning to our central question, the issue of priestly origins, we can see that the earliest layers of priestly history are not recoverable. Petrie suggests that "the office of the priest was more often developed from civil than from religious functions."⁴ Breasted concurs with this perspective:

1. Breasted, History, 434; Wilson, Culture, 288.

2. For a description of these reliefs cf. Breasted, History, 435

3. Wilson, Culture, 292ff.

Breasted provides a good summary of the rise of the priesthood's power and its political interests (History, 436f.). The involvement of the priesthood in corrupt practices is described by Breasted. In addition see Wilson, Culture, 279ff.

To complete our survey a note on the involvement of women as priestesses is necessary. From early times women were involved in the cult. They functioned as singers and dancers (Breasted, History, 52; Petrie, Religious Life, 45ff.) They may have been considered as the 'harem of the god' (Cerny, Religion, 119; B. Mertz, Red Land, Black Land (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1978) 56).

Petrie seems to attribute further cultic functions when he writes that the "XVIIIth dynasty brought an entire change. Women were no longer priestesses but musicians, and these were nearly all attached to the rich and prevailing worship of Amon." (Petrie, Life 51). Cerny notes that "they had no part in the liturgy proper." (Religion, 118).

The most powerful influence that women had on the cult was when a woman was 'king'. We have already noted the reign of Hatshepsut, but Mertz claims that "there seem to have been at least three others" who sat on the throne of Egypt (Red Land, 65).

4. Petrie, Religious Life, 47.

The earliest priesthood was but an incident in the duties of the local noble, who was the head of the priests in the community; but the exalted position of the Pharaoh as the nation developed, made him the sole official servant of the gods, and there arose at the beginning of the nation's history a state form of religion, in which the Pharaoh played the supreme role.¹

The importance that kingship plays in the nation's conception of priesthood would support the view that kingship and priesthood are ideas which are fused at the earliest points in Egyptian history. Yet we must still wonder if the basis of service to the gods ever rested on 'charismatic' leadership. What was the basis of civil leadership in archaic Egypt? Was the fusion of north and south into a unity,² by whatever early Pharaoh, perceived as a 'sign from the gods'? We will probably never know. We do know that later thought saw this action as the act of a god, Horus.³ Nevertheless, we can observe the central importance of the king to priestly activities, the importance of his divinity to his priestly function, and the continuing notion that priesthood is delegated by the king to the cultic officiant. The 'service' of priesthood is realized in the care of the god and his house, the provision for the needs of the god, and obedience to the god.

1. Breasted, History, 51.

2. Cf. Frankfort, Kingship, 15ff.; W.B. Emery, Archaic Egypt (Middlesex: Penguin, 1961) 38ff.

3. We cannot be sure how early this conception arose, or when kingship became a reality in Egypt. The origins of these do not appear to be recoverable.

Mesopotamia

At the beginning chief, medicine man, magician, prophet, astronomer, elder, priest, were not separate functionaries or castes: their duties overlapped and the same person was at home in alternative roles. Even in relatively late historic times kings have readily assumed the leadership of national churches, whilst Christian bishops and popes have governed cities and led armies. But at some point a greater elevation of the ruler and the priest took place: apparently after 3000 B.C., when there was a similar expansion of human powers in many other departments. With this came vocational differentiation and specialization in every field. The early city, as distinct from the village community, is a caste-managed society, organized for the satisfaction of a dominant minority: no longer a community of humble families living by mutual aid.

At that point kingly power claimed and received a supernatural sanction: the king became a mediator between heaven and earth, incarnating in his own person the whole life and being of the land and its people. Sometimes a king would be appointed by the priesthood; but even if he were a usurper, he needed some sign of divine favor, in order to rule successfully by divine right. The ancient King List of Sumer records that kingship "was lowered down from heaven." The five kings appointed by the deity were given five cities "in . . . pure places": Eridu, Badtibira, Larak, Sippar, Shurruapak, all appointed as cult centres.¹

From the earliest written records in Mesopotamia we have evidence of the close relationship between kingship² and priestly functions.³ Kingship is a gift of the gods and is ultimately a sacral function,

1. L. Mumford, The City in History (New York: Harvest, 1961) 37f.

2. On the concept that kingship is eternal and descends to earth cf.

Engnell, Studies, 16f.; Frankfort, Kingship, 237. Guillaume notes: "The Babylonians held that the founder of divination, medicine, and the magical rituals of expiation, was Enmenduranna (or Enmenduranki), one of the legendary Sumerian kings who reigned before the Flood." (A., Guillaume, Prophecy and Divination (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938) 39). The office, not the incumbent was divine. For the text of the Sumerian King List cf. ANET 265f.

3. It is difficult to determine in what order political and religious priority came to be united. Most likely it varied from place

thus, governors and kings are responsible for the service of the gods, as high priests. Their duties are threefold: "the interpretation of the will of the gods; the representation of his people before the gods; and the administration of the realm."¹

As in Egypt, in practice, the sacral role as high priest was delegated to the priesthood.² "But at all times the king stood at the head of the priesthood and appointed the high priest."³ The king was chosen by the gods.⁴ They also provided guidance for him through signs, oracles, and dreams.⁵ Except in the earliest periods,

to place. Frankfort (Kingship) suggests that the growing complexities of the city states required "more vigorous leadership than an assembly of free men or a body of elders was able to give. The king, the high priest of a powerful temple, and the governor of the city-state were in a position to fulfil that need. By early dynastic times one or the other of these functionaries had established himself as a ruler in each of the Mesopotamian cities." (223). Sabourin (Priesthood) argues that the head of a city likely also functioned as high priest (48). Cf. G. Roux, Ancient Iraq (Middlesex: Penguin, 1980) 76; C.J. Gadd, The Cities of Babylonia (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1964) 14, 46.

A. Falkenstein, The Sumerian Temple City (Los Angeles: Undena, 1974) argues that the direction of development is from 'high priest' to 'mayor' of the temple precincts to king.

1. Frankfort, Kingship, 252.

2. Sabourin, Priesthood, 50. The king fulfilled the role of 'high priest' on certain important occasions. Cf. Engnell, Ideas, 30ff.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 48, 51ff.; H.W.F. Saggs, The Greatness That Was Babylon (New York: Mentor, 1962) 329.

3. Frankfort, Kingship, 252.

4. Ibid.; Saggs, Babylon, 342.

5. Signs or omens that were not induced were provided by the gods as a means of revelation of the divine will, or of future events. Careful cataloguing of strange events and their results (or perceived meaning) could be used to interpret later 'signs'. Cf. A.L. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964) 217ff.; Saggs, Babylon, 308; Frankfort, Kingship, 252.

Also see Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, 208; J.J.M. Roberts, "Divine Freedom and Cultic Manipulation in Israel and Mesopotamia," Unity and Diversity (ed. Goedicke and Roberts; Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1975) 187.

On dreams cf. A.L. Oppenheim, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East," PAPS 46 (1956) 179-307; Saggs, Babylon, 346f.; Frankfort, Kingship, 252ff.; Hawkes, Civilizations, 234.

the king was not regarded as god 'incarnate'.¹

The Mesopotamian king was not at one with the gods, inspired by their will, executing their counsels in his own divine decisions. He could maintain the natural harmony only by watching over the service of the gods and attuning the life of the community to such portents as were vouchsafed him as revelations of the divine will. His faithful service was rewarded by abundance, so that he could call himself the "husbandman" of his land.²

The role of the king regarding the priesthood varied according to time and place in Mesopotamia. While the king retained the theoretical high priesthood at all times, in practice, very different working models of this theory were employed. The early figure known as the En functioned as a priest-king and actually lived in the temple. When in the remote past the En moved out of the temple into his own palace a division of functions took place.³ This is reflected in the architecture.

1. Frankfort, Kingship, 224ff.; Roux (Ancient Iraq) writes: "If the Kings of Mesopotamia ceased early to be 'sustitute gods' they always retained some of their priestly functions. Yet the general trend throughout history was towards a gradual separation of the Palace from the Temple, and this development began in Presargonic times . . . There were even times when the ruler and the priests were, it seems, in open conflict. About a century after Etemena, Urukagina, the last prince of Lagash, tells us in a famous inscription how he, as champion of the gods, put an end to the abuses that existed before his reign." (133).

2. Frankfort, Kingship, 309.

3. Saggs, Babylon, 329. Kramer refers to the En as the "spiritual head of the temple . . . who lived in a part of the temple known as the gipar." They could be male or female, and supervised a number of other priestly classes, including "guda, mah, ishib, gala, and nindingir of whose duties we know very little except that the ishib may have been in charge of libations and lustrations, and the gala may have been a kind of temple singer and poet." S.N. Kramer, The Sumerians (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963) 141f.

Cf. CAD E 177; Roux, Ancient Iraq, 130; Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, 106 on the en (enu).

The sanga was the "administrative head of the temple". Kramer, Sumerians 141. Also Sabourin, Priesthood, 57; Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, 106. When the en moved out of the temple he became known as the ensi, and later the ensi of a dominant city became lugal (or king). The king remained the representative of the god. Cf. Saggs, Babylon, 330. Smith calls the ruler the "tenant farmer" of the god. S. Smith, "The Practice of Kingship in Early Semitic Kingdoms," Myth, Ritual and

The earliest period in Sumer is marked by this unification of temple and palace.¹ Yet the division of the functions of temple and palace are also very clearly ancient:

In the old cities of the alluvial plains - with the exception of the Babylon of the Chaldean kings - we observe a significant separation between the temple and the palace . . . The main sanctuary (is) . . . separated from both the palace and the main wall. Temple and palace are surrounded by residential selections shot through with a maze of winding streets . . . When one leaves the alluvial plain, proceeding upstream toward Upper Mesopotamia, Syria, Asia Minor, and Palestine, the separation between temple and palace disappears. They have moved together and now often form an urban unit either occupying a central position or becoming part of the circumvallation.²

Although the role of king and priests are separated, the king still rules on behalf of the gods.³ He was responsible for the building and maintenance of temples for the gods, and participated in rites, feasts, and processions.⁴ The most important cultic role of the king as 'high priest' was his participation in the Sacred Marriage rite⁵ where he represented the god bestowing fertility upon

Kingship (ed. S. Hooke; Clarendon: Oxford, 1958) 27. On these early titles also see S. Langdon, CAH 1 (1924) 379; Gadd, Ideas, 37; Sabourin, Priesthood, 55, 63; Oppenheim (Ancient Mesopotamia) describes "the relationship evolving between the lugal ('king') and the en ('high priest') (as) too complex and as yet too ill-defined to be mentioned but in passing." (99).

1. Ibid., 132. Here he seems to agree with Saggs, while in the preceeding section (next quote) he appears to argue that in Upper Mesopotamia the temple and palace have fused. I would suggest that it is more likely that there was a separation of function at this early date rather than a coalescence.

2. Ibid., 130.

On the separation of palace and temple cf. Roux, Ancient Iraq, 131.

The coming of the Semitic invasion during the Ur III period does not seem to have changed this fundamental division. As we shall see, the Babylonian period maintains this separation of roles. On the effects of the western Semites on the cult cf. ibid., 196ff.

3. Ibid., 130.

4. Ibid., 131

5. The Sacred Marriage was celebrated from the 3rd M., if not before.

the land. The union signified the renewal of life.

In Babylonia the temple and palace remained separated.¹ The usual arrangement was for the palace to be at one end of the city and the temple at the other. The role of the king diminished until finally the king was allowed to enter the temple's inner sanctuary only once a year, on the occasion of the New Year's Festival.² This entry followed the humiliation of the king before the high priest.³ While we might wonder at the political implications of such a ritual, we cannot be sure of the amount of power that Babylonian priests exercised upon the kingship. The text does evidence the rising power of the citizens in some of the cities.⁴

In Assyria, the king was most clearly the most important cultic figure in the nation, and daily ritual attested to that fact. As 'high priest' the king was involved in complex rituals, which occupied much of his daily schedule.⁵ The Assyrian kings were energetic builders of temples,⁶ and restorers of cults. In the succession ritual,

Cf. Roux, *ibid.*, 93f.; On the sacred marriage cf. Frankfort, *Kingship*, 330f.; Kramer, *Sumerians*, 140; Saggs, *Babylon*, 360ff.; T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven: Yale, 1976) 32-47; S.H. Hooke, *The Origins of Early Semitic Ritual* (Oxford: Oxford, 1938) 16ff.; ANET 637-645.

Saggs (Babylon) notes that at the head of the 'priestesses' and 'temple-prostitutes' was the 'Entu (a feminine form of the noun from the Sumerian En), whose status might reasonably be rendered as 'high-priestess' and who was, according to her Sumerian ideogram, 'the wife of the god' . . . The Entu was of very high rank, and the kings might make their daughters the Entu of a god . . . In the earliest period the Entu was the female counterpart of the En in the Sacred Marriage." (332f.) Yet they are also to live chaste lives. Cf. W.F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (New York: Doubleday, 1969) 153f. for a similar concept.

1. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 132.
2. *Ibid.*, 122; Frankfort, *Kingship*, 319f.; Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 365-369; ANET 331-334.
3. Cf. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 122.
4. We should note that certain old cities enjoyed a variety of immunities from taxation and other royal claims.
5. *Ibid.*, 100; Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 316.
6. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 108.

the power and authority of the Assyrian king was attested to by the fact that all office holders deposited their symbols of authority before the king who was being enthroned.¹ Clearly, the sovereign was to restore or retain the offices according to his will. Temple and palace were again architecturally united, separated by a wall from the common people, and elevated above all other structures in the city.²

The well being of the king was considered essential for the survival of the country. Elaborate provisions were made for the care and well being of the king, as the head of the state, and as the high priest, the 'designated' ruler, appointed by the gods. At times, this appears to have taken the form of appointing a 'substitute king',³ when a negative omen threatened the Assyrian monarch.

The priesthoods were delegated the responsibility of watching for the revelations of the god through the recognized means of manifestation, as well as for the maintenance of the daily cultic rituals. Thus, various specializations arose among the priestly classes. We have an abundance of terms utilized to refer to cultic officials in Mesopotamia. Yet which of these terms are we to understand as equivalent to 'priest'?⁴ About some of these cult functionaries we know little more than their titles.⁵ Other titles we more clearly understand, but debate about the 'priestly' or 'non-priestly' character of their functions.⁶

1. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, 100.

2. Ibid., 133.

3. Ibid., 100.

4. Sabourin (following J. Renger: 'Untersuchungen zum Priestertum in der altbabylonischen Zeit' Pt.1 ZAssyr NF 24 (1967) 113, 110-188) notes that "neither in Sumerian nor in Akkadian is there a term which would correspond to the English word priest, applicable to various categories of the cult personnel." (Priesthood, 57).

5. Kramer, Sumerians, 141; Saggs, Babylon, 331.

6. Ibid., 329-335; A. Haldar, Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wikells, 1945) 1-63. Haldar argues that there is 'no clear distinction in Mesopotamia between 'priest' and 'prophet'.' He then concludes that "the same function may be performed by different 'priest classes'." (63); Roux, Ancient Iraq, 199f.; Hawkes comments: "The names of different classes of priests are known in both Sumerian and Akkadian, but their functions remain uncertain." (Civilizations, 225); Sabourin, Priesthood, 63ff.; Oppenheim

We can see the complexities of the terms for 'priests' reflected in both the number and types of offices described in the texts. Many of these types of priests we can already see in Sumerian texts,¹ and a number of the terms that we later find in Babylon and Assyria can be traced back to Sumer. Describing the priesthood in Babylon, Roux writes:²

A large number of priests were attached to the main temples. Sons and grandsons of priests, they were brought up in the sanctuary and received a thorough education in the temple school At their head was the high-priest, or enu (Akkadian form of the Sumerian word en, 'lord') and the urigalla, originally the guardian of the gates but now the main officiant. Among the specialized members of the clergy, the mashmashu who recited incantations, the pashish who anointed the gods and laid their table, the kâlu who chanted lamentations, the âshipu or exorcist and the bârû

states: "the Mesopotamian diviner is not a priest, but an expert technician and, first of all, a scholar." A.L. Oppenheim, "Perspectives on Mesopotamian Divination," *La Divination en Mesopotamie Ancienne* (Paris: Presses Un. de France, 1966) 40; A. Cody, *A History of the Old Testament Priesthood* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969) Cody makes a distinction between the baru and the Hebrew kōhēn, as using dissimilar oracular methods (23ff.). Yet what do we really know about the earliest oracular procedures in Israel? And where do we draw the line regarding the amount of 'divining' for answers which is priestly? Or the techniques which are priestly? We might conclude from all this that the various categories of cultic officials remain somewhat of an enigma. Further research will need to be applied to these figures to determine more exactly their functions and purposes. We may hope that as further data is uncovered the picture will clarify somewhat. We are certain that the temple staff, as in Egypt, was elaborate and varied, developing in ways that were important to fulfil the roles which had been delegated to them by the king. In spite of our concerns regarding the problems of these cultic terms, we will briefly review them as part of our survey.

1. Since we have already surveyed Sumerian terms for priests we will not do so in the text at this point. Assyrian priests will be included in our survey of Babylon.

2. Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 199f.

Erib-biti priests (lit. 'temple entrants') were admitted to all parts of the temple, yet the term is used in varying ways. They appear to have carried out the normal ceremonials. Cf. *ibid.*, 197; Saggs,

On the Mashmashu cf. *ibid.*, 330, 296f.

who interpreted dreams and foretold the future were the most important. But there were other categories of priests as well as singers, musicians, artisans, servants, and slaves. The female personnel of the temple was no less numerous and varied. The high-priestess (entu) was often of royal blood, and the naditu-priestesses, who could marry but were not allowed to bear children as long as they remained in the temple cloister, usually came from the best families. Side by side with these respectable ladies were various categories of women who had devoted themselves to what was then considered not a shameful profession, but a particular form of contact between man and the divinity: sacred prostitution.

Central to all of these concerns was the care of the god which included various forms of service to the image worshipped in the cella. This included the provision of meals, washing of the image, changing the garments, and other services rendered to the

Ashipu priests were also concerned with the purification rites. Cf. CAD A II, 431ff. I/J, 242f.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 58; Saggs, Babylon, 330, 294, 296f.

On Pashishu priests cf. CAD G, 119f.; Saggs, Babylon, 331; R.C. Thomson, CAH 1, 535.

On Kalu priests cf. Sabourin, Priesthood, 64; Saggs, Babylon, 331 (notes exorcisms and music); CAD K, 91ff., 'kalamahu' or 'chief of lamentation priests, chief singer of dirges (in temple)' 66; Saggs (Babylon) notes the Naru 'chanters', male and female, were closely connected to the kalu priests (331); Thomson (CAH 1) notes similar priests termed 'zammuru' (535) attested in the first dynasty of Ur.

Sacrifices are performed by Shangu (Sumerian sanga) priests: cf. Saggs, Babylon, 331; Roux, Ancient Iraq, 367; Sabourin, Priesthood, 57; Kramer, Sumerians, 141.

On Baru priests cf. Saggs, Babylon, 331f.; Halдар, Associations, (1-11) who notes the connection with the Enmederanki tradition; Guillaume (Prophecy, 40) notes that they were consulted on all important matters by the Assyrian kings; Thomson (CAH 1, 535) observes their presence in the first dynasty and their role as 'king's seer' (536); Sabourin, Priesthood, 64.

Related closely to the baru priests are the sha'ilu priests, who interpret dreams. Cf. Halдар, Associations, 12ff.; Saggs, Babylon, 332.

On the naditu: *ibid.*, 334; Sabourin, Priesthood, 57; Thomson, CAH 1, 536f.

Saggs (Babylon, 334) also notes that the Hebrew Bible speaks of the Qadishtu, who may have engaged in ritual prostitution.

deity. As Hawkes observes, "the physical tending of the god's image can be seen as the central purpose and justification of the whole program and organization of the temple."¹ The priests of Mesopotamia were engaged in service to the gods, administration of his property, caring for his home, his needs, his service, as well as carefully looking for his revelations.²

Other terms attested in the texts include:

Apilu (lit. 'answerer', a term found in male and female forms. Cf. CAD A II, 171.

Apkallu (fem. apkallatu) - wise man, expert, priest or exorcist, diviner. Cf. CAD A II, 171.

Kumru - a priest. The term appears to be related to the Hebrew komer. Cf. CAD K, 534.

kinistu - a class of low status priests concerned with the preparation of food offerings. Cf. CAD K, 386.

1. Hawkes, Civilizations, 222; Cf. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, 192; Roux, Ancient Iraq, 199; ANET 343ff. (ritual at Uruk).

2. Cf. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia.

In this work Oppenheim also argues against the writing of a "Mesopotamian Religion". He argues:

As a general statement covering the underlying problem, let me present some of the reasons that have convinced me that a systematic presentation of Mesopotamian religion cannot and should not be written.

These reasons are of two orders - the nature of the available evidence, and the problem of comprehension across the barriers of conceptual conditioning. (172)

. . . If one separates the royal religion from that of the common man, and both from that of the priest, one could probably obtain something approaching an unobstructed vista. A large part of what we assume to be Mesopotamian religion has meaning only in relation to royal personages - and for this reason distorts our concepts. The religion of the priest was centred primarily on the image and the temple; it was concerned with the service of the image required - not only in sacrifices but also in hymns of praise - and with the apotropaic functions of these images for the community. (181)

While the priesthood was, in theory, the right of the king, the succession of kings in Mesopotamia was not always smooth. Often there were several claimants to the throne, and the 'choice of the gods' was necessary to determine succession.¹ Such a situation would tend to make the priestly office powerful in political terms as well. In Mesopotamia there is also more of a tendency to make oracular procedures state what is desired, by playing one set of oracles against another.² The priesthood became hereditary, and specialized training was important.³ Yet the priesthood of the king always appeared to dominate the scene. The king's performance of certain rites was considered essential to the survival of the nation.⁴

This brief survey has given us some indication regarding the various roles which the priesthood performed in Mesopotamia. Yet what of this can we apply to the question of origins?

1. Frankfort, Kingship, 237-248; Saggs, Babylon, 134f.; Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, 101ff. Although much of the time the succession was relatively smooth, there were numerous political intrigues over the centuries.

2. Hawkes (Civilizations) comments: "There is evidence that the kings did not always accept the guidance of their diviners, and that sometimes they tested their reliability one against another." (234). Sabourin, Priesthood, notes that the influence of the priesthood on political events "varied according to the states and periods. The kings of Babylonia and Assyria never surrendered, however, the prerogative they had to appoint higher clergy officials, a right which they often exercised in favour of their own relatives." (65).

3. Ibid., 64f.; Guillaume, Prophecy, 40; Thomson, CAH 1 (1924) notes that sometimes priestly privileges were sold (535).

4. Much has been written regarding the New Year Festival, and the 'Sacred Marriage'. Cf. Saggs, Babylon, 362ff.; Roux, Ancient Iraq, 365ff.; T.H. Gaster, Thespis (New York: Norton, 1977). On the king's functions as high priest in Babylonia and Assyria cf. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, 99ff.

As we observed in Egypt, priests began to specialize in their care for certain concerns. Thus divination,¹ dream interpretation,² the reading of omens,³ sacrificial rites, and temple administration⁴ developed as areas of expertise. Magical procedures developed for the treatment of the sick, and the rites connected with purity developed both a therapeutic and a prophylactic form of medicine. The use of oracles and ordeals to establish truth often involved priests in concerns for justice, while concern for the properties of the god involved them in commerce. The correct uses of weights and measures, the measuring and surveying of land, the establishment of calendars, and its related astronomical concerns were also functions of Mesopotamian priests. The entering of this data into the temple records, as well as the recording of, and commenting on religious literature provided yet other areas of special concern. Finally, the training in and practice of various divinatory techniques allowed the priest-hoods to explore very specialized areas of concern.⁵ Taken together, this demonstrates a vast number of developing specialties demanding expert training and workmanship, as well as reflection and interpretation.

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1. Cf. *ibid.*, 206ff. on divination practices; also La Divination En Mesopotamie Ancienne; Haldar, Associations, 6ff.; Guillaume, Prophecy
 2. Cf. Oppenheim, "The Interpretation of Dreams".
 3. Saggs, Babylon, 308ff.; W. Hinz, "Religion in Ancient Elam," CAH 1, Pt.2, (3rd ed.) 673.
 4. Hinz, *ibid.*, 673; Saggs, Babylon, 330; Sabourin, Priesthood, 57.
 5. A.L. Oppenheim, "Assyro-Babylonian Religion," Forgotten Religions (ed. V. Ferm; New York: 1950) 75. In this statement he includes diviners as priests, a position he reverses in La Divination.

I would suggest that the main priority of priesthood is found in the royal duties which are delegated to the priests:

- 1) to maintain the god's house,¹
- 2) to act as the god's servant,²
- 3) to care for the god's properties.³

When these basic ideals first became organized, it is impossible to state, and it is not a concern of the sources. The closest statement that is provided, that would resolve our question, is the concept that kingship is from eternity.

1. To provide service for the image of the deity, and properly care for the house of the god. We have already noted the daily rituals involved in this process. Along with these royal duties was the need to build and/or maintain the 'temple/house' of the deity. Cf. Saggs, Babylon, 345ff.

2. As well as the actual care for the image, which we might include as a part of 'maintaining the god's house', the priests (and the king) had a responsibility as servants of the god to listen to divine commands, and to obey them, whatever that might involve. To aid in this procedure, methods such as divination, ecstasy, incubation, and similar activities were established. This ensured that the voice of the god would not be unheard due to the neglect of the servants.

3. The tributes and offerings which were given to the god not only maintained the god and his servants, but also established 'estates' which were the property of the deity. The land itself was a gift from the god, and as such, the king as servant was obligated to enquire of the gods concerning their will. Cf. *ibid.*, 351.

Canaan

When we look at priesthood in Canaanite religion we see a familiar pattern emerging. Again, the most important cultic figure is the king, who delegates his priestly roles to others. Here too, the king retained the role of 'high priest' on certain occasions.¹ The son of a king might also be important in the religion of the city-state as the successor of his father.² The idea that the temple was the home of the god, and the priests his servants, was again most important.³

1. Sabourin (Priesthood) notes that in the Krt and Aqht texts only kings performed priestly functions, but that the "administrative texts, which describe the real situation, show that at Ugarit, as in Mesopotamia, the kings delegated their priestly power." (71); Engnell, Studies, 86ff.; Donald Harden, The Phoenicians (Middlesex: Penguin, 1973) 93; Gray writes: "The fact is that in the primitive community - which is, of course, a sacral body - the king is the one member who concentrates in his person the life of his people and relieves the community from practical embarrassment by realizing himself this sacral status. This is the onus of royalty. The king, then, is the one particularly qualified to approach the deity on behalf of the community. He is by his very nature priest. As representative or the embodiment of the society he maintains a personal communion with the god of the community, a situation which is characterized by the description of the king as the son of god . . . Thus the king represents the people before the deity as their priest in sacrifices and he mediates to them the divine influence." John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan (Leiden: Brill, 1957) 153. We should also note that the Sidonian kings of the first millenium were priests of Astart. The narrative of Gen 14 describes Melchizedek, a 'king' and 'priest' of Salem. Cf. H. Ringgren, Israelite Religion (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966) 233.

2. Gray, Legacy, 185.

3. Cody, History, 22. It is likely that the cultic functions of the priests of Canaan would be similar to those found elsewhere in the ancient world; the care of the image, the maintainance of the 'house', and the administration of the god's properties. The priests would also typically represent the people before god, and god before the people, based on the authority delegated to them by the king's high priestly role. As elsewhere, divination, incubation and related techniques were likely employed. On the whole, the information we have about priesthood in Canaan is 'sketchy'. Cf. Cody, *ibid.*, 19f.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 69.

Priests¹ were the custodians of tradition² and held important military³ and judicial functions⁴ as well as responsibility for cultic rituals.⁵ As was the case in Mesopotamia, divination and other procedures meant to induce the revelation of the gods were also practiced.⁶ Important temples, such as those of Dagan and Baal in Ugarit,⁷ dominated the cities in which they were located, and significant sites would have numerous support staff. Cultic rites, the copying of religious texts,⁸ care of the administrative records, oversight of the temple lands and properties, as well as functions as "scribes and librarians"⁹ were all part of daily priestly concerns.

1. The Canaanite terms for priest are *khn* (cf. Gray, *Legacy*, 154; Sabourin, *Priesthood*, 71) which is related to Heb. *kōhēn* and *qdām* or 'consecrated persons'. Cf. Gray, *Legacy*, 154ff.; Sabourin, *Priesthood* 71; T.H. Gaster, "The Religion of the Canaanites," *Forgotten Religions*, 134; CAH 2, Pt. 2, 150. *Kmr* (pl. *kēmārīm*) is used in the Heb. Bible to designate priests of foreign gods (cf. 2 Kg 23:5; Hos 10:5; Zeph 1:4) and is also found "among the Assyrians in Cappadocia, in Old Aramaic, in Palmyrene, and in Syriac." Ringgren, *Religion*, 204.

The following Arab cultic officials are known. The *kāhin* was an 'omen observer', 'diviner', 'seer' and 'ecstatic' (Halḍar, *Associations*, 174-179; Sabourin, *Priesthood*, 95; Cody, *History*, 15) while the *sādin* was a sanctuary attendant (Cody, *ibid.*, 15; Sabourin, *Priesthood*, 95f.) Cody contends that neither were sacrificers (*History*, 15) We cannot be sure if either functionary offered sacrifices. Smith ("Kingship") argues that in south Arabia the "earliest known rulers used a priestly title, *mukarrib*, 'the bringer of offerings', before *malik* was adopted." (26).

Harden (Phoenicians) notes priests and priestesses among the Phoenicians (93), and we should note that many of these terms have been found in feminine forms.

Ringgren notes the term *mahhū* at Mari and suggests parallels in Phoenician as well as Canaanite contexts. He also observes that "the Akkadians used the same word to refer to an ecstatic oracle priest" (*Religion*, 213). Cf. Th. C. Vriezen, *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (London: Lutterworth, 1967) 201ff.

Due to their involvement and influence in Canaan, Hittite practices should also be briefly reviewed. Gurney notes that "the temple was the home of the god, and the priests his domestic staff." (155). O.R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1981). Divination was practiced (160) and purity concerns were realized (152); Engnell, (*Studies*) states that the expression 'become a priest' was the equivalent of being 'enthroned' (62). Here as well, the king functioned as high priest (J.H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (SBT 2/32: London: SCM, 1961; Sabourin, *Priesthood*, 76f.) and his authority was delegated to the priesthood (*ibid.*, 77). The terms which are used for cultic officials are problematic and little more can be accurately described

It would appear that certain families maintained a priestly

(ibid., 76).

Likewise Hurrians "acted as intermediaries and disseminators" of cultic ideas. Cf. CAH 1, Pt.2, 522.

2. Gray, Legacy, 159; Harden, Phoenicians, 93; Peter C. Craigie, Ugarit and the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 35.

3. ibid., 35; J. Milgrom, "The Shared Custody of the Tabernacle and a Hittite Analogy," JAOS 90 (1970) 204ff.; G.W. Ahlström, Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine (Leiden: Brill, 1982) 47ff. We should note that the Levites also had very clear military connections.

4. Harden notes that Phoenician priests did not have judicial functions (Phoenicians, 93).

5. Cf. ibid., 93; Craigie, Ugarit, 35.

Sacrifice is well attested. Punic sacrificial tariffs (cf. A. Caquot, "Les religions des Sémites occidentaux," Historie des Religions (Vol. 1; Bruges: Gallimard, 1970) 333; Ringgren, Religion, 176) and Canaanite records (ibid., 176f.; 1 Kg 18 [Elijah and the Priests of Baal]), as well as North Arabian accounts (Vreizen, Religion, 66, 71; Caquot, "Les religions," 313) are all known. The problem of human sacrifice should also be noted. Cf. A.I. Baumgarten, The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos: A Commentary (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 244. [He also provides a critical examination of the historical value of this material and its relationship to Sukkaniathon, the 'Phoenician' of 'antiquity' [?] 263ff.]; Ringgren, Religion, 174; Vreizen, Religion, 63; Caquot, "Les religions," 334; 2 Kg 16:3; 17:31; 21:6; Jer 7:31; 19:5; Deut 12:31.

On fertility rites: Vreizen, Religion, 51, 63.

The following were important cult sites:

high places - cf. Ringgren, Religion, 157; trees: ibid., 158; threshing floors, ibid., 158; (2 Sam 24:15-25); temples and buildings: ibid., 158; sacred mountains: Caquot, "Les religions," 313, 327; R. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain (Cambridge: Harvard, 1972).

6. On divination cf. Caquot, "Les religions," 313; Craigie, Ugarit, 35; CAH 2, Pt.2, 150f.; on 'medico-magical texts' cf. CAH 2, Pt.2, 150f.; on incantations: CAH 1, Pt.2, 522; CAH 2, Pt.2, 150f.

7. Craigie, Ugarit, 35.

8. ibid., 35; CAH 2, Pt.2, 150f.

9. Priestly dress is noted by Harden (Phoenicians, 93f.).

10. ibid., 93; Craigie, Ugarit, 35.

role, yet we are still unable adequately to reconstruct the organizational and succession patterns of the various priesthoods. It is likely that, in principle, the king and/or the deities selected the priests to whom authority was delegated.¹

Here again the king appears ultimately responsible to the gods for the well being of the lands and properties given to him. The role of the priesthood, delegated to them by the king, was:

- 1) care of the god,
- 2) maintenance of the god's home,
- 3) care for the god's properties
- 4) seeking the will of the deity.

1. The role of the king in the 'Sacred Marriage' remains unclear. It is likely that there were several cultic roles that the king was to perform each year which were not to be delegated.

While it is not our purpose to deal with priesthood in Israel at this point in our study, it would appear helpful to make a few observations at this point. First, a number of scholars have argued that the king in Israel also functioned as a high priest, and delegated his authority to the priesthood. This certainly appears to be the perspective enunciated in the Deuteronomic history, as we shall see.

Cf. G., Cooke, "The Israelite King as Son of God," ZAW 73 (1961) 202-225; J. Eaton, Kingship and the Psalms; Engnell, Studies; A.R. Johnson, "Hebrew Concepts of the Kingship," Myth, Ritual and Kingship, 204ff.; A.R. Johnson, "The Role of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus," The Labyrinth (ed. S. Hooke; London: SPCK, 1935) 73ff.; S. Mowinckel, "General Oriental and Specific Israelite Elements in the Israelite Conception of the Sacral Kingdom," Suppl. to Numen IV, 283ff.; The Psalms in Israel's Worship (2 Vol.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1962); C.R. North, "The Religious Aspects of Hebrew Kingship," ZAW 9 (1932) 8-37; G. Widengren, "King and Covenant," JSS 2 (1957) 1-32.

Second, priestly families existed in early Israel. The most significant difference we should note is that the Israelite priesthood was centred on an imageless cult.

Conclusions

We have noted that the body of textual material from the ancient near east does not concern itself with the origins of priesthood. The closest text to a paradigmatic model concerns the descent of kingship from the gods to mankind. Priesthood is a responsibility which is delegated by the king throughout most of the ancient near east. While we may not be able to reconstruct early history in a manner that would answer all our queries, we can make some logical guesses at the origins and development of the institution of priesthood.

First, we have noted that the primary conception of the priest in the ancient near east was 'servant of the god'. As such he was to care for the cult dedicated to the god, and provide adequate service for the image, in which the god chose to manifest himself. The temple was truly the 'house of god' and the priest the domestic servant of the god.

Secondly, we know that the temple was the 'house' of the god and as such must be properly maintained and cared for. The priests were delegated the royal responsibility to protect and maintain the 'house of god'.

Thirdly, the gifts and services due to the god must be properly administered. As the gods were the 'lords' of the land, their interests must be maintained and their properties cared for. This was necessary not only to please the god, but also to make the land fruitful.

Finally, we should also note that the priests became concerned to hear and understand every revelation that the gods might choose to make available. Thus, priests developed and used methods by which they might ask the god to reveal himself. This openness to the divine was of increasing importance to the priestly role. In addition, the gods might choose to manifest themselves in a manner which was unsolicited. The ability to observe and interpret events in the world around them was likewise a concern of priestly lore and tradition.

Priests must have attained their offices by various methods. Perhaps some individuals displayed signs of ecstasy or charisma which caused their peers to attribute to them, or they to attribute to

themselves, a special communion with the divine. Others may have demonstrated by their political influence and power, that the gods were 'with them'. Families may have been set aside as 'priests' due to their succeeding a 'cult founder'. Or a group or family may have been perceived as being in some special event or circumstance 'set apart'.

It is likely that such diversity begins to give us some perception of the true 'origins' of the various priesthoods of the ancient near east. As they evolved, however, we should also note that they appear to have placed a high degree of spiritual importance on the political and social leadership of their culture. The governor or king was a man 'set apart' by the gods, for a special purpose. As their leader, he, in a special way, represented the people before god, and god before the people. In Egypt this later characteristic reached its most developed form.

In conclusion then, we should note that priestly origins are so historically remote that we cannot hope to reconstruct them accurately. The development of priesthood appears to be linked to the conception of the temple as the house of god. The priestly functions of social and political leaders also appears to be important to the conception. Beyond this, the picture becomes enshrouded in mystery.

PRIESTHOOD IN THE BIBLICAL SOURCES

The Terminology

The first clear indications of a priesthood in Israel appear in Exodus. The term קֹהֵן appears with the sense of 'priest' when the term is first encountered (Gen 14:18, 41:45, 47:22; Exod 3:1, 19:22). The verbal form קָהַן appears to derive from the noun, rather than the opposite.² "The etymology of kohen is not known although a similar term occurs in the Ugaritic texts and in Nabatean."³

A second important term for our discussion is also employed in Exodus. Exodus 4:14-16 provides the information that Aaron the Levite is the brother of Moses. But what does 'Levite' mean? While we will discuss the problems of this term in greater detail later, we need to make some preliminary observations regarding the term. Johnson contends that "in the earliest records the לֵוִי or 'Levite', as a cultic official, always has the status of a קֹהֵן or 'priest'."⁴

1. Cf. Exod 31:10; Lev 7:35; Sabourin, Priesthood, 99; Ringgren, Religion, 204.

2. Sabourin, Priesthood, 99.

3. *Ibid.*, 99. Ringgren notes the suggestions that the term derives from the root קָנָן , 'to stand', or from the Akkadian k'n , 'to bow'. Both of these are unlikely because a change in a root letter is necessary for the hypothesis to work. All the languages in which khn appears preserves the root unchanged (Religion, 204f.); R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel (2 vol.; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961) examines the same proposals and draws similar conclusions (346); also cf. G.B. Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925) 181ff.

Another noun כֹּהֵן is used in the plural form three times in the Heb. Bible in reference to priests of other gods. Cf. 2 Kg 23:5; Hos 10:5; Zeph 1:4; de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 345; Gray, Sacrifice, 182ff.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 99; Ringgren, Religion, 204f.

The term khn does not have a feminine form in Hebrew, although the form does exist in other languages. Cf. Gray, Sacrifice, 186, 192.

4. A.R. Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1962) 3. This is a position supported by most scholars.

The etymological origins of the word are uncertain.¹ Three basic meanings have been suggested:

- 1) lwh can mean 'to twist, turn around, whirl around'; this has been connected to ecstaticism;²
- 2) lwh can also mean 'to be connected to someone, attached to someone, to accompany'. This meaning is suggested in the tradition by the etymology given for the word in Gen 29:34 when Leah declares the child will be called Levi since 'this time my husband will cling to me'. Levi is also 'attached' to Aaron in Num 18:2,4;³
- 3) lwh can also mean 'to lend, to give as a pledge or surety'. The Levites are 'given' to YHWH in place of the 'first-born' (Num 3:12; 8:16), and Samuel was 'given over' to YHWH in his childhood (1 Sam 1:28).⁴

1. Cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 358f.; Gray, Sacrifice, 243f.

2. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 358; T.H. Gaster, "The name לֵוִי", JTS 38 (1937) 250-251.

3. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 358.

4. Ibid., 358f., 369. Albright contends: "It is probable that the Hebrew term Lewi, 'Levite' is derived from lawiyu, 'person pledged for a debt or vow,' and therefore refers to a class of such persons." W.F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (New York: Doubleday, 1969) 106.

Vriezen notes: "If as seems most likely, the word 'Levite' (which has its parallels in the North Arabian and North Mesopotamian world) signifies: (one) covenanted (to God), or devoted to God, then on the strength of that we can further postulate that in this early Yahwistic period there existed a group of men who had consecrated themselves wholly to the cult of Yahweh and should be regarded, in accord with the tradition, as Moses' most zealous supporters." Vriezen, Religion, 163f.

The meaning of 'pledged' or 'covenanted' to god appears to align well with what we know of the functional usage of the term. Perhaps the concept of 'attached' to YHWH was also an understanding of the term, since the proximity of this meaning would also assist in the linking of this term to the service of god, as practiced by the kōhēn. While the term does not appear to be etymologically related to kōhēn or to another term clearly designating 'priest', it is clearly utilized in denoting some form of sacral 'separateness'. As we shall see, the witness of the earliest Israelite archives attests to Levites functioning in priestly roles.¹ While such evidence is not completely unambiguous, it provides an important understanding of a usage of the term.

1. Gray comments: "And yet, though 'Levite' at times is used as a professional rather than a tribal term, it is not quite fairly used in Hebrew as a common noun: it differs, for example, from the synonymous kōhēn: the language speaks of priests of Yahweh, his priests, my priests, for example: it never speaks of Levites of Yahweh, his Levites, my Levites, &c.: this difference can be explained if the original significance of 'Levi' was tribal." He goes on to point out that the Minaean traditions use such terminology, but points out that the borrowing was probably in the direction of borrowing from Hebrew. Gray, Sacrifice, 247; de Vaux argues the same point. Cf. Ancient Israel, 369f.

On all the above cf. Cody, History, 29-33.

The Early Poetry

The first two references to the Levites are found in poetry which Cross and Freedman have dated to the 11th. Century B.C.E.¹ The first of these is Gen 49, where Levi is described in verses 5-7 as follows:

Simeon and Levi are brothers;
 weapons of violence are their 'stock in trade'.³
 Let me not enter into their council;
 Let me not glory in their company;
 for in their anger they slew a man,⁴
 and in their wantonness they hamstrung an ox.⁵
 Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;
 and their wrath, for it is cruel!
 I will divide them in Jacob
 and scatter them in Israel.

Simeon and Levi are described in this text as impulsive and dangerous, a tendency which will divide and scatter them. The allusion to the violence of Simeon and Levi is likely a reference to Gen 34. No priestly status is attributed to the Levites in this account.

1. F.M. Cross and D.N. Freedman, Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry (Missoula: Scholars, 1975) 97.

2. E.A. Speiser, Genesis (New York: Doubleday, 1964) sees this text as the first of the two (371).

3. The term here is difficult. The RSV translates as 'swords'. Cross and Freedman suggest 'merchandise' (Studies, 70).

4. The term is singular, although often translated as 'men'. The singular is likely intended to refer to Hamor or Shechem (Gen 34).

5. Again a singular term, commonly translated as oxen, as in the case of the singular 'man' (note 4). While it is possible to read these as a collective noun, the singular appears to be intended. The term should likely be understood as a parallel to 'man'. Amos 4:1 uses a similar image to speak of the aristocratic women of Samaria as the 'cows of Bashan'.

Deuteronomy 33 provides a view of Levi which regards him as fulfilling a number of priestly roles. The office of kōhēn is clearly implied, though not specifically stated.

And of Levi he said,
 'Give to Levi your Thummim,¹
 and your Urim to your loyal one,²
 whom you tested at Massah,
 with whom you contended
 at the waters of Meribah;
 who says to his father
 and to his mother,
 'I regard them not':
 and his brethren he did not recognize,³
 and his children he did not acknowledge.
 For they observed your word,
 and kept your covenant.
 They shall teach Jacob your ordinances,
 and Israel your torah;
 they shall put incense before you,
 and whole burnt offering upon your altar.
 Bless all his skills, O Lord,
 and accept the work of his hands;
 crush the loins of his adversaries,
 of those that hate him,
 that they rise not again."
 (Deut 33:8-11)

The most unusual aspect of this tradition is the fact that Levi is credited with having set aside kinship obligations in order to do service for YHWH.⁴ This may well be an allusion to Exod 32 where the Levites are ordained by their zealous behaviour for YHWH, in slaying their fellow Israelites who have been apostate.⁵ The tradition also speaks of the Levites generating oracles from the Urim and Thummim, offering incense, conducting sacrificial service, and teaching the torah; all of these being aspects of priestly service to YHWH.

1. 'Give to Levi' is not in the Hebrew text. This translation is following the LXX and 4 Q Dt^h.

2. 'Loyal one' could also be 'he who keeps covenanted'.

3. 'Acknowledge' is literally 'know'.

4. Cf. G. Von Rad, Deuteronomy (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) 206.

Cross suggests that we are to see Moses behind the reference to Levi. "Moses is the faithful one of Levi, tried at Massah and Meribah."¹ The vindication of Moses by YHWH before the people, which takes place at Massah and Meribah (Exod 17:1-7) provides an important confirmation of Moses function as an intercessor, and is likely to be understood as a validation of his priestly role.² On the other hand, de Vaux argues that "clearly this text must refer to an episode which is unknown to us."³ In any case, the reference remains a vindication of Moses as a Levitical priest.

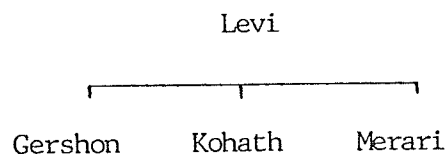
5. Cf. Sabourin, Priesthood, 105; F. M. Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic (Cambridge: Harvard, 1973) 200; Cody, History, 152.

1. Cross, CMHE, 197.

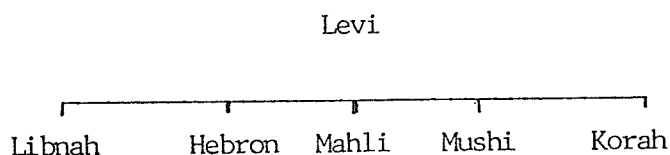
2. The Epic tradition clearly ties Moses to this event. A second account is recorded in Num 20:1-13, an account heavily edited by P. In this second account, Aaron stands by Moses throughout this event, and although he does not usurp the role of Moses in striking the rock, he participates fully in all other aspects of the narrative. As Noth observes: "P has consciously altered this tradition of the water-miracle as it appears in its original JE form in Exodus 17 in view of the purpose in which this story is told in P, namely the necessity for an insistance of 'unbelief' on the part of Moses and Aaron in order that a basis may be found for the divine decision that Moses and Aaron are not to enter the promised land." M. Noth, Numbers (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968) 146. If this observation is correct it would appear that the narrative has a dual purpose in P, first, to highlight Aaron in this event as the equal of Moses, or perhaps even the true priestly figure, and secondly, to provide a reason for the deaths of Aaron and Moses outside of the land of promise.

3. R. de Vaux, The Early History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 531. He concludes this by suggesting that Exod 17 may have been written taking into account Deut 33 (532).

Finally, we should examine another early text in this context, although it is not poetry. This is a fragment of an archaic Levitical genealogy preserved in Numbers 26:58a. This is recorded in the midst of a standard Levitical genealogy which is as follows:



This genealogy is linked to P and may only go back to the Exile.¹ The fragment in Numbers 26:58a provides five divisions:



Libnah and Hebron are both place names, and this likely provides evidence of Levites who settled in these towns at an early date.² These towns are also listed as 'Levitical cities' in Josh 21:13 and 1 Chr 6:57. While Aaron is notably absent from this list, both these towns are linked to the Aaronides in the verses noted from the lists of Levitical cities.³ On the other hand, Olyan argues that the "evidence for the presence of Kenite clans in Hebron and Zadok's south-Judahite origins, coupled with the priestly dynamics of the Absalom revolt, weigh against localizing the Zadokite Aaronids in Hebron, as Cross proposed."⁴

1. Cross argues that this list can only be dated to the exile (CMHE, 200).

2. Cf. de Vaux, Early History, 530.

3. Cross, CMHE, 206.

4. S. Olyan, "Zadok's Origins and the Tribal Politics of David," JBL 101 (1982) 193.

Mushi appears to be equivalent to Moses. Some scholars have argued that Korah equals Kohath¹, but this is unlikely. De Vaux has suggested that Korah is a place name², and it would also appear to be the name of a priestly clan³.

These important pieces of archaic information regarding Levitical origins are helpful⁴. They reveal that in early times:

- 1) Levi was a priestly group.
- 2) Levi had a reputation for militant and violent behaviour.
- 3) Levites are zealous Yahwists.
- 4) Priestly obligations have taken priority of place over familial roles. This likely indicates an open group that could be joined.
- 5) Levitical service included the generation of oracles, incense rituals, sacrificial service, and the teaching of the torah.
- 6) Moses is connected to the Levites.
- 7) Likely, the most original genealogy we have divides Levi into five clans: Libnah, Hebron, Mahli, Mushi, and Korah.

1. Cf. de Vaux, Early History, 530; Ancient Israel, 370.

2. Ibid., 370.

3. Olyan, JBL 101, 193.

4. Cross, CMHE, 206; de Vaux, Early History, 530.

Priesthood in the J/E Traditions

The similarity of approach between the J and E traditions, and the number of composite traditions which we must examine make the linking of these strata practical for our purposes. As part of our process, we will identify the sources as we survey the material.

In the texts which narrate the earliest time periods of the Old Testament,¹ the Patriarchs are presented as offering sacrifices on behalf of themselves and their families. Gen 4:4 provides an account of both Cain and Abel presenting an offering to the Lord. How this was presented is not stated, and no other individual appears to be involved. Noah offers sacrifices on an altar following the flood (Gen 8:20). Abraham builds altars (Gen 12:7, 13:8), calls upon the name of the Lord (Gen 13:4), and makes offerings to YHWH (Gen 15:9ff.; 22:13). He also prepares to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22:2). Isaac also "built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord" (Gen 26:25). Jacob is described in the narratives as the builder of an altar (Gen 35:3,7), and as an individual who offers sacrifices as well:

Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and called his kinsmen to eat bread; and they ate bread and tarried all night on the mountain.
(Gen 31:54f.)

In these examples there is no tradition of an organized priesthood; rather, the heads of families or tribes fulfill a sacral function on behalf of the community or family.

In Genesis 25:22 we read that Rebekah went "to inquire of the Lord". Clearly the phrase implies a cult, yet no details are preserved. De Vaux argues that the reference is employed by later writers to provide an archaic etiology for a sanctuary. Jacob's vow

1. These texts are presented as coming from the earliest time period. They are not necessarily the earliest traditions to assume a written form, nor do they necessarily reflect earliest realities.

2. J traditions are Gen 4:4; 8:20; 12:7; 13:4,8; 15:9-12; 25:22; 26:25. E traditions are Gen 15:13-16; 22:2,13; 31:54f.; 35:3,7.

to tithe at Bethel is viewed likewise by de Vaux:

The priesthood . . . did not appear until the social organization of the community had developed considerably; then certain members of the community were entrusted with the special tasks of looking after the sanctuaries and of performing rites which were becoming ever more and more complicated.¹

Finally, we should note that Genesis only mentions priests in connection with foreign, settled nations: Egypt (Gen 41:47; 47:22) and Salem (14:18).²

An intriguing aspect of the texts describing the Patriarchs is that where there is an altar constructed there is not usually an account of sacrifice, and vice versa.³ Haran describes the period as a time when "temples are still beyond their ken, as is priesthood, since both temples and priesthood usually have no place in semi-nomadic societies".⁴ No established priesthood is noted as being in existence in Israel, and worship is conducted by the heads of families. The fact that such sacral traditions do not connect altar and sacrifice may be merely a quirk of the tradition, or it may be the result of the final editing of P. The Priestly writer spoke of no priesthood prior

1. de Vaux, R., Ancient Israel , 345.

2. The references to Egypt are from E. Gen 14 appears to be a special source. Melchizedek appears in relationship to the city of Jerusalem (Jebus = Jerusalem = Salem?). The dating of this material is debated. Van Seters for example dates the Melchizedek episode as from the second temple period. Cf. Abraham in History and Tradition (New Haven: Yale, 1975) 304ff. Albright has argued that this is an archaic source and provides an accurate ancient record. Cf. W.F. Albright, "Abraham the Hebrew: A New Archaeological Approach," BASOR 163 (1961) 36ff. ; E.A. Speiser, Genesis (New York: Doubleday, 1964) 105. Another approach would date this between these two extremes. Cf. H.H. Rowley, "Zadok and Nehushtan," JBL 58 (1939) 124f.; C. Hauer, "Who was Zadok?," JBL 82 (1963) 90. Also S. Olyan, "Zadok's Origins and the Tribal Politics of David," JBL 101 (1982) 181.

3. H.H. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel (London: SPCK, 1967) 61. O. Gates, "The Relation of Priests to Sacrifice Before the Exile," JBL 27 (1908) argues that there was no sacrifice by priests until the institution of the temples (75).

4. M. Haran, "Temples and Cultic Open Areas as Reflected in the Bible," Temples and High Places in Biblical Times (Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology of Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, 1981) 32.

to the Aaronides, and may have wished to tone down the priestly functions of the patriarchs.

Exodus 3 provides an account of the setting apart of Moses as a servant of YHWH. Moses and Aaron are then identified as 'Levites' and 'brothers' by Exod 4:14-16.¹ The term 'Levite' may well be intended as a sacral term in this context, as it is clear that both J and E regard Moses and Aaron as priests. The division of these two chapters is difficult as the text is "clearly composite".² The terms used here may also designate a blood relationship between the two, or at least a tribal relationship. E views Moses as bringing the divine name YHWH to the people of Israel through a special revelation, as a result of which they follow Moses as YHWH's representative.³ Such functions are clearly priestly.

The relationship of Israel with the Midianites is also of relevance to the origins of the Israelite priesthood. Exod 2:15ff. records the flight of Moses from Egypt and his marriage to a Midianite woman. Exod 3, the 'burning bush' narrative, takes place in Midian. The father-in-law of Moses is reported to be a Midianite priest in Exod 18:11. Jethro acknowledges the supremacy of YHWH over "all gods", making sacrifices to YHWH which are shared with "Aaron and all the elders of Israel" (18:12). According to this E narrative, Jethro functions as a legitimate priest of YHWH, and as we shall see in the narrative of Exod 32, it is important that Aaron accepts this offering from Jethro, who is clearly to be associated with Moses. E gives Moses priority in these narratives by making him the priest to whom YHWH reveals his name, and his father-in-law the first⁴ who

1. Martin Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972) and Alan Jenks, The Elohist and North Israelite Traditions (Missoula: Scholars, 1977) 40, view this section as a J narrative. J.P. Hyatt Exodus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1971) 84, views the narrative as from E.

2. Jenks, Elohist, 40.

3. Ibid., 41. Cf. R. de Vaux, "The Revelation of the Divine Name YHWH," Proclamation and Presence (ed. Porter and Durham; Richmond: John Knox, 1970) 48ff.

4. In E Jethro offers sacrifices to YHWH prior to Moses, following the revelation to Moses.

offers sacrifices to him. Some scholars argue that Exod 18:12 attests the adoption of a Midianite (or Kenite) deity by Moses. Aaron and the elders of Israel are said to have been initiated into the worship of YHWH by Jethro¹ according to this hypothesis². Clearly a relationship exists between the cult practiced by Moses and that of Jethro. Jethro may well have been an El worshipper who recognized and accepted the revelation to Moses as a manifestation of his god. The present form of the text suggests such a possibility. Thus, Jethro becomes a Yahwist.

Exod 24 provides another composite account of Moses' priestly actions. While the tradition avoids the term kōhēn it is clear that Moses is to be understood as a cult functionary. YHWH commands:

Moses alone shall come near to the Lord; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him. (Exod 24:2)

To this J narrative is appended a more explicit E narrative (vs.3-8) which describes Moses building an altar, the offering of sacrifices and a blood rite which Moses performs which is very clearly priestly.

And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord made with you in accordance with all these words." (Exod 24:6-8)

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1. Num 10:29-32 calls Moses' father-in-law 'Hobab'. Cf. W.F. Albright, "Jethro, Hobab, and Reuel," CBQ 25 (1963) 3-11. The J traditions speak of Reuel (cf. Exod 2:18).
 2. Cf. Hyatt, Exodus, 78-81, 187; M. Buber, Moses (New York: Harper and Row, 1958) 94-100; T. Meek, Hebrew Origins (New York: Harper and Row, 1955) 86fff. (He also postulates a connection between the Levites and a serpent god and suggests that this appears to be related to Hobab [120ff.]); de Vaux, Early History, 330-338; H.H. Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua (London: Oxford, 1950) 149ff.; Ringgren, Religion, 33f.; Y. Kauffman, The Religion of Israel (New York: Schocken, 1972) 164, 224, 242-244; Bright, History, 116.

The J narrative resumes with Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel (vs.9) taking part in a sacrificial meal¹ (vs.9-11), following which Moses is commanded to ascend the mountain to receive the torah. The actions of Moses are clearly priestly in this narrative. Psalm 99 declares:

Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
 Samuel also was among those who called on his name.
 (Psalm 99:6)

This psalm is the only text which designates Moses as kōhēn². The dating of this psalm is also debated. Moses and Aaron are also identified together in Pss 77:20; 105:26; 106:16.

Exodus 32 is an important text in our discussion of priestly origins. The narrative supplies an account of the making of a golden calf, the involvement of Aaron in this process, and the 'ordaining' of the Levites. Yet a careful reading of the narrative will reveal a number of inconsistencies within the account. Because of the importance of this text for our purposes, we will examine this account in some detail.³

The relationship between YHWH and the 'god of the father(s)' has been examined by Cross, CMHE, 3ff., "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," HTR 55 (1962) 225-259; Alt, Essays, 1ff.

We should also note the clear tradition of a link between Moses and the Midianites. P responds to them negatively, stressing that Midianites are 'enemies' of Israel, particularly in cultic areas, while affirming Aaronide priority and legitimacy.

1. Jenks (Elohists) notes that the sacrificial meal in Exod 18 should be connected to that in Exod 24, the first sealing a covenant with Midian, the second a covenant with YHWH (44f.).
2. Cf. Gray, Sacrifice, 194.
3. On the difficulty of isolating the various strata cf. J.W. Davenport, A Study of the Golden Calf Tradition in Exodus 32 (Ph.D. thesis; Princeton Theological Seminary, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1973) 4f.

The earliest written form of this text is likely the J account. To this I am assigning Exod 32:1-6, 15-20, 25-34. While these have been revised several times, the narrative they outline shows Moses functioning on Sinai as a priest. Cross supports this viewpoint noting that "Moses is the dominant priestly figure of the oldest traditions."¹ While the term kōhēn does not appear, it may well be that P has excised all such references in the final editing of the Pentateuch. The text recognizes Aaron's role as a cult founder, linking him to the calf, the altar, and the proclamation of a feast to YHWH. The 'villains' of this account are the people, who perhaps misunderstand the cult image and/or festival. The breaking of the torah and the destruction of the calf appear to symbolize the violation of the covenant with YHWH. The calf does not appear condemned in this tradition. The ordination of the Levites comes as a result of their faithfulness to YHWH.² Clearly, the response of these individuals 'ordains' them, not birth.

The text would then take the following position:

- a) pro-Moses,
- b) pro-Levite,
- c) anti-people,
- d) neutral towards Aaron.

This perspective lines up with other J views on Moses and the Levites. In Exod 24 Moses functions as a priest. Numbers 12 also suggests a priesthood of Moses, as Cross has correctly observed. Moses must

1. Cross, CMHE, 197.

2. The text literally reads "fill your hands today for YHWH!" and means to 'install a priest' or, 'institute to a priestly office'. The expression is normally used of priests and its origins are uncertain. "It may have originated in a custom such as the one which is described in Exodus 29:22-24 and Lev. 8:22-29. There it is said that Moses placed in the hands of Aaron and his sons parts of a sacrifice, made the gesture of presentation with them, and then offered them on the altar. The 'ram of ordination' in those passages is literally, 'ram of filling (millu'im)'. The texts describing this ceremony are late P texts. Some scholars think the idiom was derived from the custom of placing in the hands of the priest as he began to fill his office a first installment of the fee due to him for his services; this view may find some support in Jg.17:5-13, where the idiom is used in verses 5 and 12. The Hebrew idiom, may, however, be derived from- and it is in any event similar to the Akkadian idiom (ana) gat X. mullû, which came to mean 'appoint to an office', 'put in charge of something', and the like." Hyatt, Exodus, 310.

withstand an attack by Aaron and Miriam on two issues related to his sacral role.¹

The two themes in Numbers 12 appear to be (1) Moses' superiority to the house of Aaron as mediator of the divine command, and (2) the affirmation of the legitimacy of the Mushite priesthood despite its "mixed" blood.²

As a result of this conflict the priesthood of Moses is affirmed.

The next edition of 'Exodus 32' appears to be an early attempt to vindicate Aaron. This likely included a rewriting of vs.1-6 and the addition of vs.21-24, as well as 35. Cross links the Aaronides to Bethel³ and suggests that the polemical form of the bull tradition is to be linked to an alternate northern priestly group. This tradition seeks to affirm Aaron's priesthood by strengthening the blame placed upon the people, while at the same time removing the superiority of Moses. Aaron was also likely linked to the Levitical ordination in this account.

E is a northern source which appears during the period of the monarchy, perhaps as early as the 10th century B.C.E., although the

1. Cross views the pre-history of the text to be two distinct conflict narratives which are now fused together: (1) the Cushite woman and (2) prophetic precedence (CMHE, 203).

2. Ibid., 204.

3. Ibid., 198.

4. Meek (Origins) associates the Aaronides with the bull god (136ff.) and views the calf as "originally the cult of some one of the northern tribes" (136). He identifies Joseph or Ephraim as probably being associated with the bull image. Kaufmann (Religion) connects the Aaronides to a pagan Egyptian cult and argues a fundamental opposition exists between Aaronides and Levites (238ff.) Cole connects the calf to Baal. R.A. Cole, Exodus (Illinois: Inter-Varsity, 1970) 214; de Vaux suggests that the calf may have been originally connected with the worship of El (Early History, 457); M. Haran, Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel (Oxford: Oxford, 1978) 29; A. Mazar, "The 'Bull Site' - An Iron Age I Open Cult Place," BASOR 247 (1982) 29ff.; H. Kraus, Worship in Israel (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966) 150.

5. Jenks (Elohism) suggests the 10th C. (105ff). The 8th C. is more

traditions have been revised, perhaps on more than one occasion. This particular text may have ultimately come close in time and perspective to D.¹ This would appear to provide the basis of the final shaping of the text of Exod 32, with the work of D and P being mostly limited by the fixed nature of the narrative when they receive it. It would appear to me that E has overwritten the tradition to this point to shape the material against Aaron, a polemic which D will intensify, but not alter, and in support of Mushite and Levitical claims to priesthood.

A number of scholars have argued that in E Aaron is not the priest, rather he seeks to usurp the priesthood. These scholars regard Exodus 32 as a polemical piece opposed to an Aaronic priesthood.² Haran³ is prepared to acknowledge the northern anti-Aaronic elements in E but he argues, in my opinion correctly, that there is "no point in claiming that in early layers of J and E Aaron was not considered a priest".⁴ While the material in Exodus 32 might not be considered flattering to Aaron, and while he may not originally have been connected with Moses, I do not believe that the intent of the chapter is to deny a form of priesthood to Aaron, but rather to oppose this 'tainted' priesthood with the 'legitimate' Levitical claims.⁵

typical. Cf. O. Kaiser, Introduction to the Old Testament (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975) 98f.; G. Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament (London: SPCK, 1970).

1. Jenks, Elohist, 119ff.; Hyatt, Exodus, 300ff.

2. Cf. F.S. North, "Aaron's Rise in Prestige," ZAW 66 (1954) 191ff., who reviews the situation. Also G. Widengren, "What Do We Know About Moses?," Proclamation and Presence, who argues that the E tradition consistently puts Aaron forward (33). Yet he also feels this is not the position of the earliest traditions (23, 32f.); Gates states: "in J/E there is no trace of the later view of Aaron as priest" (JBL 27, 71).

3. Haran, Temples, 90f.

4. Ibid., 69.

5. Further on Aaron cf. Davenport, Calf Tradition, 52f.; Cody, History, 146ff.; de Vaux, Early History, 469ff.

Cross suggests that this polemic might be traced to the Mushite priesthood of Nob (earlier Shiloh) who supported the cherub iconography.¹ While this appears likely, we are convinced that the sections 32:1-6, and 15-35 have been ultimately shaped by northern traditions which oppose Aaronide exclusivity and support Mushite and Levitical priestly interests.

Exod 32:7-14 has been added by a Deuteronomic editor who seeks to link the calf polemic against Aaron to Jeroboam.² In Deut 9:20f. we are told that the Lord was prepared to destroy Aaron for his apostasy, a perspective which is sharpened in this narrative and also polemically linked to Jeroboam. The essential shape of the narrative inherited from E remains, Mosaic intercession being affirmed by the sharpening of the polemic. The confirmation of the Levitical priesthood found in E also remains intact.

The final overwriting of this text by P leaves it virtually intact. The phrase 'tables of testimony' in verse 15 betrays a P touch, but outside of this we have no evidence of rewriting. Yet the fact that Mosaic priesthood is never clearly stated in the Pentateuchal narratives may be due to P editing. In addition, the confused state of the current narrative causes the reader to look for clues regarding the roles of the individuals involved. P has provided these clearly in the narratives which surround this problematic text. Aaronides are priests, Levites are assistants.

1. Cross, CMHE, 199.

2. Cf. B. Halpern, "Levitic Participation in the Reform Cult of Jeroboam I," JBL 95 (1976) 31-42; Cross, CMHE, 199; Jenks, Elohist, 50f.; B. Childs, The Book of Exodus (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 560; M. Aberbach and L. Smolar, "Aaron, Jeroboam, and the Golden Calves," JBL 86 (1967) 129-

A comparison of this narrative with 1 Kings 12 reveals the similarity of the polemic employed by D in these two pieces.

In summary we can make the following observations:

- 1) the earliest traditions allow sacrificial actions to be within the rights of any Israelite male.
 - 2) at an early stage in the development of the nation, and in particular during the Egypt (and Exodus) period, a group known as Levites also come to hold priestly offices.
 - 3) Moses and Aaron are both considered members of this Levitical group.
 - 4) Moses is clearly a priest,¹ although the term kōhēn does not now appear in the tradition.² (The exception is Ps 99, as noted.)
 - 5) E's portrait of Moses as a priest is more developed than the corresponding J presentation.
 - 6) E appears to take advantage of all opportunities to highlight the Mosaic priestly status at the expense of Aaron. J, on the other hand, appears neutral to Aaron.
 - 7) E is also prepared to accept the priesthood of Jethro as legitimate.
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1. Rowley, Worship, 24.

2. The most convincing piece of evidence that P may have excised all references to Mosaic or other early priestly function is the fact that in a J section, Exod 19:22, we read of Israelite 'priests'. In the canonical form of the narratives, the final P edition, these priests appear prior to the ordination of any Israelite priests. This anachronistic reference would make sense if other references to an Israelite priesthood had existed in J/E prior to the rewriting of the patriarchal and exodus narratives.

Priesthood in D

In Deuteronomy all priests are regarded as Levites and all Levites as priests. In Deut 10 they are clearly set apart as such, Levi being designated by YHWH to hold a priestly role and exercise his sacral rights at the 'chosen place'. D uses the phrase *הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם*, 'the priests, the Levites' in 17:9, 18:1, and 24:8. While some have argued that this phrase is lacking a conjunction, there is no evidence that such is the case. While the phrase is strange,¹ it aligns with Deut 10:

At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord and to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day. Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers; the Lord is his inheritance, as the Lord your God said to him. (Deut 10:8,9)

In addition to these cultic duties the Levites were entrusted with other responsibilities.

Other functions were committed to them which were equally important, particularly those connected with the torah-book. They, with the judges, were put in charge of the legal matters for which there was no precedent (17:9), which meant the establishment of new toroth (laws). They also had custody of the torah itself (17:18; 31:9,25f.) together with its interpretation and application (21:5f.; 24:8). Along with Moses, they were the preachers who pronounced the divine curses (27:9,14). Their most pertinent function is relayed in the blessing of Moses (33:8-10) where they are said to have been

1. Wright argues that this phrase was used to designate altar-clergy, and that D and P were essentially in agreement. Cf. G.E. Wright, "The Levites in Deuteronomy," *VT* 4 (1954) 325-330; J.A. Emerton, "Priests and Levites in Deuteronomy," *VT* 12 (1962) 129-138, was written in response. He argues that D confers the priestly office on Levi. Haran, (Temples) agrees with Emerton but notes that "In fact, outside the chosen place the Levite is considered by D an ordinary layman." (62). He goes on to suggest that while every Levite has a right to become a priest, only a limited number of such do so (63). Myers suggests that: "For Deuteronomy the priests were Levites and every Levite was eligible for the priesthood (cf. 18:1,6-8), but the legal status the writer accorded the country priests doubtless led to a somewhat artificial distinction between priests and Levites later on." J.M. Myers, "The Requisites for Response," *Int* 15 (1961) 23; Cody, *History*, 131ff.; Sabourin, *Priesthood*, 105-110.

entrusted with the urim and thummim (the sacred lot), to have observed the word and kept the Covenant, and to have taught Jacob his ordinances and Israel the law.¹

Deuteronomy is concerned for the Levites who are displaced by cultic centralization.² The text continually classes Levites with other disinherited persons (cf. 12:12,18f.; 14:27,29; 16:11,14; 26:12f.). As Von Rad has pointed out, the redaction of Deut is to be linked to northern Levitical circles, for the following reasons³:

- 1) The work is addressed to Israel as a whole.
- 2) Deut speaks of the free choice of a king, an Israelite tradition.
- 3) A number of close relationships with the northern prophet Hosea exist.
- 4) Chapter 27, located at Shechem suits a northern context well.

1. Myers, "Requisites," 24.

2. Hezekiah attempted to centralize the cult of the southern kingdom by eliminating worship at the high places (2 Kgs 18:4), a position which was reversed by his successor, Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:3). Under Josiah a more sweeping, and more effective reform is undertaken. This reform is based upon the 'recovery' of the 'torah' in the temple. The nature of the Josian reform appears to be based on ideas which we also find in Deuteronomy, and this was likely the document used as a guide to the reformation. (Cf. 2 Kgs 22-23) Cf. Ringgren, *Religion*, 165f.; J. Rosenbaum, "Hezekiah's Reform and the Deuteronomistic Tradition," *HTR* 72 (1979) 23-43; N. Lohfink, "Deuteronomy," *IDBSup*, 231. On dating cf. Cody, *History*, 127.

3. G. Von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) 26. A fifth criterion he suggests is that the Baal polemic appears to suit a northern context in the historical time frame of Deuteronomy's composition. This is rather vague to be of much service. Cf. Cody, *History*, 125ff.; H.L. Ginsberg, "Hosea," *EJ* 8, Col. 1010ff.

The central concerns of the tradition are reflected in Deut 18:1-8.

The Levitical priests, that is, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings by fire to the Lord, and his rightful dues. They shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them. And this shall be the priests' due from the people . . . For the Lord your God has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand and minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons for ever.

And if a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel, where he lives-and he may come when he desires-to the place which the Lord will choose, then he may minister in the name of the Lord his God, like all his fellow-Levites who stand to minister there before the Lord. They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what he receives from the sale of his patrimony.

Clearly, the priesthood of Levi is presented as a perpetual priesthood, and is not limited to any particular family or clan of Levi.¹ Similarly,

the Deut section of Jeremiah 33 reads:

The Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn cereal offerings, and to make sacrifices for ever. . . As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David my servant, and the Levitical priests² who minister to me. (Jer 33:18,22)

1. Cody comments: "It is here in Dt. 18:1-8 that we see most clearly that for the code of Deuteronomy all Levites are potentially priests, even if not actually priests . . . For Deuteronomy, only a Levite should be a priest, and all Levites are potentially priests even though not all are functioning priests." (History, 131f.).

2. The term used here is כֹּהֲנֵי הַלֵּוִיִּם. Cf. J.A. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 602.

The remainder of Deut 18 warns against other cultic practices and officiants:

There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or daughter as an offering, any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord . . . (Deut 18:10ff.)

Since some of these functions are attributed to priests in other parts of the ancient near eastern world, the text is interesting in its placement of limitations on priestly functions. This also serves to eliminate competition, since the priests have a virtual monopoly on YHWH.

Deut 24:8 notes Levitical priests 'offering instruction', which may refer to the giving of an oracle¹, law making, or teaching. D utilizes an earlier text (Deut 33 is a quotation of early poetry) to affirm certain Levitical functions: manipulating Urim and Thummim², law-giving, teaching, and altar service. Campbell argues that Deut 24:8 accurately reflects one of the chief Levitical functions, the giving of instruction:

II Chron 35:3 and Neh 8:7-9 also suggest their teaching or at least expository function. But perhaps most interesting evidence comes from two passages in Chronicles . . . In II Chronicles 17:7-9, a group of four "captains", eight Levites, and two priests are sent out, taking with them the book of the Torah of Yahweh, to all the cities of Judah to teach the people. In II Chronicles 19:4-11, Levites participate in handling the administration of justice, apparently from a Jerusalem base, in both civil and cultic cases. Albright suggests that a similar combination of officials functioned in the local courts as well.³

Thus we need not see the Deuteronomic perspective as innovative, but probably reflects an accurate tradition.

1. On oracle giving as torah cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 353ff.

2. Ibid., 349ff.

3. E.F. Campbell, Ruth (New York: Doubleday, 1975) 21.

Careful analysis of the Biblical material from Deuteronomy to the end of II Kings has established an essential unity of approach contained in these writings¹. The exact nature of this 'Deuteronomistic History', and the processes through which the materials passed prior to attaining a canonical form are still under discussion, however, great strides have been made in understanding certain characteristics of the corpus². The connection between Deuteronomy and the 'book of the law' discovered by Hilkiah during Josiah's reign is made apparent by the terminology the text employs³, still, the scope and nature of the redactional history of the text remains a matter of contention⁴.

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1. Ruth is excluded from this group of texts in the Hebrew canon and is not considered Deuteronomistic.
 2. A.D.H. Mayes, The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile: A Study of the Deuteronomistic History (London: SCM, 1983) 1-21; R.D. Nelson, The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History (JSOT Supp. Series 18; Sheffield: 1981); F.M. Cross, CMHE, 274ff.; R.G. Boling and G.E. Wright, Joshua, 41-52, 132-135; Kaiser, Introduction, 169-175; M. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School (Clarendon: Oxford, 1972) 1-57; W. Brueggemann, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historian," Int 22 (1968) 387ff.; R.E. Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt: Dtr¹ and Dtr²," Traditions in Transformation (ed. Halpern and Levenson; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 167ff.; W. Roth, "The Deuteronomistic Rest Theology: A Redaction-Critical Study," Papers of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research 21 (1976) 5ff.; G. Von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy (SBT 9; London: SCM, 1953).
 3. Compare: Deut 6:5 + 2 Kgs 23:25; Deut 31:26 + Josh 1:8 + 2 Kgs 22:8,11; Deut 17:18-20 + Josh 8:32, 23:6, + 2 Kgs 23:2f.; Deut 16:1-8 + Josh 5:10-12 + 2 Kgs 23:21f.; Deut 34:10-12 + 2 Kgs 23:25.
 4. For the purposes of this study I am treating the material as generally unified in purpose, however, cf. Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt".

Moving into the narratives of the settlement period¹ we find very little data regarding priests has been preserved. This should not surprise us, as we found throughout the ancient near east that the functions of the priesthood were considered of more importance than the origins or history of the institution. D continues to utilize the term הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם in Joshua (3:1-6,8,15,17; 4:3,9,11,17f.) describing the Levites as the bearers of the ark of the covenant. In Josh 6 the priests circle Jericho bearing the ark,² and in Josh 8 their appearance is representative of the presence of YHWH, as they stand by the ark during a covenant ceremony.

The bearing of the ark links the Levites to a military theme which provides a consistent element in Levitical tradition. The early poetry links Levi with militant actions, and the connection between early texts which speak of YHWH as a warrior and Exodus narratives, which also feature Levites, should also be noted.³ Exodus 32 links the ordination of the Levites to their zealous behaviour for YHWH in the slaying of their fellows.⁴

1. Historical problems abound in this period. R.G. Boling and G.E. Wright, Joshua (New York: Doubleday, 1982); R.G. Boling, Judges (New York: Doubleday, 1975), (Boling provides a good survey of the data in the introduction to this volume.); G.E. Mendenhall, "Social Organization in Early Israel," MD 132-152; Abraham Malamat, "Charismatic Leadership in the Book of Judges," MD 152-167; A. Alt, "The Settlement of Israelites in Palestine," Essays in Old Testament History and Religion (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966) 135-169; B. Lindars, "The Israelite Tribes in Judges," SVT 30 (1979) 95-112; S. Warner, "The Period of the Judges Within the Structure of Early Israel," HUCA 47 (1976) argues that Judges should be placed after Joshua (57ff.).

2. Cf. Josh 6:4-6,8,12f. (As bearing the ark cf. Deut 10:8).

3. Cf. Cross, CMHE, 91ff.; P. Miller, The Divine Warrior in Ancient Israel (Cambridge: Harvard, 1973). Meek (Origins) argues that only Levi was captive in Egypt (31f.). While Weber (M. Weber, Ancient Judaism (New York: Macmillan, 1967)) argues that Gen 49 is a reference to a non-priestly military tribe (170), it is interesting to note that he does not include the Levites in any significant way in his sections "Warfare and War Prophecy" or "Social Significance of the War God to the Confederacy" (90ff.). Kaufmann notes that the priesthood of the Aaronides may "antedate the religion of YHWH. Its Egyptian names - Aaron, Hophni, Phinehas, Hanamel, Pashur - point to an origin in Egypt." (Religion, 238).

4. Kraus, Worship, 151.

In the military lists in Numbers Levi is not included. On the other hand, the 'marching' configurations place Levi either at the head of the tribes, or in the centre of the procession. While these two images serve different theological purposes we might suggest that a possible interpretation of the exclusion of Levi from the numbering is that Levi is already a military unit. This would also make sense of the Levitical connections to 'holy war'.¹ Levites are also known to have functioned as guardians of the Ark. As the Ark bearers they carry the shrine of the 'warrior god' into battle against his enemies. Similar military and priestly co-functions are known from both Ugaritic and Hittite analogies.² Finally, we should also note that the archive appended to Judges (ch.19-20) speaks of a Levite from Ephraim who is able to call Israel to war against Gibeah as a result of a crime against his concubine. No mention is made of priestly status, yet we wonder if his ability to assemble the people for war is based on sacral military status. Phinehas 'son of Eleazar, son of Aaron' (20:28) consults YHWH for the people and assures them of victory.³

1. J. Milgrom, Studies in Levitical Terminology 1 (Berkeley: University of California, Near Eastern Studies 14, 1970) 12f.; Sabourin: 106f.; D.L. Petersen, Late Israelite Prophecy (Missoula: Scholars, 1977) 68ff.

2. Cf. Craigie, Ugarit, 35; Milgrom, JAOS 90, 204ff.; Ahlström, Royal Administration, 47ff.

3. The appearance of the name Phinehas in Num 25:1-15 and Jud 19-20, as well as in 1 Sam 1:3 suggests that a 'standard' list of priestly names may have been in use. While the references in Num and Jud likely are to be understood as the same individual, the reference in 1 Sam appears to highlight a contrast between the zealous Phinehas and Eli's son. Other names seem to be developed from a compounding of names; 'Abinadab' possibly reflecting the union of 'Abihu' and 'Nadab'.

Samuel functions in a similar way, consulting YHWH.

Josh 13:14 and 13:33 serve to remind us that Levi has been given no inheritance in the land of promise. The first text suggests that "the offerings by fire to the Lord God of Israel are their inheritance", while the LXX reads "Yahweh the God of Israel is their heritage." The MT of 13:33 reads "the Lord God of Israel is their inheritance" while this verse is omitted by the LXX. Josh 14:1-5 picks up this theme describing the division of the land by lot. Here Joshua acts as the leader of the people while the priests manipulate the sacral lots.¹

Levitical cities are also allocated by YHWH through the manipulation of the sacred lots (Josh 21). Soggin, following Mazar, suggests that these allotted cities were in difficult areas of the land, noting that such a postulation explains the fact that most Levitical cities did not contain, and were not particularly near, a sanctuary.² In this context we might note Boling's remarks regarding the division of the land as depicted in Josh 14:1-15:

Some reminiscence of the early significance of Levites as the militant core of the Yahwist movement survives in the vocabulary used in describing their responsibility, which resists any spiritualizing interpretation, for example, "warfare" (saba'). It was precisely those who could be counted on for military service that were assigned responsibility for "the work" of the desert sanctuary (Num 4:3,23,30,35,39,43). And thus the most characteristic activity of the Levites in the wilderness was guarding (not merely "keeping charge of") the portable sanctuary and the sacred things (Num 1:53; 3:28; 18:4; 31:30, et passim).³

1. On Urim and Thummim cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 352ff.; Boling points out the probable use of Urim and Thummim in this case. Cf. Boling & Wright, Joshua, 354.

J. Lindblom argues for both civil and sacral lot casting in Israel. Cf. J. Lindblom, "Lot-Casting in the Old Testament," VI 12 (1962) 164-178.

In Mesopotamia, lot casting is used almost exclusively for such things, rather than to generate other omen information.

2. Cf. J.A. Soggin, Joshua (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) 205f.

3. Boling and Wright, Joshua, 359.

The Deuteronomic history incorporates a large amount of archival material regarding the priesthood, which likely comes from the Jerusalem archives. This material allows us a fuller picture of the priesthood during the kingdom period than D's stylized presentation might otherwise allow.

The first and only major archival section dealing with the priesthood is the appendix to Judges. All of chapters 17-21 deal directly or indirectly with Levitical history, however it is Judg 17-18 which concerns us here.¹ This provides an account of a sanctuary established by Micah of Ephraim. Micah had stolen eleven hundred pieces of silver from his mother, and when this was returned to her, she dedicated two hundred pieces of the silver to YHWH, and has an image made.

And the man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and teraphim, and installed one of his sons, who became a priest. (Judg 17:5)

This son is not said to be a 'firstborn' who we might suspect could be dedicated to YHWH, and when a Levite passes through, Micah is able to persuade him to stay and become the sanctuary priest. When the Danites, who are moving northwards² pass by, they take the image, the ephod, and the teraphim from Micah, the Levite going with them.

1. Most scholars view the text as having a unified source. For another opinion cf. G.F. Moore, Judges (Edinburgh: Clark, 1895) 366f.

Ahlström argues Micah was a city-ruler, using the pursuit of Micah with 'his men' to support this thesis (Royal Administration, 24). This does not appear to provide an adequate basis for this postulation. Any number of people might have 'men' working for them. This does not make them a city-ruler.

2. Some scholars have suggested that Dan may be connected with the 'Sea Peoples' and argue that following 'conversion' to Yahwism it became necessary for them to migrate northward. Cf. de Vaux, Early History, 775ff.; A. Malamat, "The Danite Migration and the Pan-Israelite Exodus-Conquest: A Biblical Narrative Pattern," Biblica 51 (1970) 1ff.

Following their arrival in Dan, the image is set up and a 'Levitical' priesthood established.¹

And the Danites set up the graven image for themselves; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land. So they set up Micah's graven image which he made, as long as the house of God was at Shiloh. (Judg 18:30b,31)

Important here is the connection of the 'Levitical' priesthood to the house of Moses,² and the enduring nature of the cult founded. The point of the narrative does not appear to be to condemn the Levite, as there is no clear denunciation contained within these chapters, other than the standard "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (17:6). This comment is not included at all in the portions of the text in which the Levite appears. Judg 18 only begins with the statement "in those days there was no king in Israel." Clearly, according to the narrative, anyone could be made a priest, although a Levite was preferred. It would seem that this installation of a priest goes uncondemned as does

1. On Levites as 'strangers' cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 359.

Goulder argues that the Urim and Thummim were connected with the cult at Dan, and that David returned these to Dan after the establishment of the cult at Jerusalem (64f.) M.D. Goulder, The Psalms of the Sons of Korah (JSOT Suppl. #20; Sheffield: 1982).

2. Cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 362.

The text in the MT reads Manasseh, the reading being changed in a superscription. The fact that this adjustment to the MSS is early is attested to by the LXX which offers both versions of the text. I would suggest that an amendment during the exile would accord with the evidence. As we will see the standard Deuteronomic rubric 'there was no king in Israel' places the cultic blame upon the leadership of the nation, as is typical of Deuteronomic thinking. D appears to preserve this archaic account as an appendix representing northern Levitical concerns, which are closely attached to a Mushite priesthood. Goulder views this as the "original sanctuary legend at Dan, heavily overlaid with perjorative embellishment by its blackest enemies, the Deuteronomic historians" (53). He bases this argument on the Deuteronomic interest in a central cult. I would prefer to see this as an example of D allowing a legitimate pre-centralization archival source to remain in the tradition, shifting the 'blame' for such a situation from the shoulders of the Levites, onto the lack of Yahwistic leadership during the period of the judges. The polemic appears to align more with later priestly thought than with Deuteronomic Levitical interests.

the sanctuary with an image, which likely took the form of a bull icon. The fact that a priest was installed illegitimately, according to the other traditions we have examined, does not mean that this was originally viewed in the same manner. It does not appear that Micah's son remained a priest. It would seem that the appearance of the Levite signalled the removal of Micah's son. The Deuteronomic shaping of this material has left us with the observation that during that time "every man did what was right in his own eyes." That such situations occurred is unquestionable. Priesthood may have been shaped upon more than one occasion by the fact of local need. Against this viewpoint which sees the piece as historical Halpern writes: "Taken in conjunction with the genealogy of the Danite priesthood found in Judg 18:30, it indicates that the Micah tale should be interpreted, at heart, as a piece of official northern kingdom propaganda." Thus he argues that it "cannot be treated as a historically accurate piece."¹ While the piece is polemical in its current state it is to be linked to Levitical circles as a cult etiology. The location of Micah's shrine near Bethel, staffed by Mushite Levites provides a subtle polemic affirming Mushite Levitical service prior to the establishment of the Aaronides there. Judges 17-18 thus establishes a Mushite Levitical heritage at both Dan and Bethel.²

The relationship between Judges 17-18 and two other Deuteronomic polemics, Exodus 32 and 1 Kings 12:25-33 is intriguing, as the following chart will illustrate:

1. Halpern, JBL 95, 37.

2. Ibid., 37.

Cross (CMHE), on the other hand, argues that there was an "ancient and prolonged strife between priestly houses: the Mushite priesthood which flourished at the sanctuaries of Shiloh and Dan and an allied Mushite-Kenite priesthood at the local shrines at 'Arad and Kadesh opposed to the Aaronite priesthood of Bethel and Jerusalem." (206). The two powerful priesthoods are also used by Cross to support his proposal that the dual highpriesthood of Jerusalem represents the Aaronide (Zadok) and Mushite (Abiathar) families (215).

comparison	Exod 32	Judges 17-18	1 Kgs 12:25-33
cult figure	calf	image ¹	calf
reference to cult figure	'these are your gods, O Israel . . .' (vs.4,8)		'these are your gods, O Israel' (vs.28)
who establishes?	people Aaron	Micah (5,12)	Jeroboam
sacrifice	people (8) (implied)	no reference	Jeroboam (implied)
altar	Aaron builds (implied)		Jeroboam builds (implied) (33)
feast	Aaron announces feast to YHWH (5)		Jeroboam ordains feast to YHWH (32)
priesthood	Moses and Levites viewed positively people and Aaron negatively Levites ordained 'fill your hands' (vs.29)	Levites/Mushites viewed positively priests until exile (18:30) Levite ordained 'filled the hand' (17:12) by Micah -replaces son he had ordained (17:5) with Levite location of Micah's shrine at/near Bethel gives Levitical priority at this important shrine	Levites removed? non-Levites appointed* have non-L. replaced Aaronides at Bethel? (32) Levites viewed positively
location	Sinai	Dan & Bethel	Dan & Bethel
polemical levels	anti-Aaron pro-Levite anti-Jeroboam kingship of YHWH rejected in act of apostasy	anti-Aaron pro-Levite 'no king' (17:6, 18:1)	anti-Aaron? ³ pro-Levite anti-Jeroboam king fails religiously
redaction	encloses in alternate trad.	Moses to Manasseh ⁴	no need to alter

The relationship between these passages is apparent and the polemical intent appears to be related at the first level, that is, the polemic against Aaron appears clear. The pro-Levitical concerns are also clear throughout these texts. Elsewhere there is agreement between two of the three. Judges 17-18 appears to be concerned to establish Levitical interests in Dan and Bethel, and likely serves as the basis for the polemical approach found in 1 Kgs 12. While an analysis of this text in detail is beyond the scope of our concern, the polemical nature of D's approach is clear from other sources on Jeroboam.⁵

1. Cf. Halpern, JBL 95, 36.

2. This is the account provided by D. The obvious polemic here denies legitimacy to the cult at Bethel and Dan. Yet Jeroboam seems to be involved in a reform movement of sorts, bringing to life some of the oldest traditions of Yahwism. D denies that the priests at Bethel and Dan were Levites and contends that these had been replaced by laymen. Cf. *ibid.*, 32. Likely an Aaronide priesthood at Bethel would be loyal to Judean interests and a threat to the stability of Jeroboam's kingdom. Cf. *ibid.*, 35. The continued survival of northern Levites, and their participation in the cult would indicate that this serves a polemical intent in the shaping of Jeroboam as an anti-hero (see note 5).

3. Halpern contends that at or near Bethel is the likely location of Micah's shrine (36). "Thus the Micah tale would establish that while Aaronid priests had served Bethel before the division, Mushite Levites had served at that site before the Aaronids. As a piece of northern propaganda, the narrative would serve to legitimate and justify Jeroboam's replacement of the Aaronid Bethel priesthood with Levites of the Mushite ancestry." (38). If Halpern is correct, a polemical intent of this narrative could be to confirm the Levitical priesthood, at the expense of the Aaronids. The removal of the Aaronides would allow the condemnation of Jeroboam, while at the same time confirming Levitical rights to the priesthood. At the same time we must also realize that the text does not explicitly state that Jeroboam removed any Levites, only that he maintained the royal prerogative to appoint those he chose to the priesthood (D does not point this out in his dealings with Judah's history): "[Jeroboam] also made houses on high places, and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites" (1 Kgs 12:31 also cf. 13:33). The pro-Levitical viewpoint of D is quite apparent.

4. The LXX knows both of these text traditions. The MT preserves Moses but adjusts to Manasseh in a raised script. This would confirm that such an amendment is fairly early.

5. *Ibid.*, 34ff.; Cross, CME, 198ff.

The archival material contained in the Deuteronomic history provides evidence of priests who appear to be non-Levitical. Perhaps this reflects the realities of the monarchic period, when such idealizations as D provides are not credible. The account in Judg 17-18 would suggest that this may be so. We should also consider that perhaps an individual could 'join' the Levites during this period, and that later the priesthood 'closed up'. The archival material is as follows:

1) In 1 Sam 5 and 2 Sam 6:10f. reference is made to the Ark being in the care of Obededom the Gittite. The Chronicler views him as a Levite (1 Chr 16:37-42).

2) David's sons are noted as priests in 2 Sam 8:18. In the LXX they are termed 'chief officials', while 1 Chr 18:17 also refers to them as 'officials'. Such a state of affairs would accord well with what we know in the ancient near east of royal sons holding cultic posts.¹

3) Another list of David's officials in 2 Sam 20:25f. includes the final statement "Zadok and Abiathar were priests, and Ira the Ithrite² was also David's priest." This appears to be the appointment of an individual about whom we know little, other than that he was a colleague of David's.

4) 1 Kgs 4:5 notes that "Zabud the son of Nathan was priest and king's friend."

5) Finally, Samuel the Ephraimite clearly functioned as a priest both in his capacity as leader, and as a cult functionary.³ Chronicles provides him with Levitical status (1 Chr 6).

1. Cf. Cody, History, 101-105; G.J. Wenham, "Were David's Sons Priests?" ZAW 87 (1975) 79-82, rejects such a standing, following the version of the textual tradition which designates David's sons as 'high officials'. H. Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) suggests that a proper translation of the text would read that David's sons 'had been priests' (294).

2. While the MT reads 'Jairite', one version of the LXX reads 'Ithrite'. This would appear to be the preferred reading. Cf. S. Olyan, "Zadok's Origins and the Tribal Politics of David," JBL 101 (1982) 190ff.

3. Samuel's role in the national religion falls in line with D's view of political leadership. Samuel prays for the people (1 Sam 7:5, 9) and YHWH hears (7:10f.), he sacrifices on their behalf (7:6, 9, 13, 15; 10:8), and he builds an altar to YHWH (7:17). Hertzberg understands

The fact that the Deuteronomic history broadens its perspective regarding priesthood as the history provided moves towards the time of composition is understandable. The archival material provides an alternative perspective of events which allows us to realize that some flexibility in the matter of priesthood appears to have been a reality. Levitical status may well have been attained by various methods, including birth, but also royal appointment, special aptitude, and dedication as a firstborn child. In any case, as we can observe from the archival material, such additions to the priestly ranks were made, regardless of the answer to our question regarding Levitical status.

Zadok also appears in the archival material in 2 Sam 20:25; 1 Kings 4:4; and initially in 2 Sam 8:17. Since Zadok is not provided with a Levitical status by the Deuteronomist, questions regarding his origins have also been raised.¹ Zadok has been seen originating at a number of places. Chronicles notes Zadok serving at the altar in Gibeon (1 Chr 16:39f.), and this has caused some to postulate that Zadok may have been a Canaanite priest of Gibeon who converted to Yahwism. On the other hand, a number of scholars have suggested that Zadok was originally the Jebusite priest of Jerusalem, who entered the service of David.² Another postulation is that Zadok entered the

Samuel as a priest (*ibid.*, 34ff.); but cf. Cody (*History*, 72-80) who argues that Samuel was a 'temple servant'. In Psalm 99 Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are mentioned in the context of priesthood. Also see W.F. Albright, *Samuel and the Beginnings of the Prophetic Movement* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1961).

1. 2 Sam 8:17 lists Zadok as 'son of Ahitub' but no further elaboration is provided. Olyan argues that it is "not necessarily unusual that important officials would be without a genealogy." (Olyan, *JBL* 101, 181. Also J.R. Bartlett, "Zadok and His Successors at Jerusalem," *JTS* 19 (1968) 1, 5f.

2. Cf. Cody, *History*, 89ff.

C. Hauer, "Who was Zadok?" (*JBL* 82 (1963) argues for Zadokite origins in Jebus (92ff.); In this hypothesis he is following Rowley. Cf. H.H. Rowley, "Zadok and Nehushtan," (*JBL* 58 (1939) 123. Rowley also makes a connection with Nehushtan as the god of Jebus (137) and postulates that Zadok was a priest of this cultus. Others have suggested that 'sedeq' could be a god of Jebus.

service of Saul.¹

The relationship of Zadok with Abiathar is also interesting. Cody postulates that the Jebusite theory of the Zadokite origins is the correct one.² In his view, a high priest of Levitical stock stands beside a high priest of Jebusite stock. Cross views this unique structure of two functioning high priests as the result of other concerns, unparalleled even by Jeroboam's two high priests.³ Cross contends that the two priests appointed by David represented the heads of two powerful priestly houses, "presumably two rival houses", the Mushite and Aaronite clans:

David's unusual choice of two chief priests, like many of his decisions relating to Israel's new central sanctuary in Jerusalem, was based on sure diplomatic grounds; he chose a priest from each of the great, rival priestly families: Abiathar of the Shilonite house of Eli which claimed descent from Moses, Zadok from the Hebronite clan which traced its line to Aaron.⁴

Olyan contends that Zadok should be linked to "the Aaronid line of Jehoiada", citing the pericope preserved in 1 Chr 12:27f., which notes Zadok's role as aide to the 'nāgîd of Aaron', Jehoiada. Likely, Zadok was his son. The term nāgîd has clear military overtones, and its use in this priestly context should be noted relative to prior observations. Citing familial links to David's government, Olyan

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1. For a number of views cf. Ringgren, Religion, 60f.; de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 373f. (who suggests Zadok's origins must remain unknown).
 2. Cody, History, 89ff.; Against the Jebusite theory cf. Olyan, JBL 101, 177ff.
 3. Cross, CMHE, 207ff.
 4. *Ibid.*, 215.
 5. Olyan, JBL 101, 185.
 6. *Ibid.*, 185-190. Olyan notes that the view of Cross that Zadok is an Aaronide is sound, but that there is no evidence to link Zadok with Hebron (184). He argues that the Hebron centred rebellion of Absalom does not line up with Zadok's support of David (184). While this is possible it is more likely that Zadok is to be linked with south-Judah (193).

contends that the "genealogical materials do not preserve an authentic lineage for Zadok," while his connections through the family of Jehoida explain well his rise to power in the royal court.¹ Olyan concludes that Abiathar represented northern Mushites, while Zadok represented southern Aaronides during David's reign.²

It appears clear that an Aaronide link for Zadok is likely a historical reality. In any case, since the historical reliability of the Chronicler has been called into question,³ it would be helpful to remember that D obviously viewed Zadok as a Levite either by attributes or by birth. Since we cannot be sure that the priesthood was 'closed' to persons not biologically 'Levites' it is possible that Zadok became a Levite. What is important is that D considered the Zadokites to be legitimate priests.

1. Ibid., 177.

2. Ibid., 193. Olyan also suggests that Ira the Ithrite may have been appointed as a priest of David to relieve the tensions between David and the Ithrite or Korahite priestly clans who anointed Absalom (193).

3. Cf. Jacob M. Myers, I Chronicles (New York: Doubleday, 1965) who suggests that we just do not know how reliable the genealogical traditions of the Chronicler might be (lxiif.). Cody argues that Zadok "appears from nowhere" and is provided with "an Aaronide genealogy by 1 Chr 5:30-34; 6:35-38, while 1 Chr 24:3 makes him a Levite of the family or clan of Eleazar, while making Abiathar, through his father Ahimelech, a Levite of the family of Ithamar." History, 89.

T. E. Fretheim, "The Priestly Document: Anti-Temple?" VT 18, 1968) suggests that the genealogy which provides Zadok with an Aaronide heritage is to be attributed to the fact that by the time the Chronicler writes the two opposing priesthoods had settled their differences (329).

Although the Deuteronomist(s) has concerns regarding Levites and the cult, another redactional concern is given priority in his work. This is the theme of kingship, and the function of royal cultic choice in the history of the nation. For the Deuteronomist, kings are religious leaders whose cultic actions are of supreme importance for the history of the nation. The importance that the Deuteronomist places on this theme would make any examination of religious issues in the history inaccurate if this theme were not addressed. This interest in kingship is also important for the period prior to the monarchy, and similar redactional interests are at work in the figures of Moses and Joshua, as well as in the period of the Judges.

Deuteronomy is therefore important as a model by which the Deuteronomic history is redacted. The passage which calls for Israelite kings to submit to the torah (Deut 17:14-20) under the guidance of the Levitical priests is of course central to the Deuteronomic conception of kingship. The 'core' of this law code appears to be found in Deut 4:41-30:20, the framework which now encloses the 'core' serving two purposes: first, as an introduction to the criteria by which Israelite history is to be judged, and secondly, the use of paradigms to evaluate leadership is outlined. Moses is presented as a prophet second to none, and his corporate actions on behalf of the community are highlighted. Later in the history, Josiah and Joshua are both portrayed in a similar vein.²

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1. J. Porter describes Moses in Deuteronomy as the "prototype of king" *Moses and Monarchy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963) 23. E also views the prophetic role of Moses as 'second to none'.
 2. This relationship is worked out in some detail in Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt," 171ff.; Cf. R. Nelson, "Josiah in the Book of Joshua," *JBL* 100 (1981) 531ff.

Mayes observes that: "Joshua is not only a second David (II Kings 22.2), he also stands as a supreme example of the faithful one, obedient to all the law of Moses (23.25) with which the Deuteronomic historian had opened his account. Moses, David and Josiah are the key figures in the deuteronomic history, and in the activities of the last of these authentic expression of the will of Yahweh for his people is to be found." Mayes, *Story*, 132.

Joshua is portrayed as the leader designated to take the place of Moses. The narrative of the conquest is faithful to the dictates of Deut 7:1ff. (cf. Josh 10:40ff., 11:10ff.) and the covenant with YHWH is renewed by Joshua in the land of promise (cf. Deut 31:25f., Josh 24).

The Judges narrative provides a portrait of unstable leadership conditioned by the fact that "there was no king in Israel" (cf. Judges 2:6-23 for a typical 'cycle' from Judges). The way is thus prepared for the period of the divided kingdoms.

The Deuteronomist's framework contrasting paradigms of good and evil leadership is most obviously employed in the history of the kingdoms. Cross has observed how these 'ideal types' function in the history:

The crucial event in Judah, comparable to the sin of Jeroboam was the faithfulness of David. Through much of Kings this theme of grace and hope parallels the dark theme of judgement. David established Yahweh's sanctuary in Jerusalem, an eternal shrine on chosen Zion: Jeroboam established the rival shrine of Bethel, a cultus abhorrent to Yahweh, bringing eternal condemnation. David in Kings is the symbol of fidelity, Jeroboam the symbol of infidelity. In view of the antimonarchical elements surviving in Deuteronomic (Dt) tradition, notably in the law of the king, and in certain sources in the book of Judges and Samuel, it is remarkable to discover that the Deuteronomist in 2 Samuel 7 and in Kings shares in unqualified form the theology of the Judean monarchy.¹

Due to this theological purpose, information which would be of great service to historians is not preserved in the text. Many rulers are quickly passed over due to a negative theological appraisal of their reigns² (cf. Omri 1 Kgs 16:17ff. who from other sources is known to be an important king).

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1. Cross (CMHE) postulates two editions, the second having as its theme judgement and hope (287). He considers the second redaction to be exilic.
 2. Cf. B. Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 235ff.; John Gray, I and II Kings (Rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 9ff.; Weinfeld, Deuteronomy,

The connection of the Levites to the question of kingship in early Israel is important to note. Saul attempts to erradicate the priests of Shiloh (1 Sam 21-22) when they offer aid to David and his men. It is this move which firmly establishes David's opposition to Saul.¹ David is also credited with bringing the Ark to the new national capital.

Grossly speaking, then, Israel adopted her peculiar form of kingship as a compromise between the tribal power structures and the sacral authority wielded over the tribes by the ark-priesthood . . . In Saul's time, however, the monarchy joined with the tribes to deprive the priesthood of its temporal authority, precipitating the league authority structures into turmoil. The result was the emergence of a new tension, this time between the king, or the central regime, and the tribesmen . . . Succeeding Ishbaal, about whom nothing is known, David tied himself to the old ark-priesthood, introducing the Judahite Aaronides into the cultic establishment of the nation.²

Whatever the nature of the priesthood which David installs in Jerusalem, it is important to note that David seeks to create a strong bond between the king and a royal cult. The bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem increases the importance of the new shrine by unifying old cultic traditions and priesthood(s) with the royal shrine.

The importance of the 'Levitical priests' to the history of kingship in Israel must still be worked out in many details.

354ff.; Von Rad, Theology, 345; Nelson, Double Redaction, 33ff.; Mayes, Story 106ff.; Cross, CMHE, 282ff.; R.E. Clements, "The Deuteronomistic Interpretation of the Founding of the Monarchy in 1 Sam. VIII," VT 24 (1974) 398ff.

While a detailed analysis of the Deuteronomic system of positive and negative rulers would be interesting it is beyond the scope of this study. For our purposes the paradigms of 'faithfulness' and 'disloyalty' to the covenant need to be clear. Cf. C.D. Evans, "Naram-Sin and Jeroboam: The Archetypal Unheilsherrscher in Mesopotamian and Biblical Historiography," Scripture in Context II (ed. Hallo, Moyer, and Perdue; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 97-125.

1. B. Halpern, "The Uneasy Compromise: Israel Between League and Monarchy," Traditions in Transformation, 87.
2. *Ibid.*, 94. Albright's hypothesis that Levitical cities lists reflect the Davidic period has recently been defended by Hauer. Cf. C. Hauer, "David and the Levites," JSOT 23 (1982) 33-54.

Although the political involvements of the priestly factions are unclear, the importance of these interests should not be underestimated. The fact that Levitical scholars are likely behind the composition of both Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic history¹ tends to cloud certain aspects of the traditions.²

Thus we can see that the single most important figure influencing the well being of the people was, according to D, the king. The cultic decision of the king determined the fate of the people.³ While we cannot answer the important question of whether or not the king performed cultic functions as the highest priest of the land,⁴ we can determine with assurance that for the Deuteronomic historian his faithfulness to YHWH was of supreme importance.

1. Cf. G. Von Rad, Deuteronomy, 24; Boling, Joshua, 35; Boling and Wright, Judges, 132ff.; Mayes, History, 37f., 52; J. Milgrom, "Profane Slaughter and a Formulaic Key to the Composition of Deuteronomy," HUCA 47 (1976) 16; R. Clements, "Deuteronomy and the Jerusalem Cult Tradition," VT 15 (1965) 310; Von Rad, Studies, 60ff.

2. David and Saul are both clearly related politically to Levitical circles. Jeroboam is noted as appointing priests 'from among all the people, who were not of the Levites.' (1 Kgs:12:31; also 13:13f.) This is clearly polemical. Jeroboam's cult is an attempt to affirm old Yahwistic traditions, not to alienate the populace in his newly established state. The anti-Jeroboam polemic is clearly linked to the Deuteronomic section of Exodus 32 (and likely to Judg 17-18 as well). Priestly rivalries are likely responsible for these polemical narratives. Cf. Cross, QHE, 198f.; Halpern, JBL 95.

3. Another theme does appear in the history, which puts the fate of the nation squarely on the shoulders of the people. Cf. 1 Sam 12; Mayes, Story, 105; Friedman, "Egypt to Egypt," 182ff., 187f.

4. This point is debated. Cf. Cody, History, 101ff.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 100. The fact that the information that David's sons acted as priests is left in the deuteronomic redaction may indicate that the editor(s) had no problem with this conception (although it may indicate that they do not censor). If the king is not the highest cultic official in the opinion of the deuteronomist, he certainly is the most influential as regards the salvation of the nation. He appears as a 'corporate personality'. His failure to be faithful to YHWH is always noted, while the daily routine of cult and temple are not dealt with by the narrative.

While the term 'king-priest' is nowhere applied to the Israelite royalty we should recognize that many of their actions were later understood as 'priestly'. Kapelrud comments: "It would actually be sensational if kingship in Israel meant something completely different from kingship in other countries in the Ancient Near East."

A.R. Kapelrud, "King David and the Sons of Saul," Supp. Numen 4, 294.

In summary we can note the following distinctives of the Deuteronomic perspective:

- 1) In D all Levites are priests. While certain individuals may not function as priests, all Levites are potentially priests.
- 2) Kingship was considered the most sacrally significant office in the nation. The importance of the central (royal) shrine alligns well with D's view of kingship. The centralization of sacral responsibility in the figure of the king in essence means that functions of priests are delegated cultic responsibilities for which the king is ultimately responsible. The sacral failure of the king signals disaster for the nation. In this viewpoint, D aligns himself with the common theological perspectives of the ancient near east.
- 3) Aaron and his line are polemically attacked by D. The linkage between Aaronide cult functions and apostacy is maintained throughout the Deuteronomic material. Any special status Aaronides might have could be gathered under the rubric 'cult disasters'.
- 4) Finally, we should note that D condemns all divinatory practices which could be connected to magical or manipulative rites. The remaining acceptable practices appear to be the 'Urim and Thummim', incubation, and ecstatic revelation. D clearly attests that prophetic utterances are to be measured by their fulfillment (cf. Deut 18).

Priesthood in P

The Priestly writer does not include any patriarchal act of sacrifice. For P, the Aaronide priesthood initiated by YHWH (Exod 28) and installed by Moses (Lev 8-9) represents the first and only legitimate priesthood. Moses ordains Aaron and this act of consecration is the only priestly function which P tolerates of a non-Aaronide. While other sources in the Pentateuch take differing views, the priestly overwriting of these events has been quite effective in systematizing the cult of Israel to accept Aaronide priority.¹

In Leviticus 10 two of Aaron's sons² are consumed by fire because they have presented incense on 'unholy fire' to the Lord. This leads to a section distinguishing 'clean' from 'unclean' (10:4-15:33) which finally is connected to the 'Day of Atonement' (16:1ff.). Some scholars have argued that the background of this event is a rival priesthood yet there is no proof for this contention.³ It would appear to me that if anti-Levitical interests were original to this narrative the P redactor would have utilized them. The present redactional placement of the text suggests that cultic purity concerns would provide an adequate original purpose for the narrative.

1. Exodus 32 appears to have been left virtually untouched by P. The traditions behind the text were likely so well established that P had few options in retouching the narrative. Yet the text ultimately remains buried in a tradition shaped by Aaronide priority and the reader arrives at the troublesome narrative with the facts clearly set before him in Exod 28. Aaronides are priests. Exod 40:12-15 reminds us of this fact again and calls the priesthood 'perpetual'. P also provides a Levitical genealogy in Exod 6:14ff. which leads into a section noting the priority of Aaron over Moses by birth (Exod 7:7). We should also note that the lineage of Moses is also ignored.

2. Nadab and Abihu

3. Noth argues the case. Cf. M. Noth, *Leviticus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965) 84ff.; R.K. Harrison, *Leviticus* (Illinois: Inter-Varsity, 1980) 110f. disagrees.

Leviticus 21-22 offers a discourse on the holiness demanded of priests as the representatives of YHWH. Purity is portrayed as essential to the priestly life. Again, we should note the connection of this theme with the narrative of Nadab and Abihu.

Numbers 3 provides an important account of the status of the Levites:

And the Lord said to Moses, "Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister to him. They shall perform duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle; they shall have charge of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and attend to all the duties for the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle. And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the people of Israel. And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but if anyone else comes near, he shall be put to death."

And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people instead of every firstborn that opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine . . ." (Num 3:5-12)

Again the question of how one became a Levite is central. The Levites are presented as the virtual possessions of the Aaronides. But are Aaronides Levites? If so, what is the relationship outlined here? The fact that this text is usually ascribed to P does not permit us to dismiss the latter question, for it is often postulated that individuals, or even groups, were given 'Levitical' standing by a later redactor. Could anyone become a Levite, but only members of a certain family become priests, or was the priesthood open to anyone? Did one first become a Levite and then a priest? Were Levites originally 'strangers' who were devoted to the cult? Joshua 9:27 provides such an account to explain the status of the Gibeonites. The text also might suggest to us that originally 'first-born' children were consecrated to the priesthood. Further support for such a priesthood of 'firstborn' Levites might be provided by Exod 13:1f. which states:

1. Cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 359f.

"Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine."¹ From what we know of the history of the priesthood, it would appear that the priesthood was open during the earliest periods and closes up over time. By the time P writes in the exile, the priesthood is in the control of the Aaronides². For the writer it is important to demonstrate that the condition of the priesthood is ordained to be such by YHWH. This serves to legitimate their status at the same time as it closes the priestly ranks to any opposition.

Numbers 8:5-26 relates closely to Num 3. Again the Levites are regarded as servants of Aaronides (vs.19) in spite of the fact that they have been given to YHWH for his own.³ Verse 19 also notes that the Levites should "make atonement for the people of Israel", a function normally considered priestly.⁴ While P provides an elaborate system in which Levites are Aaronide servants (Num 3-4) we see that the underlying material takes other points of view.

The text of Numb 12 and 16 both betray earlier priestly concerns. In the first case the text appears to have been left untouched by P, which would suggest that this tradition was well known. Numbers 16, on the other hand, appears to have been rewritten by the editor. In this account Korah and other Levites following him 'seek the priesthood' (vs.10) Moses and Aaron oppose them in a test before YHWH.

1. We should also note that Israel is even termed YHWH's 'firstborn' in the Exodus narrative (Exod 4:22f.).

2. If the priesthood is not in the control of the Aaronides during the exile, it is certainly their plan to gain complete control of the institution, and they write the Priestly history to conform to this viewpoint. The conflict narratives appear to attest to challenges to Aaronide hegemony. For example, the challenge of the Korahites, a rival priestly clan.

3. M. Noth, Numbers (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968) 69.

4. Ibid., 69. We have not discussed Num 6 which deals with the Nazarite. At present there is no evidence to indicate that this sacral status had any relationship to the priesthood. Cf. ibid., 53ff.; de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 466f.; Weber, Ancient Judaism, 94f. Weber regards them as sacral warriors in earliest times.

Korah had complained to Moses and Aaron:

You have gone too far! For all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?

Moses tells Korah to bring his followers in the morning to stand 'before the Lord' so that he might choose between them. Moses charges the Levites with 'seeking the priesthood'. Until this point the text is quite clear, however, in verse 12 the situation begins to change. Dathan and Abiram, who appear to be responsible for 'murmurings' against Moses and Aaron, are introduced to the story. At this point the narrative becomes difficult to follow. Dathan and Abiram are intertwined with the rebellion of Korah and the focus of the narrative is clouded. Two originally independent stories appear to be at work here, but they have been editorially fused at some point in the history of the traditions. On the other hand, it could be possible that an originally clear narrative has become confused in transmission. In this case it seems unlikely. When the text declares that the ground opened and swallowed those that the Lord opposed, it is not clear who was swallowed up. Verse 32 appears to indicate that all who participated in Korah's rebellion were consumed. Did this include Dathan and Abiram? Numbers 26 provides the following account:

These are the Dathan and Abiram, chosen from the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the Lord, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a warning. Notwithstanding, the sons of Korah did not die. (Num 26:9-11)

Perhaps this last note is to indicate that not all the Korahites were involved in this opposition to Moses. Or could the narrative have originally only intended to indicate that Dathan and Abiram were consumed? The confusion in the text does not help us to clarify the history of the text, or to reconstruct the original narrative, or narratives. In its final form the text has been edited by P. It

serves to indicate the division between the Aaronides and the Levites. The chasm between the priestly and levitical functions is not to be transgressed, upon pain of death. The message of the Priestly redactor appears clear. The Levites are to keep their place. This is the will of YHWH.¹ Finally, we should observe that the narrative serves as a sharp polemic against non-Aaronide priestly groups. While others may 'claim' priestly rights, the 'sons of Aaron' have been chosen by YHWH.

Numbers 17 is also concerned with the relationship between Aaronides and Levites. Here Aaron is regarded as a Levite, and the sign of the rod is portrayed as reinforcing the point made in chapter 16; there is no priesthood apart from Aaron's house. Yet Aaron's house is represented by the budding of the 'rod of Levi'! Furthermore, the text, by its silence, ignores the existence of other Levites. Is this silence to indicate that all Levites are priests? Why is there silence in the final form of the text, regarding the other Levites that play such a significant role in chapters 16 and 18? Clearly the redaction of P presents Aaron as supreme, yet it is likely that the original form of the text highlighted Levitical superiority in the priesthood.

Chapter 18 records again the priestly nature of the Aaronide family and is clear in making the Levites their assistants. The "Levites appear in a strange intermediate position between priests and laymen".²

Levites are noted as being taken "from among the people of Israel" for service to the tent of meeting. Although the text clearly places their service in the context of submission to the Aaronides, does

1. On this difficult narrative cf. Noth, *Numbers*, 118ff.; N. Magonet, "The Korah Rebellion," *JSOT* 24 (1982) 3-25; R.P. Carroll, "Rebellion and Dissent in Ancient Israelite Society," *ZAW* 89 (1977) 192; J. Milgrom, *Studies*, 18f., 50-56; Cross, *CMHE*, 205f.; Sabourin (Priesthood) suggests that "historically the Kohathites were the closest rivals of the Aaronites. In Num 4 the prerogatives of the Aaronites are re-stated together with the limitations of the rights of the Kohathites." He further argues that this narrative reflects the nature of the Kohathites, always battling for position and power (129).

2. Noth, *Numbers*, 137.

this notation indicate an earlier tradition? I would argue that here we find a remnant of an earlier viewpoint which recognizes a priestly status for Levites. The provision of a 'tithe' of the fruits of the land as a Levitical 'portion' surely indicates an original priestly status (cf. 18:21ff.).

In Num 25 an account of Israel's participation in the cult of Baal Peor again provides a link to the Midianites. The contact is viewed negatively and Phinehas 'the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron' rises against this outrage. As a result of his fidelity to YHWH and his zealous actions he is given 'the covenant of a perpetual priesthood' (vs.13). Cross argues¹ that the actions of Phinehas indict Moses, a view which accords with his view of a fundamental opposition between Mushites and Aaronides. "That is to say, the priesthood passed to the Aaronites precisely for their service in cleansing Israel from the taint of Midianite rites! The polemical tone could not be stronger or more obvious." Noth argues² that the text is intended "to legitimize the descendants of Phinehas, in the face of any possible opposition, as the true heirs to 'Aaronite' privileges."³ That the text now serves such pro-Aaronide interests is apparent. The suggestion made by Cross that the fundamental opposition between Mushites and Aaronides lies behind this text is likely correct. P does not expect Moses to act in a priestly manner, here he does not do so, and any question of a Mushite priesthood is silenced by the actions of Phinehas. In addition, the relationship between Moses and his Midianite kinsmen is subtly attacked by the Priestly redactor, who clearly portrays such as enemies of Israel. In this context, their cultic rites are particularly under attack, and by association, the Mushite priesthood. The polemic against Midian is continued in Num 31, where Phinehas appears again, this time, in a 'holy'war against Midian. Phinehas bears certain cultic apparatus into the field of battle, as ordered

1. Cross, CMHE, 202.

2. Noth, Numbers, 199.

3. Cf. Milgrom, Studies, 48f.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 125-128; S.C. Reif, "What Enraged Phinehas? - A Study of Numbers 25:8," JBL 90 (1971) 200f.; G. Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1973) 105ff.

by Moses, and the Israelites return victorious. The spoils of war are brought to Moses and Eleazar, who are angry with the people for not keeping the 'herem'. Yet Phinehas is not condemned, nor does he reappear in the narrative. The people are portrayed complying with the will of YHWH, and taking steps to correct their failure to observe the commands of YHWH. Eleazar oversees this process (31: 13ff.). This narrative appears to be connected with the previous narrative regarding Baal Peor, but the traditions regarding Eleazar-Phinehas are unclear. At times it would seem that one figure would make the narrative flow more easily, at other times two characters appear necessary. Here we might question the unity of the text itself.¹ Is this originally one narrative, or are two or more accounts fused in this tradition?

Numbers 35 provides a list of forty-eight 'Levitical' cities. These are provided in the midst of the territories divided among the people of Israel, as dwelling places for the Levites who 'have no inheritance'. While D describes the Levites for the most part as resident aliens, P presents a diverging tradition. In this systematization, the Levites are settled in specific cities. They are provided with pasture lands surrounding the cities, yet they are designated as non-landholding. Two basic approaches to these lists have been taken. Wellhausen viewed the scheme as fictional and utopian, and viewed the list as a product of the post exilic era.² Against this view, others have argued that the lists are 'not later than the United Monarchy, since it embraces the whole of Israel and still recognizes the tribal boundaries, whereas Solomon redivided

1. Noth (Numbers) suggests this text is composite (230ff.).

2. Haran, Temples, 112.

the land into administrative regions."¹ This observation is important to our concerns. We can conclude that both D (Josh 21)² and P (Num 35) recognize the reality of Levitical cities during the period of the United Monarchy. At the same time we are able to realize that the historical basis has been overlaid with certain polemical concerns in the later accounts.³ This is most apparent in 1 Chr 6 where the distinction made by P between Aaronides and Levites appears in the lists.

The editing of P maintains a consistent separation between the cultic functions of priests and any other leadership, including Moses and his successors (including the royal family, although this is not explicitly stated, as we should expect given the context).

1. *Ibid.*, 113.

2. D prefers the portrait of the Levites as scattered throughout the land (cf. Deut 12:12,18f.; 14:28; 16:11; 26:12f.; Josh 13:14,33), and links them with the poor and destitute. At the same time, Joshua 21 clearly recognizes the existence of 'Levitical' cities. This may provide an important indication that various types of 'Levites' existed side by side.

3. Cf. Haran, *Temples*, 122ff.; W.F. Albright, "The List of Levitical Cities," *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945) 49-73; B. Mazar, "The Cities of the Priests and the Levites," *SVT* 7 (1959) 193-205; Olyan, *JBL* 101, 183f.

Gervitz claims that "Biblical tradition produces no indication that Levites ever laid claim to even a limited geographical or tribal location." S. Gervitz, "Simeon and Levi in 'The Blessing of Moses' (Gen 49:5-7)," *HUCA* 52 (1981) 118.

Also cf. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 366f.; C. Hauer, *JSOT* 23, 33ff.; Cody, *History*, 161; A.G. Auld, "'The Levitical Cities': Texts and History," *ZAW* 91 (1979) 194ff.; F.S. Frick, *The City in Ancient* (Missoula: Scholars, 1977) 140ff.. Frick reviews the concept of the 'Levitical' city as a fiscal and administrative centre during the monarchic period.

The limitations of the priestly office according to P are very clearly delineated. Aaronides are priests. All others are not. The Levites stand in a position between the priesthood and the people. They are sacral personnel but clearly they are not priests. Only that section of the Levites that are designated as 'the sons of Aaron' may hold the priestly office. This distinction is made clear in the texts as follows:

- 1) "There was no priesthood prior to the giving of the law at Sinai."¹
- 2) Exodus 28:1,43 records the fact that Aaron and his sons shall serve as priests in perpetuity. They are also represented as a 'closed group'.²
- 3) The sacrificial laws of Leviticus 1-7 presuppose an Aaronic priesthood.
- 4) Numbers 1:47 presents Levitical servitude as a command from YHWH.³
- 5) Numbers 3:5-10 clearly sets apart Aaron and his sons for the priesthood. Anyone who attempts to usurp this role is to die.
- 6) The tasks of the Levites are defined in Numbers 4.⁴
- 7) Numbers 8 notes the dedication of the Levites to the service of the Aaronide priesthood.
- 8) Numbers 16 records the attempt of Levites to usurp the priesthood (Korah).
- 9) Phinehas (an Aaronide) is given 'perpetual priesthood' for his faithfulness. This text appears after the account of Aaron's death.

1. G.B. Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925) 195. He also notes that in P Moses only functions in a priestly role for a week (196).

2. Ibid., 195ff.

3. The role that the Levites have as guardians of the tabernacle is highlighted by their separating the remainder of the Israelites from the tabernacle (Numbers 1:52f.).

4. These are clearly tasks of service to the 'authorized' priests.

It is most likely that we should look to priestly circles to find the milieu in which such conceptualizations would arise, or be preserved. The material seems to have gone through a number of stages of development and is clearly a "literary composite".¹ Kaiser notes the following important considerations regarding the circle that developed the P materials:

- 1) P could obviously refer to a large body of priestly and cultic traditions, which had their own extensive prehistory.²
- 2) "P assumes one single cultic centre as a matter of course."³
- 3) "In P the high priest has taken over the cultic position and apparel of the king."⁴

These later two factors suggest that we should date the final redaction of the P material to the exilic period,⁵ although this redaction is based on earlier cultic traditions. Von Rad argues:

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1. Milgrom; Studies, 5.
 2. O. Kaiser, Introduction to the Old Testament (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975) 106.
 3. Ibid., 108. This would suggest the final redaction is later than D.
 4. Ibid., 109.
 5. Cf. S. McEvenue, The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971) 183; A.R. Kapelrud, "The Date of the Priestly Code (P)," ASTI 3 (1964) 64; Cross, CMHE, 324; R.E. Friedman, The Exile and Biblical Narrative (Chico: Scholars, 1981) argues for "two principle stages of the Priestly work, the first in response to the Josianic edition of the Deuteronomistic history (Dtr), the second Exilic." (44). He also takes into account in his discussion the argument of Kaufmann for a pre-exilic dating of P. (Y. Kaufmann, Religion)

In particular, the rigid demarcation of the priests from the Levites which we find everywhere in P, and without which its whole theological sacral picture is incomprehensible, was set in motion by an event which only took place in the late monarchical period, namely Josiah's centralisation of the cult. The precedence of the priesthood at the Temple presupposed by P was only established and given its justification by that event.¹

This observation that the centralization of the cult severely limited the number of priests involved in the sacrificial rites is important. The sacrificial rites of priesthood form an important part of the normal functions of priests. Yet these activities are not the only significant functions of priests, as we have observed. P represents the attempt of a particular family, 'the sons of Aaron', to gain exclusive control of the centralized sacrificial system of Jerusalem. While this may have been an objective before the exile, I do not believe that any such systematization took place until after the captivity.² While the traditions employed by P include both archaic historical traditions as well as ritual lore, the motivating factor in its view of priesthood appears to be the establishment of the Aaronide priesthood in a restructured cultic system. Levitical servitude thus serves as a model 'ordained' by YHWH. Rivals are to realize that their function as 'Levites' has been in place from the revelation at Sinai.

1. G. Von Rad, Old Testament Theology (Vol.1; New York: Harper and Row, 1962) 249f.; Sabourin (Priesthood) argues that the traditions in P were preserved and edited by the Jerusalemite priesthood (113).

2. Haran has argued: "As long as P existed independently, either as a creative school or as a literary product preserved by the quills of copyists and compilers, the specific institution of the Levitical class could only have been known within the temple confines. Outsiders would not notice it, as the Levites did not stand out from the rest of the priests. In Ezra's time, however, when priestly writings became an integral part of the Law and an attempt was made to fulfil everything that had been 'found written' (Neh.8:14), the existence of the Levites became public knowledge, one of the fundamental rules of the Torah."

In summary, we have discovered that the P source presents the 'sons of Aaron' as the only legitimate priests in Israel. The Levites are their servants. This 'system' is of divine origin.

(Temples, 108). Enough traditions exist within the Hebrew Bible to negate the argument Haran makes here. I would suggest that very much **as** the 'Levites' closed up during the time of the late monarchy, the priests responsible for sacrificial service in the re-established temple closed ranks as legitimate 'sons of Aaron'.

Priesthood in Ezekiel 40-48

In his temple vision 'Ezekiel'¹ quotes YHWH as saying:

The Levites who went far from me, going astray after their idols when Israel went astray, shall bear their punishment. They shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the temple, and serving in the temple; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall attend on the people, to serve them. Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore . . . they shall bear their punishment. They shall not come near to me, to serve me as priest, nor come near to any of my sacred things and the things that are most sacred; but they shall bear their shame because of the abominations which they have committed. Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, to do all its service and all that is to be done in it. (Ezekiel 44:10-14)

'Ezekiel' appears to be referring to the practices of Levites in the time of the monarchy, although this is not clear. The influence of priestly ideas of the exile are clearly at work here, and the pattern which emerges of Levitical servitude is known to us from P.

The text continues, by specifying who will function in the priestly office. Again, a pattern familiar from P emerges. A specific Levitical 'family' will function as priests. In the case of 'Ezekiel' these are to be the "Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok" who remained faithful to YHWH through the time when Israel went astray (44:15). Unlike the other Levites they have been faithful, and as a result:

[The Zadokites] shall come near to me to minister to me; and they shall attend on me to offer me the fat and the blood, says the Lord God; they shall enter my sanctuary, and they shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge. (Ezekiel 44:15b-16)

1. While Ezekiel 40-48 takes the form of a vision of the Temple, it is clear that this material has taken shape in various stages. Cf. W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 455-458.

Following this, certain priestly regulations are outlined (44:17-27), concluding with the injunction familiar from Levitical history:

They shall have no inheritance; I am their inheritance: and you shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession. (44:28)

In contrast to P, however, the Zadokites are pictured as the only legitimate priests of YHWH. The sons of Aaron, like all other Levites, have been reduced to servile status as a recompense for their idolatry. According to this 'Zadokite' section of Ezekiel, at one time all Levites could function as priests. It is only upon the command of YHWH that the priestly role has been limited to Zadokite membership.

Zimmerli contends that Ezekiel 40-48 has been constructed layer upon layer, this section limiting priesthood following an earlier interpretation, a remnant of which is found in 40:45-46¹:

He said to me, "The room facing south is for the priests who have charge of the temple, and the room facing north is for the priests who have charge of the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who are the only Levites who may draw near to the Lord to minister before him."

Verses 45 and 46a recognize two priestly functions, and likely reflect two priestly clans. The term kōhēn is employed to describe the clergy serving at the altar as well as those more generally employed with temple business. A Zadokite gloss (46b) is added to align this text with the viewpoint contained in chapter 44. Chapter 40:45-46 follows the viewpoint of Deuteronomy regarding the Levites. The Zadokite section merely develops from the Deuteronomic perspective. All Levites were priests, but due to their idolatry and unfaithfulness to YHWH they have lost their priestly status, and serve the faithful Levites, the sons of Zadok, who now claim exclusive rights to the priestly order.

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1. W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 455-458.
 2. We should also note that the Deuteronomic term הכהנים הלויים is employed in the Zadokite section (cf. 44:15), then modified to mean sons of

Haran suggests that the 'sons of Zadok' is an attempt to restrict drastically the Aaronide priesthood. He contends that those who could prove their genealogy as Aaronides would have been considered as 'sons of Zadok', and Levites were those who could establish their descent from northern Levitical circles.¹ The latter were clearly excluded from the priesthood. This thesis is unlikely.

Cody notes the lack of discussion of Aaron or the 'sons of Aaron' in Ezekiel and suggests that Zadokites were not originally Levites.² If this were so, this shift would mark the conquest of the Israelite priesthood by a non-Levitical group. This too is unlikely.

Zadokites are Levitical priests who seek control of the priesthood. These narratives describe a shift within the Levitical organization, which has closed the priesthood to all non-Zadokites. At the same time, the term 'Levite' takes on a new meaning. In this utopian dream from the exile the 'sons of Zadok' are priests.³ All other Levites are servants.

Zadok. This is precisely what we should expect. The viewpoint of D regarding Levites is accepted by the author of this anti-Levitical polemic. The Levites were priests. It is only now that the priesthood excludes all who are not **בני צדוק**.

1. Haran, Temples, 103,110.

2. Cody, History, 166ff.

3. We should also note that the Zadokites are given the portion of land around the temple "set apart for YHWH" (45:1). Levitical lands are also noted (45:5). Outside of the sacral land, and adjacent to it is the land of the prince. The structure of this vision also carries a clear message regarding the priestly role of the king. Priesthood is given by YHWH, and not delegated by the king, as in the remainder of the ancient near east. The land serves as a visible reminder that the priesthood is central in communication with YHWH, not the king.

Priesthood in Chronicles

The Chronicler's history provides us with yet another view of the organization of the Temple. This is characterized as follows:

- 1) Priests are clearly to be 'Aaronide', and these are to be served by 'Levites'.¹
- 2) 'Sons of Zadok' are clearly included as 'Aaronide'.²
- 3) Like D the Chronicler evidences a special interest in the Levites and provides us with information regarding their duties for which we have no other source.
- 4) Genealogies are used to legitimate both priestly and levitical offices, and persons are incorporated into their ranks from earlier generations to 'validate' their offices.

Since the levitical concerns of the Chronicler are important to his traditions regarding the priesthood it is important that we examine them in more detail at this point. David³ is clearly portrayed as the founder⁴ of the 'new' Levitical order.⁵ According to the Chronicler

1. Kaiser (Introduction) notes that P themes are employed in Chronicles (109). Sabourin notes this fact, along with the similarities to D's interest in the Levites (Priesthood, 114). Kraus observes that the Levites appear in a "subordinate position as doorkeepers (1 Chron 26:1ff.) and singers (1 Chron 25)." Worship, 99.

2. J.R. Bartlett, "Zadok and His Successors at Jerusalem," JTS 19 (1968) argues that it is "clear from the Chronicler's work that the major priestly family in Israel was considered to be that of the descendants of Aaron, and that Zadok and his successors had to be incorporated into that family." 16. Obviously Bartlett is basing this judgement on the assumption that Zadok is not an Aaronide.

3. David is 'purified' by the Chronicler who "omits all the darker aspects of the tradition about David." Kaiser, Introduction, 177; also Von Rad, Theology, 350f.; S. Japhet, "Chronicler, Book of," EJ 5, Col.517ff., 522. Only the Davidic dynasty is considered to be legitimate.

4. Von Rad, Theology, 350f. In spite of this we should note that "the king was to manage external affairs, and defray expenses, but the cult concerned the priests only." J. Pedersen, Israel: It's Life and Culture (Vol.III-IV; London: Oxford, 1959) 194.

5. Perhaps David is to be viewed as a figure with the authority of Moses. Is this merely to highlight David or is a deeper meaning intended?

the Levites have a very prominent role in the monarchic history. This is obvious when Chronicles is read alongside of Samuel and Kings. The prominence of the Levites is attested to by the fact that the Levites have the principal role in the care of the Ark (1 Chr 15-16) and in the Temple (1 Chr 23-26). In the reforms of Hezekiah (2 Chr 29-31) and Josiah (2 Chr 34-35) they play a leading role. As de Vaux notes "they are found intervening everywhere, whether their action is relevant or not". The Chronicler is greatly interested in Levitical genealogies and traces their ancestry to the three sons of Levi, Gershom, Kohath, and Merari (1 Chr 6:1-32; 23:6-24). This is in harmony with P, as recorded in Num 3-4. We should also note the willingness of the Chronicler to give individuals who function in the cult Levitical genealogies, even when the earlier traditions had recorded otherwise.

The Levites are seen to be 'unemployed' when the Ark finds its new resting place in the Temple. Thus, much of Chronicles is devoted to delineating their new functions. They are noted as fulfilling the following roles:¹

- 1) Temple singers (1 Chr 16:4; 15:16-22; 2 Chr 5:12),
- 2) musicians (1 Chr 25:1-31),
- 3) porters (1 Chr 26:1-19),
- 4) judges (2 Chr 19:8,11),
- 5) prophets (2 Chr 20:14f.),²
- 6) court officials (1 Chr 26:20-30; 2 Chr 8:15; 29:25f.; 35:3ff.,15),
- 7) foremen for Temple construction (2 Chr 34:12f),
- 8) cleaners for the Temple (2 Chr 29),

1. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 391.

2. Cf. *ibid.*, 390ff.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 115ff.; Japhet, EJ 5, 531; J.M. Myers, I Chronicles (New York: Doubleday, 1973) lxviiiiff.

3. Petersen notes the importance of prophets in Chronicles and argues that the text seeks to "advance the claim of superior status for Levitical singers by designating them as prophets" (66). Petersen,

9) teachers (2 Chr 17:8f., 35:3).

It also appears that upon occasion the Levites fulfilled specifically priestly roles, e.g. 2 Chr 29:5ff. Myers comments:

The priests were not actually demoted by the Chronicler; they continued to be the chief religious officials. But there can be no doubt that they are treated with much less enthusiasm than their brothers, the Levites. This may be seen from the order of 1 Chron vi where, in the genealogy of Levi, the high priests are listed first, then the Levites, and finally the sons of Aaron (the priests), and in the recurrent expressions of displeasure with them (2 Ch 26:19, 29:34, 30:3,15; Ezra 10:18; Neh 9:34, 13:28ff.).¹

Where are we to look for the advancement of such views? It would appear to me that Levitical circles of the post-exilic period would be most likely to order their material in this way. If Levites were becoming more and more specialized as record keepers, scholars, and teachers, it would seem likely that they would take special interest in their own history.² Their historiographic perspective would also be influenced by their present concerns and status.³ While Kaiser contends that the Levites are highlighted because of their inclusion in the Aaronic priesthood, this view does not really make sense of the evidence.⁴ It would appear to me more likely that the Chronicler

Late Israelite Prophecy

Cf. esp. 66ff., 85ff.; Petersen also points out how the account contained in Chronicles stands against P traditions regarding the burning of incense. (80ff.).

1. Cf. J. Myers, II Chronicles (New York, Doubleday, 1965) 172. In this text the priests are regarded as less pure than the Levites.
2. Myers, I Chronicles, lxx.
3. Milgrom states that the Chronicler reflects the "temple cult of his own day". Milgrom, Studies, 82f.; Sabourin, Priesthood, 114.
4. Kaiser, Introduction, 186.

admitted the priority of the Aaronide priesthood because he had no choice but to do so. It was a reality of his day. While he may subtly critique it in a writing intended for scholars, or as an official cultic document, he must still recognize the boundaries of his present day political and cultic realities.

Thus, in the Chronicler we find that Aaronic priority is affirmed but in a 'backhanded' sort of manner. Next to the Levites the 'legitimate' priests appear as shamefully self-concerned.

The Development of Priesthood in Israel

The canonical picture of the priesthood has allowed a number of paradigms which appear to be mutually exclusive to stand side by side. As we have seen, the problem in dealing with the earliest stages of priestly history is compounded by the fact that most of our sources date from the time of the monarchy, or later, in their written form. In order to attempt to clarify this phenomenon we have examined the traditional Pentateuchal sources and the paradigms for priesthood presented there. The models which dominate the canonical shaping of the text are the view of Deuteronomy (that all Levites are priests) and the view of P and the Chronicler (which asserts that only a certain family of Levites, the Aaronides, are priests). The examination of the Biblical texts also served to highlight details which do not fit these paradigms, yet which are preserved in the text traditions, or appear to be plausible based on a careful analysis of the traditions. For example, while the systems of D and P feature Levitical priority we have seen that in J and E such a viewpoint is not as clearly focused. While Levites do function as priests in these sources, they do not do so exclusively. The Deuteronomic history also provides examples of priests who are clearly non-Levitical. P and the Chronicler tend to harmonize these details by providing such figures with Levitical or Aaronide status, thus preserving their model of the priesthood, or as in the case of the Patriarchs, denying any priestly function to them. As we have previously noted, we cannot assume that such a procedure is totally manipulative, as we do not know the process by which one became a priest was exclusively on the grounds of birth.

In order to help focus the data provided by the Biblical material we began our study with a brief review of the concept of priesthood in comparative studies and the sociology of religion. Following this, we outlined the development of priesthood in the religions of the Ancient Near East. We will now attempt to draw conclusions from our research, applying these latter mentioned tools when appropriate.

'Origins' are not a major concern of the priesthoods in the Ancient Near East, nor of priests in comparative study. While an established priesthood will likely eventually prepare lineages to cement relationships, and establish legitimacy, function appears to be the central issue at earlier stages in priestly activity. Individ-

ual 'call' narratives may be recorded or verbally transmitted to establish an intermediary's credibility,¹ and these may be recorded at a later time if that individual is the founder of a priesthood. Such narratives appear in the Bible. Exod 3 records the call of Moses, and 1 Sam 3 the call of Samuel. Priestly origins are not a concern of the documents we have available from the ancient near east. One text speaks of Kingship being lowered from Heaven.² As we have already observed, this text comes closest to providing a tradition regarding priestly origins. The Bible, on the other hand preserves a number of accounts of 'origins'. As well as the call narratives we have noted we have the account of the 'ordination' of the Levites in Exod 32, an account which appears to be confirmed by the earlier poetic piece, Deut 33, which alludes to such an event; the narrative of Aaron's ordination, along with his sons, in Exod 28, and the perpetual priesthood conferred upon the Aaronide Phinehas in Numb 25:13. Alongside we might wonder if a firstborn son might also be dedicated to the Lord in priestly service (cf. Exod 34:20; 1 Sam 1)?

In cross cultural contexts the priest appeared as a mediator between god and man and fulfilled roles related to both individuals and the larger society, the term functioning generically, needing the specificities of a particular culture to provide substance to the term. Examining priesthoods found in the cultures of Israel's ancient neighbours in the Near East, we found a common idea appeared to be at the root of the various ancient priesthoods, the concept that the priest was the servant of the god. While various developments followed this basic understanding, we have a principle of interpretation which we might apply to early Israel.

1. While priesthoods are 'central intermediary groups', to use Wilson's term, they are often founded by a charismatic individual who passes on his/her techniques to others. Eliade describes this type of experience among shamans, and provides written accounts of experiences which would otherwise only be verbally transmitted, if they were maintained at all. Cf. *Shamanism*, 101ff.; As Weber points out priesthoods tend to become formalized societies, whose purposes evolve into bureaucratic means of controlling power and authority. Many of his observations in 'Bureaucracy' (From Max Weber, 196 - 244) are helpful in understanding this process. When the concerns of the priesthood turn to its own authentication, such foundation narratives become important. (Cf. V. Barnouw, *An Introduction to Anthropology* (Vol.2;

Homewood: Dorsey, 1975) 269). The earliest stages of recording appear to be the collection of rites and rituals, and priestly lore of such ceremonial importance. In Mesopotamia we see this concern in Omen texts, ritual texts, and then in the recording of epics and tales. Priestly origins are presumed to be by divine appointment, and do not appear to need vindication by such texts. (On recording of rites cf. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (op.cit.) 66ff.) Priests systematize the approaches and information passed on to them to develop religious systems upon which the society depends, and which become normative for societal functions. Cross has pointed out that the conflict narratives recorded in the Old Testament likely reflect the working out of the relationships between rival priesthoods (CME, 201ff.). I believe that this observation is fundamentally sound, and makes sense if we apply such a perspective to what we know to be happening in the settlement period, when various groups are uniting as Yahwists. Each group would desire to maintain the religious practices and dogmas which had been normative for their particular society. At the same time, the various priesthoods would need to work out their interrelationships.

Wilson's views on the development of prophecy and its functions in society provide many helpful comparisons for our purposes. (Robert Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980). First, the methodology which he uses to approach early Israelite prophecy is essentially that adopted here. Sociology and Ancient Near Eastern studies are used to attempt to provide a context for the observations he seeks to make. The identification of the role of the intermediary in society (28ff.) is used to provide the category of 'central intermediary'. Wilson describes this person as one who occupies "an established position within the social structure" and are "the official links between their societies and the spirit world. Societies depend on their central intermediaries to provide access to the spirits whenever necessary and to relay important messages from the supernatural realm." (83). Wilson also speaks of the diviners of the Ancient Near East, figures we have regarded in relation to the question of priesthood. In early Israel, as we have noted, the distinction between these individuals, prophets and priests, is not as clear as we might like. And yet this is exactly what we should expect, from our knowledge of such individuals provided by comparative studies. (In addition to material referred to in chapter one of this study cf. *ibid.*, 21ff.) Wilson also regards two figures we have noted functioning as priests, as prophets. Moses and Samuel illustrate well the difficulty of extricating the roles in concrete traditions.

2. The text is the Sumerian King List already discussed in chapter two of this study.

In the J/E narratives describing the Patriarchal period we noted that the heads of families, or clans, function as priests. He offers sacrifices and is the bearer of divine promises. P is careful to avoid any reference to this as 'priestly' service, and does not allow for a functioning priesthood prior to the ordaining of the sons of Aaron. The Epic tradition, however, clearly allows sacrificial service by the Patriarchs. J/E records the foundation etiologies of a number of important cultic centres, preserves numerous El epithets which are regarded by the sources as appellatives of YHWH, and identifies some early cultic traditions.¹

Throughout the ancient near east we have seen that priest-hoods were established on the understanding that the priest was the servant of god, the temple being the house of the god, and in the earliest cases, an actual house, virtually indistinguishable from other houses. This fact makes it extremely difficult to differentiate between houses of people, and houses of gods.² The problem is even more difficult when we realize that physical evidence is often the basis of such identifications, and if the priest also lived in the house, this could again complicate identification. As well, the image was treated in many ways as a living being and physical evidence could again be unclear. Moving to Canaan, the process of identifying and distinguishing between 'Canaanite' and 'Israelite' levels is nearly impossible. Thus it remains that the basis of our examination of early cult centres is highly dependent upon textual analysis. While archaeology may assist us in the providing of contexts, and in the analysis of possibilities, the earliest levels remain problematic.

1. Cf. Ringgren, Religion, 19f.; Vreizen, Religion, 119ff.; de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 289ff., Early History, 267ff.; Cross, CMHE, 44ff.
2. Cf. W.F. Albright, Archaeology, 41ff.; W.B. Emery, Archaic Egypt, 127f.; CAH 1, 1, 319f. (Anatolia); CAH 1, 2, 221ff. (Palestine). A major tradition in the Biblical material concerns the 'tent' sanctuary. No archaeological evidence of such a cultic dwelling place would be preserved, therefore, we must depend upon analogies and textual traditions to develop this idea. Cf. Ringgren, Religion, 40; Haran, Temples, 260ff.; J. Morgenstern, The Ark, The Ephod and the "Tent of Meeting" (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1945) 1-76; de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 294ff.

Certain Biblical traditions appear to have the background familiar to us from the ancient near east. Moses appears in the Epic tradition as the servant of YHWH, and as we have also indicated, it would appear that the tradition regarded Moses as a priest until later times when such an image of leadership/kingship was considered 'inappropriate' by priestly factions. As we have noted, this would accord well with the evidence of a shift in understanding between the focus of D, and that of P. Moses functions as the servant at the 'tent of meeting'¹ (cf. Exod 33:7,11) and leads the people in their participation in the covenant at Sinai (Exod 19ff.). In addition, he offers sacrifices to YHWH, leads in sacrificial meals, and fulfills other priestly duties. The tradition also refers to him as the 'servant' of YHWH (Num 12:7f.; Deut 34:5; Josh 1:7,13, 15; Ps 105:6,42).

Levitical history also suggests that perhaps the status of the Levites originally was based on such a conception of servant roles. Levites function as bearers of the ark and the various structures of the tabernacle,² guards, keepers, and warriors. The poetic account of Deut 33, one of the earliest records of Levitical service, describes them instructing in torah and offering holocausts and incense before YHWH. The oracles generated by Urim and Thummim are also noted in this reference. Such functions concur well with what we know of priestly service in the ancient near east. The functions of Moses and the Levites in caring for the dwelling place of YHWH, and reflecting divine concerns in the organization of society at large, as well as actions in mediation between YHWH and his people, are all attested in the canonical record. Levitical properties may also be a development of such a conception. Altar service may have been viewed as service at YHWH's table. In any case, we can see that such perceptions as we encounter in Israelite records remain in accord with what we know of the ancient near east.

1. The E traditions regarding the tent of meeting do not provide an elaborate description of the tent, and picture Moses receiving oracles there (cf. Exod 33; Num 11). The P traditions differ and are more elaborate (cf. Exod 26). Cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 294ff..

2. P provides an account of the Levites assembling and dismantling a half-size temple throughout the wilderness period. While this is unlikely, it may reflect the role of the Levites in bearing all forms of cult apparatus, as well as the structure housing the cult objects.

The complex nature of the settlement period provides the next major clue to the development of the priesthood. The fact that the Exodus event did not include all 'Israel', but is only one component of the foundation history must be realized. While the Mosaic and Levitical traditions embedded in the exodus-wilderness narratives are an important component of the priesthood it would appear that other traditions must also be incorporated into our understanding of early priestly history. Even the exodus group includes a "mixed multitude" (Exod 12:38). The establishment of 'Israel' during the settlement period also includes peoples of diverse origins.¹

The development of local cults in Canaan which were joined to Israel, by various methods, probably lies behind some of the priestly traditions. Such local situations focused on the worship of the High God El, known to us from Canaanite texts, and through the El epithets applied to Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible. Ringgren points out that no polemic against El appears in the Biblical texts, while the Bible is strong in its condemnation of Baal.² It would appear that El and YHWH were equated from the earliest stages of Israelite faith.

The conflict narratives which we find in the priestly traditions likely reflect the attempts to establish legitimacies and rights of various priestly groups or families. Wilson suggests that genealogies function to outline new relationships in a group.³ This is precisely what we should expect to see as the nation forms and a national consciousness arises. Perhaps this understanding of a development of relationships can provide a clue to the complexities of Levitical history. If the 'Levites' of the Exodus are a clan which are ordained in the manner narrated in Exod 32, and the 'Levites'

1. Cf. de Vaux, Early History (Pts.2-4 esp.); Gottwald, Tribes (Pts.5-6 esp.); M. Weippert, The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Palestine (SBT 21, London: SCM, 1971). Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation is especially clear in this regard. Cf. 174ff., 215ff..

2. Ringgren, Religion, 44.

3. R. Wilson, Genealogy and History, 199ff.

located in Canaan are 'cult specialists',¹ the confusion regarding the term might be somewhat clarified. Three basic models of Levitical origins have been proposed, which we might summarize under the linguistic rubrics synonym, antonym, and homonym. Thus, some scholars argue that 'Levi' always referred to a sacral collegium, there having never been a secular Levitical tribe;² others contend that two distinct and unrelated groups are being designated by a term which is either identical or has become identical;³ while a third postulation is that the meaning of the term has shifted and thus means different things at different times.⁴ While all these possibilities need to be considered

1. Mendenhall suggests the "curious 'ethnic' nature of the Levites" might be "explained by their pre-Israelite origin as Luwians, who also were evidently noteworthy for their expertise in rituals." (163). He argues that the shift from Luwi to Lewi has parallels.

2. Cf. B. Mazar, "The 'Orpheus' Jug From Megiddo," MD, argues that there was a "tendency to connect genealogically all the free families involved in cultic duties with the tribes of Levi." (190); also Cody, Priesthood, 36ff.

3. The 'secular' tribe may have been destroyed, or drastically reduced, and lost through intermarriage. Cf. *ibid.*, 33-36. In this viewpoint, the sacral order is usually seen to have arisen independently at some time during, or prior to, the exodus period. The linguistic similarity, or identity, led to understanding of these two groups as being related. The identification of these two bodies, is, according to this point of view, a misunderstanding.

4. A homonym is a "word of the same form as another but different sense" (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (ed. Fowler and Fowler, London: Oxford, 1964) 583. This is an appropriate appellation for the word lewi, as portrayed in this third viewpoint. This idea suggests that the secular tribe of Levi was, over a period of time, transformed into the sacral order of the Levites. Cf. Meek, Hebrew Origins, 118f.

De Vaux notes these three basic reconstructive models. Cf. Early History, 737.

Albright suggests: "The Levites were thus a class or "tribe" which was kept distinct from the other tribes because of its function. In practice we may safely suppose that the Levites were constantly being increased in number by the addition of children vowed by their parents to Yahweh, but that the total number was kept down by the defection of Levites scattered throughout the country, either through intermarriage or because of inability to make a living as sanctuary attendants . . . In other words, one could either be born into the Levite tribe or one could be adopted as a full member of it." Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, 106.

it may be that the term Levite functioned in more than one way. The evidence appears to me to make sense of such a proposal. Certain families are linked to historical Levi, while other uses of the term appear to designate sacral personnel. Thus, a diversity of usage appears likely. Perhaps this is why P and the Chronicler assign Levitical connections to individuals such as Samuel. If the term designated a cult functionary, there would be no reason for a later writer to view the earlier figures as non-Levites when they were clearly such functionally. Wilson's arguments regarding the purposes of genealogies make sense of such a proposal. As local cults identified with YHWH, the relationships of their various priesthoods would also need to be established, the need for the working out of such affiliations increasing with the centralization of political power. The narratives describing village life during the pre-monarchic period appear to outline a very loose confederation of peoples around the central idea of a covenant with YHWH and one another. Local cults appear likely to have been maintained through the efforts of various priesthoods. The silence of the Biblical sources regarding this critical period of the development of the priesthood makes reconstruction difficult, yet we do know that by the time of the Deuteronomist certain distinctions appear to have been developed which while related to what we know of Canaanite religion, are also reactionary to such conceptions. Likely, such distinctions began to be made in the various local Yahwistic cults.

While in Canaan, as throughout the near east, priesthood was in the first place the service of the god, and in particular, the care of the image, in Israel an imageless cult is a distinctive feature. The cherubim and the bull images are conceived of as pedestals for YHWH. While Israelite priests furnish oracles (cf. 1 Sam 14:36-42; 23:10-12; 30:8; 10:17ff.) they do not become involved in the kind of divinatory techniques which are commonplace throughout the rest of the ancient near east.¹ Nor do Israelite priestesses appear

1. This distinction is important in setting the Israelite cult apart from its near eastern counterparts. Techniques developed in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan are not adopted or even adapted. The only oracular method clearly accepted is the Urim and Thummim.

in the traditions.¹ D seeks to completely eliminate fertility rites, cultic prostitution, a consort for YHWH,² and magical rites. In the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah the influence of Deuteronomic ideals are quite apparent. For D, such distinctions provide a critical element of the service of YHWH. Yet at the same time, like the other sources he maintains many of the basic concepts of divine service found throughout the ancient near east. The idea of the priest as the servant of god is maintained, as is the concept of the sanctuary or cult centre as the dwelling place of god. Certain 'Levitical' properties may also date from this period, providing yet another link to a basic near eastern conception. The priests do service in the maintaining of the god's properties. The priesthoods at these local shrines also fulfilled the important intermediary role between YHWH and his people, providing oracles, teaching torah, and serving at the altar. The exodus-wilderness experience and the establishment of Israel in Canaan appear to be the situations out of which the main perceptions of Yahwism emerge. Mendenhall summarizes the polemical approach we have noted

1. The role of Miriam in Numbers 12 may reflect a cult function for her, as we have observed. Deborah and Jael (Judg 4) may also have close connections to the cult. Deborah is a "prophetess" who is a "judge" in Israel, while Jael is connected to the Kenites. The normative approach did not allow women to function in priestly roles, and, as we have seen, no feminine forms of *kōhēn* or *Lewi* are used in the Bible. Cf. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 383f.. 1 Sam 8 records the encounter between Saul and the "witch" of Endor. The techniques employed are interestingly compared with Hittite divinatory practices by J.C.Moyer, "Hittite and Israelite Cultic Practices," *Scripture in Context* II 21ff.

2. Cf. S. Olyan, "Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel," *Problems in the History of the Cult and Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (Ph.D. thesis; Cambridge: Harvard, 1985) 51-148.

commenting that:

With this [ancient near eastern] background, it is rather easy to see the points of opposition in the early biblical faith. The king, who was the focus of the whole political, economic, and religious system, was eliminated. If he ruled by delegated authority from the gods, why did not the God himself rule? This is exactly what ancient Israel was - the Kingdom of God.⁴

The important conception of Yahwism was, as Mendenhall observed, the rule of YHWH:

It is a confusion in terminology to speak of the "Israelites" as an ethnic group during the Biblical period. Israel is the designation of a religious community, of a large social organization, that constituted the Kingdom of God. . . . The twelve tribes were comprised of those members of the population of Palestine and Transjordan who had accepted the rule of God. This constitutes the only perceptible difference between them and the non-Yahwistic population, which tended to centre in the old Canaanite city-states that Israel did not convert to Yahwism and which it had neither the motivation nor the military power to conquer until the reign of David.⁵

1. Mendenhall, Tenth Generation, 224.

2. *Ibid.*, 224ff.; also de Vaux; Early History, 523ff.; Albright; Archaeology, 109; Gottwald; Tribes, 555.

3. Mendenhall, Tenth Generation, 224.

The tribal lists are problematic. In the Old Testament we find two basic versions of the twelve tribe system, one including Levi as a land-possessing tribe, the other excluding Levi and dividing Joseph into Ephraim and Manasseh. In the second formulation, Levi is provided with a series of cities (Levitical cities) as a dwelling place (Josh 13-19 lists no possession for Levi. Levitical towns are noted in Josh 21). Cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 360.

Cf. Sabourin, 119; de Vaux, Early History, 732ff.; de Geus, The Tribes of Israel (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976) 105ff.; Z. Kallai, "Territorial Patterns, Biblical Historiography and Scribal Tradition - A Programmatic Survey," ZAW 93 (1981) 427-432.

Sabourin uses the term 'amphictyonic' to describe the structure of Israel. We should note that this schematization is generally rejected by modern scholarship. Cf. de Vaux, Early History 700ff.

Wilson suggests political functions for the list omitting Levi (187ff.) Genealogy and History.

When the people want to have a king the narrative notes two important aspects of kingship relevant to our present concerns. While ~~some~~ people desire a king to be "like the other nations",¹ other elements view kingship as a rejection of the rule of YHWH² (1 Sam 8:8). Though the Deuteronomist records this anti-monarchic viewpoint, it is clear this is not his view. Judges serves as a model of the nation without a king. Clearly, we are to understand that this is not a positive state of affairs. The development of the monarchy appears to be an adoption of the ancient near eastern concept of kingship as central to the well being of the nation. D subscribes to this view of the king as the most sacrally significant individual in the land. The Deuteronomic history also portrays kings offering sacrifice, delegating priestly service,³ concerned about the provision for the cult, and as builders of temples.³ The fertility and peacefulness of the land are dependant upon religious/cultic decisions of the Israelite king. In the P traditions, which date from the exile in their present form, the priesthood has separated itself from the king, thus in Chronicles we find cultic actions of kings toned down or eliminated, and while the sinfulness of the kings leading to the exile is observed, cultic rights belong to the Aaronide priests and should not be violated. Thus, the right of national leaders and kings

1. 1 Samuel 8:5.

2. The earliest traditions are rooted in the concept of the Kingship of YHWH. While Moses, Joshua, the Judges, and Samuel function as priest-leaders, the nation is perceived as a theocracy. As Mendenhall observes (224), the king has been eliminated as the ultimate intermediary. YHWH chooses to 'call' all the leaders to do service for him. Priesthood is based on this perspective of divine initiative. Even the Levites are 'ordained' by their response to YHWH in Exod 32. The most significant idea in these passages is that kingship in Israel is the rule of YHWH. YHWH himself delegates priestly service to whom he chooses.

3. David and Solomon in particular are portrayed as cult founders. David establishes Jerusalem as the site of the Royal shrine, and Solomon builds a temple on that site. Jeroboam is also portrayed as a cult founder, in spite of the fact that the tradition is shaped against him. Such perspectives of the king as responsible for the provision of a house for the god are known to us from the ancient near east. Likewise is the accompanying phenomenon, the royal appointment of cult personnel.

to appoint priests appears likely to have been applied in the monarchic period. Royal sons are provided with cultic posts, and priestly positions were likely awarded for political or military service to the king. In addition, 'mayors' or officials of towns, cities, and villages may also have functioned as priests.¹ The near eastern conception of the priest as the administrator of the king's properties, properties which have been provided by the god to his 'adopted son', also functioned in ancient Israel. Ahlström argues that priests were spread throughout the land to preserve legal, civil, and cultic rights and standards in the ancient near east, and that Israel was no exception to this procedure.² Levites were "state employees" who were counted on for their loyalty as civil servants, judges, policemen, and teachers of law.³ Contending that 'Levite' equals 'priest and government official' and is a technical term, Ahlström views the 'tribe' of Levi as an 'artificial scheme', noting that "any royal appointee may have been called a Levite."⁴ Levitical cities would serve as administrative centres, fulfilling the function of care of the god's properties.

1. Ahlström argues that such was the case in the ancient near east. Royal Administration, 47ff.

2. *ibid.*, 8, 15.

3. *ibid.*, 15, 47ff.; Cf. de Vaux: Ancient Israel, 133.

4. Ahlström, Royal Administration, 48f.

The monarchic period may well have been the time when the concepts of priesthood most nearly resembled that of the ancient near east as a whole. Kings were clearly temple builders and maintainers, and priests functioned as administrators. The portrait of this period provided by the Deuteronomist concurs well with these approaches. The portrait of P and the Chronicler represent a time when the monarchy had failed religiously and politically, and an effort to separate and legitimate the priesthood was made. This necessitated a 'closing up' of the priestly office, and membership based upon birth, and family became important. At the same time one group or family of Levites gained control of the more important cultic roles, leaving the remaining 'Levites' subordinate to them.

Finally, during or following the exile a return to the earlier concept of the kingship of YHWH was developed among the priesthood, and the 'theocratic' decision for Aaronide superiority espoused. The relationship between the priesthood in Israel and the ancient near east had returned to its original reactionary format, not due to choice, but by necessity. When no king ruled in Israel the concept of royalty delegating priestly function could not survive. Time had produced a change, however, now the Aaronide priesthood had its own political agenda as well.

Returning to the matter of origins and early development of priesthood in Israel we can make the following conclusions:

- 1) A variety of approaches to priesthood are attested by the sources.
- 2) The majority of sources, however, are monarchic or later.
- 3) The relationships between various priestly factions are attested to by the conflict narratives.
- 4) At some point early in the history of the institution, "Levites" gain precedence in cultic activity. The term was likely used in more than one manner.
- 5) The priesthood of Moses and the Levites is closely linked to the exodus-wilderness traditions.
- 6) The narratives also attest the establishment of cultic sites in Palestine. Many of these sites are linked to the worship of El, who we have noted appears to equal YHWH in the Biblical narratives.
- 7) Various local cults likely existed in the settlement period, the cultic personnel being determined by fidelity to YHWH, and cultic status prior to joining 'Israel'. These individuals appear to have become regarded as "Levites" over time.
- 8) The enthronement of a king changed the theocratic understanding of priesthood, and kingship developed its familiar near eastern pattern. Priesthood was a role delegated by the king. Pragmatically, the cultic officials were placed under the control of the king, and loyal officials were added to the numbers of "Levites" holding office.
- 9) The demise of kingship in Judah and Israel spelled

a reversion to theocratic delegation of priestly authority. This time, YHWH's message was clearly defined. The Aaronides are the only 'family' of 'Levites' who are to function as priests. All other 'Levites' are to be assistants to the Aaronides.

While our inability to provide adequate historical data presents us with an impasse of sorts, it may also provide us with a new way of understanding the institution. The foundation of our analysis has been an examination of the Biblical traditions. We have seen that, according to the texts, the priesthood functioned in very different ways according to both time and locational variants. The diverse models which have been presented closely resemble a situation which exists in reconstructing the early history of Israel itself. In attempting to find a model for early Israelite history, particularly the settlement period, a number of proposals have been made. The increased analysis of the period makes it more and more clear that there are no simple solutions to the question of Israelite origins. Conversion (both social and religious), revolt, conquest, and covenant all appear to provide important pieces to the puzzle of the settlement. Each model of the events must find a place in an increasingly complex solution to the riddle of origins. A model which suggested the omission of any of these sub-models would not provide an adequate historical picture, and would leave out an important aspect of the social milieu in which the nation consolidated. Thus, a type of anti-model appears to provide the best solution to the problem. This model must hold a number of conceptualizations of the process in tension, balancing what was true in one set of circumstances with what was true under different conditions. Due to the complex of 'tribes', and the varied experiences of these components of the nation, such a model is necessary to a balanced historical understanding of the settlement period.

It is my contention that a similar model is necessary adequately to represent the 'origins' and early development of the priesthood in Israel. That such a conception makes sense would appear to be attested by what we know of both the narrative traditions,

and the settlement narratives. If various components are being incorporated into 'Israel' in various ways, it makes sense that the cultic personnel already attached to these peoples are undergoing the same processes. We realize that the various constituent parts of the developing nation must have had prior conceptions of the nature of priesthood, and the criteria by which an individual became a priest. The basic near eastern conceptions we have surveyed likely formed a basis for these local conceptions. Future research will need to take seriously the development of models for the early priesthood which allow for such diversity of approaches, using the schematizations presented in the texts dating from the monarchic period only as a starting point.

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