Merneptah's Israel and the Horite Genealogy in Gen 36: 20-30

S. Frolov – The Open University of Israel

[The author argues that both Merneptah's inscription and Gen 36: 20-30 indicate intimate ties between Israel and the people known to Pharaoh's scribe as Kharu and to the author of the Biblical text as Horites. This means that in the late 13th century B.C.E. an entity named Israel occupied the southern fringe of Canaan and that the beginning of the nation-making process in Central Canaan a few decades later could be connected with the arrival of this entity.]

The princes are prostrate, say "Peace";
None raises his head among the Nine Bows.
Now that Tehenu has come to ruin Hatti is pacified;
Canaan has been plundered into every sort of woe.
Ashkelon has been overcome, Gezer has been captured,
Yeno'am was made non-existent.
Israel is desolate, his seed is not:
Kharu has become a widow because of Egypt.
All lands have united themselves in peace,
Anyone who was restless, he has been subdued.[1]

For almost a century this text – the famous coda section of an inscription on Merneptah's "victory stele" – caused neither great agitation nor considerable dissensions in the scholarly circles. As "Israel" is accompanied here by a determinative signifying a "foreign people", the inscription was almost invariably understood as a plain indication that c. 1210 B.C.E.[2] "we should seem to have the

1. The translation is according to N. Na'aman, "The 'Conquest of Canaan'", in I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman, eds., *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*. Jerusalem 1994, p. 247 with slight modifications. The only considerable change was made in line 7: "Israel is desolate" instead of conventional "Israel is laid waste": cf. A.F. Rainey, "Rainey's Challenge", *BAR* 27 (1991), no. 6, p. 60. For other translations see: J.A. Wilson, "Egyptian Hymns and Prayers", *ANET* (1955) 378; G. Fecht, "Die Israelstele, Gestald und Aussage", in M. Görg, ed., *Fontes atque Pontes: Eine Festgabe für H. Brunner*. Wiesbaden 1983, pp. 106-138; E. Hornung, "Die Israelstele des Merneptah", *Fontes atque Pontes*, pp. 224-233; H. E. Stein, "The Israel Stele", *Papers for Discussion* 1. Jerusalem 1982, pp. 156-165.

2. This date is obviously preferred in recent studies. Merneptah's expedition could take place somewhat earlier, but in any case not before 1235 B.C.E.

Aula Orientalis 13 (1995) 203-209

Children of Israel in or near Palestine, but not yet as a settled people".[3] The identification of Merneptah's "Israel" with the tribal coalition described in the OT (especially in its developed, amphictyonic form) was sometimes doubted,[4] but not rejected outright. Moreover, when attempts were made to localize the tribe(s), allegedly defeated by Merneptah in the course of his Asiatic expedition, the scholars, despite certain differences between them as regards the interpretation of the text in question, were almost unanimous in their conclusion, more or less matching the Biblical picture of the post-*Landnahme* period and the archaeological data, at least as they looked and were understood more than a decade ago: "Israël doit être dans le nord ou dans le centre".[5]

In 1985 a new approach was developed by D. Edelman and G.W. Ahlström who claimed that the last verses of Merneptah's ode have a ring structure, "in which Israel serves as a parallel element to Canaan".[6] Thus, they concluded, the former is to be understood like the latter (although they have different determinatives), i.e. for Merneptah's scribe Israel was a place name, and not an ethnic term.[7] For Edelman and Ahlström Merneptah's Israel is a designation either of the hill country of Cisjordan (with Canaan standing in this case for lowlands along the sea coast) or of the region as a whole (in their interpretation – a sort of a Greater Hill Country, roughly equivalent to the Greater Lowland – Canaan).

While the ring structure was universally recognized, its analysis, proposed by Edelman and Ahlström, as well as their general conclusions, came under strong fire,[8] and a number of new interpretations followed. F. Yurco drew a parallel between Canaan and Kharu and thus returned Israel to the sequence of three city states,[9] W.H. Stiebing proposed to couple it with Yeno'am,[10] J.J. Bimson suggested that Israel was equated by Merneptah's scribe with Tehenu (Libya) and Hatti (Hittites), Egypt's most dangerous rivals,[11] and, most recently, M.G. Hasel again grouped it with city states.[12]

3. Wilson, "Egyptian Hymns" 378, n. 18. Cf. F. W. Albright, "Archaeology and the Date of the Hebrew Conquest of Palestine", *BASOR* 58 (1935) 10-18; F.W. Albright, "The Israelite Conquest of Canaan in the Light of Archaeology", *BASOR* 74 (1939) 11-33, especially 21-23; A. Alt, "Erwägungen über die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina", in A. Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*. München 1968, vol. 1, pp. 163-164; S. Herrmann, *A History of Israel in Old Testament Times*. London 1975, pp. 51, 55 n. 46; J.M. Miller, J.H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*. Philadelphia 1986, p. 68.

4. E. g., in M. Noth, *The History of Israel*. New York 1958, p. 3; T.L. Thompson, "Historical Reconstruction of the Narratives", in J.H. Hayes, J.M. Miller, eds., *Israelite and Judaean History*. London 1977, p. 152; H. Engel, "Die Siegesstele des Merneptah", *Bib* 60 (1979) 373-399. For a criticism of the amphictyonic hypothesis see N. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*. Maryknoll 1979.

5. R. de Vaux, *Histoire Ancienne d'Israël: Des origines a l'installation en Canaan*. Paris 1971, pp. 366-367. Cf. S. Yeivin, *The Israelite Conquest of Canaan* (Istanbul Nederlands Historisch-Archaelogisch Instituut in het Nabije Oosten 27). Leiden 1971, pp. 29, 85; Engel, "Die Siegesstele" 387-389, 397-399; I. Singer, "Merneptah's Campaign to Canaan and the Egyptian Occupation of the Southern Coastal Plain of Palestine in the Ramesside Period", *BASOR* 269 (1988) 4 and, most recently, S. Bunimowitz, "Socio-Political Transformations in the Central Hill Country in the Late Bronze – Iron I Transition", in I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman, eds., *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*. Jerusalem 1994, p. 201, n. 109. The book of Judges presumes the settlement of the Israelites in the hill country of Canaan, Galilee and parts of Transjordan.

6. G.W. Ahlström, D. Edelman, "Merneptah's Israel", *JNES* 44 (1985) 59-61.

7. Subsequently each of the scholars went his own way: Ahlström became convinced that the name Israel was originally applied to a territory and only later to its population (G.W. Ahlström, *Who Were the Israelites?* Winona Lake 1986, pp. 37-42, cf. G.W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest* [JSOTSup 146]. Sheffield 1993, pp. 282-287), while Edelman seems to opt now for "the opposite process, a group of people giving their name to the territory they inhabited" (D. Edelman, "Who or What Was Israel?", *BAR* 28 [1992], no. 2, p. 72). For a criticism of their attempts to dismiss the determinative, accompanying "Israel", see: J.J. Bimson, "Merneptah's Israel and Recent Theories of Israelite Origins", *JSOT* 49 (1991) 13-14; R.S. Hess, "Early Israel in Canaan: A Survey of Recent Evidence and Interpretations", *PEQ* 125 (1993) 134.

8. See J.A. Emerton, review of G.W. Ahlström, "Who Were the Israelites?", *VT* 38 (1988) 373; Bimson, "Merneptah's Israel" 20-22; Rainey, "Rainey's Challenge" 60, 93; A.F. Rainey, "Anson F. Rainey Replies", *BAR* 28 (1992), no. 2, p. 73.

9. F.J. Yurco *apud* Rainey, "Anson F. Rainey Replies" 73.

10. W.H. Stiebing, *Out of the desert?* Buffalo 1989, pp. 51-52.

11. Bimson, "Merneptah's Israel" 20-23.

12. M.G. Hasel, "*Israel* in the Merneptah Stela", *BASOR* 296 (1994) 45-61.

Soon, however, it became clear that "all of these proposals are inconclusive owing to the variety of possible ways to analyze the few lines of this poem".[13] The formal structure of the coda, with its monotonous enumeration of more or less violent actions directed against different territorial, political and ethnic entities allows, indeed, *all* imaginable couplings and parallels, denying us any possibility to choose the correct one[14] without recourse to general considerations having nothing to do with Merneptah's inscription as such.[15] Moreover, one even cannot be sure that the scribe ever cared about the order of items in his narrative; actually, there is at least one piece of evidence to the contrary. In the very beginning of the coda "princes" are saying "Peace!" in one of Western Semitic languages (*sa-la-ma*, cf. Heb. *šālôm*), but it certainly doesn't mean that Libyans and Hittites, mentioned a little lower among these princes, were Semitic peoples.

In fact, the scholars that were dealing with the alleged ring structure succeeded primarily in demonstrating that "traditional" interpretations – especially including attempts to localize Merneptah's Israel – are also unreliable so long as they are to some extent based on formal considerations. As a result only two points remained doubtless:

1. According to Merneptah's scribe, a group of people called Israel or populating a territory named Israel lived at the end of the 13th century B.C.E. in Canaan or near it.[16]

2. This group was big or strong enough for the pharaoh to be proud of defeating it.[17]

Both points are truistic and add little or nothing at all to our knowledge of early Israel. It means that entirely different ways of analysis are to be looked for. In my opinion, one of them is opened by the proposal that was put forward by L.E. Stager a decade ago:

> "Hurru and Israel form a distinct, complementary pair in the ode; *viz.* husband (Israel) and wife/widow (Hurru)".[18]

This proposal has a number of advantages. First of all, Stager addresses himself to the poetical imagery and grammar of the text. Unlike its formal structure, they do not allow multiple interpretations. Of the entities mentioned in the coda only Israel and Kharu (Hurru) look animate if not quite human. The former's ability to produce "seed" (offspring)[19] betrays him as an undisputable male. This

13. Hess, "Early Israel" 134.

14. Despite Bimson's assertion that he has found a "correct form" of the coda (Bimson, "Merneptah's Israel" 21) and Rainey's claim that Yurco's arrangement of the poem "represents the original intention of the Egyptian author" (Rainey, "Anson F. Rainey Replies" 73).

15. Cf. Na'aman, "The 'conquest of Canaan'" 248-249. Yurco's proposal to treat some battle reliefs at Karnak as illustrations to Merneptah's inscription did not change the situation, for the interpretation of these reliefs is itself to a great extent dependent on the model of historical reconstruction preferred by the scholar: cf. Rainey, "Rainey's Challenge" 56-60; F.J. Yurco, "Yurco's Response", *BAR* 27 (1991), no. 6, p. 61; Hess, "Early Israel" 134.

16. Cf. Hess, "Early Israel" 139; I. Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*. Jerusalem 1988, p. 28.

17. Even if the attack on Israel was a pure fiction (so D.B. Redford, "The Ashkelon Relief at Karnak and the Israel Stela", *IEJ* 36 [1986] 188-200): see Bimson, "Merneptah's Israel" 23-24.

18. L.E. Stager, "Merenptah, Israel and Sea Peoples: New Light on an Old Relief", *Eretz Israel* 18 (1985) 61*. This proposal went virtually unnoticed, partly because Stager used it just to prove that in Merneptah's times Israel was stronger than in the period of the Judges.

19. Hasel prefers to translate *prt* in Merneptah's inscription as "grain". This translation brings him to the conclusion that "*Israel* functioned as an agriculturally-based/sedentary socioethnic entity in the late 13th century B.C., one that is significant enough to be included in the military campaign against political powers in Canaan" (Hasel, "*Israel* in the Merneptah Stela" 54); however, it has already been convincingly shown by Bimson that first traces of a non-urban entity (big enough to be noticed by pharaoh's scribe) appear in Central Canaan only in the second quarter of the 12th century B.C.E., i.e. a few decades after Merneptah. If such an entity did exist there in Merneptah's times, it was archaeologically invisible, i.e. pastoral (Bimson, "Merneptah's Israel"). In the texts cited by Hasel in support of his view *prt* need not be understood literally: "his/their/our seed is not" may well denote some sort of genocide; moreover, in the case of the Northern War text ("Those who reached my boundary, their seed is not") it can hardly mean anything else. Indication that the destruction of seed took place by fire does not change the context, for "fire" may be (as Hasel concedes) a figurative reference to the victorious Egyptian army. It goes without saying that this army (not unlike any other military force of the world) used to destroy or plunder enemy's field crops and harvests; but the use of this tactics could hardly be limited to the reigns of Merneptah and Ramses III while it seems that the expression "his/their/our seed is not" was in vogue only under these two monarchs. It means that we deal here not with a description of a specific military tactics but rather with a literary cliché of the time denoting wholesale slaughter and skilfully used by Merneptah's scribe in order to stress Israel's masculinity.

is proved also by the use of a masculine pronoun with "Israel".[20] Kharu is certainly female: her marital status is registered. Moreover, the text seems to imply that this status changed as a result of the blow suffered by Israel, while Kharu herself was not harmed.[21]

Stager's proposal is, furthermore, the only one to be directly supported by the OT. It has already been pointed out that Merneptah's Kharu may have something to do with the Biblical Horites.[22] This is not obvious, for in the Egyptian texts of the New Kingdom Kharu signifies Canaan as a whole or different parts of it,[23] while the OT firmly places Horites on its southern fringe, in the "land of Seir" (Gen 36: 30) or "Mount Seir" (Gen 14: 6), most probably a highly rugged mountainous country west of modern Wadi Arabah.[24] It is usually maintained that Egyptians dubbed Canaan Kharu after Hurrians – a non-Semitic people influential in the Near East in the 15th – 13th centuries B.C.E.,[25] while some scholars try to prove that *ḥōrî* (Horites) is a Hebrew equivalent of cuneiform *hurru*.[26] Hurrian presence in the Canaanite cities is attested to by archaeological and written sources, but it hardly could be massive enough to impress Egyptians so as to make them regard the regions as a "Hurruland".[27] Moreover, the Biblical Horites could hardly be Hurrians: Hurrian traces in the extreme south of Canaan have not been found, and the Horite names in the OT are Semitic.[28] There is, however, another way to establish a link between Merneptah's Kharu and the Biblical Horites. It is possible that the place name *ḥōrî*/Kharu was originally applied only to the Horite ethnic territory, and Egyptians, whose acquaintance with the lands northwest of the Sinai peninsula probably began with it, extended the toponym to the region as a whole[29] (not unlike Frankophones who still call Germany *Allemand* – after Alamanni, *one* of German tribes, that lived next to Franks in the days of Clovis, or Arabs and Turks for whom all Catholics and Protestants were until the 19th century *Ifrandj*, or *Firandj*, i.e. Franks)[30] and secondarily ethnicized it (Kharu prisoners mentioned in a number of New Kingdom documents are for the most part neither Horites nor Hurrians).[31]

Biblical mentions of Horites are mostly *à propos* remarks (cf. Gen. 14: 6, Deut. 2: 12, 22). The only exception is the name list in Gen. 36: 20-30. It may seem to be an ordinary quasi-genealogy of the type abounding in the book of Genesis and registering ethnic, sub-ethnic and sub-subethnic units as fathers, sons and grandsons respectively. However, some peculiarities make this list unique. It comprises three generations; and if Seir the Horian stands for a people or a tribal coalition (as it is presumed by Gen. 14: 6 and Deut. 2: 12, 22), then his immediate descendants are to be viewed as tribes and their offspring as clans. This level of subdivision is reached only in two other cases – in the list of the

20. Though Yurco's suggestion that this pronoun indicates "identity with a male deity or eponymous ancestor" (Yurco *apud* Stager, "Merenptah, Israel and Sea Peoples" 61*) is unwarranted. As we shall see *infra*, Merneptah's scribe was not totally ignorant of Canaan and its inhabitants; still, he could hardly know a bit about tribal eponyms, for this presupposes close contacts.

21. Hasel asserts that according to Merneptah's inscription Hurru's husband was Canaan (Hasel, "*Israel* in the Meneptah Stela" 51). However, the text clearly indicates that Canaan, unlike Israel, was an object of plunder, not of massacre. This, obviously, could not turn Kharu into a widow.

22. Cf., e.g., Wilson, "Egyptian Hymns" 378, n. 19.

23. A. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*. London 1947, vol. 1, pp. 180-184. Cf. also Stager, "Merenptah, Israel and the Sea Peoples" 61*.

24. So J.R. Bartlett, "The Land of Seir and the Brotherhood of Edom", *JTS*, n.s. 20 (1969) 1-20.

25. Cf., e.g., R. de Vaux, "Les Hurrites de l'historie et les Horites de la Bible", *RB* 74 (1967) 490-492; H. A. Hoffner, "The Hittites and Hurrians", in D.J. Wiseman, ed., *Peoples of Old Testament Times*. Oxford 1973, pp. 224-225.

26. So, e.g., H.L. Ginsburg and B. Maisler, "Semitised Hurrians in Syria and Palestine", *JPOS* 14 (1934) 256-258; G.E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation*. London 1973, p. 158; R. North, "The Hivites", *Bib* 54 (1973) 58-62 (with some reservations).

27. F.W. Bush, "Horites", *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids 1982, vol. 2, p. 756.

28. See E.A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB 1). Garden City 1964, pp. 282-283; de Vaux, "Les Hurrites" 501.

29. *Contra* de Vaux, "Les Hurrites" 501-502.

30. B. Lewis, "Ifrandj", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Leiden – London 1971, vol. 3, pp. 1044-1046.

31. Cf., e.g., *ANET*, p. 247.

progeny of Abraham and Qetura in Gen. 25: 1 – 4 (only along the Jokshan and Midian lines) and in the Edomite genealogy in Gen. 36: 10-19. Both groups were thought to be closely related to Israel; moreover, only its presumed relatives (though not all of them) are provided with some kind of genealogy (the only exception is the Table of Nations in chapter 10 where the last subdivision is that of peoples). Thus, we may assume that the presence of a detailed Horite genealogy in the book of Genesis implies – not unlike Merneptah's inscription in Stager's interpretation – intimate ties between Israel and Horites although these ties are only hinted at by the Egyptian scribe and never referred to in the OT.

If so, what could be the correlation between Israel and Kharu/Horites? The simplest answer would be that either they were twin peoples or Israel was one of Horite tribes. However, this is untenable, for in Merneptah's inscription the entities in question are definitely not identical. Israel's determinative is that of a people, whereas Kharu is classified as a country; Israel is male and Kharu female (see *supra*); Israel is active, producing seed and/or defending his partner,[32] while Kharu is passive. These contrasts may have two explanations. One is that Kharu was – at least for Merneptah's scribe – a place-name, roughly equivalent in this case to "the land of Seir", and Israel stood for its population. We may tentatively suppose that the latter term was this population's self-designation, while to its neighbors (including Egyptians) it was known as *ḥōrîm* – in the same fashion as two centuries later, in the times of Saul and David, Philistines dubbed Israelites *ʿibrîm* – "Hebrews" (cf. 1 Sam. 13: 19; 29: 3). It is difficult to say what could prompt the scribe to cite both terms, including the less known one. Perhaps he was eager to register a previously unknown phenomenon (e.g., a newly formed tribal coalition) or just to demonstrate his knowledge of Asiatic realities – as testified also by his unwarranted choice of the Semitic *sa-la-ma* for "peace" and his preference of the loanword Canaan to its Egyptian parallels (Retenu, Djahi).

Another possibility is to treat Israel as a specific sector of the Horite population, *viz.* a *Männerbund*. Such closed social groups, usually secret societies of initiated males, mostly of warrior age, are widely known elsewhere, Spartan syssitia and Teuton comitatus being the most celebrated examples.[33] This could account for Israel's masculinity in the inscription as well as for its name: meaning, in all probability, "God will fight [for us?]",[34] it is an appropriate self-designation for a society of warriors (cf. the Philistine "votaries of Rapha" mentioned in I Sam. 21: 15-22).[35]

As to the ethnonym *ḥōrî*, its etymology may also reveal a link between Horites and Israelites. E.A. Speiser's suggestion to derive this ethnonym from Heb. *ḥōr* (or *ḥôr*), "a hole, a pit"[36] and thus to understand it as "cave dwellers, troglodytes"[37] was rejected by R. de Vaux, who pointed out, *inter alia*, that south of the Dead Sea caves are rare.[38] However, caves, ravines and all kinds of holes in the ground may serve as natural fortifications and traps, not only as dwellings. According to the OT, Israelites, being attacked by a strong enemy, used to retreat to "the tunnels which are in the mountains, and caves,

32. By saying that Kharu has become a widow, the scribe could mean either that she is defenseless or that there is no one to impregnate her.

33. See H. Schurtz, *Alterklassen und Männerbünde*. Berlin 1902, pp. 347-368; H. Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies*. New York 1932, pp. 74-134.

34. If *'el* is understood as "God" (not as a proper name of a deity) and the verb *śārā* is translated according to Gen. 32: 29 and Hos. 12: 4-5. For different interpretations of the ethnonym see G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* (WBC 2). Dallas 1987, pp. 296-297; O. Margalith, "On the Origin and Antiquity of the Name 'Israel'", *ZAW* 102 (1990) 225-237.

35. See P.K. McCarter Jr., *II Samuel* (AB 9). Garden City 1984, pp. 449-451 and bibliography there.

36. See A. Even-Shoshan, A *New Concordance of the Bible*. Jerusalem 1993, p. 352 (Hebrew) and a list of Biblical occurrences there.

37. Speiser, *Genesis*, p. 282.

38. De Vaux, "Les Hurrites" 499-500.

and strongholds" (Jud. 6: 2; cf. I Sam. 13: 6). In view of I Sam. 14 such a retreat may be regarded as a part of a peculiar guerrilla tactics successfully applied by Jonathan and his armor-bearer in the war with Philistines.[39] Certainly well known to neighboring peoples (hence the ethnonym), this tactics could prove extremely effective against Egyptians whose numerical superiority and advanced weaponry (chariots) were of no use in skirmishes with tribal warriors taking full advantage of the rugged terrain of their country.

An identification of Merneptah's Israel with the Biblical Horites or a social structure within this entity may contribute to the solution of the paradox formulated by Bimson: "Israel" is mentioned on pharaoh's stele at least a few decades before its archaeological traces appear in Canaan.[40] Following I. Finkelstein, Bimson surmises that at the very end of the Late Bronze period the central hill country of Canaan was populated mostly by archaeologically invisible pastoralists (known in Egypt and elsewhere as Israel) whose (re)sedentarization was marked by the appearance of numerous Iron Age settlements.[41] Accepting this hypothesis in general, we may now add that by the beginning of Merneptah's reign these pastoralists had not yet become Israel; bearers of this name lived at that time in the extreme south of Canaan. Subsequent developments may be tentatively reconstructed as follows. As a result of Merneptah's campaign and probably also under Edomite pressure (reflected in Deut. 2: 12, 22)[42] proto-Israel migrated north, reaching (via Transjordan?)[43] the central part of Canaan. If – as the OT insists – its wanderings lasted forty years, they were to come to an end c. 1170 B.C.E., i.e. exactly at the time when the Iron Age settlements began to spring up in the hill country. This is not to say that they were founded by it or under its direct influence: nation-making as well as state-making are predominantly internal processes.[44] However, it could be proto-Israel's arrival that triggered these processes off: even a saturated solution does not produce crystals unless a small (even microscopic) grain is inserted. Only a group with a strong social organization and an ideology of its own could become such a grain; this seems to prove that proto-Israel was really a *Männerbund*, for such entities are invariably based on firm discipline[45] and in most cases worship their own gods. While nothing is known of proto-Israel's social structure, some poetic Biblical texts (Deut. 33: 2; Judg. 5: 4) seem to imply that the nati-

39. Note also the remark of the Philistine warrior upon seeing Jonathan and his armor-bearer: "Behold, the Hebrews come out of the *holes* (*ḥōrîm*) where they have hidden themselves" (I Sam. 14: 11). It appears also that during the same war Saul had his headquarters in a cave: see the interpretation of I Sam. 14: 2 in P.M. Arnold, *Gibeah: The Search for a Biblical City* (JSOTSup 79). Sheffield 1990, pp. 93-94.

40. Bimson, "Merneptah's Israel".

41. I. Finkelstein, *The Archaeology*, pp. 336-351; Bimson, "Merneptah's Israel", pp. 24-25.

42. Note that Edom and Edomites never appear in Egyptian texts before Merneptah's Asiatic campaign: see *ANET*, p. 259. E.A. Knauf, "Supplementa Ismaelitica, 13. Edom und Arabien", *BN* 45 (1988) 69-70 maintains that the Horite genealogy in Gen. 36: 20-30 was compiled in the 7th century B.C.E. and reflects the "peaceful coexistence" between Horites and Edomites at that time (cf. A. Bartel, "Studies in the Lists of Gen. 36", *Beth Mikra* 32 [1986/87] 364-372 [Hebrew]), while the Deuteronomist(s) simply applied to them the scheme of aborigines being supplanted by newcomers (see also E.A. Knauf, "Horites", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York 1992, vol. 3, p. 288). However, it is hard to imagine that an ideological cliché could make the authors of the book of Deuteronomy, working in the 6th or even in the 5th century B.C.E., distort the reality of the recent past in such a blatant way, especially as Edom was not considered a chosen people and it was impossible to regard the alleged Edomite occupation of the land of Seir as a crucial proof of Israel's right to do likewise in Central Canaan. It is much more simple to suggest that an old tradition matching the writers' outlook was cited here; this method was a trademark of the Deuteronomistic historical school: cf. M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15). Sheffield 1981, pp. 10-11.

43. Bartlett links Horites with the clans of southern Judah: J.R. Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites* (JSOTSup 77). Sheffield 1989, p. 88. If he is right, it means that proto-Israel took a shorter road – via Negev; however, this option is not just ignored but vehemently denied by the OT: cf., e.g., Num. 14: 40-45; Deut. 1: 41-46.

44. Cf. Ph. R. Davies, *In Search of Ancient Israel* (JSOTSup 148). Sheffield 1992, pp. 64-66.

45. H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Oxford 1946, pp. 253-264.

ve country of Yhwh was "Seir, the field of Edom".[46] If so, he could come to the central hill country as a deity of the Horite *Männerbund*.[47]

Having given the newly formed nation its name[48] and its cult, proto-Israel – numerically small in comparison with the native population of the central hill country – was quickly assimilated, and a few centuries later, when the texts of the OT began to evolve, its historical memory was virtually non-existent. Trying to detect respectable ancestors of the nation, Jerusalemite or Samarian chroniclers hardly could reckon Horites, obscure, as they seemed to be, and "dispossessed" as well, among them. Only a Horite clan list (together with a feeling of its importance) and a vague poetic notion of Yhwh's southern provenance were left.

46. Cf. B. Mazar, "Yahweh Came out from Sinai", in A. Biran, ed., *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times: Proceedings of the colloquium in honor of the centennial of Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion. Jerusalem. 14-16 March 1977*. Jerusalem 1981, pp. 5-9, especially 8-9.

47. According to K. van der Toorn, "Saul and the Rise of Israelite State", *VT* 43 (1993) 519-542, Yhwh was originally the god of the Israelite army; however, this scholar suggests that the cult of Yhwh appeared in Central Canaan during Saul's reign due to the Edomite provenance of the first Israelite king and his retinue.

48. Such phenomena are widely known elsewhere: for example, such a big state as Russia received its name (originally Rus') from tiny mixed gangs of merchants, sea and river nomads that began to roam in Eastern Europe in the 8th century C.E. and vanished a few centuries later: see O. Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus'*. Cambridge 1981, vol. 1, pp. 24-33.