Durham E-Theses

The rechabites in the bible and in Jewish tradition to the time of rabbi David Kimhi

Knights, Christopher Hammond

Christopher Hammond Knights

The Rechabites in the Bible and in Jewish Tradition to the Time of

Rabbi David Kimhi

The first part of the thesis examines the biblical trad-
itions about the Rechabites.   After an opening chapter surveying
Twentieth Century scholarly attitudes to the Rechabites, the rele-
vant biblical texts, 1 Chronicles 2:55, 4:12, Nehemiah 3:14,
2 Samuel 4, 2 Kings 10:15f, 23 and Jeremiah 35, are examined in
chapters two and three.   It is concluded that only 2 Kings 10:15f
and Jeremiah 35 really refer to the Rechabites, and that they depict
them as a group of prophets who were closely linked with the movement
represented by Elijah, Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets of 1 Kings
17 - 2 Kings 13.   This conclusion is strengthened by a consideration
of a number of relevant themes in chapter four, where it is shown
that there are no Ancient Near Eastern parallels to the Rechabites,
that the title 'Rechabite' derives from the ancient conception of
the God of Israel as the divine charioteer, that the Rechabites
were an Introversionist sect who originated in a schism in the proph-
etic circles following Elijah's death, that they lived on alms and
on gifts made for prophetic services rendered, that their attitude
to the cult was ambivalent, and that the only point of contact
which they had with the Nazirites was the avoidance of intoxicants,
which stemmed from a common belief that Yahweh's sacred servants
should be abstinent.

The second part of the study shows that the biblical trad-
itions concerning the Rechabites did not influence the Qumran commun-
ity, but were popular in other Jewish writings.   All the rabbinic

references until the time of Kimhi are examined, and the various ways in which the traditions were used are highlighted. It is also shown that the current approach to the Pseudepigraphon, The History of the Rechabites, is seriously flawed, and a new theory concerning its origin is proposed.

The thesis concludes with some suggestions for future research and for contemporary applications of the traditions concerning the Rechabites.

The Rechabites in the Bible and in Jewish

Tradition to the Time of Rabbi David Kimhi

(2 Volumes)

Volume I

by

Christopher Hammond Knights

Ph.D.

University of Durham

Department of Theology

1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I certify that the material of this
thesis is the product of my own research
and that no part of it has been
submitted for a degree to this or any
other university.

PREFACE

Although the world of biblical studies is a very
active one, there are nevertheless subjects which still have
not received the full-scale investigation they deserve. The
present thesis, the culmination of six years' under- and post-
graduate study in the Department of Theology of the University
of Durham, is an attempt to rectify this lack in the case of
just one of those subjects, the Rechabites, with the hope
that it will stimulate further interest and renewed research
into both the biblical and the Jewish material dealing with
this unique Old Testament group.

Where the source of a translation of a biblical or
other text in the thesis is not given, the translation is my
own. In the case of the rabbinic and patristic texts, these
translations should be regarded as provisional, and not as
definitive renderings of previously untranslated texts. Where
the verse numbers in the Hebrew and English biblical texts
differ, the former have been followed. Where a quotation
from an English Bible translation (usually RSV) appears, I
have substituted 'Yahweh' for 'LORD', in accordance with
modern scholarly conventions. Where Semitic languages have
been transliterated, the conventional method has been followed,
except that ' has been used for <u>Aleph</u>, and ^c for <u>Ayin</u>.
Where reference is made in the notes to another part of the
thesis, underlined page numbers denote Volume II. All other
references are to Volume I.

While a doctoral thesis, by its very nature, must
be an individual piece of work, it is nonetheless true that no
thesis is ever completed without considerable assistance from
others. The present thesis is no exception, and I wish to
thank the following for their help in its preparation: the
British Academy, who funded the whole project; Dr Robert
Hayward, who supervised the thesis with care and cheerfulness;
Professor John Sawyer, of the University of Newcastle-upon-
Tyne, Professor John Rogerson, of the University of Sheffield,

PART ONE:

THE RECHABITES IN THE BIBLE

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION - THE RECHABITES IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

The Rechabites are an often-cited, but seldom studied, Old Testament group. Most general Old Testament works - Introductions, Histories or Theologies - contain at least one reference to them and, of course, the commentaries on those biblical books in which they appear, or are thought to appear - 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Nehemiah and 1 Chronicles - contain some discussion about them, but studies on them in their own right are singularly lacking. In 1961, Roland de Vaux was only able to cite two articles on them, other than those in dictionaries,[1] and in 1964 Paul Riemann wrote, "It is significant that so few studies of the Rechabites have been published since the turn of the century."[2] There have been a few articles dealing with the Rechabites published since 1964 and, in addition, while de Vaux is more or less correct with his bibliography of the pre-1961 material written _specifically_ on the Rechabites,[3] it should also be noted that much was written on them under the auspices of the so-called 'Nomadic Ideal' theory.[4] However, to date no full-scale systematic study of the Rechabites, _as a subject in their own right_, has been undertaken. Yet such a study is plainly required: the Rechabites are often cited in support of a particular theory of Ancient Israelite religion, but invariably with the unspoken assumptions that who they were and what they represented are self-evident. In addition, some of the more specialized studies of the Rechabites have either failed to use some of the scant data about them, or else have utilized other available data uncritically, thus yielding a distorted picture. The present thesis seeks to offer such a full-scale systematic

study, in the hope that it will lead to a more careful evalu-
ation of the Rechabites in future general works on the Old
Testament, and that it will stimulate further research on them
as a subject in their own right.

As there have been so few significant studies dealing
with the Rechabites since 1895, it is possible to provide a
relatively full survey and critique of those studies, prefaced
by some indication of scholarly positions held prior to that date,
which has been chosen as the dividing point because it is the
date of the publication of Karl Budde's highly influential art-
icle, 'The Nomadic Ideal in the Old Testament',[5] which may
legitimately be seen as the ultimate source of such modern
scholarly interest in the Rechabites as exists. It should be
stressed, however, that this is a study on the Rechabites, and
not on the 'Nomadic Ideal' theory, which has already been ade-
quately investigated by Riemann and Talmon,[6] even though,
inevitably, this survey of scholarship on the Rechabites will,
to a certain extent, go over the same ground as that covered by
these two scholars, albeit from a different standpoint.

It is not here intended to cite all the references
to the Rechabites to be found in every Twentieth Century Old
Testament Introduction, History, Theology or other general
work. Besides being widespread and brief, these references
invariably present no opinion not found elsewhere in the more
specific literature. For the same reason, it is not necessary
to list the opinions of every Twentieth Century commentator on
the biblical books containing material pertaining to the Rechab-

ites. Rather, the aim is to offer here a reasonably full

survey of all that more specific literature, with no more than

a brief mention of more general works.

At first sight, it may seem a little odd to begin

an examination of the secondary literature on the Rechabites

prior to Budde's article with the relevant section in John Cal-

vin's <u>Commentaries</u> <u>on</u> <u>the</u> <u>Book</u> <u>of</u> <u>the</u> <u>Prophet</u> <u>Jeremiah</u> <u>and</u> <u>the</u>

<u>Lamentations</u>, first published in 1565. Calvin, however, still

commands respect amongst biblical scholars,[7] and he stands as

the first person, outside of the rabbinic traditions, to have

written anything of any length on the Rechabites which has sur-

vived - St Jerome had only reached chapter 32 in his commentary

on Jeremiah when he died. In addition, Calvin's exegesis of

Jeremiah 35 - the chapter that deals with the Rechabites - is

considerably longer than that offered by any other scholar, so

the inclusion of Calvin in this survey is completely justifiable.

Calvin's work does need to be used with care, however,

for he accepts the reading of the Massoretic Text unquestioningly.

Thus, in his commentary on Jer. 35,[8] at least, there is no

reference to any of the textual variants contained in the LXX

or elsewhere, whereas modern Jeremianic scholarship has shown

that the LXX of the Book of Jeremiah needs to be carefully con-

sidered in any exegesis of that Book.[9] There are also distinct

polemical and apologetic currents in Calvin's writings - polemic

against the Roman Catholicism of his own day, apologetic for

'Calvinist' theology and practice. Thus, Calvin regards the

laws which Jonadab ben Rechab promulgated as being purely civil

and social[10] and not religious, which seems to reveal more

about the rigid Calvinist division between 'Church' and 'State'

than about thought categories in Ancient Israel, where the

'sacred' and the 'secular' were not sharply distinguished.

Bearing these presuppositions in mind, an outline

of Calvin's understanding of the Rechabites, as reflected by

his commentary on Jer. 35, can now be given.

He opens his exegesis of the chapter with a state-

ment of his understanding of the formation of the prophetic

literature:

> The prophets, after having been preaching,
> reduced to a summary what they had spoken;
> a copy of this was usually affixed to the
> doors of the Temple; that anyone desirous
> of knowing celestial doctrine might read
> the copy, and it was afterwards laid up in
> the archive,[11]

and later gathered into the canonical books as we now have them.

While Calvin's statement is too sweeping in some respects,[12] it

nevertheless comes very close to what seems to be the correct

understanding of the formation of Jer. 35, _ie._ as a tract

written by Jeremiah himself, for wider circulation, recounting

an actual act and speech of the prophet.[13] In seeing the pro-

phets as tractarians, Calvin has been followed, in more recent

times, by both Max Weber and Bernhard Lang.[14]

Calvin next correctly perceives the purpose of Jere-

miah's act as "a visible sign to shame the people".[15] Although

he does not use the word 'Kenite' at all, nor mention 1 Chronicles

2:55, the verse which is thought by many to connect the Rechab-
ites with the Kenites, it is plain that he does regard the two
groups as connected. The Rechabites "derived their origin from
Obad and from Jethro the father-in-law of Moses",[16] and this
is proved, for Calvin, by the command that the Rechabites live
as sojourners (Jer. 35:7),[17] which Calvin thus regards as a
statement of the non-Israelite origin of the Rechabites.

Calvin seems to believe that that the Rechabites had
two occupations, tending sheep[18] and building houses.[19] These
two trades seem to stand somewhat at variance with each other
and, in any case, it is forced to take Jer. 35 as indicating
that the Rechabites were permitted to build, but not to live
in, houses. A comprehensive ban on both house-building and
house-dwelling seems to be implied by the biblical text. It is
possible that Calvin, again without acknowledging it, has
derived his idea from Nehemiah 3:14, where Malchijah ben Rechab
participates in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.[20]

The reasons why Jonadab imposed his regulations upon
his followers were, according to Calvin, because he dreaded
the punishment that the Jews and Israelites would receive for
despising the Law, and because he saw in the agricultural life-
style the source of vice. By practicing such austerity, the
Rechabites became detac hed from possessions and were easily
able to move about, and thus able to endure any adversity[21]
- in particular, Calvin links Jer. 35:11 to the fall of the
Northern Kingdom, and not to any invasion of Judah,[22] despite
the fact that 2 Kings 17:1-6 expressly states that Samaria fell

to Shalmaneser king of Assyria, not to Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, named in Jer. 35:10!

Calvin presents the contrast between the Rechabites and the Judaeans in clear, simple terms: the Rechabites obeyed a hard mortal command, the Judaeans disobeyed an easy divine command; Jonadab's precept had retained its force for nearly 300 years, while the Law of God had been continually proclaimed - without effect; Jonadab was rigid and austere, while God acted equitably and did not press too much on the Jews.[23]

When he comes to deal with the Promise to the Rechabites, Jer. 35:18f, Calvin notes the discussion of Exod. 20:12 in Eph. 6:2, in order to demonstrate that there is no need to be surprised to learn that God gives rewards for obedience to the Law - the Rechabites had obeyed the fifth commandment, so they were promised long life.[24] The phrase עמד לפני, "standing before me", Jer. 35:19, is regarded by Calvin as simply intimating that some of Jonadab's offspring would always be living and that obedience would not appear to be without its just reward.[25]

While there is much of value in Calvin's commentary on Jeremiah 35, it is debatable whether he is right to ascribe such a rigid distinction between 'religious' and 'civil/social' matters in pre-exilic Israel and, even if he is, whether he is right to so firmly exclude the Rechabite discipline from the 'religious' sphere. His use of other parts of the Old Testament, in this case 1 Chron. 2:55 and Neh. 3:14, without acknowledging

their use is also open to criticism - in particular, Calvin's

argument for the Kenite origin of the Rechabites is very weak

indeed. He falls into the trap, like many after him, of

assuming that a non-agricultural lifestyle, as practised by the

Rechabites, is equivalent to a pastoral nomadic lifestyle,

while the biblical text makes no such equation. His spelling

out of the contrast between the Rechabites and the Judaeans

under three headings is a very useful summary of the position,

but his understanding of the Promise to the Rechabites seems

to be mistaken: Jer. 35:7 suggests that the promise, "that you

may live many days in the land wherein you are sojourners", is

connected with the <u>content</u> of the commands, and not simply with

the fact that they are parent's commands, the obedience of

which - regardless of content - secures long life. In addition,

it is questionable whether Calvin is correct to understand עמד

לפני in v.19 in the way that he does.[26]

The next scholar to be considered in this very brief

survey of scholarship prior to Budde is Heinrich Ewald, whose

massive <u>Geschichte des Volkes Israel</u> appeared in the period

1843-55. He regarded the Rechabites as desert-dwelling sect-

aries, drawing inspiration, and perhaps even descended, from

the Nazirites and the Kenites - he thought that the Hammath

mentioned in 1 Chron. 2:55 could have been Jonadab's grandfather.

For him, 1 Chron. 2:55 also indicated that, like later monks,

the Rechabites may have devoted their leisure time to learning.[27]

He also regarded them as forerunners of the Essenes.[28] Ewald

thus regarded 1 Chron. 2:55 as clearly illustrating that the

Rechabites and the Kenites were linked, despite the fact that

neither Hammath nor Beth-Rechab are found elsewhere in the
texts dealing with the Rechabites. He also seems to have read
the traditions of the Essenes and the Christian Desert Fathers
back into the Rechabites, which yields a distorted picture -
there is, for instance, no evidence that the Rechabites ever
lived in the desert.

　　　　Soon after the completion of Ewald's Geschichte in
Germany, a major Bible dictionary appeared in the U.K., with
an article on the Rechabites by E.H.Plumptre.[29] He regarded
1 Chronicles 2:55 as being late and as referring to the locality
occupied by the Rechabites after the return from the Exile, yet
also seems to maintain the view that the Rechabites were Kenites,
Yahwists and circumcised, but not bound to the Mosaic laws.[30]
He was of the opinion that 'Rechab' was a title that had become
a proper name, probably pointing towards a conspicuous form of
the wild Bedouin life ("the Rider"). He does mention, however,
the view that 'Rechab' is in some sense linked with the title
of Elijah and Elisha mentioned in 2 Kings 2:12, 13:14, "The
Chariotry of Israel and its Riders".[31] Jonadab ben Rechab,
found in 2 Kings 10:15, 16, 23, imposed his rules upon the
members of his clan as a reaction to the worship of Baal, with
its attendant Phoenician luxury and licence, introduced by
Ahab and Jezebel. The discipline was an ascetic one, a more
rigid adherence than ever to the old Arab life.[32] The customs
of the Nabataeans, as recorded by Diodorus Siculus (XIX.94),
form a good parallel to the Rechabites' discipline.[33] Plumptre
noticed that the Rechabites all had Yahwistic names, which in-
dicated to him that they had maintained their ancient worship of

Yahweh.[34] He regarded the עמד לפני in Jer. 35:19 as a lit-

urgical formula, and then went on to accept the Targumic

interpretation of the verse, ie. that the Rechabites became

priests, as true.[35] He cited Neh. 3:14, 1 Chron. 2:55, the

heading to LXX Ps. 70 and the account by Hegesippus of the

martyrdom of James the Just as historically accurate notices,

indicating the continued existence of the clan.[36]

Plumptre seems to be asking too much of 1 Chron.

2:55 by using it both as a late notice indicating the contin-

ued existence of the Rechabites after the Exile and as an

indication of the ancient, Kenite origin of the clan. His

idea that the Rechabites existed as a Kenite clan before the

days of Jonadab, and were in some sense 'refounded' by Jona-

dab in the days of Jehu, is one that recurs, implicitly and

explicitly, throughout the secondary literature dealing with

the Rechabites, presumably as an attempt to reconcile the

usual understanding of 1 Chron. 2:55 with the material contain-

ed in Jer. 35 and 2 Kings 10. Yet this creates an uneasy

tension: were the practices of the Rechabites observed before

the time of Jonadab? If so, why do the Rechabites in Jer.

35 honour Jonadab as their lawgiver? If not, how can his rules

be seen as a more rigid adherence than ever to the old Arab

life? There is a logical contradiction here, the maintenance

of which in most studies of the Rechabites produced since 1863

has yielded numerous theses which rest on extremely tenuous bases.

It will be shown in Chapter Two that there are good grounds for

concluding that 1 Chron. 2:55 has nothing whatsoever to do with

the Rechabites.

Plumptre also falls into the same trap as Ewald, in
supposing, against all the evidence, that Jonadab's rules
were an imposition of a strict Bedouin lifestyle - Bedouins
were desert dwellers, the Rechabites were not! Plumptre is
also wrong to accept the Targumic tradition about the Rechab-
ites so unquestioningly. Chapter Five of this thesis will
reveal that there is a rich diversity of Early Jewish trad-
itions about the Rechabites - traditions which are anything
but uniform. Some of them even explicitly deny that the
Rechabites became priests! Thus, the Jewish traditions may
not have any direct historical accuracy at all. At any rate,
more care should have been exercised in claiming that a part-
icular statement in a Jewish text is historically accurate.

It is commendable that Plumptre mentions the idea
that the title 'Rechab' is somehow linked to Elijah and Eli-
sha, but it is regrettable that he simply terms it, "ingeni-
ous enough to merit disinterment from the forgotten scholarship
of the 16th Century".[37] The suggestion was apparently made
by one Boulduc,[38] though Plumptre's claim that St Jerome's
contemporary John of Jerusalem made a similar suggestion
cannot now be substaniated.[39] Chapters Three and Four of
the present work will demonstrate that a good case can be
made for regarding this interpretation, which, incidentally,
St Jerome himself seems to have made in one of his letters to
Paulinus,[40] as the correct one.

It can be seen, from this sample of views prior to
1895, that the main features of Budde's ideas about the

Rechabites were already present in scholarship before him.

Our group were generally viewed as pastoral nomads, desert

lovers, connected in some way with the ancient clan of the

Kenites, yet also 'refounded' by Jonadab as a reaction

against the Tyrian Baal-cult.

Many, if not all, of these ideas were taken up and

pushed even further by Budde, who published his article,

'The Nomadic Ideal in the Old Testament', twice - first in

English, and soon afterwards in German.[41] It was his belief

that an idealisation of the nomadic life was clearly discern-

ible in the Old Testament, beginning with Jonadab ben Rechab

in 2 Kings 10, who was the founder of the Rechabites who

appear in Jeremiah 35. Their lifestyle, "tent instead of

house, cattle-breeding instead of agriculture, and, above

all, the strict avoidance of wine",[42] was a nomadic one,

which would lead to Yahweh's blessing if practised. Budde

discovered the reason for the rejection of the settled life

in 1 Chron. 2:55, which he called late, "but still entirely

credible".[43] The Rechabites were part of the nomadic clan of

the Kenites. Hence, Jonadab had, "in fact, only bound

his descendents to the primitive customs of their fathers".[44]

Budde went on to trace what he believed to be ins-

tances of the 'Nomadic Ideal', albeit in a different form,

elsewhere in the Old Testament, notably in the preaching of

Hosea and Isaiah. As the purpose of the present survey is

simply to show how Budde used the material on the Rechabites,

and not to demonstrate how he understood the 'Nomadic Ideal',

a full summary of the second half of his article will not be offered here.[45]

The same logical contradiction is found in Budde's understanding of the Rechabites as in Plumptre's. Two contradictory models are proposed for the 'Nomadic Ideal' of the Rechabites: it is the maintenance of the ancestral, Kenite, nomadic lifestyle; and it is a reaction against an excessive Baal-cult. Like Plumptre, Budde makes no attempt to reconcile these two models. Hence, his understanding of the Rechabites is weakened and, thus, by implication, his whole theory of the 'Nomadic Ideal' is seriously called into question.

Again in common with Plumptre, Budde is over-hasty in his claim that 1 Chron. 2:55 links the Kenites and the Rechabites. It is clear that this biblical verse has proved to be something of a lynch-pin in studies dealing with the Rechabites, yet too many scholars, Budde included, have baldly asserted that the verse does connect the Kenites with the Rechabites, without actually offering an exegesis of the verse, in order to justify such an assertion.

It is also by no means certain that the Rechabite discipline represented a nomadic lifestyle. Budde tacitly assumes that the fact that the Rechabites were non-agriculturalists indicates that they were pastoralists - an inference completely unwarranted from the biblical texts at our disposal. Like Ewald and Plumptre, Budde is also on very shaky ground

when he claims that the Rechabites were lovers of the steppe
or the desert (in Hebrew, the same term, ie. מִדְבָּר, is used
for each). The only geographical terms that appear in connect-
ion with the Rechabites are הַאֲדָמָה (Jer. 35:7) and הָאָרֶץ (35:10),
both regularly used to denote the cultivated land - the com-
plete opposite of מִדְבָּר! Part of the problem seems to lie in the
fact that Budde nowhere actually offers his definition of
'nomadism' - we are left to infer how he understands it from
his various remarks.

Budde's understanding of the Rechabites is thus seri-
ously deficient. He may have been influenced by the 'décadence'
prevalent in the late 19th Century Western World, as Keukens
likes to think,[46] but, in any case, his contradictions and
exegetical assumptions render his position untenable. One of
his opening statements is, however, praiseworthy. He argues
that the narrator (or compiler) of 2 Kings 10 "did not need to
tell his Jewish readers who Jonadab, the son of Rechab, was".
[47] Budde is surely right in saying that the very terseness of
2 Kings 10:15f implies reader knowledge of the characters there-
in depicted.

Despite Budde's theory about the Rechabites resting
on very uncertain grounds, it has proved extremely popular in
20th Century scholarship, and was not seriously challenged
until the 1960s. Even articles purporting to be about the
Rechabites, such as Lucien Gautier's 'A propos des Récabites',[48]
turn out to have a very similar structure and theme to Budde's
'Nomadic Ideal in the Old Testament'. Gautier is evidently

more interested in religious conditions in pre-exilic Israel
in general, rather than in the Rechabites per se - he uses them
simply as an entry into his analysis of pre-exilic religious
life. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with this,
it is surely erroneous to entitle an article 'A propos des
Récabites' when the Rechabites only appear on just over half
the pages of that article. The article really covers the same
ground as Budde's, yet without showing any knowledge of that
article.

Gautier offers little that is new in his understanding
of the Rechabites. Jonadab was a fervent Yahwist who reacted
against the Baal-cult by imposing Bedouin customs upon his
followers, because he felt that agriculture led inevitably to
the worship of the Baals, Yahweh being a desert war-god. In
imposing such a discipline, Jonadab was seeking to return his
followers to their past, to their origins among the Kenites,
origins revealed by 1 Chron. 2:55.

For Gautier, it was crucial, for his understanding
of the religious life of pre-exilic Israel, to see the Rechab-
ites as fervent Yahwists who regarded their god as a desert
deity yet, as has already been pointed out, there is no evi-
dence that forces us to conclude that the Rechabites ever lived
in the desert, let alone believed in a desert deity.

The same view of the Rechabites can be found in most
works appearing in the period between 1895 and 1923, the date
of John Flight's article, 'The Nomadic Idea and Ideal in the

Old Testament'.[49] Biblical commentaries, such as those by
Kittel,[50] Streane,[51] Cornill,[52] Driver,[53] Giesebrecht,[54]
Peake,[55] Curtis and Madsen,[56] Binns[57] and Smith,[58] general
books and articles, such as those by Marti,[59] Meyer,[60] Burney,[61] and Causse,[62] and the articles on the Rechabites in the
dictionaries and encyclopaedias, such as Hastings' Dictionary
of the Bible,[63] the Encyclopaedia Biblica,[64] and the Jewish
Encyclopaedia,[65] all more or less followed the lines laid down
by Budde, and saw the Rechabites as nomadic Kenites worshipping
Yahweh, the god of the desert. Only Hugo Winckler seems to
have presented any challenge to this dominant belief in the
first quarter of the 20th Century. His views appeared in a
book[66] which sought to refute the developmentalist view of
Israelite religion advanced by Marti in Die Religion des Alten
Testaments, which had seen the Rechabites as a survival of an
earlier, nomadic stage in Israel's history. Winckler propounded
a diffusionist view of the origin of Israelite religion. More
importantly for the present purposes, he argued that the Rech-
abites were

> a sect within Yahwism, and their way of
> life was not a survival of earlier nomadism,
> but a deliberate attempt to create an imag-
> ined ideal state of human life. Similar
> movements could be found elsewhere among
> modern Russian and American sects.[67]

This view seems to have largely gone unnoticed, which is un-
fortunate becuse, as the present thesis will demonstrate, it
in fact contains a fairly accurate interpretation of the Rechab-
ites.

In any event, the 'Nomadic Ideal' theory seemed to become the dominant one in Old Testament studies, with the nomadic, desert-loving, Kenite Rechabites as its lynch-pin. The theory reached its fullest flowering in John Flight's 1923 article. Through nearly 70 pages, he sought to demonstrate that much of Israel's practices, customs and religious beliefs could only be explained as survivals from a nomadic period in Israel's history. His views on the Rechabites follow the by-now familiar pattern established nearly 30 years previously by Budde - they were pastoralists,[68] but were fanatics who believed that Yahweh was the god of the desert only,[69] and were Kenites.[70] These views have already been discussed, and so require no further comment. What is worthy of note, however, is that at one point Flight presents a view of the nomadic life that actually reinforces the argument against seeing the Rechabites as nomads! On page 172, he writes:

> The wheat and the barley for the making of
> bread by the nomads must either have been
> obtained by barter from settled peoples or
> caravan traders, or else raised in small
> quantities in fertile oases where it was
> possible for them to carry on slight culti-
> vation while they halted between planting
> and harvest time.

Thus, nomadism, in Flight's view, was not completely non-agricultural yet, as Jer. 35:7 clearly reveals, the Rechabites were completely non-agricultural: they were forbidden to sow seed at all. This is an extremely strong indication that, regardless of the merits or demerits of the 'Nomadic Ideal' theory, the Rechabites simply cannot be viewed as nomads.

As the foregoing paragraphs have shown, the years
immediately following Budde's 'Nomadic Ideal in the Old Testa-
ment' saw little challenge to the conSensus view that the
Rechabites were nomads who worshipped the desert god Yahweh and
that they were Kenites, despite the fact that these views have
been shown to have rested on very tenuous bases. The view that
they were Kenites came seriously under fire for the first time
in 1926, from Samuel Klein, in the first article which dealt
with 1 Chron. 2:55 at any length and in any detail.[71] Obviously,
frequent reference will be made to this article when 1 Chronicles
2:55 is examined in Chapter Two, but some indication of Klein's
general approach, including his understanding of the Rechabites,
is in order at this point. He understands the verse to prove
the existence of scribes in the pre-exilic period,[72] and finds
references to place names in South Judah in the three names,
"Tirathites, Shimeathites, Sucathites".[73] More importantly
for the present purposes, he says, "Die allgemein akzeptierte
Kombination von רכב בית mit dem הרכבים בית(Jer. 35) ist nicht
annehmbar".[74] As he points out, the Rechabites elsewhere
traced their descent from Jonadab ben Rechab, not from the
Hammath called "father of Beth-Rechab" in 1 Chron. 2:55, and it
is not said anywhere else that the Rechabites were Kenites,[75]
ie. Hammath was not a Rechabite and the appellation אבי בית רכב
must denote something else.[76] Based on the use of אבי elsewhere
in the genealogical chapters of Chronicles, Klein argues that
Hammath was the founder or leader of a place called Beth-Rechab,
which he equates with Beth-Marcaboth, which was probably near
Beer-Sheba.[77]

Klein is to be commended for his careful reading of
1 Chron. 2:55, and he is almost certainly right in concluding
that Beth-Rechab in the verse does not refer to the Rechabites.
If he is right, then there are a number of important conse-
quences for the correct understanding of the Rechabites.   There
is no longer any evidence for them having been Kenites, nor any
for them having existed prior to the time of Jonadab, nor any
for the view that their discipline was some sort of conscious
re-imposition of the clan's ancestral practices. While not all
of Klein's opinions should be followed,[78] his contribution to
Rechabite studies is nevertheless highly significant indeed.

Unfortunately, Klein's views, like those of Winckler
almost 20 years earlier, went virtually unnoticed. The biblical
commentaries that appeared between 1926 and the outbreak of the
Second World War all show themselves ignorant of Klein's
article - Rothstein and Hänel's commentary on Chronicles accepted
that 1 Chron. 2:55 referred to the Rechabites, but was dubious
as to whether it referred to the Kenites.[79] The two major
commentaries on Jeremiah that appeared - those of Volz and Nöts-
cher - represent little more than a restatement of the usual
position typified by Budde and Flight.[80]

The period from the end of the War to the early 1960s
saw a steady stream of general works relevant to our subject,
and also two more specialized studies - one from Talmon and one
from Seidensticker[81] - but despite being so well-served in terms
of quantity, nothing really new was offered in terms of ideas.

Most commentators still subscribed to the "traditional view of
the Rechabites",[82] although a growing body of opinion was coming
to cast doubt on the connection between the Kenites and the
Rechabites (while nevertheless maintaining that the Rechabites
were nomadic), generally without any reference to the work of
Klein.[83]

Talmon's article was an attempt to reassert the link
between the Kenites and the Rechabites, this time on the basis
of comparative philology. He suggested that חמת in 1 Chron.
2:55 was not a proper name, but rather a construct noun meaning
'family-in-law'. While this shows commendable awareness of the
fact that Hammath, as a proper name, is nowhere else connected
with the Rechabites, it may wondered whether the evidence for
the existence of such a noun in biblical Hebrew, as proposed
by Talmon, is so flimsy as to render the idea improbable in the
extreme. For further consideration of Talmon's views, see 2.1
passim.

In the portion of his article devoted to the Rechab-
ites, Seidensticker accepts that the Rechabites' lifestyle was
a nomadic one[84] and, while he expresses some hesitation over
the accuracy of the textual transmission of 1 Chron. 2:55, he
nevertheless thinks that it is likely that the Rechabites were
not Israelites.[85] He further argues that there is nothing in
the biblical texts concerning the Rechabites that forces us to
interpret their nomadism as a reaction to Baalism. It was,
rather, a conscious clinging to their thus-far maintained
lifestyle, against the development of culture. He then crit-

icizes the view that sees the nomadism of the Rechabites as a binding to the desert-god Yahweh - the desert period of Israel's history does not appear ideal because it was nomadic and in the desert, but as it was the time when the relationship between Yahweh and the people was at its most pure (cf. Jer. 2:2).[86]

Seidensticker's view is only tenable if the Rechabites can be shown to have existed as a 'nomadic' group prior to the time of Jonadab, ie. if 1 Chron. 2:55 does link the Kenites and the Rechabites - an assumption which has already been questioned several times in the course of this chapter. He is also evidently of the opinion that it is possible to be a nomad without having any connection with the desert at all - a highly questionable assumption. Seidensticker has correctly perceived that there is no explicit connection between the Rechabites and the desert in the Bible, but nevertheless still wishes to call them 'nomads' - but surely nomadism and the desert are inextricably linked with each other? As was noted in the case of Budde,[87] there is a lack of terminological precision here - what exactly is meant by 'nomadism'?

Thus, by 1963, most scholars who had written anything about the Rechabites were still maintaining what has been called the "traditional view of the Rechabites", as expounded by Budde et al. They were seen as a Kenite clan, nomadic shepherds, and desert lovers, who were in some sense 'refounded' by Jonadab. There had been a few dissenting voices, notably Winckler and Klein, but they had gone largely unnoticed. The 'Nomadic Ideal' theory was also still maintaining its ground, and this served to reinforce the traditional view of the Rechab-

ites.

In 1964, however, Paul Riemann produced a devas-
tating critique of the whole 'Nomadic Ideal' hypothesis, in his
(unpublished) Ph.D. thesis, <u>Desert</u> <u>and</u> <u>Return</u> <u>to</u> <u>Desert</u> <u>in</u> <u>the</u>
<u>Pre-Exilic</u> <u>Prophets</u>.[88] He provides a useful summary of the
'Nomadic Ideal' literature, covering ground similar to, but
not identical with, the present survey up to this point, but
from a different standpoint. Concerning the Rechabites, he
observes that,

> the supposition of a Kenite ancestry for
> Jonadab ben Rechab – important to [Budde's]
> whole case – rests upon very slender support.[89]

And dealing with their supposed love of the desert, he writes,

> how can one reconcile the Rechabites'
> doctrinaire henotheism with their abode in
> the land, and their conviction that they were
> keeping their vow in order to deserve long
> life in the land (Jer. 35:7)? If the desert
> god had no hegemony over the land, why did
> the Rechabites live there, and how could they
> imagine that this desert god could give them
> length of life there?[90]

Riemann further correctly observes that we have no
proof that the Rechabites were shepherds,[91] and that we have

> no assurance that Budde was correct in
> associating [Jonadab's] oath with nomadism,
> since other interpretations are also possible.[92]

He lists his reasons for caution: (1) The Rechabites are
unlikely to have been herdsmen, as they fled to a fortified
city in time of war, and not to the steppe; (2) There is no

evidence that teetotalism was a trait of nomadic society; (3)

The purpose of the vow was to secure long life in the land. He

is aware of the much quoted passage in Diodorus Siculus about the

Nabataeans, but points out that the comparison is not an easy

one, because of the difference in time, the somewhat dubious

reliability of the Classical witnesses to the Nabataeans, the

different purposes of the two rules, and the eagerness with

which the Nabataeans adopted agriculture.[93] Riemann himself

suggests the following ways of viewing the Rechabites: as cultic

personnel, even from the days of Jonadab - "an order, or even

a family ... devoted to divine service in the Temple";[94] as

teetotal as a reaction against the orgiastic rites of Canaan;

as tent-dwellers through an interest in Holy War, or in the

role of the tent shrine in the tribal league.[95] At the conclu-

sion of his study, one subject which he suggests requires

further study and research is the Rechabites.[96]

The questions and points which Riemann raises are very

important, and his work is a significant contribution to the

study of the Rechabites - even if the Rechabites were not his

main area of research! The significance of his work lies not

in his own, extremely tentative, suggestions about the Rechab-

ites, but in his effective demolition of the "traditional view"

of them. It is hoped that the present, full-scale, system-

atic study of the Rechabites will go some considerable way to-

wards fulfilling Riemann's hope that further research would be

done in this area. His arguments against the connection of

the Rechabites with the Kenites or with the 'Nomadic Ideal'

are cogent and convincing, and it is regrettable that his

thesis remains unpublished, and so has had only a limited im-
pact on subsequent scholarship - as the rest of this survey will
demonstrate.

In a paper published in 1966, with the title 'The
Desert Motif in the Bible and in the Qumran Literature', Talmon
made another offering relevant to this survey of the Rechabites
in modern scholarship.[97] He took a line very similar to that
taken by Riemann, and challenged the notion that there was a
desert ideal in the Old Testament, typified by the Rechabites.
For him,

> the assumed existence in Biblical Society of
> a reform movement that advocated a return to
> the original nomad status ... is based upon
> historical premises and on sociological
> comparisons which cannot be maintained
> without far-reaching qualifications.[98]

Israel in the biblical period can never be described as a true
nomad society, and there is no evidence that the Israelites
ever went through a stage of true nomadism - even in Patri-
archal times, Israelite society bore the imprint of the semi-
settled life. The only other period that could have served as
the matrix for the 'desert motif' was the period of the wander-
ing in the Sinai peninsula, but in that period Israel is not
presented in the organisational pattern of a typically nomadic
society.[99]

Talmon additionally observed that the desert life is
not presented in the Bible as a social ideal - the representa-
tives of the Bedouin in the OT are Ishmael and Esau, who are

hardly paradigms for the biblical writers![100] The Rechabites,

he believed, cannot be adduced as evidence for a pre-supposed

prophetic 'desert ideal'. Their non-agricultural mode of life

was a reality, but not a motif, an occupation, but not a

vocation. To support this statement, Talmon cites 1 Chron.

4:38-41, 5:18-22 and 7:20-21, but whether this comparison is

simply intended to show that the Rechabites were not the only non-

agriculturalists in Israel, or whether it is meant to suggest

that they were pastoralists (as in 1 Chron. 4:38-41) or

warriors (as in 5:18-22 and 7:20f) is unclear. Talmon goes on

to accept that the Rechabites may have resisted the course of

cultural development which affected all Israel but, he observes,

we are nowhere told in the Bible of an effort to propagate their

views with missionary zeal – Jeremiah commends their obedience,

not their customs.[101]

Talmon is correct to dissociate the Rechabites from

the desert motif/nomadic ideal – there is no evidence to connect

them with the desert or with nomadism – but he is not necess-

arily correct to call their lifestyle "an occupation not a vo-

cation". If Talmon is correct in arguing that the Rechabites

resisted the course of cultural development, then they must be

seen as having done so by observing their peculiar practices,

which would then suggest that their lifestyle was a motif and a

vocation. And if Talmon is wrong in arguing this, there still

remains the possibility that the Rechabites' lifestyle was a

motif of something different and a vocation of a different sort.

The subsequent chapters of this thesis will show that it is

likely that the Rechabites did have such a different sort of

vocation.

Almost contemporary with Talmon, another Israeli scholar published an article on the Rechabites. As Abramsky's, 'The House of the Rechabites - Genealogy and Social Character', [102] is a long article, yet is not readily accessible to those who do not read modern Hebrew (the English summary hardly covers the whole of Abramsky's argument), a full summary of it is provided here.

One of Abramsky's opening assumptions is that the Rechabites were a clan, and he avowedly investigates them as a clan among the Kenites, Kenazzites and Calebites. He accepts that 1 Chron. 2:55 refers to both the Kenites and the Rechabites, but argues that the verse offers no evidence that the House of Rechab was ever identified with the Kenites.[103] Rather, the two groups were associated with each other. Abramsky notes Klein's view that בית רכב may refer to a dwelling place, thus becoming one of the few scholars who show any awareness of Klein's 1925 article, but thinks that it is equally possible that the whole 'house of the father', ie. the whole clan, was called בית רכב, and cites the use of בן־רכב in 2 Kings 10:15 as a parallel. He notes the difficulties of 'Hammath', and that it is traditionally associated with Hammath in Naphtali, which would indicate that the Rechabites, just like the Kenites, wandered far from their original home in Judah - as far as Galilee, in fact. 1 Chron. 2:55 does not refer to all the Kenites, but only to that portion of them that was in close proximity to the Rechabites. The הבאים מ' in the verse may be compared

with the use of הבאים בשמות, which means 'numbered', in

1 Chron. 4:38. Thus, the reference is, according to Abramsky,

to that portion of the Kenites that lived near, or else had

kin-ties with, the family of Hammath the father of the clan

Beth-Rechab.[104]

For Abramsky, the closeness of the Kenites and the

families of the scribes to Beth-Rechab in 1 Chron. 2:55 suggests

that the dwelling place of the Rechabites was on Mount Judah,

and not in the Negev. He expresses a preference for the reading

of LXX[BL] in 1 Chron. 4:12, which has "men of Rechab" for MT's

"men of Recha". The men of Rechab were thus also in close prox-

imity to the Kenazzites, who were also on Mount Judah.[105] The

date represented by these genealogical references is unclear.

In them, Beth-Rechab does not yet have the character of a

distinct tribe or sect, and the connections with the Kenites

and the Kenazzites must date from the period of the early mon-

archy, or perhaps even earlier.

> Accordingly, it is not impossible to think
> that, in the time of the United Kingdom,
> there was already a House of Rechab, a
> house of the father, with its presence
> upon the mountains of Judah.[106]

In the second part of his article, Abramsky goes on

to consider the evidence presented by 2 Kings 10 and Jeremiah 35.

There was a change in the House of Rechab in the days of the

Omrides - a change caused by Jonadab. Abramsky is of the

opinion that the rules in Jer. 35 were not the sum of Jonadab's commands, but were rather a representative sample. Jer. 35 commends the fidelity of the Rechabites, but not their customs.[107] The prohibition on wine was the central feature of Rechabite discipline: wine is the outstanding mark of agriculture (cf. Gen. 9:20) and also of the sedentary life (cf. Ps. 107:35-38), as a vine takes more than a year to grow to maturity. The basic form of abstinence is the avoidance of wine (Am. 2:12, cf. Num. 6:2-5). Thus, by their prohibition on wine, the Rechabites were distanced not only from agriculture, but also from celebrations and social gatherings (cf. Ps. 104:16, Judg. 9:27, 21:20, Dan. 10:3) - as is fitting for a separated sect. Wine was also a regular part of the Cult. Thus, the separation of the Rechabites was a protest against all ideas of permanent dwellings, abundance, good and merriment. Thus, they stand at variance with the prophets of Israel, who stood very close to the Rechabites in the days of Elijah and Elisha, and who used wine as a symbol of peace. It is impossible to say what the attitude of the Rechabites towards the Cult was, but there are hints in the rabbinic literature that they participated in the Second Temple Cult.[108]

The third section of the article deals with the economic occupations of the Rechabites. Abramsky is of the opinion that "dwelling in tents" (Jer. 35:7, 10) is a clue towards the correct understanding of the Rechabites' occupation. In the Bible, the 'tent' often denotes pasture and cattle, cf. Gen. 4:20-23, 25:29. Tent-dwelling is indicative of the life of the semi-nomad, not of the full nomadism of the hunter or the

wanderer.[109] The Rechabites thus dwelt alongside the

settled zones as semi-nomadic pastoralists, perhaps engag-

ing in barter. That they dwelt close to the settled zones

is revealed by their appearance in Jerusalem, and also by

2 Kings 10. The Rechabites had no 'Nomadic Ideal' in the

sense of dwelling in the wilderness.

In the days of Jeremiah, the Rechabites were ob-

viously small in number, but the clan was doubtless larger

in Jonadab's day. Jonadab was not only their father (אב)

in a genealogical sense, but also in the sense of 'teacher,

counsellor'[110] - and אב is used in the same way of Elijah

and Elisha also. This title could well have arisen in the

time of the Omrides. The Rechabites were distinguished from

the prophets in this period by their greater fanaticism and

asceticism. Jonadab founded a new sect in the days of Jehu,

which distanced itself, because of hatred for the Omrides,

from everything in which there was any hint of the power of

Baal. ·The precise nature of the relationship between the

'Sons of the Prophets' (הנביאים בני) and Rechab is unclear,

but it is to be noted that Jonadab is active alongside Jehu,

whereas Elisha is not.

Abramsky notes that there are interesting parallels

between Elijah and Jonadab: the language of zeal is associ-

ated with both; both are called 'my father'; and Elijah's

title, ופרשיו ישראל רכב, is very similar to Jonadab's

בן־רכב. רכב ישראל ופרשיו is a symbolic expression for

divine leadership, dating from the days of Elijah, Elisha,

and Jonadab. Jonadab received a similar title because the

name 'Rechab' was thus interpreted in his days. The Promise

to the Rechabites in Jer. 35:19 contains the same formula

as is used of Elijah and Elisha, namely 'to stand before

Yahweh', meaning 'unique service'.[111]

Abramsky also goes on to say that Jonadab was also

influential as a lawgiver, and that the Rechabites'state-

ment of obedience in Jer. 35:10 is covenantal. He regards Jer.

35 as having a deuteronomistic style, and thinks that the

conclusion to Jer. 35:7 is a phrase from the Decalogue (Exod.

20:12, Deut. 5:16). As in Deuteronomy, obedience ensures

preservation.[112]

The Rechabites were not 'missionaries'. They with-

drew to the fringes of society, and it cannot be told for

certain whether they played a part in the life of the king-

dom. The sect of the Rechabites was a unique phenomenon in

the Near East in the biblical period. They may have been the

descendents of the Nazirites. In their social abstinence and

discipline, Abramsky sees the Rechabites as forerunners of

the sects which arose in Israel in the Second Temple period.

113

The broad sweep of Abramsky's article is clear,

but it is also evident that he seems to have cast his net so

wide that he includes what are, in fact, contradictory

opinions. Thus, he seems to accept the idea that Hammath in

in 1 Chron. 2:55 is to be linked with the place Hammath in

Naphtali, but he also speaks of the family of Hammath the
father of Beth-Rechab, ie. he also views Hammath as a per-
son! He regards the Rechabites as an ancient clan, but
later says that they were a new sect founded in the days of
Jehu. He sees 'Rechab' as the ancient clan name, but also
as a prophetic title similar to the one held by Elijah and
Elisha.

As has been shown, this use of the same piece of
data in more than one way, and the collection of mutually
contradictory opinions within the same article, have
plagued Rechabite scholarship right from the days of Calvin.
In the main, it arises from a belief that 1 Chron. 2:55,
which contains material at variance with that contained in
Jer. 35 and 2 Kings 10, nevertheless actually refers to the
Rechabites. The legitimacy of this belief has already been
questioned several times in the course of this chapter, and
will be worked out in detail in Chapter Two.

Abramsky's use of the tent as an indicator of
semi-nomadic pastoralism is also open to question. The term
'semi-nomadic' is singularly ill-defined, and is thus even
less helpful than the term 'nomadic' (itself not very well
defined!) and, in any case, Norman Gottwald has convincingly
shown that the tent is not an unambiguous indicator of
pastoralism.[114]

'The House of the Rechabites - Genealogy and
and Social Character' does have its merits, however.

Abramsky's spelling out of the possible links between the

Rechabites and the Sons of the Prophets is to be commended,

as is his contention that abstinence from wine is not simply

an indication of the avoidance of agriculture.

Abramsky also wrote the article, 'Rechabites',

for the Encyclopaedia Judaica, which appeared in 1971,[115]

but expressed no opinions different from those expressed in

his earlier, longer article.

The beginning of the 1970s saw the emergence of

one of the more significant commentators on the Rechabites,

Frank Frick, who has stated his views on them no fewer than

three times: in his 1970 Ph.D. thesis (published in 1977) on

the city in the Old Testament; in an article in JBL in 1971;

and in the article on the Rechabites in the IDB Supplement-

ary Volume, which appeared in 1976.[116] He seems to have been

one of the first people to have made significant use of Rie-

mann's arguments, and his views have won some support,

notably from Gottwald (who has lamented the fact that Frick's

views have largely gone unnoticed).[117] In his thesis,

Frick suggested that the Rechabites were motivated by the

ideology of Holy War, and practiced their discipline for

that reason. In his 1971 article, however, he took a some-

what different line, and contended that the Rechabites were,

in fact, a group of itinerant metalworkers.

His arguments run as follows: 2 Kings 10:15f

gives no indication that Jonadab ben Rechab was a represent-

ative of a 'Nomadic Ideal', or that he lived a nomadic ex-
istence. If he had played a significant role in Jehu's coup,
he would doubtless have been rewarded with a place in Jehu's
administration. The name 'Jonadab' consists of the Theo-
phoric element and the root נדב. All other holders of names
using this root in the monarchical period were members of the
urban nobility, which suggests that Jonadab himself was a
member of this class. The rest of his name, בן־רכב, sug-
gests to Frick that Jonadab was a member (בן) of a trade guild.
[118] The Ugaritic phrase hrš-mrkbt means 'wainwright', which
suggests that Jonadab was also a chariot-maker or driver.
This contention is supported by Klein's claim that 'Rechab'
denotes a place name, Beth-Marcaboth, probably one of the
places where Solomon manufactured and stored his chariots.[119]
The narrative of 2 Kings 10 suggests to Frick, on the basis
of Josephus' account of the meeting between Jehu and Jonadab,
found in Antt.IX.6.6., that the two men had had a former ac-
quaintance with each other, in the royal chariotry.[120]

He went on to suggest that the cultural traits of
the Rechabites, narrated in Jer. 35:6f, could be inter-
preted as being those of a guild of craftsmen, specifically
those of a guild of metalworkers involved in the manufacture
of chariots - the nature of a smith's work would have pre-
vented him from "establishing a permanent domicile or en-
gaging in agriculture",[121] and the injunction to teetotalism
could have been designed to guard against the divulgence of
trade secrets under the influence of alcohol. (Frick is not
actually being original here. This idea of the Rechabites as
metalworkers goes back at least as far as Gray's commentary

on Kings.)[122]

Frick found support for his contention in 1 Chron. 2:55 and 4:12 (LXX[BL]) – he regarded the Rechabites as being linked with the Kenites, whom he viewed as smiths.

Frick is to be commended for his vigorous assertions against the assumptions

> (1) that abstention from intoxicants is
> a distinctive trait of a nomadic society;
> (2) that tent-dwelling necessarily involves
> nomadism; and (3) that the disdaining of
> agriculture is a sure sign of nomadism.[123]

He may also be commended for his observation that there is no evidence for the Rechabites having been shepherds,[124] but his approach is open to criticism on the following grounds: his assumption that 1 Chron. 2:55 and 4:12 have to do with the Rechabites; his opinion that רכב must be connected with chariot-<u>manufacture</u> – it could just as easily be understood as having a connection with the chariot imagery found in connection with Elijah and Elisha (an area not even mentioned by Frick); his uncritical acceptance of Josephus' interpretation of 2 Kings 10; and his failure to integrate the conclusion of Jer. 35:7 ("that you may live many days in the land wherein you are sojourners") into his argument. These and other points will be taken up at the relevant points in the suceeding chapters.

None of the three articles on the Rechabites which have appeared since Frick proposed that they were metalworkers have taken up his arguments, although they have been mention-

ed, or even followed,in some of the recent commentaries,[125]

while others have tended to keep to the traditional line,[126]

or to some variant of it.[127]

The first of those three articles on the Rechabites

to appear since Frick published his proposals was a study of

the _form_ of Jer. 35:18f by J.D.Levenson in 1976.[128] He

suggested that the closest analogue to Jer. 35:18f within the

Book of Jeremiah itself is to be found in the promise to the

Levitical priests in 33:17f, and then went on to claim that

both derive from the language of covenant,[129] more speci-

fically from the language of the 'Covenant of Grant',

identified by Moshe Weinfeld.[130] Levenson cited 2 Sam. 7:14f

and Ps. 89:31-38 as parallel instances of this type of coven-

ant.[131] In such a covenant of grant,

> the outstanding fidelity of one generation
> against a background of epidemic faithless-
> ness wins for the clan the gift of eternal
> survival.[132]

Obviously, Levenson's purpose is simply to classify

correctly the material in Jer. 35:18f, so he stands a

little outside the stream of interpretation of the Rechabites

themselves. Thus, he only mentions three other commentators

on the Rechabites.[133] Levenson's contribution is, however,

a significant step towards a clearer understanding of the

Promise to the Rechabites - and hence towards a clearer under-

standing of the Rechabites themselves - and his arguments

will be utilised when Jer. 35:18f is examined more fully in

Chapter Three.

Two years after Levenson's article appeared, J.T.Cummings read a paper entitled 'The House of the Sons of the Prophets and the Tents of the Rechabites' to the 1978 Studia Biblica conference in Oxford.[134] His starting point was the 'Floating Axehead' story in 2 Kings 6:1-7, which he suggested reflected counter-polemic against attitudes hostile to building permanent constructions, an attitude reflected both by Nathan's oracle to David in 2 Sam. 7:4-6 and by the Rechabites.[135] He went on to suggest that there are other indications of a connection and rivalry between the Rechabites and Elisha: both Elijah and the Rechabites were itinerant; the title 'Father', used of Jonadab, is a prophetic one; the events of Jer. 35 occur within the chamber of a 'man of God' - another prophetic title; the Promise to the Rechabites is "both reminiscent of the oath formula of Elijah and Jeremiah's own designation of his prophetic role at his re-commissioning";[136] and the designation of Jonadab as בֶּן־רֵכָב, 'Son of the Rider', may be compared with the designation of Elijah and Elisha as רֶכֶב יִשְׂרָאֵל וּפָרָשָׁיו.[137]

Cummings further argued that Elisha originated, or at least sanctioned, an innovation among the prophetic guilds, which resulted in a split and rivalry - and 2 Kings 6:1-7 is a story legitimising that action.[138] There are traces of this elsewhere in the text: 2 Kings 10 depicts Jonadab playing the part that 1 Kings 19:17 leads us to expect Elisha to play. Jonadab is thus pictured in the text

as a counterpart to Elijah ... a rival

to Elisha, a rival for the prophetic
leadership left vacant by Elijah, a
rival in his actions as a successor
carrying on Elijah's struggle against
the prophets of Baal, a rival possibly
even in the appellation 'Son of Rechab'.[139]

Of course, the idea of a connection between Elijah,
Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets on the one hand, and Jon-
adab and the Rechabites on the other, is not new - it has
already come up several times in the course of this survey
of the Rechabites in modern scholarship, notably in the writ-
ings of Plumptre and Abramsky - but Cummings has presented it
from a fresh angle, and in a particularly cogent way. This
idea will be explored in greater depth in Chapters 2-4.

The most recent article to appear on the Rechabites
is 'Die Rekabitischen Haussklaven in Jeremia 35', published
by Kh.H.Keukens in 1983.[140] As the title suggests, Keukens
takes a novel line. His starting point is הרכבים בּית־בני in
Jer. 35:5 which, on the basis of בּני־בּית in Eccles. 2:7 and
בּן־בּית in Gen. 15:2f, he interprets as denoting persons with
a lower legal status, ie. house-slaves. He links גּרים in
Jer. 35:7 with בּיתי גּרי, Job 19:15, which he understands as
strangers in the land, who are of a lower legal status, but
enjoying the protection of a household. From its use in Ps.
68:6, Job 29:16, Is. 22:21, he concludes that אב in Jer.
35 is to be understood as a legal term.[141]

He further argued that צוה + על , used in Jer. 35,
denotes a command where the one who gives the command is not

bound by the terms of that command himself, cf. Gen. 2:16,

28:6, 2 Chron 19:9, where the command not only prohibits,

but also allows something new. Keukens applies this to the

Rechabites: Jonadab allows them the status of protected

burghers.[142] For Keukens, on the basis of Deut. 28:39, Am.

5:1, Mic. 6:15, a permanent prohibition on drinking wine

must be seen as being secular, and not sacred, and denoting

a lower social class: Jonadab's prohibition ensures that the

Rechabites will not attain the status of free burghers.

Home-building and agriculture would lead to economic pros-

perity, and hence to emancipatory movements among the lower

classes, and so they are forbidden to the Rechabites.[143] The

Rechabites complied so willingly with these conditions, be-

cause in return for them they received the status of 'pro-

tected burghers', which compared with their former msiery

was absolute luxury.[144]

Keukens thinks that the Rechabites were descended

from the Rechab who appears in 2 Sam. 4 and, hence, that they

came from one of the southern kingdoms ruled by Judah.[145] He

views Jonadab as a Yahwistic military leader, an officer in

the Judaean army who was acting as a rearguard for the

Judaean mission murdered by Jehu (2 Kings 10:12-14). Jonadab

avoided a similar fate because of his former friendship with

Jehu, and because he joined the revolt.[146] The phrase עמד

לפני in the Promise to the Rechabites (Jer. 35:19) indicates

that the Rechabites were permitted to live in Yahweh's cult-

ivated land as burghers with rights and duties, while the

other Kenite clans had to live ‎מֵעֵדֶן‎(Gen. 4:16).[147]

Keukens is to be commended for his ingenuity, but
not for his opinions: he is unaware of the text-critical prob-
lems of ‎בֵּי־בֵּית הָרֵכָבִים‎; his interpretation of ‎גָּרֵי בֵיתִי‎
in Job 19:15 is not universally accepted; he makes much of the
use of ‎עַל + צָוָה‎ in Jer. 35, despite his admission that in
Jeremiah ‎עַל + צָוָה‎ and ‎אֶל+ צָוָה‎ are interchangeable; he fails
to notice the permanent, 'religious' Nazirate envisaged in
the stories of Samson (cf. Judg. 13:3-5) and Samuel (1 Sam.
1:11 LXX), as well as in Am. 2:12f; and there is no evi-
dence that ‎עֲמֹד לִפְנֵי יהוה‎ ever denoted "living in Yahweh's
land" - whether as burghers or otherwise - in biblical Hebrew.
These criticsms will be spelt out in detail in the relevant
sections of the exegetical notes and, in the first case, in
the text- and form-critical notes, to Jeremiah 35 (Chapter
Three) but, when listed as a whole, they make Keukens'
whole argument untenable and, in fact, he calls his whole
argument

> nur ein Spiel mit der Übersetzungsmög-
> lichkeit "hausgeborner Sklave" für
> ‎בֶן בַּיִת‎/‎יְלִיד בַּיִת‎/‎גַּר בַּיִת‎, die auch
> in Jer. 35 anzuwenden ist.[148]

It is clear that no consensus of opinion exists in
current scholarship concerning the Rechabites. Despite the
fact that Budde's 'Nomadic Ideal' hypothesis was effectively
discredited more than twenty years ago by Riemann and Talmon,
the view that the Rechabites were Kenite pastoral nomads who

worshipped the desert deity Yahweh is still advocated in some commentaries and general Old Testament works today. Among the specialist articles that have appeared in the 'post-Riemann' period, there is little unity on questions concerning the origins and the nature of the Rechabites - Abramsky's views contradict themselves; Frick believes that the Rechabites were metalworkers; Cummings that they were prophets; Keukens that they were Jonadab's house-slaves. This bewildering variety of views, views which seem to have little interest in entering into dialogue with each other, arises from the fact, noted at the beginning of this chapter, that as yet no full-scale study of the Rechabites, as a subject in their own right, has been undertaken, critically examining all the available data. The following three chapters of this thesis will offer such a study of the Rechabites in the Bible, beginning where all biblical scholarship should begin, with the texts themselves, which will be the subject of study in Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Four will then focus attention on some of the more general issues raised by the study of those biblical texts, so that a picture of 'The Rechabites in the Bible' may be drawn.

CHAPTER TWO: THE RECHABITES IN THE BIBLE OUTSIDE JEREMIAH 35

The biblical texts which mention, or have been
thought to mention, the Rechabites, and thus which need to
be studied in depth in the course of this study, are Jeremiah
35 _passim_, 1 Chronicles 2:55 and 4:12, Nehemiah 3:14, 2
Samuel 4:1-12 and 2 Kings 10:15f, 23. As Jeremiah 35 is
longer than all the other references put together, and as it
contains more information important for the study of the
Rechabites than all the other references put together, con-
sideration of it is reserved for a separate chapter. The
purpose of the present chapter is to consider the remaining
biblical references. The order in which these references are
examined - 1 Chron. 2:55, 4:12, Neh. 3:14, 2 Sam. 4,
2 Kings 10 - is by no means arbitrary. Rather, it reflects
the conclusion, to be established as each text is investi-
gated in turn, that only the last - 2 Kings 10:15f, 23 -
preserves material that actually does deal with the Rechabites,
and that the others, although the name 'Rechab' appears in
all of them, have nothing, in fact, to do with the Rechab-
ites at all.

2.1: 1 CHRONICLES 2:55

As the previous chapter has shown, most scholars
have taken it for granted that 1 Chronicles 2:55 links the
Rechabites with the Kenites. Budde, and those who followed
his line, used the verse to support their contention that
the origins of the Rechabites in Israel were very ancient.[1]

Abramsky used it to claim that the Rechabites and the Kenites

lived in close proximity to each other,[2] while Frick, Gray,

and Gottwald have all used it as part of their argument that

the Rechabites were itinerant metalworkers.[3] None of these

scholars, however, have offered a full exegesis of the verse,

in order to demonstrate precisely how, in their estimation,

it proves that the Rechabites and the Kenites were connect-

ed. Recent commentators on the Books of Chronicles, such

as Rudolph, Myers and Wiliamson, view the verse as being

very difficult, and express caution about arriving at a

definitive conclusion as to the verse's meaning.[4] A very

few scholars, such as Klein,[5] have concluded that 1 Chron.

2:55 contains no mention of the Rechabites at all.

Obviously, the verse is an important one for the

correct understanding of our group, who are not connected

with the Kenites elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. If 1 Chron.

2:55 does mention the Rechabites, and if it does link them

genealogically with the Kenites, then the arguments of both

Budde and Frick gain in force. If, however, the verse does

not mention the Rechabites, or link them with the Kenites,

then a serious question mark appears over any view which

seeks to interpret the Rechabites by means of data proper to

the Kenites.

The following, in-depth analysis of the verse will

first evaluate the Text and Versions of 1 Chronicles 2:55,

before moving to a word-by-word commentary, in an attempt to

elucidate its true meaning.

The Text of 1 Chronicles 2:55, according to the various Versions, is as follows:

Massoretic Text:

$$\text{וּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת סֹפְרִים יֹשְׁבֵו יַעְבֵּץ תִּרְעָתִים}$$
$$\text{שִׁמְעָתִים שׂוּכָתִים הֵמָּה הַקִּינִים הַבָּאִים מֵחַמַּת}$$
$$\text{אֲבִי־בֵית־רֵכָב}$$

There is a <u>Kethiv</u>/<u>Qere</u> variant in the verse, the <u>Kethiv</u> reading יֹשְׁבוּ, the <u>Qere</u> יֹשְׁבֵי.

Septuagint:

πατριαι γραμματων κατοικουντας Ιαβες,
Θαργαθιιμ, σαμαθιιμ, σουκαθιιμ. ουτοι οἱ
Κιναιοι οἱ ἐλθοντες ἐκ μεσημα πατρος
οἰκου ρηχαβ.

For μεσημα, read by Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus reads ἐξ αἱμαθ. For ρηχαβ, B reads ρηχα.

Vulgate:

Cognationes quoque scribarum habitantium
in Jabez, canentes atque resonantes et in
tabernaculis commorantes. Hi sunt Cinaei,
qui venerunt de Calore patris domus Rechab.

Old Latin:

... Hi sunt qui venerunt de Calore domus
patris Rechab.

Peshitta: Not extant.

Targum:

$$\text{וגניסת סופרי רבתא דהבין בר אלצריר בר משה}$$
$$\text{תלמידא דרעיעץ הוא עזרא הות בר קין רבון}$$
$$\text{יעבץ הוו חיין ליה ודארון בקיתין בת־צרעה}$$
$$\text{תרבצה לתלמידא דרעתא תרעתים הוו חיין}$$
$$\text{להון דהוה קהלין במשבהתון הי כאבבא}$$
$$\text{שמעתים דהוון מתברין אפין בסניעתא}$$

ס/רכוֹ־ס דוֹיי דוֹהֹ־ מסﬥﬥ־ן היוּדⁱ בﬧﬡﬡ נבﬡⁱﬡ הﬧﬡ ﬡﬡⁱﬡ ﬡﬡⁱ

שﬦﬠﬡⁱ בﬡⁱ צﬧﬠﬡ דﬡﬡ־ﬡﬠﬡ־ﬡ ﬠﬦ

גﬡⁱⁱ־ס ﬡﬡⁱﬠ־ס לﬡⁱﬡ־דﬡﬡ־ן מﬧﬧ־ﬠﬥ־ﬡ מﬠﬥ שﬠה

ﬧﬠﬡﬡⁱ ﬦﬡﬡ־ן דⁱﬡﬧﬡﬡ־בﬠﬡ ﬦﬡﬥ־ן דﬡﬡﬧ־ⁱ ﬧﬥﬦﬡⁱ־ן

ﬡﬧﬠﬡﬡ־כﬡ־ן

English Translation (RSV):

The families also of the scribes that dwelt
at Jabez, the Tirathites, the Shimeathites,
and the Sucathites. These are the Kenites
who came from Hammath, the father of the
House of Rechab.

Textually, none of the Versions, with the except-
ion of the Old Latin, presents a different text from that
represented by the MT. As Talmon has shown,[6] the LXX readings
εκ μεσημα /εξ αιμαθ reveal a <u>Vorlage</u> identical with the MT,
ie. מחמת. The omission of the final β on ρηχαβ by LXX[B] is
slightly odd, especially as it is Codex B (and Lucian) that
read(s) ρηχαβ in 4:12, where the other LXX manuscripts
read ρηφα. Note, however, that in 2 Samuel 4:2, 5, 6, 9,
LXX[-B] reads ρηχαβ throughout, whereas B, after reading
ρηχαβ in v.2, then reads ρεκχα in vv.5,6 and 9. This
suggests that LXX[B] regarded רכב and רכה as interchangeable
variants of the same name, and not as two different names.

The Vulgate reads a preposition 'in' before 'Jabez',
but this is no indication that a preposition was present in
Jerome's Hebrew text at this point: יעבץ ⁱⁱⁱשﬨﬡ (following
the <u>Qere</u>) would most naturally be rendered into Latin by
'habitantium in Jabez'.

The Old Latin omission of הקינים and the inversion
of בית and אבי , are also slightly curious, but not inex-
plicable. הקינים has been lost by Homoioarcton, the trans-
lator's eye having jumped from the initial ה of הקינים to the
initial ה of הבאים. The fact that both words end in ים
may have facilitated this process. The translator understood
הבאים מ' as a geographical term, correctly (as will be
shown below), but then felt that חמת (='Calore', cf. Ps.
19:7) was a place name, rather than a personal name, which
made the following אבי בית רכב somewhat ridiculous, so he
inverted the אבי and the בית to make the verse say that the
father of Rechab, as well as the Tirathites, Shimeathites
and Sucathites, came from Hammath.

The Targum is really a piece of Midrash, so ascer-
taining its precise underlying Hebrew text is impossible, but
it seems probable that it was identical with the MT. The
text of the Targum may be explained as follows: Hebrew
משפחות – Targum answers the question, 'which families?'
Targum הרבית derives from the assonantal רכב at the end of
the verse.[7] הרבית is found in the MT at 1 Chron. 23:17,
24:21 and 26:25, where he is the son of Eliezer, the son of
Moses. Targum makes Jabez into a person, and gives him dis-
ciples, in accord with the rabbinic traditions about Jabez.
For Othniel, see 4:13. A pun on יעבץ leads to עצתיה,
'his initiative'. Targum שלמאי בני צפרה for MT הקינים.
Salma is found in 1 Chron. 2:52, 54; Zipporah was a Kenite.
The Targumist thus strengthens the supposed link between the

Kenites and the Rechabites. The Levites in the Targum appear

because Rekhabiah is a Levite in 1 Chron. 23:17, 24:21, 26:

25. Their appearance may also have something to do with the

Targumic and rabbinic traditions that the Rechabites became

priests.[8] The Targum's 'riders and chariots' is derived from

MT's רכב, but there may also be a link with the title

'the Chariotry of Israel and its Riders', held by Elijah and

Elisha - Moses' merit was greater than theirs.

Having established that there are no textual vari-

ants which witness to a Hebrew text different from that found

in the Massoretic Text, a word-by-word analysis of the

verse may now be undertaken.

ומשפחות ספרים : As it stands in the MT, ספרים

is vocalised as סֹפְרִים, 'scribes'. Klein saw this as evi-

dence for the existence of scribes in the pre-exilic period;

Kittel thought that it denoted scribes in the post-exilic sense,[9]

Richter was of the opinion that the necessary settledness of

the scribal profession was incompatible with the nomadic life-

style of the Rechabites, and emended ספרים to הָאֲסוּרִים,

which he rendered as 'the Abstainers', ie. the Rechabites.[10]

However, the Qal passive participle of the root אסר is gen-

erally used of being bound in prison, fetters, etc. Only

in Num. 30 does אסר appear with a figurative meaning, de-

noting the obligation of an oath or vow, but the passive

participle is not used there to denote one who has taken such

a vow and, in any case, Num. 30 has nothing to do with the

Rechabites. It seems a highly dubious exercise to emend ספרים

into a word which has a meaning otherwise unattested in bibli-

cal Hebrew. It is also hard to see how הָאֱמֹרִים could have

become corrupted into סֹפְרִים.

More feasible is Rudolph's proposal to read סְפָרִים,

with the meaning 'men of Kiriath Sepher', for סֹפְרִים.[11]

It is unlikely that scribes ever lived in one single place –

and a remote one at that (Jabez is only mentioned elsewhere

in 1 Chron. 4:9f, where it is a personal, not a place,

name). As Rudolph charmingly puts it, "Schriftgeleherte

wird man nicht zuerst in einem Landheim suchen".[12] While

it is true that some occupational groups in Ancient Israel

did live together as craft guilds, this cannot have been

true of the scribes, for whom dispersion throughout other

places of business and trade was of the essence of their

craft. That סֹפְרִים appears here without the definite article

would be more readily explicable if it were a gentilic rather

than the title of an occupational group. Kiriath Sepher was

a Calebite city (Josh. 15:13f, Judg. 1:11f), and 1 Chron.

2:55 occurs within the context of a Calebite genealogy (cf.

2:18-20, 50a-55). Hence, Rudolph's proposed change in point-

ing is adopted here, and סְפָרִים מִשְׁפְּחוֹת is understood as

'And the clans of the Sepherites'.

יֹשְׁבֵי : It seems preferable to follow the Qere, as

the Kethiv entails understanding or inserting a בְּ before the

following יַעְבֵּץ. יַעְבֵּץ יֹשְׁבֵי stands in apposition to the pre-

ceeding וּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת סְפָרִים.

יַעְבֵּץ : As noted above, 'Jabez' reappears only in
4:9f, where it is a personal name. Despite the rabbinic
traditions understanding יַעְבֵּץ as a personal name in 2:55
also,[13] it is evident that it is intended to be a place name
here, even if the place 'Jabez' is yet to be identified.
Within the biblical genealogies, there is often a degree of
fluidity between personal and place names. The place Jabez
may have been in Judah.

תִּרְעָתִים שִׁמְעָתִים שׂוּכָתִים : None of these three names
are elsewhere attested. Klein made a brave attempt to dis-
cover South Judaean place names in them, an attempt which is
more ingenious than convincing.[14] The Vulgate and Kittel[15]
both argue that they denote occupations, but in so doing they
are simply following rabbinic Haggadic exegesis,[16] which is
unlikely to have had a basis in historical reality. It seems
best to follow Rudolph, and to view these names as clan
names and nothing more.[17]

הֵמָּה הַקִּינִים : There is virtual unanimity among schol-
ars that הַקִּינִים denotes the Kenites (usually הַקֵּינִים). As
Abramsky puts it, "there is no reason for not identifying the
Kinites of this text with the Kenites".[18] The הֵמָּה clearly
indicates that only a portion of the tribe of the Kenites is
being referred to, viz. the three named clans.

הַבָּאִים מֵ: Elsewhere in the Old Testament, √ בוא
followed by מִן seems to have had a usage that was literally
spatial. It is used of individuals, eg. of Jacob coming

from Paddan Aram (Gen. 33:18); of communities (cf. 2 Sam.
15:18); of the elements (of water, 2 Kings 3:20; of a storm,
Is. 10:3; of smoke, Is. 14:31); of Yahweh, or God, in
anthropomorphic imagery (cf. Is. 63:1, Hab. 3:3); and of
wisdom (Job 28:20). It is used of a 'word' in 2 Sam. 15:28,
but again the meaning is a spatial one - the 'word', ie. a
message, would have to be brought by someone. Deut. 32:17
should be excluded from consideration, as the sense 'recent-
ly' applies to מִקָּרֹב as a combined preposition. Thus, there
is no metaphorical use of בוֹא followed by מן elsewhere in the
Old Testament, which makes it unlikely that its use in 1
Chron. 2:55 is genealogical in meaning. Abramsky compares
the use of הַבָּאִים לֵ here with that of הַבָּאִים בְּשֵׁמוֹת in 1 Chron.
4:38, and suggest that both mean the same as הַבָּרוּרִים, 'that
were numbered'.[19] Talmon, who thinks that חמת is a cons-
truct noun meaning 'family-in-law' (see below), argues that,
just as בוֹא followed by אֶל in 1 Chron. 2:21, and probably
also 2:24 (see LXX), denotes the establishment of marital
kin-ties between the Calebites and the inhabitants of Gilead
and Ephrath, by the 'male' element, ie. the Calebites,
moving into the territory of the 'female' element, so בוֹא
followed by מן in 2:55 reveals that, in the case of the
Calebite-Kenite alliance, the 'female' partner, ie the
Kenites, moved into the territorial domain of the 'male'
partner, ie. the Rechabites.[20] In the light of the usage of
בוֹא + מן elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, both of these argu-
ments seem somewhat spurious. In particular, it is difficult
to understand how "the Kenites who came from ... the father
of the House of Rechab" (leaving חמת aside for the moment)

can denote the movement of the Kenites <u>into</u> Rechabite terri-
tory. Also, if בוא followed by אל may denote the con-
summation of a marriage, then, surely, if it <u>did</u> have a
metaphorical meaning, בוא followed by מן would have to
denote the very opposite, <u>ie</u>. divorce? In addition, it
is anything but clear what Talmon is trying to denote by
'male' and 'female' in his description of clan relationships
- does 'male' denote the stronger clan, and 'female' the
weaker, or does 'male' denote the moving clan, and 'female'
the static one?

Usage, however, suggests that, in fact, the
meaning of הבאים מ' in 1 Chron. 2:55 has nothing to do with
genealogy at all, but to do with geography, as in all the
other cases in the Hebrew Bible where בוא is followed by מן.
It denotes a group of Kenites who were once in some sort of
geographical proximity to חמת אבי בית רכב (however <u>that</u>
phrase is understood), but at some stage have moved to an-
other dwelling place; hence they may be said to have 'come
from' חמת אבי בית רכב.

This observation, seemingly unoticed by other
commentators, that הבאים מ' in 1 Chron. 2:55 has nothing
to do with genealogy, but to do with geography, already
renders untenable those views which have seen the Rechabites
as a Kenite clan. As the verse is to do with geographical,
not kinship, links, the view of Abramsky, that this verse
demonstrates that the Rechabites and the Kenites lived in
close proximity to each other, may perhaps seem to be the

correct one.[21] The rest of this study of 1 Chron. 2:55 will,

however, reveal that not only does the verse not link the

Kenites and the Rechabites genealogically, but also that a

good case can be made for arguing that it does not, in fact,

refer to the Rechabites at all, but to the place from which

this group of Kenites came.

חמת : The Versions and most commentators understand

חמת either as a personal name, or else as a place name.

Thus, LXX[B] reads εκ μεσημα(rendering the מ prefix twice

over - translating it (εκ), and then transliterating it

(με)), evidently understanding it as a personal name,

as elsewhere in the OT, where Hammath appears as a place

name, it is rendered in the Greek by εμμαθ or αιμαθ,

which is adopted by LXX[A] here, evidently understanding Ham-

math as a place name, presumably the well-known Hammath in

Naphtali (Josh. 19:35).

אבי בית רכב , however, makes little sense after

a place name, so Talmon seeks to derive חמת(מ), as a

construct noun, from the root חמ(ה), and proposes the

existence of a noun חמת, meaning 'family', especially

denoting the relationship between a husband's family and his

wife. He cites the use חמ, meaning husband's father in

relation to his son's wife, in Gen. 38:13,25, and of חמות,

husband's mother in relation to her son's wife, ten times

in the Book of Ruth. He also mentions that an equivalent

noun can be found both Akkadian (ḥammutu) and Syriac

(חמותא).[22]

The NEB follows Talmon's lead, and renders this half of the verse as "these were the Kenites who were connected by marriage with the ancestor of the Rechabites". Talmon further argues that Jehonadab the son of Rechab was so well-known that the author of 1 Chron. 2:55 did not feel it necessary to mention him by name.

Objections may be raised to Talmon's interpretation. Firstly, such a noun is not attested elsewhere in the Old Testament genealogies – if it were a well-established term, its appearance elsewhere in the lists would be expected. Secondly, it has already been shown that בוא followed by מן had a purely spatial meaning for the biblical writers, so it cannot have the meaning ascribed to it by Talmon. Thirdly, is it really true to say that Jonadab ben Rechab would have been so well-known that his name would not be required in such a genealogical list? While it is true, as Budde pointed out,[23] that the author of 2 Kings 10:15f evidently believed that his readers would be already familiar with Jonadab, it is also true that what is permitted in narrative is not permitted in genealogy, where names are all-important. Talmon cites 1 Chron. 8:29, "the father of Gibeon dwelt in Gibeon, and the name of his wife was Maacah", as evidence for the omission of a father's name in a genealogy,[24] but 1 Chron. 8:29 has a doublet in 9:35, where the name of the father of Gibeon _does_ appear, so it has either fallen out of 8:29 by accident,[25] or else the compiler has deliberately omitted it in 8:29, as it was going to appear in

9:25. There is no such doublet to 2:55.

אָבִי : אָבִי , 'father', is capable of a broad range

of meanings in the Old Testament, so ascertaining its correct

meaning here is by no means straightforward. However, the

formula 'X the father of Y' is common in the genealogical

lists in Chronicles. Particularly illuminating for the pres-

ent purposes are 1 Chron. 2:52f and 4:5ff, where X is record-

ed as having offspring, but his offspring do not include Y:

> 2:52f: Shobal the father of Kiriath-
> jearim had other sons: Haroeh, half of
> the Menuhoth. And the families of
> Kiriath-jearim: the Ithrites, the Puthites,
> the Shumathites and the Mishraites ... (RSV)

> 4:5ff: Ashhur, the father of Tekoa, had
> two wives, Helah and Naarah; Naarah bore him
> Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni and Haahashtani.
> These were the sons of Naarah. The sons of
> Helah: Zereth, Izhar and Ethnan. (RSV)

These two texts strongly suggest that, in the majority of

instances in 1 Chron. 1-9, the formula 'X the father of Y'

denotes not blood paternity, but the leader or founder of a

particular geographical place or area. Other than in 2:42f

and 4:11f, in the rest of the occurrences of 'X the father

of Y' in the genealogical lists, the formula finishes the

reference to that clan, which also srongly suggests that

חַמָּת אָבִי בֵּית רֵכָב is more likely to denote "Hammath the founder/

leader of the place Beth-Rechab" than "Hammath the ancestor

of the Rechabites". Both Klein and Rudolph understand the

reference in this way.[26]

בֵּ֣ית רֵכָב : As just indicated, Rudolph and Klein are
probably right in seeing in בֵּ֣ית רֵכָב the name of a place.
As Rudolph points out,[27] this is certainly how the LXX of
4:12 understood בֵּ֣ית רֵכָב in 2:55 - 4:12 LXX[BL] concludes,
"these are the men of Rechab", and probably reflects the
original reading.[28] Klein suggests, with some plausibility,
that Beth-Rechab is the same place as Beth-Marcaboth, known
from Josh. 19:5 and 1 Chron. 4:31. In both of these refer-
ences, Beth-Marcaboth occurs adjacent to Hazar-Susah/Susim,
the locality of which is known, even if that of Beth-Marcaboth
is not. Hazar-Susah is Khirbet Abu Suseim, a little west
of Beer-Sheba.[29] It seems reasonable to place Beth-Marcaboth
in the same vicinity. The names of the two places ('House of
Chariots' and 'Village of Horses') suggests that they had links
with Solomon's manufacture and storage of chariots (cf. 1
Kings 9:19, 10:29). This would perhaps lend support to the
idea that the Kenites were metalworkers, but it does not
necessarily say anything about the Rechabites. There is no
need to assert that the Rechabites must have come from Beth-
Marcaboth/Rechab - Rechab could have quite easily have been
a personal name throughout Israel, as well as the name of a
particular place: a Benjaminite[30] called Rechab turns up in
2 Sam. 4, but no-one has tried to associate him with the
place Beth-Marcaboth/Rechab, so why should Jonadab ben Rechab
necessarily be associated with it?

1 Chron. 2:55 thus presents the following picture.
The Tirathites, Shimeathites and Sucathites were Kenite clans,

from the lands belonging to Hammath, chieftain of the town

Beth-Rechab, in the Beer-Sheba region. At some point they

moved north to Kiriath-Sepher, where they became linked in

some way with the Calebites. At a later stage in their his-

tory they moved again, to Jabez, the location of which is

now unknown, but may well have been in Judah. Would it be

possible to suggest that this northward movement of these

Kenite clans, from Beth-Rechab to Jabez <u>via</u> Kiriath-Sepher,

was occasioned by the encroachments into Palestine from the

south made by the Edomites following the Fall of Judah?

If the Versions are right in reading Caleb for כלוב

and Rechab for רכב in 1 Chron. 4:11f, there may be some

support for this proposal to understand 2:55 as representing

a movement of part of the Kenites, and its mingling with the

Calebites. None of the names in 4:12 are otherwise attested,

but it could be that a reference to the union of the group

of Kenites from Beth-Rechab ('men of Rechab') with a partic-

ular portion of the Calebites is intended by 4:11f.

Whether this interpretation of 1 Chron. 2:55 is

correct, and whether it is correct to follow Rudolph in re-

pointing סֹפְרִים, the fact remains that no reference to the

Rechabites is to be found in the verse and, even if there

was, the reference would not claim that the Rechabites were

a Kenite clan. The usage of מן + בוא elsewhere in biblical

Hebrew forces us to interpret the verse as referring to the

geographical movement of a group of Kenites.[31] Hammath's

title, 'father', in this context, forces us to understand

Beth-Rechab as a place name, not as a title for the Rechabites,
who are not called Beth-Rechab anywhere else, and who are
not connected with Hammath anywhere else. The attestation
of Rechab as a personal name elsewhere in Israel in the mon-
archical period reveals that, simply because Jonadab ben
Rechab had part of the name of a town in his name, there is
no need to conclude that he was necessarily associated with
that town. The supposed connection between the Kenites and
the Rechabites, for which the sole evidence adduced has been
1 Chronicles 2:55, needs to be rejected forthwith: the
biblical Rechabites never had anything to do with the Kenites,
and those views which argue that they did, or which describe
the Rechabites by means of material proper to the Kenites,
need to be revised accordingly.

2.2: 1 CHRONICLES 4:12

1 Chronicles 4:12 is usually mentioned with 2:55,
as part of the evidence for the non-Israelite origin of the
Rechabites. It is certainly correct to mention it with 2:55,
as 4:11f is a postscript to 2:55b, which seeks to explain
the רכב בית of 2:55 more clearly.[32] Once 2:55 is shown to
have nothing to do with the Rechabites, it follows that 4:12
has nothing to do with them either. 4:12 nevertheless merits
a separate examination, which will serve to strengthen the
earlier conclusion. Once again, the texts of the various
Versions are gathered before evaluation is undertaken.[33]

Massoretic Text:

וְאֶשְׁתּוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־בֵּית־רָפָא וְאֶת־פָּסֵחַ וְאֶת
תְּחִנָּה אֲבִי עִיר נָחָשׁ אֵלֶּה אַנְשֵׁי רֵכָה

Septuagint:

καὶ Ασσαθων ἐγεννησεν τον βαθρεφαν καὶ
τον φεσσηε καὶ τον θανα πατερα πολεως Ναας
αδελφου Εσελων του κενεζι. ούτοι ανδρες ρηφα.

For ρηφα, Codex Vaticanus and Lucian read ρηχαβ.

Vulgate:

Porro Eshton genuit Bethrapha et Phesse et
Tehinna patrem urbis Naas. Hi sunt viri Recha.

Old Latin: Not extant.

Peshitta:

Walton's Polyglot, the Urmia Edition and
Codex Ambrosianus all have different readings
for our verse. None of them include an
obvious equivalent to רכה   אנשי‎ אלה of the MT.

Targum:

ואשתון אוליד ית ית־בי ורפא ית פסח ית,
תחנה אבי עיר נחש אלין אנשי מרדותא
דרבנן

Minor Greek Versions:

Read ηρχαας for LXX πολεως ναας.

Translation (RSV):

Eshton was the father of Beth-rapha, Paseah
and Tehinna the father of Irnahash. These are
the men of Recah.

Only the Vulgate follows the MT reading completely.
The various Peshitta readings remain mystifying and, in any

case, since, throughout the genealogies in Chronicles,

the text of the Peshitta is considerably different from that

of any other witness, it is probably of little textual value,

and so need not be considered further in this examination of

1 Chronicles 4:12.

The Targum to the verse is, however, extremely

interesting. It follows the MT literally throughout the

verse, except that instead of the final clause אלה אנשׁי רכה,

it has אלין אנשׁי סנהדרין רבתא, 'these are the men of

the Great Sanhedrin'. R. le Déaut and J. Robert admit to

being unable to understand how this reading has arisen[34] -

they note that it is not dealt with by Rashi. They suggest

that it is necessary to resort to the sense 'noble, aristo-

crat', which the Aramaic רכא can have. This is certainly

the view of Levy,[35] who thinks that רכא is derived from the

Greek ἄρχη, and cites bBaba Bathra 4a,[36] which gives this

sense to רכא.

While this explanation of the reading is perhaps

possible, it would seem that no-one has yet adequately ex-

plained why the Meturgeman, if he understood the Hebrew רכה

to be equivalent to the Aramaic רכא, should then decide to

render 'these are the men of aristocracy' by 'these are the

men of the Great Sanhedrin'.

Perhaps it is worth considering a different explan-

ation of the origin of the Targumic reading. There is a

rabbinic tradition that the Rechabites sat in the Sanhedrin.

For example, and further details of this and other rabbinic
traditions about the Rechabites may be found in Chapter Five
of the present thesis, Sifre Numbers 78 has a long passage
about the Rechabites. In the discussion about the Promise
to the Rechabites contained in Jer. 35:19, Rabbi Joshua is
quoted as saying about them:

> Is it the case that proselytes enter the
> Temple? - do not all Israel not enter the
> Temple? - rather, they were sitting in the
> Sanhedrin and teaching words of Torah.[37]

Given this tradition, and the reading of LXX[BL] (ρηχαβ) for
the last word of the verse, is it not possible that the Hebrew
Bible with which the Targumic tradition was familiar read,
in fact, רכב, and not רכה? If such were the case, the
Meturgeman could have seen here in the use of רכב a refer-
ence to the Rechabites. Then, since he was aware of the
rabbinic tradition that has just been quoted, he decided to
indicate it by the use of מתיבתא דרבנא. This would then
suggest that the Targum joins LXX[BL] in witnessing to a text
of 1 Chron. 4:12 that read רכב, over against the רכה of
the MT.[38]

Consideration of the Septuagint has been deliber-
ately left until last, because it contains an addition, viz.
ἀδελφὸν ἐσελων του κενεζι, ie. אחי ... הקני - the restor-
ation of the Hebrew underlying ἐσελων cannot be attempted,
as the word is an LXX hapax legomenon. The addition must have
been in the Hebrew text used by the Greek translator, as it
could hardly have been inserted by him in the course of his

work of translation. Yet, if the reading of the LXX here is
more original than that of the Massoretic Text, it is hard
to see how the phrase could have fallen out of the MT (and the
Targum and the Vulgate), so perhaps this must be accepted as
a crux interpretum: we cannot know which reading is the
original.

Even accepting this crux, the LXX addition can
still be used to help explain the proper meaning of עיר נחש .
It is often claimed that עיר נחש means 'Copper City',[39] and
that this is further evidence that the Rechabites were metal-
workers, due to the close connection of copper and 'men of
Rechab' (LXX[BL]) in the verse. Whether or not 'men of Rechab'
denotes the Rechabites remains to be seen, but the LXX
addition clearly understands נחש/ναας as a personal name,
not as a common noun - a 'city of copper' can hardly have a
brother! It is also worth noting that the noun נחש never
has the meaning 'copper' elsewhere in the OT. The word for
'copper' is regularly נחשה . נחש means 'serpent' so, even
if the LXX interpretation of נחש in 1 Chronicles 4:12 is
incorrect, there is still no connection between metalworking
and the Rechabites. If Nahash is not a proper name in the
verse, then עיר נחש must be rendered 'Serpent City', not
'Copper City'. While certainty is impossible, on balance it
seems better to follow the lead given by the LXX and regard
עיר נחש as meaning 'City of the man Nahash'. As a place name,
עיר נחש is otherwise unknown, but the personal name נחש
is found in 1 Sam. 11:1f, 12:12, 2 Sam. 10:2, 17:25, 27,
1 Chron. 19:1f.

In common with most scholars, Rudolph regards the
reading ῥηχαβ, found in Vaticanus and Lucian, as repre-
senting the original reading of the LXX and of the Hebrew.[40]
As already noted, Rudolph regards 4:11f as a postscript to
2:55b, which seeks to explain the רכב בֵּית of 2:55 more
clearly. Unfortunately, as Rudolph adds, the additional
details provided by 4:11f are of little help, as all the
names in the verses are otherwise unknown. The phrase אלה
אנשׁי רכה/ב in 4:12, however, is of value, because it
reveals, through its use of אנשׁי rather than בני, that
Rechab in 2:55 was regarded as a place, not a personal, name:
the list of returned Exiles in Ezra 2 shows that אנשׁי was
regularly used with place names, בני with personal ones.
Hence, the choice of אנשׁי rather than בני in 1 Chron. 4:12
provides further support for the contention that בֵּית רכב
in 2:55 denotes a place, and not the Rechabites.

It is also interesting to note that the LXX addition
in 4:12 provides some support for the proposed emendation in
2:55 of מִשְׁפְּעִים to מַשְׂרֵפוֹת. The addition in 4:12 refers to a
Kenazzite - and it was the Kenazzite Othniel who, according
to Josh. 15:17, Judg. 1:11f, took possession of Kiriath
Sepher.

It is clear that 1 Chronicles 4:12 does not mention
either a 'Copper City' or the Rechabites. נחשׁ must either
be seen as a proper noun or, if it is seen as a common noun,
then it must be understood to mean 'serpent' and not 'copper'.
The original text of the verse, reflected by LXX[BL] and Targum,

read "these are the men of Rechab", but this is not a refer-
ence to the Rechabites. אֲנְשֵׁי רֵכָב means "men of the place
Rechab" - the Beth-Rechab named in 2:55. The genealogies in
Chronicles, despite the interpretations offered by the Targum
in 2:55 and 4:12, do not mention the Rechabites.

There is another verse in the genealogical chapters
of 1 Chronicles where the LXX has a mentioned of 'Rechab' not
found in the MT, namely 4:8, but here it looks as if the
appearance of Ῥηχαβ is due to interpretational activity on the
part of the Greek translator.

In the Massoretic Text the verse reads,
וְקוֹץ הוֹלִיד אֶת־עָנוּב וְאֶת־הַצֹּבֵבָה וּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת
אֲחַרְחֵל בֶּן־הָרֻם

In the Septuagint it is rendered by,
και κως εγεννησεν τον ενωβ και τον σαβηβα
και γεννησεις αδελφου Ῥηχαβ υιου Ιαριμ

Commentators by and large do not mention the LXX
rendering αδελφου Ῥηχαβ υιου Ιαριμ for אחרחל בן הרם of the
MT. The Targum reads אחראל הוא חיר בוכרא דמרים, its expan-
sion being based on Tg. 1 Chron. 2:19, 4:4. The Peshitta for
this verse is not extant. Curtis and Madsen think that some
connection between 4:8 and 4:9 needs to be found, and propose
that הצבבה is יעבץ.[41] It is not impossible that the LXX
translator felt the same problem, and wrote αδελφου Ῥηχαβ
υιου Ιαριμ for the same reason, and at the same time attempt-
ed some sort of harmonization with 2 Samuel 4. 1 Chron. 4:9f

mentions Jabez. Jabez and Rechab are mentioned in 1 Chron.

2:55, so the LXX translator replaced the בּחַ֫ר of MT's בּחַ֫ראֵ

with $\rho\eta\chi\alpha\beta$ (regarding אֵ as the normal word for 'brother')

to bring 4:8 and 4:9 into connection with each other. In

2 Sam. 4, a 'Rechab' appears as an inhabitant of Beeroth,

one of the towns of the Gibeonite confederation (Josh. 9:23),

along with Kiriath Jearim, ie. the $\dot{\iota}\alpha\rho\iota\mu$ of LXX 1 Chron. 4:8.

Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of this inter-
pretation, it seems most unlikely that any reference to the
Rechabites can be detected in 1 Chronicles 4:8.

There are two other places in the Greek Old Testament
where $\rho\eta\chi\alpha\beta$ appears in a context where it is lacking in the
Hebrew Bible. In 1 Kings 4:9, Lucian reads $\rho\eta\chi\alpha\beta$ for Heb-
rew דֶּ֫קֶר. This will be considered along with 2 Samuel 4 in
2.4. In Judges 1:19, the LXX renders the Hebrew word רֶ֫כֶב,
'chariotry', by $\rho\eta\chi\alpha\beta$. Because it has been argued that this
reading reflects knowledge of Jewish Haggadic exegesis,[42]
this reading will not be examined until Chapter Five, where
the strange heading to LXX Ps. 70, $\tau\dot{\omega}$ $\Delta\alpha\upsilon\epsilon\iota\delta\cdot$ $\upsilon\dot{\iota}\omega\nu$ $\dot{\iota}\omega\nu\alpha\delta\alpha\beta$
$\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\tau\omega\nu$ $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omega\nu$ $\alpha\dot{\iota}\mu\alpha\lambda\omega\tau\iota\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu\tau\omega\nu$, will also be considered.

2.3: NEHEMIAH 3:14

The appearance of Malchijah ben Rechab in Nehemiah
3:14 has often been cited as evidence that, in the post-
exilic period, the Rechabites were still in existence, but
had become incorporated into the rest of the people and had

abandoned their distinctive lifestyle. If the verse does in-

deed say this, then it becomes important evidence for the

post-exilic history of the Rechabites. However, as will be

shown, it is equally likely that Malchijah has nothing what-

soever to do with the Rechabites.

Massoretic Text:

וְאֵת שַׁעַר הָאַשְׁפּוֹת הֶחֱזִיק מַלְכִּיָּה בֶן־רֵכָב שַׂר
פֶּלֶךְ בֵּית הַכָּרֶם הוּא יִבְנֶנּוּ וְיַעֲמִיד דַּלְתֹתָיו
מַנְעֻלָיו וּבְרִיחָיו

Septuagint:

καὶ τὴν πύλην τῆς κοπρίας ἐκράτησεν Μελχια
υἱὸς Ρηχαβ ἄρχων περιχώρου Βηθαχαρμ αὐτὸς
καὶ οἱ υἱοι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐσκέπασαν αὐτὴν καὶ
ἐστησαν θύρας αὐτῆς καὶ κλεῖθρα αὐτῆς καὶ
μοχλους αὐτῆς.

Vulgate:

Et portam sterquilinii aedificami Melchias
filius Rechab, principeps vici Bethacharam;
ipse aedificavit eam et statuit valvas eius
et seras et vectes.

Old Latin: Not extant.

Peshitta:

ܘܬܪܥܐ ܕܩܘܦܬܐ ܬܩܦ ܡܠܟܝܐ ܒܪ ܪܟܒ
ܫܠܝܛܐ ܕܦܠܟܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܟܪܡܐ ܗܘ ܒܢܝܗܝ
ܘܐܩܝܡ ܬܪܥܘܗܝ ܘܣܟܪܘܗܝ
ܘܡܘܟܠܘܗܝ

Targum: As with the books of Ezra and Daniel,
it seems that no Targum to Nehemiah was ever made.

Translation (RSV):

Malchijah the son of Rechab, ruler of the
district of Beth-haccherem, repaired the Dung
Gate; he rebuilt it and set its doors, its

bolts, and its bars.

The textual problem lies in יבננו , "he will build it", or "let him build it". Batten argues for the priority of the LXX, the <u>Vorlage</u> of which would have read הוא יבנו והקירוהו ועמידו, the regular gate-building formula, <u>cf.</u> 3:3, 6.[43] However, this looks like a case of harmonization, either in the LXX or in its <u>Vorlage</u>, and so should not be followed too readily.[44] According to Batten, Guthe reads בנהו, "he built it", for הוא יבננו.[45] The simplest solution seems to be to follow the lead given by the Vulgate, and to read הוא בנהו, "<u>he</u> built it", as it involves the least change in the consonantal text, and no subsequent emendations.

In any event, the textual problems with יבננו do not affect the part of the verse which is important for present purposes, namely מלכיה בן רכב פלך בית הכרם. Jer. 6:1 indicates that the locality of Beth-Haccherem was south of Jerusalem, beyond Tekoa. Whether Malchijah was connected with the Rechabites in any way is difficult to determine from the tantalizingly brief reference to him here. The text of Neh. 3:14, beyond בן־רכב, makes no mention of any possible connection between Malchijah and the Rechabites, and it is by no means certain that בן־רכב ever denoted any Rechabite other than the founder of the group, Jonadab, who is called בן־רכב in 2 Kings 10:15, 23, Jer. 35:6, 8, 14, 16, 19. The only other certain named Rechabite in the Bible is the group's leader in Jer. 35. He is called Jaazaniah ben Jeremiah ben Habazziniah, but not ben Rechab, which strongly suggests

that the title ben Rechab was reserved among the Rechabites

for Jonadab alone. This would indeed be the case if Jonadab's

blood father had had the name Rechab, and Jonadab had cre-

ated a title, the Rechabites, out of that name when he found-

ed his group, so that only Jonadab was בֶּן־רֵכָב; his followers

were בֵּית הָרֵכָבִים, Jer. 35:2, 3, 5(MT), 18, or בְּנֵי יְהוֹנָדָב

בֶּן־רֵכָב, Jer. 35:16. The form בְּנֵי רֵכָב is nowhere found,

so it seems most unlikely that Malchijah was a Rechabite.

The fact he was called בֶּן־רֵכָב simply means that his father's

name was Rechab. It is impossible not to believe that there

was more than one person called Rechab in the history of

Israel.

There are also two other elements in the descrip-

tion of Malchijah that argue against identifying him with the

Rechabites. Firstly, he is said to have been ruler of בֵּית

הַכֶּרֶם, 'House of the Vineyard', but Rechabite discipline

proper shunned both houses and vineyards (Jer. 35:6f). Sec-

ondly, he is said to have engaged in building activities.

Indeed, that is the whole point of his appearance in Neh.

3. Yet, Rechabite discipline proper shunned even building

houses, let alone living in them (ibid.).

Thus, Malchijah's territory and his activities in

Jerusalem suggest that he was not a Rechabite. More import-

antly, his title ben Rechab does not appear to have been one

that the Rechabites ever used except in designating their

founder, Jonadab, ie. the fact that Malchijah has the title

means that his father was called Rechab, not that he was

a Rechabite.

2.4: 2 SAMUEL 4

    2 Samuel 4:1-12 presents us with a character called
Rechab, although it is not very common to link him with the
Rechabites.[46] He _may_ be the ancestor of Jonadab ben Rechab
(hardly the father!), but it is unlikely. More important is
the question of his nationality. If it can be proved to be
Israelite, then it increases the likelihood that the Rechab-
ites were of pure Israelite stock, and if it can be proved to
be non-Israelite, then it makes it more likely that the Rech-
abites were originally non-Israelites.

    The relevant verses are 2 Sam. 4:2-3. Fortunately,
there are no textual variants significant for the present
purposes,[47] but the meaning of the section is far from clear.
The problem lies in vv.2b-3, an explanatory note:

בְּאֵרוֹת תֵּחָשֵׁב עַל־בִּנְיָמִן ׀ וַיִּבְרְחוּ. הַבְּאֵרֹתִים
גִּתָּיְמָה וַיִּהְיוּ. שָׁם גָּרִים עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

> For Beeroth also is reckoned to Benjamin;
> the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and have
> been sojourners there to this day. (RSV)

Ackroyd interprets the passage as follows. Beeroth was part
of Benjamin, and the assasins of Ish-Bosheth, Rechab and
Baanah, were thus from Saul's own tribe. After this partic-
ular act of treachery, which would have left a stain on the
whole family, the Beerothites fled elsewhere.[48] Most other
commentators[49] point out that Beeroth was part of the Amorite

tetrarchy not subdued by the Israelites and allowed to contin-
ue to exist, Josh. 9:17. At some point, possibly connected
with Saul's activities against the Gibeonites (2 Sam. 21),
the Beerothites had fled to Gittaim - either in Benjamin
(Neh. 11:33) or possibly in Philistia (cf. 'Gath', one of
the five Philistine cities named in 1 Sam. 6:17) - and Beeroth
was occupied by Benjaminites, including Rimmon and his fami-
ly. Hertzberg observes that, if El-Bire is identical with
Beeroth, then Beeroth was north of Benjaminite territory
proper, which would agree with the statement that "Beeroth
also is reckoned to Benjamin".[50] Some commentators wish to
see in the murder of Ish-Bosheth an act of vengeance for the
cruelty of Saul to the Gibeonites,[51] which would make the
assasins Amorites rather than Israelites. However, as
McCarter points out,[52] the text of 2 Sam. 4 makes no connect-
ion, either explicit or implicit, with 2 Sam. 21, and does
not assign a motive of vengeance to the killing. The sons of
Rimmon are themselves Benjaminites, and not indigenous Beer-
othites, and were officers in Ish-Bosheth's army. Their
treachery was born, not out of a desire for revenge, but
out of sheer opportunism, and out of a hope of a reward from
David. In addition, Rimmon is explicitly termed ﬦﬦﬦ ﬦﬦﬦ,
"from the sons of Benjamin", so it seems likely that he and
his two sons, Rechab and Baanah, were native Israelites,
not Canaanites or foreigners.

This demonstrates, not that Jonadab was originally
descended from Rechab ben Rimmon, as it seems a little un-
likely that he would have called his group after a renegade

Benjaminite army officer who had been executed for murder by
David. Rather, it demonstrates that Rechab was an Israelite
personal name. If the בֶּן in בֶּן בֶּן רֵכָב is a patrynomic,
then the contention that the Rechabites were a group of Israel-
ites, not an outside clan, or converts, or anything else,
is thereby strengthened. This is another pointer, along
with the evidence already adduced when 1 Chron. 2:55 was
examined, away from the often claimed link between the
Rechabites and the Kenites - who <u>were</u> non-Israelites.

As noted above,[53] the Lucianic recension of the LXX
reads ἀδελφου ῥηχαβ in 1 Kings 4:9, for the בֶּן־דֶּקֶר of the
Hebrew. It is unlikely that Lucian here reflects a Hebrew
textual tradition, as none of the other principal Greek
manuscripts read ῥηχαβ - A has δακαβ, and B ῥηχας. The
Lucianic reading may be interpretative, regarding the offi-
cer commanding Solomon's second district, whose actual name
has been lost,[54] as the son of the Benjaminite executed by
Solomon's father in 2 Samuel 4.

2.5: 2 KINGS 10:15f, 23

Thus far, this survey of possible references to the
Rechabites in the Bible, outside of Jeremiah 35, has been
something of a <u>via negativa</u>. It has concluded that the Rech-
abites do not appear in 1 Chronicles 2:55, 4:12 or Nehemiah
3:14, and that the Rechab in 2 Samuel 4 has nothing to do
with them either. However, despite being negative, these
conclusions are nevertheless important, as most scholars have

seen, at least in the Chronicles and Nehemiah references,

notices mentioning our group. The present study has indi-

cated, however, that the Rechabites are not even mentioned,

let alone linked, genealogically or otherwise, with the

Kenites, in 1 Chron. 2:55, a conclusion which deals a heavy

blow to most appraisals of the Rechabites that have been so

far produced. It has indicated that they do not appear in

1 Chron. 4:12 either, which weakens the argument that the

Rechabites were metalworkers, which used the claimed appear-

ance of the Rechabites and 'Copper City' (itself now shown to

be a dubious translation of עִיר נָחָשׁ) in the verse to support

its case. It has indicated that the Malchijah ben Rechab who

is found in Neh. 3:14 was not a Rechabite, confounding those

views which have used the verse to provide evidence for the

Rechabites in the post-exilic period. It has shown that Rechab

is attested as a personal, Israelite name in the biblical

period, thereby increasing the likelihood that the Rechabites

were Israelites, and not Canaanites or foreigners.

In 2 Kings 10:15, 16, 23, however, an actual

reference to the Rechabites outside of Jer. 35 is finally

discovered. It is here that we meet Jonadab (here called

Jehonadab, as in some of the cases in Jer. 35) ben Rechab,

in the days of Jehu, in the Northern Kingdom. In its present

form, the text of 2 Kings 10 recounts how Jonadab accompanied

Jehu to Samaria to assist in the latter's destruction of the

Temple and worshippers of Baal. While this may be the cre-

ation of an editor or compiler of the material now contained

in 2 Kings, nevertheless, as will be shown, a historical

reference to Jonadab <u>is</u> contained in 2 Kings 10:15f.

In what follows, the textual evidence for 2 Kings 10:15f will first be gathered and evaluated, then that for v.23, before a commentary on the three verses as a whole is offered.

Verses 15 and 16

Massoretic Text:

וַיֵּלֶךְ מִשָּׁם וַיִּמְצָא אֶת־יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן־רֵכָב לִקְרָאתוֹ
וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הֲיֵשׁ אֶת־לְבָבְךָ יָשָׁר כַּאֲשֶׁר
לְבָבִי עִם־לְבָבֶךָ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָדָב יֵשׁ וָיֵשׁ תְּנָה
אֶת־יָדֶךָ וַיִּתֵּן יָדוֹ וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ אֵלָיו אֶל־הַמֶּרְכָּבָה
וַיֹּאמֶר לְכָה אִתִּי וּרְאֵה בְּקִנְאָתִי לַיהוָה
וַיַּרְכִּבוּ אֹתוֹ בְּרִכְבּוֹ

Septuagint:

και ἐπορευθη ἐκειθεν και εὑρεν τον
Ἰωναδαβ υἱον Ῥηχαβ ἐν τη ὁδῳ εἰς
ἀπαντην αὐτου και εὐλογησεν αὐτον. και
εἰπεν προς αὐτον Ἰου εἰ ἐστιν καρδια σου
μετα καρδιας μου εὐθεια καθως ἡ καρδια
μου μετα καρδιας σου και εἰπεν Ἰωναδαβ
ἐστιν και εἰπεν Ἰου και εἰ ἐστιν δος την
χειρα σου και ἐδωκεν την χειρα αὐτου και
ἀνεβιβασεν αὐτον προς αὐτον ἐπι το ἁρμα
και εἰπεν προς αὐτον δευρο μετ' ἐμου και ἰδε
ἐν τῳ ζηλωσαι με τῳ κυριῳ σαβαωθ και
ἐπεκαθισεν αὐτον ἐν τω ἁρματι αὐτου

Vulgate: Follows the MT, except that it reads a singular for וַיַּרְכִּבוּ in v.16.

Old Latin: Not extant.

Peshitta:

ܘܐܙܠ ܡܢ ܬܡܢ ܘܐܫܟܚ ܠܝܘܢܕܒ
ܒܪ ܪܟܒ ܘܩܕܡܗ ܘܒܪܟܗ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ
ܐܠܐ ܕܟܕܝܪ ܗܘ ܠܒܝ ܐܟܡܐ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ
ܠܒܟ ܥܡ ܠܒܝ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܬ ܘܐܝܬ

ܘܕ ܐܢܝ ܘܟܝ ܘܣܗܘܕ ܐܢܝܘ
ܘܣܘܩܘ ܐܠܬܝ ܓܝܘܢܝ ܘܠܝܢ
ܐܠܬܝ ܣܝ ܘܣܩܝ ܘܩܠܒܝ ܐܠܝ ܐܠܬܝܠ
ܘܠܘܠܝ ܘܣܩܝ ܣܘܕܢܝ

Targum: Follows the MT completely literally.

Minor Greek Versions:

For LXX εἰς ἀπαντην αὐτου και εὐλογησεν αὐτου , Symmachus reads ἀπαντωντα αὐτῳ ἱνα εὐλογηση αὐτον , and for LXX εὐθεια , Symmachus has ἀπλη . For LXX ἐν τω ζηλωσαι με τω κυριῳ σαβαωθ, Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion have Τον ζηλον μου υπερ κυριου . Not all LXX MSS have σαβαωθ after κυριου .

Translation (RSV margin):

And when he departed from there, he met
Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet
him, and he said to him, "Is it right
with your heart, as my heart is with your
heart?" And Jehonadab answered "It is".
"If it is, give me your hand". So he gave
him his hand. And Jehu took him up with
him into the chariot. And he said,
"Come with me and see my zeal for Yahweh".
So they had him ride in his chariot.

Josephus also has a version of the story, in

AntiquitiesIX.6.6:

After these, there met him a good and
righteous man, whose name was Jehonadab,
who had been his friend of old. He saluted Jehu,
and began to commend him, because he had
done everything according to the will of God
in extirpating the house of Ahab. So Jehu

desired him to come up into his chariot

and make his entry with him into Samaria,

and told him that he would not spare one

wicked man, but would punish the false

prophets and the false priests, and

those that deceived the multitude and

persuaded them to leave the worship of

God Almighty and to worship foreign gods,

and that it was a most excellent and most

pleasing sight to a good and righteous man

to see the wicked punished. So Jehonadab

was persuaded by these arguments, and came

up into Jehu's cahriot and came to Samaria.[55]

The Targum follows the MT literally, even to the

plural ויֹרכבֻו/וֹאֻחֹ in v.16. The Vulgate is also a liter-

al translation, except that, in common with LXX and Peshitta,

it reads a singular for ויֹרכבֻ. LXX and Peshitta are both

different from MT, and different from each other. LXX

differs from MT as follows:

(1) Between בֻן-רכֹב and לֹקֹראֻחֹו, LXX inserts ἐν

τῇ ὁδῷ , ie.בֻרֹרֹכ.

(2) For אֻמֹאֻר אֻלֹיֹ, LXX reads ויֹאמֻר יֹהוֹא אֻלֹיֹ.

(3) After הֹיֹשֻ אֻתֹ-לֹבֻבֹכֹ,[56] LXX[-A] inserts עֻ-לֹבֻבֹי.

(4) For יֹשֻ ויֹשֻ, LXX reads ויֹשֻ ויֹאֻמֻר יֹהֹוֹא ויֹשֻ.

(5) For ויֹאֻמֻר לֹכֹה, LXX reads ויֹאֻמֻר אֻלֹיֹ לֹכֹה.

(6) For לֹיֹהֹוֹה, some LXX MSS, but not B, A or L,

read לֹיֹהֹוֹה צֻבֻאֻותֹ.

(7) For ויֹרכבֻו, LXX reads a singular ἐπεκάθισεν .

The Peshitta variants are as follows:

(1) Between בֻן-רכֹב and לֹקֹראֻחֹו, Pesh. inserts

ܡܐ ܐܬܠ , 'coming'.

(2) For לקראתו, Pesh. reads Aphel of ܝܕܥ, 'to know' = Heb. √קרא I, 'to inform', 'read aloud'. Hebrew here is √קרא II, 'to meet'.

(3) Between יש יש and הנה ידך, Pesh. inserts ܣܐܡ ܠܗ, ie. ויאמר אלי.

(4) For ויאמר לכה, Pesh. reads ܣܐܡ ܠܗ ܘܐܠ, ie. ויאמר אלי לכה.

(5) For וירכבו, Pesh. reads a singular, ܣܐܘܟܒܗ.

(6) For אתו, Pesh. reads ܥܡܗ, ie. אתו.

(7) At the end of v.16, Pesh. omits the 3 m. sg. suffix on 'chariot'.

The varying ways in which the Septuagint and the Peshitta deal with וימצא את־יהונדב בירכב לקראתו and ויהרכב יש לבב כאשר ישר לבבך את־לבבי עד לבך ויאמר יהונדב יש ויש את־ידך are worthy of note. The various insertions in the two Versions suggest that they were both faced with much the same text as is currently found in the MT, and that they sought to make its terse, abbreviated form intelligible to their readers. In their understanding of who is saying what, LXX and Peshitta more or less correspond, disagreeing only over יש in יש יש, LXX taking it as part of Jehu's speech, Peshitta as the close of Jonadab's. Both Versions correctly interpret the MT, but the correct speaker of יש is imposs-ible to determine; it does not significantly affect the correct understanding of the passage. Peshitta and LXX, along with the Vulgate, agree, against MT, in reading a singular

for רכביו. They are correct to do so: while the plural

<u>could</u> be a reference to Jehu, his driver and his armour-

bearer (who is named in 2 Kings 9:25), this is unlikely, as

there is no antecedent for the plural subject in this section.

It thus seems that, apart from רכביו, the MT

represents the most primitive text. It is narrated in a very

terse style, <u>cf</u>. 1 Kings 20:34, where the change of speakers

is again not indicated in the Hebrew text. This explanation

is preferable to arguing for a mechanical omission of ויאמר

יהוא between ש and שי (שי יהוא ויאמר ש - the ויאמר

יהוא having been lost by Homoioarcton between the initial

'וי of ויאמר and שי). Such an explanation would argue

for the priority of the LXX but, if this is accepted, it

then becomes necessary to argue that the phrase ויאמר יהוא

was lost from the Hebrew after the LXX translation was made,

and that the Peshitta then inserted its variant in order to

make sense of the text. The argument that both LXX and Pesh-

itta added words independently of each other, to make the

sense of the terse MT text clearer, is both simpler and more

probable.

Josephus' version of the verses is also interesting.

It omits any reference to Jonadab's patronymic; stresses

Jonadab's Yahwism in terms acceptable to Josephus' non-Jewish

readers (ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος); says that Jonadab had

been Jehu's friend from of old; says that Jonadab began to

commend Jehu for his actions in destroying the house of Ahab;

and substanially expands Jehu's statement, "Come with me and

see my zeal for Yahweh". Frick was of the opinion that Josephus' account reveals that Jehu and Jonadab had had a prior association, in the king's chariotry.[57] Josephus' statement, however, may simply be his own inference from the compact Hebrew narrative, where Jehu begins to address Jonadab without any formal introduction, ie. the two men must have already known each other, and need not reflect any genuine historical information preserved only by Josephus. It made no difference to the author of the biblical text whether Jehu and Jonadab were already acquainted with each other or not, so he made no mention of it. It has been observed more than once that the narrative style of these verses is extremely terse, with all extraneous detail simply being omitted. The two men may have known each other beforehand, but we cannot use the evidence öf Josephus to say that they did.

Incidentally, the way that the Versions render וירכבהו in v.16 (LXX ἐπεκάθισεν ; Targum ואחית; Peshitta ܘܐܣܩܗ; all 'to make sit') supports the contention of W.B. Barrick that √רכב denotes vertical movement ('to mount up upon') rather than horizontal movement ('to ride along').[58] The Versions express no notion of horizontal movement in their choice of words rendering וירכבהו.

Verse 23

Massoretic Text:

וַיָּבֹא יֵהוּא וִיהוֹנָדָב בֶּן־רֵכָב בֵּית הַבָּעַל
וַיֹּאמֶר לְעֹבְדֵי הַבַּעַל חַפְּשׂוּ וּרְאוּ פֶּן־יֵשׁ
פֹּה עִמָּכֶם מֵעַבְדֵי יְהוָה כִּי אִם־עֹבְדֵי
הַבַּעַל לְבַדָּם

Translation (RSV):

Then Jehu went into the house of Baal with
Jehonadab the son of Rechab, and he said to
the worshippers of Baal, "Search and see that
there is no servant of Yahweh here among you,
but only the worshippers of Baal".

All the Versions support the reading of the MT in
the section of the verse relevant to the present study, ie.
"then Jehu went into the house of Baal with Jehonadab the son
of Rechab, and he said".[59] Note that if בֶן־רֵכָב יְהוֹנָדָב is
treated as a later insertion into the text, no violence is
done to the syntax of the verse by its removal, and arguably
the verse's narrative flow is improved. Jehu is plainly the
speaker of the speech in the verse yet, as it stands, the
immediate antecedent for וַיֹּאמֶר is Jonadab. The plural sub-
ject at the beginning of v.24 is no argument against the
removal of בֶן־רֵכָב יְהוֹנָדָב from v.23, as the most natural
antecedent for the plural subject is the 'worshippers of Baal',
mentioned at the end of v.23. Thus, the contention, made
by several scholars, and examined in detail in the Commentary,
to see the reference to Jonadab ben Rechab in 2 Kings 10:23
as a later gloss, seems highly probable.

Commentary

Seemingly all commentators regard the meeting between
Jehu and Jonadab as an actual historical event, but several
scholars regard it as being misplaced in its present context,
being sceptical of whether Jonadab would have accompanied Jehu

to the Baal temple in Samaria without causing serious dis-
quiet among the Baal worshippers.[60] Certainly, as was noted
above, בכל-רן ויהי/ה may be removed from v.23 without any
change in the syntax being required, and it is probably best
to delete it from the verse. Schmitt does so, regarding it
as part of a pre-deuteronomistic apologetic redaction of the
material, which sought to justify Jehu's activities.[61]
Würthwein and Jones also delete it as a gloss.[62] So does
Timm,[63] but he dismisses Schmitt's claim that it is an early,
pre-deuteronomistic, insertion. The actual date of the gloss
is less important, for the present purposes, than the fact
that it _is_ a gloss.

It is hard to tell whether vv.15-16 are of a piece
with vv.12-14. Admittedly, v.15 uses משם, 'from there',
at its beginning and, as Hobbs has recently noted,[64] vv.
12-14 and 15-16 share the same structure: Jehu journeys
(וילך) and then finds (וימצא(ה ו)) someone. He asks them a
question, the reply to which brings an immediate response on
the part of Jehu. However, while the two pericopae do share
the same structure, they hardly share the same theme - vv.12-
14 deal with Jehu's slaughter of the princes of Judah, vv.15-
16 with his recruitment of Jonadab ben Rechab[65] - so it is
more likely that v.15f was a completely isolated fragment,
which the same compiler/redactor who made the insertion in v.
23 (be he deuteronomistic, pre-deuteronomistic or post-
deuteronomistic) had in his possession, and used at this
juncture because he felt it appropriate:

> The author probably regarded the meeting
> of Jehu and Jehonadab as a fitting intro-
> duction to his account of the massacre
> of the Baal worshippers of Samaria.[66]

The compiler's purpose in inserting the fragment v.15f and

the gloss בני־רכב יהונדב in v.23 was to assert that which he

felt to be crucial in the revolt of Jehu, namely, the relig-

ious aspect. By giving Jehu the support of the founder of a

known Yahwistic group, the Rechabites, in his massacre of

the Baal worshippers, the compiler has made his revolt into

a purely religious act. In reality, however, it is more

likely that Jehu's act was inspired more by political motives

than religious ones.[67] That Jehu's act in slaying the Baal

worshippers would have rallied the 'fanatical' Yahwistic ele-

ments to his side is indisputable. If Jonadab and the Rech-

abites are seen as such a group, then it is credible that

Jonadab joined Jehu and virtually became his chaplain.

Frick argued that the words of Jehu to Jonadab were

a military formula of alliance, citing 1 Kings 22:4 and

2 Kings 3:7, both of which read "I am as you are, my people

as your people, my horses as your horses", as proof paral-

lels.[68] However, it should be noted that both 1 Kings 22:4

and 2 Kings 3:7 explicitly mention war (למלחמה) and, in them,

the "I am as you are etc." is quoted in reply to the request

for support, not as the content of it, as in 2 Kings 10:15.

In addition, a very similar formula is to be found in Ruth

1:16f, "For where you will go I will go, and where you lodge

I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God

my God; where you die I will die", where war is most def-
initely not in mind, so Frick's conclusion, that "Jehonadab
may have become Jehu's squire or aide"[69] is unconvincing. As
was suggested above, Josephus' statement that Jonadab had
long been Jehu's friend is more likely to have been Josephus'
own inference from the text as we have it than evidence of an
independent, historically accurate, tradition. The same
conclusion should be drawn concerning Josephus' statement
that Jonadab began to "commend [Jehu] for having done every-
thing in accordance with the will of God in extirpating the
house of Ahab".

The following may thus be concluded concerning
2 Kings 10:15f, 23:

(1) Jonadab ben Rechab was known to be a represent-
ative of loyal, 'fanatical' Yahwism in the time of Jehu;

(2) It is, however, unlikely that he partici-
pated in the massacre of the worshippers of Baal - the frag-
ment 2 Kings 10:15-16 and the gloss בֶּן־רֵכָב וַיְהוֹנָדָב in v.23
were placed at these places in the narrative by the compiler,
who wished to assert that Jehu's actions were essentially
religious, rather than political;

(3) V.15f nevertheless represents an actual inci-
dent, dating perhaps from after the massacre of the Baal
worshippers, indicating that Jonadab did support Jehu, but
that his support was probably more moral and religious than
political and military;

(4) If v.15f is an independent fragment, then a
precise geographical location for the event cannot be found,

beyond saying that it occurred in the Northern Kingdom;

(5) Whether Jonadab had already founded the Rechab-
ites at the time of the incident recounted in v.15f is diffi-
cult to tell, but as he is introduced into the narrative
somewhat abruptly, without any reason why he, in particu-
lar, should accompany Jehu to see his zeal for Yahweh, it is
plain that the compiler expected his readers to see Jonadab
as some sort of 'fanatical' Yahwist, so it is probable that
Jonadab had already founded his group, perhaps even before
the actual rebellion of Jehu.

The actual reasons why Jonadab founded his group
will be examined in Chapters Three and Four, but it is im-
portant to note at this point two things observed by Cummings.
[70] Firstly, in the present narrative of the Books of Kings,
Jonadab is fulfilling the role which 1 Kings 19:15-17 suggests
should really be filled by Elisha. Secondly, in 2 Kings
10:16, Jehu says to Jonadab, "Come with me and see my zeal
(קַנְאָתִי) for Yahweh" - language which is very similar to
Elijah's claim, "I have been very zealous (קַנֹּא קִנֵּאתִי) for
Yahweh". These two points, along with others drawn from
Jeremiah 35 (which will be examined in the following chapter)
suggest to Cummings that Jonadab and the Rechabites represent
alternative candidates to Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets
(בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים) for the inheritance of Elijah.[71] This would
explain why Jonadab was used by the compiler to underline the
religious aspect of Jehu's revolt: like Elisha and the בְּנֵי
הַנְּבִיאִים, Jonadab and his followers were a group of prophets,
a group which had split from the בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים, who themselves

had arisen in Israel as a protest against the socio-religious policies of the Omrides. This conclusion will be upheld and further strengthened by both the study of Jeremiah 35 in Chapter Three and the investigation of the historical and social context of the Rechabites in Chapter Four.

The Name Jonadab ben Rechab

The name Jonadab, which appears in 2 Kings 10 as Jehonadab, and in Jeremiah 35 as both Jonadab and Jehonadab, means 'Yahweh has been generous'. Stig Norin argued that, in the Hebrew Bible, theophoric names beginning with 'יהו, rather than with 'יו , were a creation of the Deuteronomists, for whom it had a more pious flavour than ' יו.[72] He had trouble, however, with יונ(ה)דב[73] and, in any case, Alan Millard has effectively demolished Norin's overall thesis.[74] According to Millard, the name יהונדב has been found on a seal of unknown provenance, dating from the 7th Century BCE.[75]

Frick noted that all the other biblical personal names from the monarchical period that contain √רכב denote members of the urban nobility, and argued that there is no apparent reason why Jonadab should be considered as an exception.[76] If he is right, then Jonadab must be seen as a member of the urban nobility, perhaps even a member of the court at Samaria, who had decided to separate himself from the court, and join the movement gathering around Elijah, because of the effects, political, religious and social, of the introduction of the Tyrian Baal-cult into Samaria.

In the same paragraph, Frick went on to suggest

that‌בכד-בן‎ here denotes a chariot-maker or driver. It does,

however, seem a little unlikely that a person would have been

simultaneously a member of the urban nobility and a wainwright!

As has already been shown, Rechab is attested elsewhere as a

personal name, and while בן, 'son of', may denote the

inhabitant of a particular place or the member of a guild,[77]

it can also denote a blood son or descendent, so there is

every reason to conclude that Jonadab was the blood son of one

Rechab.

But that is not the end of the story. Cummings took

בֶּן-רֵכָב as a prophetic title,[78] analogous to רֶכֶב יִשְׂרָאֵל ופרשיו,

an appellation of Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2:12, 13:14, cf.

6:17). It has already been indicated that it is likely that

Jonadab had close connections with Elijah and Elisha so, what-

ever its true etymology,[79] it is probable that בֶּן-רֵכָב did

come to be seen as some sort of prophetic title. This con-

clusion is supported by the fact that Jonadab's supporters

were called the 'Rechabites' (בית הרכבים), not the 'Jona-

dabites'. This does not, however, negate the conclusion

that Jonadab was called בֶּן-רֵכָב because he was the son of

Rechab. Rather, it leads to the conclusion that there was

a conscious reinterpretation of the personal name into a

prophetic title, perhaps by Jonadab himself. As Abramsky

put it,

> the phrase רכב ישראל ופרשיו is not
> only a literary device, but is also
> a symbolic expression for divine leader-
> ship, an idea which sprang up in the days

of Elijah, Elisha and Jonadab, in
the circumstances of a unique strife,
when the prophets were popular leaders
against the king's authority ... Jeho-
nadab was designated with the titles
which men gave to Elijah and Elisha,
perhaps because the name Rechab was
interpreted symbolically in his days.[80]

Conclusion

Unlike the other verses considered in this chapter,
2 Kings 10:15f certainly does mention a Rechabite; in fact,
the founder of the Rechabites, Jonadab. However, the verses
stand in their present position because of the activity of the
compiler, so it is unlikely that Jonadab played any part in
Jehu's massacre of the Baal worshippers at Samaria. His name
does, however, suggest that he was a member of the Samarian
urban nobility, whose father was called Rechab. His appear-
ance in the narrative in a place where Elisha would be
expected to appear, and the language common to Elijah and
Jonadab, suggests that Jonadab had close connections with the
movement represented by Elijah, Elisha and the Sons of the
Prophets, and that he set up a group of followers and called
them Rechabites, consciously reinterpreting his patrynomic
Rechab into a prophetic title, like that used of Elijah and
Elisha.

This picture of the Rechabites and their founder,
which is essentially an extension of Cummings', will be

tested - and upheld - in the succeeding chapters of this
study.[81]

CHAPTER THREE: THE RECHABITES IN JEREMIAH 35

The material examined in Chapter Two, references,
or supposed references, to the Rechabites in the Bible out-
side of Jeremiah 35, amounted to a collection of individual
verses from Samuel, Kings, Chronicles and Nehemiah. None
of these texts amounted to more than a few verses. With Jere-
miah 35, however, a different picture emerges. The whole
chapter concerns the Rechabites. It recounts how Jeremiah,
in obedience to Yahweh's command, took the community of the
Rechabites into one of the chambers of the Temple, and in-
structed them to drink wine. They refuse, and recount the
commands of their father, Jonadab ben Rechab – not to drink
wine, not to live in houses, not to sow seed, not to plant
vineyard, but to live in tents – and explain why they are
currently present in Jerusalem. Jeremiah then uses the fid-
elity of the Rechabites as an example to the faithless
Judaeans, who receive an oracle of condemnation, while the
Rechabites receive one of salvation: "Jonadab the son of
Rechab shall never lack a man to stand before me" (Jer 35:19
RSV).

As it is the only place in the whole of the Old
Testament where the Rechabites appear as the principal sub-
jects of a complete chapter, the examination of Jeremiah 35
is obviously crucial for the understanding of the Rechabites,
and in many respects this present investigation of the chap-
ter forms the core of the whole study. As we are dealing
with a complete chapter, rather than with a few isolated

verses, not only is it possible (and necessary!) to under-
take textual criticism and exegesis, but also form criticism.
The layout of this chapter is therefore tripartite: Textual
Criticism; Form Criticism, Rhetoric and Structure; and
Exegetical Notes. Textual- and form-critical problems of
the Book of Jeremiah are live issues in current Old Testament
scholarship,[1] so the first two sections of this chapter must,
therefore, inevitably, enter into some sort of dialogue
with the scholars working in these fields.

3.1: TEXTUAL CRITICSM OF JEREMIAH 35

The Massoretic Text of Jeremiah 35 presents no un-
intelligible readings, and is closely followed by the Vulgate,
the Peshitta and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets. The Septu-
agint, however, presents a equally intelligible, yet in
several significant respects different, text from that pre-
served by MT. While a full-scale investigation into the LXX
of the Book of Jeremiah lies beyond the scope of the present
study, and has been well-researched elsewhere,[2] some prelim-
inary remarks are still in order. The LXX of Jeremiah differs
from the MT in its arrangement of the material,[3] and is
shorter than the MT by approximately one-seventh.[4] There are
also, however, a few places where LXX has a fuller reading
than MT, and sometimes "the LXX represents a different reading
or interpretation in comparison with the MT".[5]

Numerous explanations for the origins of these
differences have been proposed. Soderlund has classified them

under four headings: the 'abbreviation', 'editorial',

'expansion' and 'mediating' theories.[6] The first regards the

"Greek text as an abbreviated or mutilated version of the

Hebrew",[7] the abbreviation being either the work of copyists

or of the original translator(s). The second argues that

"the two texts derive from different editions or recensions

of the book produced by Jer himself".[8] The 'expansion' theory,

popular today, as a glance at the works of Janzen, Tov and

Bogaert[9] will reveal, views the LXX version as "the best wit-

ness to the text of Jer, the MT having suffered greatly from

expansion, conflation and interpolation in the course of

transmission".[10] The final theory believes that it is "im-

possible to generalize on the relative priority of the two

texts; instead, each reading has to be evaluated on its

own merits".[11]

While the 'expansion' theory is extremely popular

in current studies of the text of Jeremiah, Soderlund's

detailed critique of Janzen's Studies in the Text of Jeremiah,

using one chapter, LXX Jer. 29, as a control, has shown that

the theory does not stand up to detailed examination.[12] It

seems best to follow Soderlund's conclusions, established

as they are by a painstaking analysis, and adopt the

'mediating' theory[13] - for chapter 35 (LXX chap. 42), all the

variations between MT and LXX, and all the variations be-

tween MT and the other Versions, need to be carefully

examined, and a decision as to the priority of a reading

made in each individual case, without recourse to "broad

generalizations that in sweep can solve a multitude of textual

conundrums",[14] as closer investigation reveals that such broad generalizations create more problems than they solve.

Verse 1

For MT הַדָּבָר, 'the word', Tg reads פִּתְגַם נְבוּאָה, but this is evidence of the Targumist's interpretational activity, not of a variant Hebrew text: for the Targumist, any divine word spoken to a prophet could not be anything other than a 'word of prophecy'. With a desire for precision typical of the Targums, this is exactly what Targum Jonathan reads here.

LXX[-A] does not represent the בֶּן־אֹשִׁיָּ֫הוּ, 'son of Josiah', of MT. Janzen[15] fails to comment on this omission. [16] Decision between the two readings is virtually impossible but, in any event, the interpretation of the passage is the same whichever reading is adopted. Jehoiakim <u>was</u> the son of Josiah (2 Kings 23:34). LXX[A] follows MT.

Verse 2

For MT's הָלֹךְ אֶל בֵּית הָרֵכָבִים וְדִבַּרְתָּ אוֹתָם וַהֲבִאוֹתָם, LXX[-A] reads βάδισον εἰς οἶκον Ἀρχαβιν καὶ ἄξεις αὐτούς . LXX[A] again follows MT, and reads καὶ καλέσον αὐτούς between Ἀρχαβιν and καὶ , as do Aquila and Theodotion, with καὶ λαλήσεις αὐτοῖς . It is perhaps possible that the omission of אוֹתָם וְדִבַּרְתָּ by LXX[-A] has been caused by Homoioteleuton between the ם of הָרֵכָבִים and the ם of אוֹתָם, but a case can be made, on structural grounds, for the originality of

the shorter reading, as will be shown below.[17]

For MT ‏בית הרכבים‎, both here and throughout the
chapter, Tg reads ‏בני בית רכב‎. This is not evidence that
this is what appeared in the Targumist's Hebrew text. Rather,
it is once again evidence of his interpretational activity,
perhaps harmonising with the Targumic interpretation of 1 Chron.
2:55, 4:12.

The Targum also reads ‏בית מקדשא‎ for ‏בית יהוה‎
in the verse. 'Sanctuary House' is a standard Targumic term
for the Temple.

Verse 3

The LXX omits the ‏כל‎ in MT's ‏ואת־כל־בניו‎. As
with ‏בן־אישיה‎, in v.1, a decision as to the more original
text is again virtually impossible, but once more the inter-
pretation of the passage is unaffected. Janzen feels that,
in most cases in the Book of Jeremiah, the text without ‏כל‎/
πας is more original.[18]

Verse 4

Both Targum and Peshitta change MT's ‏איש האלהים‎,
to 'Prophet of Yahweh' and 'Prophet of God' respectively.
This is another example of the Targum's desire for exactitude,
[19] and has this time been followed by the Peshitta: Igdaliah
is viewed as a true prophet.

There is quite a variety in the spelling of the proper human names in vv.3 and 4 in the Greek and Hebrew textual traditions. This is probably due to the fact that most of these proper names are either extremely rare, or else completely unattested, elsewhere in the Old Testament. The proper names are further considered in the exegetical notes.[20]

The Peshitta reads ܐܪܥܐ, 'door', for הסף, 'threshold', of MT. This is a case of a substitution of a more familiar word in the Syriac, not evidence of a different Hebrew text.

Verse 5

For לפני בני בית הרכבים of MT, LXX reads και εδωκα κατα προσωπον αυτων , ie. לפניהם ואתן. Symmachus seems to show awareness of both these textual traditions, by reading και παρεθηκα εμπροσθεν αυτων υιων οικου του Ρηχαβιτων. Janzen regards the original pronoun, as represented by LXX, as having been expanded in MT by the addition of the corresponding proper name.[21] As will be shown below, the shorter text of LXX is also preferable on structural grounds.[22]

The κεραμιον οινου of LXX represents a Hebrew text גביע יין, whereas MT reads גבעים מלאים יין. Once again, decision between the two texts is virtually impossible, and the sense is also unaffected whichever reading is adopted.

<u>Verse 7</u>

For לכם יהיה ולא תאספו לא וכרם וזרע לא-תזרעו, LXX

reads και σπερμα ου μη σπειρητε και αμτεχων ουκ εσται ύμιν,

which suggests a Hebrew text כם יהיה לא וכרם תזרעו לא וזרע.

Janzen concedes that the omission in the LXX could perhaps

have been caused by Haplography (<u>sic</u>) between the לא before

תאספו and the ולא following it.[23] He feels, however, that

v.9, וכרם ושדה וזרע לא יהיה לכו, describing the fulfill-

ment of the command, supports the reading of the LXX in v.7.

If this is so, he further argues, then the MT has expanded

the text by the insertion of √זרע after כרם, in conformity

with approximately 90% of the occurrences of כרם in the Old

Testament.

Janzen is, however, incorrect in his analysis.

The evidence of v.9 supports rather the reading of the MT

in v.7: in v.9, וכרם ושדה וזרע are all governed by the

following לא יהיה לכו, which suggests that in v.7 either

both כרם and זרע should be governed by יהיה, or else

neither. The latter option is preserved in the MT of v.7,

whil LXX preserves a cross between the two. Hence, MT is

superior to LXX here, and the variant has arisen through a

simple case of Homoioteleuton.[24]

<u>Verse 8</u>

The LXX of v.8 fails to represent בן-רכב or לכל

אשר צוונו of the MT. Following Janzen's principles over

proper names,[25] the shorter text of LXX should be regarded

as more original over בן-רכב - note also the appearance of

יהוד אבינו, without בן-רכב, at the end of v.10 in both

MT and LXX, which supports this contention. Janzen sees לכל

אשר צונו in the MT as an editorial expansion based on

vv.10 and 14.[26] While the similarity between v.8 MT and v.6

(MT <u>and</u> LXX)[27] may argue for the priority of MT in v.8, it is

more probable that the structural analogue of צוה עלינו in

v.6 is not לכל אשר צוה of v.8 MT, but rather ונשמע ב',

'and we have obeyed', found at the beginning of v.8 in both

MT and LXX. If this is so, then the shorter text represent-

ed by LXX should be seen as being more original.

Verse 9

Targum reads plural nouns (כרמין וחקלין) for the

singular nouns of MT (כרם ושדה). The Hebrew nouns can have

collective force in the singular, and this is reflected in

the Targumist's rendering.

Verse 11

For MT אל-הארץ, 'to the land', Pesh. reads ܥܠ

ܐܪܥܐ, 'against the land'. While the Syriac perhaps depicts

Nebuchadrezzar's offensive more graphically than does the

Hebrew, it does not necessarily show awareness of a text

different from MT here.

For MT באו ונבוא, Targum reads אתו וניעול,

'come, let us go up',and Aquila and Symmachus δευτε
εἰσελθωμεν, 'come, let us enter'. The unique MT reading,
'come and let us come', is preferable, precisely because it
is unique.

LXX reads Ἀσσυριων for MT אדם, which is repre-
sented correctly by Aquila and Symmachus with Συριας. The
Peshitta here reads ܝܘܡ, ie. אידם. This is probably a
simple transcriptional error, as d and r were easily con-
fused in Semitic orthography at any period.

The MT is to be preferred to the LXX. Nebuchad-
rezzar was king of Babylon, not of Assyria. In 2 Kings 24:2,
which probably refers to the same event as that recounted in
this verse, bands of Chaldaeans, Syrians (ארם), Moabites
and Ammonites are found, closely linked with the 'coming
up' of Nebuchadrezzar against Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:1), which
provides additional support for the MT reading.

For בירושלם ונשב of MT, LXX reads και ωικουμεν
εκει, ie. ונשב שם. Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion
follow MT, and this seems preferable for two reasons. First-
ly, the chapter is set inside Jerusalem, and it seems un-
likely that the Rechabites would have said 'we have dwelt
there', when the place denoted by 'there' was the place where
they were. Secondly, the sentence has a chiastic structure,
in which the two references to Jerusalem surround the two
references to the foreign armies, in an ABB'A' structure:

בַאן ונבוא ירושׁלם‎

מפני חיל הכשׂדים‎

ומפני חיל ארם‎

ונשׁב בירושׁלם‎

Thus, the priority of the MT may be upheld here.

Verse 12

For דבר־יהוה of MT, Targum has an expansionary phrase, פתגם

נבואה מן קדם יוי, which serves a similar purpose to the

expansion in the Targum of v.1. The Peshitta inserts 'the

prophet' (ܢܒܝܐ) between 'Jeremiah' and 'saying', but this,

like the substitution 'prophet of God' for 'man of God' in v.4,

is an instance of hagiographical elaboration of MT, rather

than evidence of a different Hebrew text.

LXX is, however, extremely interesting here. For

MT's אל־ירמיהו, it reads πρός με , ie. אלי . Other than

the superscription in v.1, the whole chapter has been thus

far narrated in the first person. Admittedly, there is a

major break in the text between v.11 and v.12, but that is

not a reason for asserting the priority of the MT. Rather,

the form is precisely the same as that which is found in Jer.

18:5, where the explication of the command to go to the

potter's house is recounted in the first person, cf. also

Jer. 13:1-11, especially v.8. Thus, LXX is likely to

reflect the original reading here. G.A. Smith plausibly

suggests that the MT reading has arisen through a copyist

misreading the first person suffix in אלי as the initial

letter of ירמיהו.[28] In v.18,   once again MT is in the third

person,   LXX in the first.   It will be shown that LXX is more

original here also.[29]

Verse 13

While Peshitta,   Targum and Vulgate follow MT in

reading the long divine title יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל,   LXX

does not.   It reads simply κυριος ,   ie. יהוה .   A whole sect-

ion of Janzen's book is devoted to a study of the divine names

in Jeremiah,   and of the differences between MT and LXX over

them.[30]   His results may be summarised as follows: the di-

vergence of LXX from MT over the divine names is so wide that

it cannot be accounted for by inadvertent omission,   eg. צבאות

appears 82 times in the MT of Jeremiah,   but only 10 times in

the LXX,   and אלהי ישראל is attached to יהוה 49 times in MT,

but only 14 times in LXX.   Outside the Book of Jeremiah,

the divine epithet צבאות is rendered by LXX with great regu-

larity,   so if the divine names in Jeremiah were shortened

by the Greek translator,   then it must have been a particular

idiosyncrasy of the translator(s)[31] of Jeremiah.   The short

readings of the LXX are likely to be original,   as the 'omiss-

ions' are anything but consistent,[32]   and the additions to

the divine names in the MT of Jeremiah reflect the same type

of expansionist activity as has been found with the human

names in Jeremiah.   The development of these expansions is

probably due to the fact that,   in the vast majority of cases,

the readings are linked with the prophetic cliches   כה אמר

יהוה and נאם יהוה – 65 of the 82 instances of צבאות in the

MT of Jeremiah are linked with one or other of these formu-
lae, and all 49 instances of ישׂראל אלהי are connected with
כה אמר יהוה.

The נאם יהוה found at the end of the verse in
MT is unrepresented in LXX. Due to the very nature of the
phrase נאם יהוה, it is impossible to decide whether the
long text of MT or the short one of LXX represents the orig-
inal reading: whenever נאם יהוה appears in the OT, which is
frequently (162 times in the MT of Jeremiah, according to BDB),
[33] it is never syntactically connected with anything, so
there is virtually no sure way of determining whether a text
containing it is more original than one that does not. An
'open verdict' must be returned here but, as in the other
cases where such a conclusion has been reached concerning
the text of Jeremiah 35, the sense of the passage is un-
affected.

Verse 14

For MT's הוקם את־דברי יהונדב בן־רכב, LXX has
ἔστησαν ῥῆμα υἱοὶ Ἰωναδαβ υἱου Ρηχαβ, which suggests a
Hebrew text הקימו בני יהונדב בן־רכב את־דברי. The Hophal
of √קום, used here in MT, is very uncommon in the Hebrew
Bible, being found elsewhere only in 2 Sam. 23:1 and Exod.
40:17, both of which are again in the singular form הוקם.
LXX reads a Hiphil for the occurrence in 2 Sam. 23:1 (ἀνέσ-
τησεν).

This paucity of usage of the Hophal of קוּם,
connected with the fact that הוּקַם in Jer. 35:14 is singular
with a plural subject (הַדְּבָרֵי יְהוֹנָדָב), for which a plural
verb would really be desiderated (* הוּקָמוּ), suggests two
things. Firstly, that LXX is correct to read דִּבְרֵי as a sing-
ular, דְּבַר – the final ‾ having arisen through a ditto-
graphy of the following ‾ at the beginning of יְהוֹנָדָב.
Secondly, that, apart from this, MT is, in fact, the
earliest form of the text, and the LXX represents an attempt
to resolve the difficulties of the unusual form of the Heb-
rew, by assimilating the phrase to the כִּי הֻקִם/הֻקַם דִּבְרֵי
יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן־רֵכָב אֶת־מִצְוֹת of v.16. The Targum, which retains
the Hophal of קוּם, but reads it as a plural, represents a
similar attempt to tidy up an awkward piece of Hebrew.

As well as explaining the singular verb with plural
subject, recognition that דִּבְרֵי יְהוֹנָדָב is a corruption of
דְּבַר יְהוֹנָדָב also brings v.14 into conformity with the rest
of the chapter, in describing Jonadab's commands with a
singular noun – the only other place where a plural is used
is in MT v.18, where מִצְוֹתָיו appears, but this is not found
in the probably more original LXX.

Thus, the opening phrase of v.14 read הוּקַם אֶת־דְּבַר
יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן־רֵכָב, an unusual , but still perfectly legiti-
mate, piece of Hebrew.[34] The LXX translator, however, had
trouble with the Hophal of קוּם and the accusative particle
before the subject, and rewrote the sentence so that it was

practically the same as v.16. After the LXX translation was
made, a copyist's error led to the appearance of   - ‎דברי
‎יהונדב‎ .

While Aquila and Theodotion represent the MT clause
‎עד היום הזה כי שמעו מצות אביהם‎, LXX does not. Janzen
feels that MT is secondary, and has arisen through assimi-
lation to vv.8, 10 and 16, perhaps to reinforce the contrast
between the Rechabites (v.14a) and Jeremiah's hearers (v.14b).
[35] LXX v.18 would provide the perfect source for the ex-
pansion. It reads ἐπειδή ἤκουσαν υἱοι Ἰωναδαβ υἱου Ῥηχαβ
τήν ἐντολήν του πατρός αὐτων , ie.   ‎יען אשר שמעו בני‎
‎יהונדב‎ ‎בן-רכב‎ ‎את מצות אביהם‎ . Janzen is probably right:
the MT is to be seen as expansionary.

The ‎אלי‎ at the end of the verse in MT is not
represented in LXX, except in Sinaiticus. A definitive
decision between the longer and shorter texts is not really
possible here. At the end of v.15, MT again reads ‎ולא‎
‎שמעתם אלי‎ and LXX (including Codex ‎א‎) simply καὶ οὐκ
ἠκούσατέ , but at the end of v.16 both LXX and MT read ‎אלי‎
after ‎לא שמעו‎, which perhaps suggests that MT in vv.14
and 15 is an assimilation to v.16, and that the shorter LXX
reading is more original.

Verse 15

For the first time in our chapter, the Latin
Versions present a reading different from that contained in

the MT. The Vulgate follows the MT of Jeremiah 35 completely

literally, so has figured little in this text-critical study.

The Old Latin citation of Jer. 35:15 in Irenaeus' <u>Adversus</u>

<u>Haereses</u>, Book 4, Chap. 36, Part 5, however, is closer

to LXX than to MT, and is probably drawn from the LXX

tradition.

     The LXX tradition fails to represent the כל before

הנביאים עבדי. This case is analogous to that found in v.3,

and is to be similarly left open.[36] LXX also fails to re-

present השכם ושלח, which Janzen feels has arisen in MT

through assimilation to Jer. 25:4, which reads ושלח יהוה

אליכם את־כל עבדיו הנביאים השכם ושלח ולא שמעתם ולא

הטיתם את אזנכם– a verse which Rudolph suggests has itself

been added from 7:25, 26.[37] Helga Weippert has produced a

table of the use of the idiom השכם Inf. Absol. followed by

another Infinitive Absolute in the Old Testament,[38] which

shows that, apart from 2 Chron. 36:15 (itself dependent on

Jer. 25:4), the idiom occurs only in Jeremiah, and always

in the prose portions of the book. השכם is followed by דבר,

in 7:13, 25:3 and 35:14; by העד in 11:7; by למד in

32:33; and by שלח in 7:25, 25:4, 29:14, 35:15 and 44:4.

Except 29:14, which occurs in a section unrepresented by

LXX, all the uses with שלח, other than 35:15, are faith-

fully rendered by LXX, which suggests that had השכם ושלח

been present in the Hebrew text used by the Greek translator,

he would have rendered it in 35:15 also. Thus, Janzen is

correct to see MT as secondary here.

LXX reads a future, και οικησετε for MT's impera-
tive ·ιבשׁ·ו, which is also rendered as an imperative in Pesh-
itta (ܘܥܟܒ). LXX seems preferable here, as the MT impera-
tive is really rather awkward, and may have arisen by assimi-
lation to the other imperatives in the verse. RSV tacitly
follows LXX here, which suggests a Hebrew form ושׁבתם.

For the אלי at the end of the verse in MT, Targum
has למימרי, 'to my _memra_', a phenemenon typical of Targumic
Bible translation and exegesis.[39]

Verse 17

For the full divine title יהוה אלהי צבאות אלהי ישראל
of MT, LXX has simply κυριος, and is probably more original.
[40] For MT's phrase, Peshitta reads יהוה אלהי ישראל, but
this reflects the same text as MT - the אלהי צבאות having
been lost by Haplography between the two instances of אלהי.
As in vv.3 and 15, LXX does not represent the כל before
ישבי in v.17.

The final phrase of the verse in MT, יען דברתם את־דבר
ולא שׁמעתם ואקרא לכם ולא ענה, although found in Theo-
dotion (asterisked), and used by the Targum as the basis for
an expansion,[41] does not appear in LXX. Janzen follows LXX,[42]
and sees the phrase in MT as having arisen as a result of
scribal familiarity with 7:13: ואדבר אליכם השׁכם ודבר
ולא שׁמעתם ואקרא אתכם וגו'.[43] This conclusion is likely -
MT _is_ expansionary here in v.17.

Verse 18

For MT צבאות יהוה אמר כה אמרו ירמיהו הרכב וגם ולבית
אלהי ישראל, LXX reads simply διὰ τοῦτο οὕτως εἶπε κύριος ,
ie. לכן כה אמר יהוה.[44] The shorter divine name of LXX is
more likely to be original,[45] and the first half of the phrase
in MT is also likely to be secondary, probably being part of
the reworking of the text resulting from אלי in v.12 being
seen as an abbreviation for אל-ירמיהו.[46]

For the rest of the verse in MT, LXX has ἐπειδὴ
ἤκουσαν υἱοὶ Ἰωναδαβ υἱοῦ Ῥηχαβ τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν
ποιεῖν καθότι ἐνετείλατο αὐτοῖς ὁ πατὴρ αὐτῶν , which
suggests a Hebrew text reading יען אשר שמעו בני יונדב בן-רכב
את-מצות עשו לעשות כאשר צוה אתם אביהם . Janzen once more ex-
presses a preference for the reading of the LXX.[47] The three
clauses, ועשׂו ... ותשׁמרו ... שׁמעתם of MT are not likely to
be original – although ותשׁמרו את-כל-מצותיו may be missing in
LXX by Homoioarcton, it is more likely that MT is a con-
flated variant of the previous clause. שׁמרה is otherwise
unattested in the chapter, and the plural כל-מצותיו is in
marked contrast to the singular מצות in MT vv.14, 16, 18.

If LXX is followed in v.18, then the opening לכן
כה אמר יהוה parallels the identical opening phrase in v.17,
and the two verdicts follow chiastically on from the two in-
dictments contained in v.16.

Verse 19

LXX does not represent the לכן כה אמר יהוה צבאות
אלהי ישראל of MT, and is superior to MT. MT is based on
vv.13, 15 and 17, and LXX has a superior structure in vv.
18-19. The formula no doubt came into the text of MT v.19
along with the other expansionary reworkings that have been
identified in the chapter.

For ליונדב MT, LXX reads τω υιων Ιωναδαβ . As
Janzen correctly notes, it is LXX which is secondary here,
its expansion deriving from v.16 and LXX v.18.

For עמד לפני of MT, Targum reads משמש קדמי,
'ministering before me'. This is not evidence of a different
Hebrew Vorlage. Rather, it reflects the belief, found in
some rabbinic texts, that the Rechabites became priests.[48]
As will be shown in the third part of the present chapter,
one of the meanings that 'to stand before Yahweh's face' can
have, in biblical Hebrew, is 'cultic service'.

For the final two words of the chapter, כל-הימים,
LXX has πασας τας ημερας της γης , ie. כל-ימי-הארץ,
which is again secondary, as Janzen believes.[49] Rudolph
suggests that it is an expansion based on the promise con-
tained in Gen. 8:22 :[50] עד כל-ימי-הארץ זרע וקציר וקר וחם וקיץ
וחרף ויום ולילה לא ישבתו, "While the earth remains, seed-
time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day
and night, shall not cease." (RSV)

Collationary

      It will be helpful to reproduce in full the form of
the most primitive text, as reconstructed in the foregoing
pages, and to provide a translation of Jeremiah 35. In the
following text and translation, a waved line ($\sim\sim\sim$) indi-
cates an MT plus where a decision of textual priority is
impossible, and the sense unaffected; a straight line (_____)
indicates that a reading found in LXX has been followed; a
broken line (_ _ _) that MT has been followed in preference
to LXX; and parentheses (( )) a reading found in MT but
not in LXX, the priority of which will be ascertained below
on structural grounds.[51]

1.הדבר אשר היה אל־ירמיהו מאת ^יהוה ב^ימי
‏^יוי^ק^ם בנ־^אשיהו מלך ־יהודה לאמר

2.הלוך אל בית הרכב^ם (ודברת אותם) והבאותם
בית ^יהוה ^אל־אחת הלשכות והשקית^ אותם ^יין

3.ואקח את ־^אזניה בן־ירמיהו בן־חבצניה ואת־אחיו
ואת־כל־בניו ואת־כל־בית־^הרכב^ם

4.ואבא אתם בית ^יהוה אל־לשכת בני חנן בן־
^גדליהו איש־האלה^ם אשר אצל לשכת השרים אשר
ממעל ללשכת מעשיהו בן־שלם שמר הסף

5.ואתן לפניהם גב^ר^^ מלא^ם ^יין וכסות ואמר אלהם
שתו־יין

6.ויאמרו לא נשתה יין כי ^יונדב בן־רכב אבינו צוה עלינו
לאמר לא תשתו־יין ^אתם ובניכם עד־עולם

7.ובית לא תבנו וזרע לא תזרעו וכרם לא תטעו ולא
^יהיה לכם כי באהל^ם תשבו כל ^ימיכם למען תחיו
^ימ^ם רב^ם על־פני־האדמה אשר אתם גר^ם שם

8. ונשמע בקול יונדב אבינו לבלתי שתות יין
כל ימינו אנחנו נשינו בנינו ובנתינו

9. ולבלתי בנות בתים לשבתנו וכרם ושדה וזרע
לא יהיה לנו

10. ונשב באהלים ונשמע ונעש ככל אשר צונו
יונדב אבינו

11. ויהי בעלות נבוכדראצר מלך-בבל אל-הארץ
ונאמר באו ונבוא ירושלם מפני חיל הכשדים
ומפני חיל ארם ונשב בירושלם

12. ויהי דבר-יהוה אלי לאמר

13. כה אמר יהוה הלך ואמרת לאיש יהודה
וליושבי ירושלם הלוא תקחו מוסר לשמע
אל דברי באם-יהוה

14. הוקם את-דברי יהונדב בן-רכב אשר צוה את
בניו לבלתי שתות יין ולא שתו ואנכי דברתי
אליכם השכם ודבר ולא שמעתם אלי

15. ואשלח אליכם את-כל-עבדי הנבאים לאמר
שבו-נא איש מדרכו הרעה והיטיבו מעלליכם
ואל-תלכו אחרי-אלהים אחרים לעבדם
ושבתם אל-האדמה אשר נתתי לכם ולאבתיכם
ולא השיתם את-אזנכם ולא שמעתם אלי

16. כי הקימו בני-יהונדב בן-רכב את-מצות אביהם
אשר צום והעם הזה לא שמעו אלי

17. לכן כה אמר יהוה הנני מביא אל-יהודה ואל
כל-יושבי-ירושלם את כל-הרעה אשר דברתי
עליהם

18. לכן כה אמר יהוה יען אשר שמעו בני יונדב בן-
רכב את-מצות אביהם לעשות כאשר צום אביהם

19. לא יכרת איש ליונדב בן-רכב עמד-לפני
כל-הימים

1. The word which came to Jeremiah from Yah-
   weh in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of
   Josiah, king of Judah, saying,

2. Go to the house of the Rechabites, (and
   speak with them,) and bring them to the
   house of Yahweh, into one of the cham-
   bers, and give them wine to drink.

3. So I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah,
   son of Habazziniah, and his brothers
   and all his sons, even the whole house
   of the Rechabites;

4. And I brought them into the house of
   Yahweh, into the chamber of the sons of
   Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, the man
   of God, which was near the chamber of
   the princes, above the chamber of
   Maaseiah the son of Shallum, keeper
   of the threshold.

5. And I set before them pitchers full of
   wine, and cups, and I said to them,
   Drink wine.

6. But they said, We will drink no wine,
   for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father,
   laid a command upon us, saying, You
   shall not drink wine, neither you nor
   your sons forever;

7. And you shall not build a house, and
   you shall not sow seed, and you shall not
   plant a vineyard, nor have anything, but
   you shall live in tents all your days,
   that you may live many days in the land
   wherein you are sojourners.

8. And we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab
   our father, to drink no wine all our days,
   ourselves, our wives, our sons or our
   daughters;

9. And not to build houses to dwell in, and
   vineyard or field or seed we do not have;

10. But we live in tents, and have
    obeyed and done according to all
    which Jonadab our father commanded
    us.

11. But when Nebuchadrezzar king of
    Babylon came up to the land, then
    we said, Come, let us come to
    Jerusalem from before the army of
    the Chaldaeans, and from before the
    army of Ar_a_m, and we are dwelling
    in Jerusalem.

12. Then the word of Yahweh came to me,
    saying,

13. Thus says Yahweh, Go and say to the
    men of Judah and to the inhabitants of
    Jerusalem, Will you not receive
    instruction in order to hearken unto
    my words? says Yahweh.

14. The word which Jonadab the son of Rechab
    commanded his sons, to drink no wine,
    has been established, for they drink
    none, but I spoke to you persistently,
    but you did not obey me.

15. And I sent to you all my sevants the
    prophets, saying, Turn now, every man
    from his evil way, and make your deeds
    good, and do not go after other gods to
    serve them, and you will dwell in the
    land which I gave to you and to your
    fathers, but you have not inclined your
    ear and you have not obeyed me.

16. For the sons of Jehonadab son of Rechab
    have established the command of their
    father which he commanded them, but this
    people has not obeyed me.

17. Therefore, thus says Yahweh, Behold I am
    bringing on Judah and on all the inhabitants
    of Jerusalem all the evil which I have

spoken <u>against them</u>;

18. <u>Therefore, thus says Yahweh,</u> because <u>the</u>
<u>sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have</u>
<u>obeyed the command of their father to do</u>
<u>that which their father commanded them</u>;

19. <u>There will not</u> lack a man to <u>Jonadab</u>
the son of Rechab standing before me
<u>forever</u>.

3.2: FORM CRITICISM OF JEREMIAH 35

The completion of the text-critical exercise by no
means marks the end of the endeavour to arrive at the earli-
est form of Jeremiah 35. Rather, it marks a beginning, for
once the earliest form of the text of the whole chapter has
been ascertained, then a form-critical investigation must
begin. Which, if any, words and phrases in the chapter as
it now stands in the Book of Jeremiah stem from redactors,
and which form the original unit? Is a coherent structure
identifiable in the original unit? Is such a structure found
elsewhere? Was the unit originally a preached sermon, a
written tract, or a piece of prophetic biography? What pur-
pose did it serve, both originally and in later forms and
settings? What date should be ascribed to it and to its
redactions?

This second section of the present investigation
into Jeremiah 35 seeks to raise and answer these questions.
This form-critical endeavour is by no means easy, however,

as there has been a wide diversity of scholarly opinion ex-
pressed concerning the nature and origin of the material in
the Book of Jeremiah. As with any form-critical exercise, the
present endeavour must inevitably involve a degree of sub-
jectivity, as positive external evidence is almost complete-
ly lacking, but it is hoped that the conclusions here express-
ed will commend themselves as the most reasonable way of
understanding the material now found in the thirty-fifth
chapter of the Book of Jeremiah, and it is hoped that they
will serve as a stimulus to further research, not only into
the form-critical problems of the Book of Jeremiah, but also
into the nature of Old Testament Prophecy in general, and
into the means that the prophets of Israel used for proclaim-
ing and disseminating their message.

A brief survey of the problems and positions held
concerning the nature of the Book of Jeremiah as a whole will
be provided, before the examination of chapter 35 itself is
undertaken.

Critical Problems of the Book of Jeremiah

The material contained in the Book of Jeremiah as we
now have it is of a disparate nature. As is the case with all
the pre-exilic prophetic books, a large quantity of poetic
oracles is found, contained (excluding the 'Oracles against
the Nations' in MT chaps. 46-51) largely in chapters 1-25.
There is also a large amount of prose - more than in any other
prophetic book. This material is found mainly, but again by

no means exclusively, in chaps. 26-45, and seems to fall

broadly into two classes: biography about the prophet and

speeches from the prophet. The language of the speeches in

particular seems to be closely akin to that of Deuteronomy,

and it is often argued that the Deuteronomists played a sig-

nificant role in the development (or even in the creation)

of these speeches, and of the Book of Jeremiah as a whole.

While there is widespread agreement among scholars that the

bulk of the poetic oracles in the Book of Jeremiah stems from

the prophet Jeremiah himself, there is little consensus over

over the prose portions. The division of the prose into bio-

graphical material and speeches has been questioned by at

least one scholar. The purpose, or purposes, of the prose

material is/are disputed, and so is the question of whether

or not Jeremiah could have only spoken in poetry, or whether

he could also have used prose on occasions. Whether Jeremiah

himself ever wrote anything is another debated point, and so

is the question whether oracles that were originally delivered

orally in poetry could have become, in some circumstances,

prosaicised in the course of being committed to writing. In

the following paragraphs, a summary of the positions held by

various significant twentieth century critics in respect to

these questions will be offered.

B. Duhm argued that the Book of Jeremiah was the

result of the gathering together of the authentic words of

Jeremiah, which he limited to some 280 verses of poetry, all

in Qinah rhythm (3:2), and the letter to the Exiles in chap.

29, the biographical narratives of Baruch, and a large

corpus of material representing deuteronomistic expansions
from the exilic and post-exilic periods, espousing the theo-
logy of Deuteronomy and the reform of Josiah.[52] Sigmund
Mowinckel furthered Duhm's work, and designated the three
types of material (poetic oracles, biography and speeches)
as Types A, B and C respectively.[53] He did not originally
regard Baruch as the source of the Type B material, but he
later revised his opinion.[54] His work has been very influ-
ential on twentieth century Jeremianic scholarship, and his
designation of the material has been widely accepted.

In one of the classic 'Studies in the Life of Jere-
miah', John Skinner argued that Baruch was the most likely
source for the biographical material now found in the Book
of Jeremiah.[55] He accepted that there was extensive deutero-
nomic activity evident in the Book, but nevertheless held
that the bulk of the material does go back to the prophet him-
self, and either represents Jeremiah's actual words, or
else the gist of his proclamation.[56]

The well-known pre-war combination of Oesterley
and Robinson accepted the division of the material in the Book
of Jeremiah along the lines proposed by Mowinckel.[57] They
held to the Jeremianic authorship of the bulk of the poetic
portions of the Book,[58] and felt that the biographical mater-
ial bore the marks of an account made by a contemporary eye-
witness, probably Baruch.[59] Concerning the speeches, ie.
Type C, they conceded that they had a distinctly deutero-
nomic flavour, but ascribed this, not to a whole-scale later
redaction of the Book of Jeremiah by the Deuteronomists, but

to a common sixth-century rhetorical prose style, used both

by the authors of Deuteronomy and by the scribe who recorded

Jeremiah's preaching, ie. Baruch.[60] They also suggested that,

occasionally, an oracle that was originally delivered in

poetry could become prosaicised in the course of its being

committed to writing, and cited Jer. 22:10-12 as an instance

of the preservation of both the poetic and the prosaicised

forms.[61] They went on to conjecture that these prose portions

were part of the scroll written by Baruch at Jeremiah's dic-

tation, as recounted by Jer. 36.[62] Thus, Oesterley and

Robinson followed Skinner in wishing to see the bulk of the

material in the Book of Jeremiah as stemming from Jeremiah

himself.

Both in his article on the prose sermons and in his

commentary on the Book of Jeremiah as a whole,[63] John Bright

followed Mowinckel's division of the material,[64] and Oester-

ley and Robinson's belief that the prose sermons were couched

in the common rhetorical prose of the sixth century, not

necessarily reflecting Jeremiah's actual words, but certainly

reflecting the gist of his preaching. He dated these sermons

to within a few years of the death of Jeremiah.[65] In addition,

he cited numerous phrases in the prose sermons which he regard-

ed as either being unique to Jeremiah, or found elsewhere

only in manifestly later material.[66]

W.L. Holladay has produced numerous articles deal-

ing with various questions raised by the Book of Jeremiah,[67] and

is in the process of producing the Hermeneia commentary on

on the Book.[68] He too is suspicious of claims that evidence

of large-scale deuteronomic redactional activity can be found

in the Book and, in addition, is doubtful whether the divis-

ion of the prose portions into Type B and Type C, as proposed

by Mowinckel, can be sustained.[69] One of his suggestions is

that the prose portions of Jeremiah contain phrases which have

a 'prototype' in the poetic portions, ie. the prose sections

are very closely modelled on material that is unquestion-

ably Jeremianic.[70] One of his later suggestions, following

Weippert,[71] is that the prose sermons in Jeremiah should be

seen as reflecting a particular style of prophetic diction,

called paraenetic prose, inspired by the style of Deuteronomy

and stemming from the prophet himself, who consciously

modelled himself on the portrayal of Moses in Deuteronomy as

a prophet who was both preacher and poet.[72] His subscription

to this theory leads him to follow Hyatt[73] in his dating of

the life of Jeremiah, taking the thirteenth year of Josiah

(Jer. 1:2) to be the date of the prophet's birth (cf. 1:5),

and placing the call to preach in the year of Josiah's death,

609 BCE, when Jeremiah was seventeen. An additional impor-

tant point that he makes is that, in a dictation situation,

poetry would, of, necessity, be recorded verbatim, but

with prose there would be room for considerable variation on

the part of the scribe, who would use the pattern of writing

to which he was accustomed.[74] Thus Baruch's recording of

Jeremiah's paraenetic prose would inevitably agree with the

conventions of the prose style of the sixth century BCE.

Despite Oesterley and Robinson, Bright and Holladay,

the separation of the Deuteronomists from the development of
the Jeremiah tradition is by no means universally accepted.
Ernest Nicholson has reasserted their influence on the Book
of Jeremiah,[75] arguing that Bright has greatly underestimated
the amount of deuteronomistic phraseology to be found in the
Book of Jeremiah, and claims that

> the peculiarly Jeremianic vocabulary in
> the sermons can be explained on the grounds
> that whoever composed them was working on
> the basis of authentic material from the
> prophet himself, which has been incor-
> porated, wholly or partly, in the present
> sermons.[76]

From a form-critical point of view, his contibution is also
significant because, like Holladay, he is of the opinion
that a division of the prose material into two types is a
false division.[77] He also believes that the prose portions
of Jeremiah were fashioned and shaped by the Deuteronomists,
during the Exile, in Babylon, for homiletic and didactic
purposes.[78]

Robert Carroll, both in his monograph and in his
very recent commentary on Jeremiah,[79] goes even further than
Nicholson, and presents what is in effect a more highly
nuanced version of the arguments of Duhm.[80] Carroll is of the
opinion that the Book of Jeremiah, in its non-poetic portions,
has been so overlaid with later material, dating from both
the exilic and the post-exilic periods, that 'the Quest of
the Historical Jeremiah'[81] is a largely fruitless task. The
purpose of the creation and development of this tradition was
to establish a theodicy, to justify the Fall of Jerusalem,
and to promulgate the views of a particular group in the

early post-exilic period. Like Duhm, Carroll sees the poet-
ic portions of the Book of Jeremiah as the only material that
may be ascribed to the prophet himself. One of Carroll's
fundamental dicta is that "the prophets were poets",[82] there-
by disagreeing with Holladay's belief that Jeremiah used a
paraenetic prose form.

    This review of positions on Jeremiah does not pre-
tend to be exhaustive, but simply seeks to indicate the
breadth of opinion held among various scholars. Without
attempting to solve the form-critical problems of the Book
of Jeremiah - an endeavour which lies far beyond the scope
of the present work - a few preliminary observations are in
order, which will assist the attempt to classify and date the
material contained in Jeremiah 35. It seems somewhat un-
likely that an oracle originally delivered in poetry would be
turned into prose when it was committed to writing, so the
argument of Oesterley and Robinson, based on Jer. 22:10-12,
is to be rejected, and Carroll's explanation of these
verses is to be preferred.[83] Given that this is so, then
the first person prose sections in the Book of Jeremiah (of
which chapter 35 is one) are either Jeremianic paraenetic
prose, either spoken or written, or else the creation of
traditionists, whether based on real events or not. The
questioning of the validity of dividing the prose material
into separate sources is also significant for an investi-
gation into Jer. 35, and Nicholson's emphasis on the positive
purposes of the shaping of the material (for 'preaching to
the Exiles'!) is surely preferable to a view like that of

Bright, who regards the redaction simply as a preservation
of the gist of Jeremiah's own words.[84] Carroll's approach
is very suggestive, but he may, as Berridge has noted,[85]
be asking rather too much of the data and, in fact, in his
commentary, Carroll is rather more circumspect in presenting
his hypothesis.[86] Whether he is right to maintain rigidly
that the prophets were poets is, however, another matter –
Holladay et al may be right in believing that Jeremiah, at
any rate, was capable of using prose on occasion. And what
about the prophets as authors? Quite a large body of scholar-
ship[87] believes that the prophets were quite capable of pro-
ducing tracts propounding their views. If this was the case,
did they write in poetry or in prose? Finally, it seems
incontrovertible that some passages in the present Book of
Jeremiah stem from redactors, but whether any or all of
these passages come from the Deuteronomists is a matter which,
at this stage, must be left open.

With these preliminary remarks made, we may now
turn to Jeremiah 35 itself.

Form Criticism and Structure of Jeremiah 35

The first, and most obvious, thing that should
be said about the form of Jeremiah 35 is that it is in prose,
ie. if Mowinckel's analysis of the data is correct, it should
be assigned to Type B (biographical narratives) or to Type C
(prose sermons), or divided between the two. It is common
for commentators to divide the chapter at the end of v.11,

and to assign vv.1-11 to Type B and vv.12-17 or 12-19[88] to

Type C.[89] The doubt expressed by Nicholson and Holladay over

the division of the material in the Book of Jeremiah immedi-

ately becomes significant. The assigning of the material in

chapter 35 to two distinct sources implies that the sections

vv.1-11 and 12-17(19) once circulated independently from each

other or, at least, that vv.12-17(19) were added to vv.1-11

at some later stage in the compilation of the material. How-

ever, vv.1-11 make little sense on their own. The narrative

is incomplete, the reader is left in 'mid-scene' at the end

of the Rechabites' speech, wondering what is going to happen

next. Theologically, it is incomplete too. One of the strong

points of Thompson's commentary on Jeremiah is its section on

prophetic symbolism,[90] where the importance of the spoken

divine word accompanying prophetic acts is stressed - and

Jeremiah's dealings with the Rechabites are just such an act

of prophetic symbolism.[91] For this reason, vv.1-11 must be

seen as incomplete on their own. No reason has been given

for Jeremiah's action. There has been no spoken divine word

to accompany the symbolic act, and it seems improbable that,

if Jeremiah had simply gone home at the end of the Rechabites'

speech, without saying or doing anything, his audience

would have understood the point he was trying to make - his

action would have been, at best, ambiguous and, at worst,

downright incomprehensible! The observation that vv.1-11

are incomplete on their own also holds true even if the chap-

ter is seen as a literary creation, with little or no basis

in historical fact[92] - the verses are incomplete as a literary

unit also. This being so, one of three things must be assumed

about vv.12-19. Either the section comes in toto from the
same source as vv.1-11, or the section comes in toto from
redactors, and has completely replaced the original conclu-
sion to vv.1-11, or else the section is an amalgam, contain-
ing the original nucleus of the conclusion to the pericope,
with later editorial material, whether deuteronomistic or
not, added to, and overlaying, it. The third option seems
the most likely one, as there does seem to be material in
vv.12-19 that is editorial, but it seems intrinsically im-
probable that redactors would have completely replaced the
original conclusion to the passage with something of their
own creation. A careful analysis of the verses will reveal
which ones are likely to be original to the story about the
Rechabites, and which are later editorial expansions.[93]
Some scholars have also sought to demonstrate that vv.1-11
have also undergone editorial expansion[94] but, as will be
shown,[95] this is unlikely.

Thus, for Jeremiah 35 at least, the contention of
Nicholson and Holladay, that to divide the prose material
into Type B and Type C is, at best, unhelpful, is sub-
staniated.

The overall structure of Jeremiah 35 may be defined
as follows:

a. A third person opening formula: "The word which
came to Jeremiah from Yahweh ... saying". Verse 1.

b. A command from Yahweh to Jeremiah. Verse 2.

c. A first person account of Jeremiah's carrying

128

out of that command, with the addition of further details
(ie. the speech of the Rechabites). Verses 3-11.

d. A divine explication of the act, based on those
further details, introduced by "And the word of Yahweh came
to me saying".[96] Verses 12-19.

This structure is identical with that of Jer. 18:1-
11, the so-called 'Parable of the Potter':

a. A third person opening formula: "The word which
came to Jeremiah from Yahweh ... saying". Verse 1.

b. A command from Yahweh to Jeremiah. Verse 2.

c. A first person account of Jeremiah's carrying
out of that command, with the addition of further details
(in this case, the actions of the potter). Verses 3f.

d. A divine explication, based on those further
details, introduced by "And the word of Yahweh came to me
saying". Verses 5-11.

The structure of Jer. 13:1-11, the 'Parable of
the Waistcloth', is not dissimilar to that of Jer. 35, but
it is more complicated, as it includes no less than three
successive divine instructions (vv.1, 3f, 6) and three accounts
of Jeremiah obeying those instructions (vv.2, 5, 7a), before
the further details ("The waistcloth was spoilt, it was good
for nothing", v.7b), and the divine explication, introduced
by "And the word of Yahweh came to me saying". Note that the
opening formula in 13:1, ‏כה אמר יהוה אלי‎, is different
from that in 18:1 and 35:1, ‏הדבר אשר היה אל־ירמיהו מאת־יהוה...לאמר‎.

As will be seen in the course of the following anal-
ysis, numerous scholars have rejected certain verses and
phrases in all three of these passages as redactional. Even
if their conclusions are right, this overall structure, to
be found in Jer. 13:1-11, 18:1-11, 35:1-19, remains un-
altered.

The major structural difference between Jer. 35
on the one hand and Jer. 13 and 18 on the other is that the
latter two chapters have nothing which corresponds to the
Promise to the Rechabites in 35:18-19. It is common to see
these verses as being separate from vv.12-17,[97] presumably
because of the opening formula contained in MT v.18 but, as
the text-critical analysis showed, it is rather LXX which
reflects the original text,[98] without the opening formula,
which suggests that vv.18-19 are an integral part of vv.12-
19. There are only two other 'Messages of Salvation' add-
ressed to particular persons in the Book of Jeremiah, that
to Ebed-Melech the Cushite (39:16-18) and that to Baruch
(chap. 45), but in form and language they are both signif-
icantly different from 35:18-19, and sufficiently like each
other,[99] to suggest that they should not be readily associ-
ated with 35:18-19.[100]

Nicholson does not link the structure of Jer. 35
with that of Jer. 13 or Jer. 18.[101] Rather, he links it
with the structure of Jer. 7, 11:1-17, 17:19-27, 25:1-11
and 34:1-22, and sees all of them as evidence of a deutero-
nomistic homiletic style in the prose sermons of the Book of

Jeremiah and, hence, as evidence of a deuteronomistic re-
daction of the whole of the material. However, chap. 35 is
not the same structurally as chaps. 7, 11, 17, 25 or 34, all
of which recount a divine speech and nothing more, whereas
chap. 35 recounts a piece of prophetic symbolism. Hence, in
chap. 7 there is no account of Jeremiah obeying Yahweh's
command, and this feature is absent from the passages in
chaps. 11, 17, 25 and 34 also. Nicholson is mistaken when
he includes chap. 35 with these others. Chapters 13 and 18
are closer structural parallels than those adduced by Nichol-
son - it is surely very forced to take 35:1-12 as the 'intro-
duction' to 35:13-19, as he does.[102] Vv.1-12 are not a unity
in this sense; the natural break in the chapter occurs after
v.11, and to impose a structure on the text that ignores this
seems quite arbitrary. As an 'introduction', 35:1-12 is six
times as long[103] as any of the other 'introductions' that
Nicholson cites,[104] except 34:8-12, which is still under
half the length of 35:1-12. The sections in chaps. 7, 11, 17
25 and 34 all open with "Go and say" (or variations on this),
or else "The word of Yahweh which came to Jeremiah saying",
and then launch directly into the divine speech. Jeremiah 35,
like chaps. 13 and 18, has an instruction to the prophet
to go and perform an action, and an account of him perform-
ing that action. It should also be noted that, in the present
form of the texts, the 'call to obedience' in the other texts
cited by Nicholson (7:3-7, 23, 11:3-7, 17:21-22, 25:3-6,
34:13-14) is in the indicative or the imperative, whereas in
35:13 alone is it an interrogative, and in the original form
of the text there may not have been a 'call to obedience' at

all, simply an announcement of judgement on the people.[105]

Nicholson may be right in thinking that Jer. 35 in its present

form is a sermon, but structurally he is mistaken when he

compares it with the material contained in chaps. 7, 11, 17,

25 and 34.

This is to pass no judgement on the question of

whether these other speeches cited by Nicholson have a deut-

eronomistic structure or not. It is not the purpose of this

study to prove the existence or otherwise of a deuteronomistic

redaction of the Book of Jeremiah.[106] The specific task of

the present work is to deal with Jeremiah 35, which seems to

have a very definite structure, but not a deuteronomistic

one - at least, not as Nicholson defines a deuteronomistic

structure! It is more profitable to compare the structure of

chap. 35 with that of chaps. 18:1-11 and 13:1-11, and to

classify these three units together, as George Adam Smith

did long ago,[107] and to seek the true understanding of chap-

ter 35 in terms of an account of an act of prophetic symbol-

ism.

Having rejected Nicholson's contention that a deut-

eronomistic structure is discernible in Jer. 35, and having

identified an overall general structure, it is now necessary

to move to a more detailed analysis of the text itself, in

terms of the language employed and the rhetorical devices

used. It is worth restating the contentions that vv.1-11 are

a unity, and that vv.12-19 are an amalgam, containing the

kernel of the original conclusion to vv.1-11, but overlaid

and expanded by a considerable amount of editorial expansion.
In the paragraphs that follow, the two sections vv.1-11 and
12-19 will be examined separately.

While it may not be an infallible guide for deter-
mining the presence or absence of redactional expressions in
a biblical text, it seems to be a reasonable working hypoth-
esis to suggest that where particular words or phrases that are
rare or unique in the Hebrew Bible, or words that are found
in all the various writings of the Old Testament, occur in a
particular text, then this is a sign of the 'authenticity' of
that text, and that, conversely, where 'stock phrases' be-
longing to a particular (group of) biblical writer(s) are
found, especially in large numbers in a relatively short
text, then this is a sign that a redactor has been at work
on the text. The following examination of Jer. 35 suggests
that the former situation prevails in vv.1-11, and the latter
in vv.12-19. In vv.1-11, the following rare or unique
words and phrases are found:

לשכה, 'chamber', found in verses 2 and 4, is not
a common biblical word, being frequent only in the vision
of the restored Temple in Ezekiel 40-48. The word is found
twice in the deuteronomistic corpus, at 1 Sam. 9:22, where
it denotes a banquet hall at a local sanctuary (במה), and at
2 Kings 23:11, referring, as here, to a room in the Solo-
monic Temple. It occurs elsewhere in Jeremiah at 36:10;

איש האלהים, 'man of God', Jer. 35:4, is not
in itself a rare biblical phrase, but it is found only here
in the corpus of the Latter Prophets. If the phrase here had

come from a redactor, it would be expected that it would have

been used as a title of Jeremiah or, at least, of another

known figure, not the otherwise completely unknown Hanan ben

Igdaliah. Alternatively, 'man of God' could be a designation

of Igdaliah rather than Hanan, but Igdaliah is as unknown as

his son!

In Jer. 35:7, the phrase למען תחיו ימים רבים על

פני-האדמה , lit. 'that you may live many days upon the

face of the earth', is found. Even without the addition of

the following phrase, אשר אתם גרים שם , 'wherein you are

sojourners', this is a unique construction in the OT, and

not a deuteronomistic addition, as Thiel thinks.[108] The

standard Hebrew formula for 'living long in the land' uses

√ ארך Hiph. For instance:

Exod. 20:12	למען יארכון ימיך על-האדמה
Deut. 4:10	ולמען יארכן ימים על-האדמה
Deut. 6:2	ולמען יארכן ימיך
Deut. 11:9	ולמען יאריכו ימים על-האדמה

Occasionally, √ יסף Hiph. is used to express the idea, as in

Prov. 10:27, יראת יהוה תוסיף ימים . These promises are usu-

ally followed by אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך כל-הימים, 'which

Yahweh your God is giving you forever' (Deut. 4:40), or the

like. This provides another point of linguistic difference

between Jer. 35:7 and the other promises of long life in the

land, and hence a further indication of the authenticity of

the present section of Jer. 35: in Jer. 35:7, the following

phrase is the equally singular אשר אתם גרים שם;

The plural participle of √ גור , ie. גרים, as here,

is found only nine times in the Old Testament.[109] None of the

other instances are close enough in form to posit literary

influence from them onto Jer. 35:7;[110]

The all-inclusive phrase אנחנו נשינו בנינו ובנתינו,
'we, our wives, our sons and our daughters' in Jer. 35:8
is also quite singular - the closest parallel anywhere else
in the Old Testament is to be found in Jer. 14:6, המה נשיהם
ובניהם ובנתיהם, 'them, their wives, and their sons and
their daughters';

וכרם ושדה וזרע in 35:9 is also completely un-
attested elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Rudolph proposed
reading וכרם ושדה לזרע, on the basis of Ezek. 17:5 (ויתנו
בשדה זרע),[111] but there seems no compelling reason to
follow this emendation. Rather, it is best to accept the
phrase's uniqueness;

The use of √בוא in the double formula בוא ונבוא,
Jer. 35:11, is nowhere else attested in biblical Hebrew.

While this evidence is by no means conclusive, it
is nevertheless sufficiently strong, especially when linked
with the arguments from the rhetorical devices present in
the verses, about to be detailed, to support the contention
that vv.1-11 lack evidence of the hand of the redactor.

Thiel regards Jer. 35:1 as using a typically
deuteronomistic form, and suggests that the dating of the
incident to the time of Jehoiakim also comes from the Deuter-
onomists.[112] That v.1 was not part of the original unit is
not likely, however. V.2 hardly marks the beginning of
anything, as it leaves both the speaker and the addressee
unspecified, so if v.1 is redactional, then it must have

replaced something else which contained the name of both
speaker and addressee, and probably some indication of date
as well. It is surely easier to regard the present v.1 as the
original opening of the unit, rather than as a redactional
phrase.

Verses 2-5, which recount Yahweh's command to
Jeremiah, and a first person account of the carrying out of
that command, use the rhetorical device known as _repetitio_,
where each of the commands has a corresponding account of its
fulfilment. Thus:

$$
\begin{array}{r}
\text{הלוך אל בית־הרכבים} \qquad\text{.2} \\
\text{(ודברת אותם)} \\
\text{והבאותם בית יהוה אל אחת הלשכות} \\
\text{והשקית אותם יין} \\
\text{ואקח את־יאזניה בן־ירמיהו בן־} \qquad\text{.3} \\
\text{חבצניה ואת אחיו ואת־כל־} \\
\text{בניו ואת־כל־בית־הרכבים} \\
\text{ואבא אתם בית יהוה אל לשכת בני} \qquad\text{.4} \\
\text{חנן בן־יגדליהו איש־האלהים} \\
\text{אשר אצל לשכת השרים אשר} \\
\text{ממעל ללשכת מעשיהו בן־שלם} \\
\text{שמר הסף} \\
\text{ואתן לפני בני בית־הרכבים גבעים מלאים יין} \qquad\text{.5} \\
\text{וכסות ואמר אליהם שתו־} \\
\text{יין}
\end{array}
$$
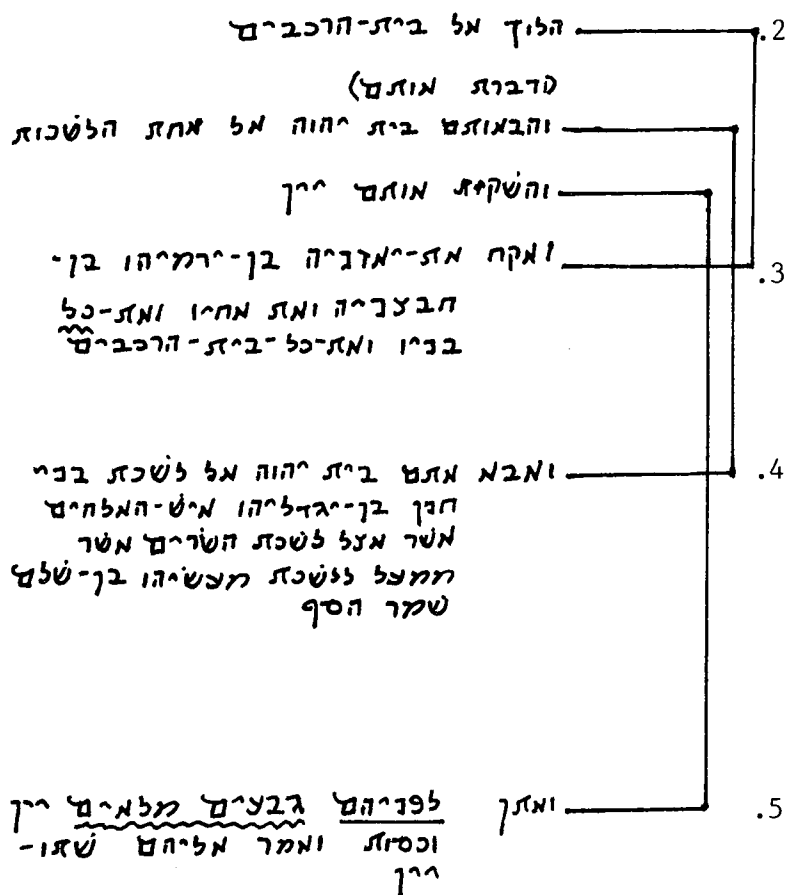
In the text-critical analysis,[113] the question of
the original text in v.2 was left open, _ie._ whether ודברת

אותם should be read with MT, LXX[A], or omitted with LXX[-A],

but it was suggested that it was possible to express a prefer-

ence for the shorter reading on structural grounds. Here are

the reasons supporting that preference. If 'go and speak to

them' is omitted, then the three commands from Yahweh in

v.2, 'Go ... bring ... make drink' are taken up successively

in the three following verses, 'And I took ... and I brought

... and I set before them'. The narrative of the fulfilment

of the command is no slavish repetition of the contents of

that command in v.2, as one would expect if vv.3-5 were a

redactional composition.[114] Rather, each element in the

fulfilling of the command is fuller than its counterpart in the

command itself. Thus, 'house of the Rechabites', v.2a,

becomes 'Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, son of Habazziniah,

and his brothers, and all his sons', with a resumptive

'even the whole house of the Rechabites', v.3. The 'and

bring them into the house of Yahweh, into one of the cham-

bers' in v.2b becomes, in v.4, 'And I brought them to the

house of Yahweh, to the chamber of the sons of Hanan etc.',

with the verb plus suffix of the command becoming verb plus

accusative pronoun, and the position of the chamber being

given in some detail, as opposed to the vague 'one of the

chambers' of the command. The 'and give them wine to drink',

v.2c, becomes 'And I set before them pitchers full of wine

and cups, and I said to them, Drink wine'. The fact that

v.2c uses an accusative pronoun supports Janzen's contention[115]

that, in v.5, LXX κατα προσωπον αυτων (ie. לפניהם) is

preferable to the MT לפני בני בית הרכבים.

The same rhetorical features discerned in vv.2-5, namely, a command followed by an account of the fulfilling of that command, based on, but different from, the command itself, can be seen also in the 'further details', the speech of the Rechabites, in vv.6-10:

.6   ויאמרו

לא נשתה יין כי יונדב בן-רכב אבינו

a   [צוה עלינו]

לאמר

b   לא תשתו-יין אתם ובניכם עד-עולם

.7

c   ובית לא תבנו

d   וזרע לא תזרעו

וכרם לא תטעו

ולא יהיה לכם

e   כי באהלים תשבו כל-ימיכם למען

תחיו ימים רבים על-פני-האדמה אשר

אתם גרים שם

.8

a   ונשמע בקול יהונדב אבינו

b   לכל אשר צונו כל-ימיו

אנחנו נשינו בנינו ובנתינו

.9

c   ולבלתי בנות בתים לשבתנו

d   וכרם ושדה וזרע לא יהיה לנו

.10

e   ונשב באהלים

ונשמע ונעש ככל אשר צונו יונדב

אבינו

On the structural link between 'laid a command on us', v.6, and 'And we have obeyed', v.8 (a-a on the diagram), see above, page 102. V.6b is taken up by v.8b (b-b), but once again there is no slavish repetition, which one would expect to find if the verses detailing the fulfilment of the command were a redactional expansion based on the command itself. The order of the elements is different - in v.6 it is 'drink no wine - people - forever', in v.8 'drink no wine - forever - people'. The expressions used for 'forever' are different - in v.6 it is עד־עולם and in v.8 כל־ימינו. The 'people' section is fuller in v.8 than in v.6 - in v.6 it is 'you and your sons', and in v.8 'we, our wives, our sons and our daughters'. V.7a is taken up by v.9a (c-c), but in v.9 the בית of v.7 becomes the plural בתים and לשבתנו is added. V.7b is taken up by v.9b[116] (d-d), but again the form of v.9b is very different from that of v.7b - an extra element (ושדה) has been inserted, and the verbs (תזרעו and תטעו) dropped. V.7c is taken up by v.10a (e-e), this time, uniquely, perhaps because it is the end of the passage, in a form shorter than that contained in the command, but with a closing summary notice appended, so that 'to command' (צוה , cf. v.6) and 'to obey' (שמע , cf. v.8) are summarised at the end of the section to form a neat conclusion.

Verse 11, the final verse of the 'further details', stands separately from the other verses, and uses its own rhetorical device, namely chiasmus, as has been already demonstrated.[117] The verse is needed to explain why the Rechabites, tent-dwellers, were currently residing in

Jerusalem (whether still in tents or in houses is immaterial
at this stage), but this should not be taken as evidence that
the verse stems from a redactor - it does include a unique
grammatical construction.[118] Rather, what we appear to have
in the speech of the Rechabites in Jer. 35:6-11 is two things:
the 'creed' of the Rechabites in vv.6-10, which forms a self-
contained unity with a tight structure, and their own addition
in v.11, justifying their presence in Jerusalem.

It is clear, from the language and rhetorical de-
vices used, that the first eleven verses of Jeremiah 35, in
the most original form of the text that can be discovered,
do not contain any redactional elements. Thus, they will
prove to be a vital source document for material on the Rech-
abites, provided that they can be dated with any certainty
- an issue that will be examined after vv.12-19 have been
subjected to analysis.

As has already been claimed, it seems highly likely
that vv.12-19, while containing the original conclusion to
vv.1-11, now also contain substantial editorial expansions,
whether from a 'Jeremianic School' (for lack of a better term),
or from the Deuteronomists, or from both. Stock phrases
abound, and there seems to be little coherent structure in
the verses as they now stand, which seem to be indications
of redactional activity. However, in determining which
phrases are redactional, caution is needed lest so much is
ascribed to redactors that insufficient material is left to
form the original conclusion.[119]

Before moving to a verse-by-verse analysis of
vv.12-19, some initial observations are in order. Firstly,
it seems intrinsically unlikely that the original purpose of
the event was simply to point out the obedience of the Rechab-
ites, and to commend them for it, without drawing any con-
trast with the people of Judah and Jerusalem at all. It is
hard to believe that Jeremiah would have performed the act
if that were its sole purpose, and still harder to believe
that it would have been preserved at all if it were. Some
element of the drawing of a contrast between the Rechabites
and the Judaeans must have been present in the original con-
clusion to the pericope, both in terms of their respective
actions and in terms of their promised rewards, so those
positions which do not include both of these have been too
extreme,[120] and are deficient because they lack any threat
or promise of judgement on the people. Secondly, the para-
llels to chap. 35, ie. chaps. 13 and 18, as well as contin-
uity within chap. 35 itself, demand that v.12, ‎דבר ‎ויהי
‎ירמיה אל‎ יהוה‎, be retained as part of the original text.
It may be felt that ‎יהוה‎ אמר‎ כה in v.13a would be desired
also, but 18:5f demonstrates that the presence of this phrase
is not absolutely essential. Thirdly and very importantly, in
the present text there is a contradiction between v.13 and
v.16f. With the question, 'Will you not receive instruction
in order to hearken unto my words?', in v.13, the impli-
cation is that Jeremiah's hearers are still able to amend
their ways, but in v.16f it is plain that the judgement upon
the people is inevitable. The analysis of redactional features

in the text must take account of this, as well as of the
change of person found in the most primitive form of the
original text - in vv.13-15, second person plural direct
address is used, while in vv.16-19, the third person plural
is found. These two changes, from conditional to definite
judgement, and from direct address to the third person,
cause some awkwardness, and their presence needs to be explain-
ed. Fourthly, and also importantly, it is vital that, when
the extent of redactional influence on Jeremiah 35 is assess-
ed, glib talk of a single redactor or redactional school must
be avoided. Numerous possibilities for redactors and re-
dactional methods for the Book of Jeremiah have been proposed,
and it is possible that some of the varying proposals are
complementary, rather than contradictory.

The initial tentative suggestion offered by the
present study is that the original text in the second half of
Jer. 35 consisted of vv.12, 16-19, as reconstructed in the
text-critical analysis. The isolation of vv.13-15 as redact-
ional removes the odd changes from second to third person and
from a threatened judgement to a promised one, and yields a
good structure. This proposal needs to be established by a
careful analysis of each verse.

As indicated above, v.12 must have been part of
the original literary unit, as the passage makes little sense
without it.

As has already been noted, verses 13-15 contain a
conditional threat of judgement couched in the second person
plural, whereas vv.16-19 contain a promise of a certain judge-
ment, couched in the third person plural. It seems improbable
that both these forms were present in the original unit. In
v.13, כה אמר יהוה, as already noted, need not necessarily
have been part of the original unit. הלוא תקחו could have
been added from Jer. 28:13 and Is. 38:5.   איש יהוה ושבי
ירושלם, which is <u>not</u> exactly the same as the phrase in Jer.
35:17, is found six other times in the Jeremiah prose[121] and
twice in the Jeremiah poetry. Bright thinks that the phrase
here is derived from the poetic occurrences of the phrase in
4:3f,[122] but Holladay is of the opinion that 4:3f is late,[123]
and that the phrase's use in the prose portions of Jeremiah
is derived from Is. 5:3, perhaps mediated by 2 Kings 23:2.
In either case, it is clear that the phrase is redactional in
Jer. 35:13.   הלוא תקחו מוסר occurs three times elsewhere in
the Jeremiah prose[124] and twice in the poetry.[125] Even though
the phrase 'to take correction' was a current one in the wis-
dom literature, and was probably a ready phrase in all periods,
its use in the Jeremiah prose is probably based on its use in
the Jeremiah poetry, as Holladay observes,[126] and thus stems
from the Jeremianic redactors. The closing phrase of the
verse, נאם יהוה, is not in LXX, and is perhaps not even
part of the most primitive form of the complete text.

Just like v.13, v.14 can also be seen as the crea-
tion of the 'Jeremianic School' of redactors, using words and

phrases from elsewhere in the Book of Jeremiah. הקול אֶת־דבר
בְּיהוה֖־־הַנדר בן־רכב צוה אשר צוה אֶת־בניו is reminiscent of the phrase

כי הקים֖ בית־הֲיֵהוֹנדבְ בן־רכב אֶל מצות אֲבִיהֶם in v.16, and may

have been drawn from it, being slightly altered to avoid

complete repetition of the same phrase within a few verses.

לבלתי שׁתות יין looks like an expansion from v.8. The use

of √שׁכם Hiph. infinitive absolute followed by another in-

finitive absolute is confined to Jer. 7:13, 25, 11:7, 25:3,

4, 26:5, 29:19, 32:33, 35:15, 44:4 and 2 Chron. 36:15,

which is dependent on Jer. 29:19. It is thus <u>not</u> a deutero-

nomistic expression, but one that is peculiar to the Jeremiah

prose tradition. As it is a 'stock phrase' of the Jeremiah

prose, it is probably a device of the Jeremianic redactors,

rather than a feature of the prophet's own language. In the

final phrase, אֵלי is absent from LXX, and ולא שׁמעתם may

have been added from 7:13.

Verse 15 is often held to be completely deutero-

nomistic, but Weippert's analysis has made this position hard

to sustain.[127] For עבדי הנבאים, <u>cf</u>. Jer. 7:25, 25:4,

26:5, 29:19, 44:4, where it always follows שׁלח√. Else-

where in Jeremiah, the prophets are never called Yahweh's

servants. In fact, most of the references in Jeremiah to

'prophet(s)' are negative in connotation: other than the

times נבא/נבאים appears with עבדי, those which desig-

nate Jeremiah in superscriptions and those which refer to Hanan-

iah in Jer. 28, only 1:5 and 2:30 use the term positively.

1:5 refers to Jeremiah, this time in a speech of Yahweh to

him, and 2:30 to the murder of the (true) prophets. This

suggests that the phrase עבדי הנבאים in Jer. 35:15 comes

from a redactor, but the identification of this redactor with

the Deuteronomists cannot be sustained. עבדי הנבאים is

found in the deuteronomistic corpus at 1 Kings 14:18, 2 Kings

9:7, 14:25, 17:13, 23, 21:10, 24:2, and elsewhere in

the OT at Ezek. 38:17, Am. 3:7, Zech. 1:6, Dan. 9:6, 10,

Ezra 9:11, but only in Jeremiah is the phrase found with

שׁכם‎ Hiph. (not in the most primitive form of Jer. 35) and

'not hearing'. Elsewhere, except for 2 Kings 9:7 ('the blood

of my servants the prophets') and Am. 3:7 ('for the Lord Yahweh

does nothing except he discloses his counsel to his servants

the prophets'), the use of ביד with עבדי הנבאים is charac-

teristic. For שׁובו נא איש מדרכו הרעה, again see Weippert's

analysis. The phrase is found also in Jer. 18:11, 25:2,

26:3 and 36:3, 7, and elsewhere only in Jonah 3:8, which is

late. <u>Similar</u> expressions are found in Ezekiel (5 times),

Zech. 1:4, Jonah 3:10, 2 Chron. 7:14 and also in 1 Kings

13:33 which as Weippert suggests, has probably been influ-

enced by the (uniquely non-metaphorical) use of שׁוב‎ + דרך

in the preceding pericopé, and in 2 Kings 17:13, which also

uses עבדי and נבאים. However, the linguistic context in

2 Kings 17 is different from that in Jeremiah, and the rela-

tion of the phrases is different. In 2 Kings 17:13, the

'call to return' is followed by a 'demand to keep the law',

and the enjoining of the latter is the task of the עבדי.

This is dealt with differently in Jeremiah. The use of שׁוב +

דרך is atypical of the deuteronomistic corpus. Usually סור‎

is used.[128] Thus, the phrase שׁובו נא איש מדרכו הרעה in the Book

of Jeremiah appears, once more not to be deuteronomistic, but

rather a phrase of the Jeremianic redactors, who may, as

Holladay argues, have drawn it from the poetic use of the

phrase in 23:14.[129] The phrase מהשיבו מעלליכם is found

outside Jer. 35:15 only in Jer. 7:3, 5, 18:11 and 26:13,

which are all prose, and nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible,

although √ישב Hiph. is used with a similar meaning in the

Jeremiah poetry at 4:22 and 13:23. Brekelmans assigns 18:11b-

12, which includes one of the instances of √ישב Hiph. fol-

lowed by מעלליכם, to the exilic period, but not to the

deuteronomistic redaction of the Book of Jeremiah.[130] There

is no reason why his contention should not be applied to the

use of the phrase in Jer. 35:15 also. The following phrase

in 35:15, ואל־תלכו אחרי אלהים אחרים, is found a total of

18 times in the Jeremiah prose, and some 35 times all over the

deuteronomistc corpus. In the deuteronomistic writings, the

phrase is always followed by 'to serve them', as in Jer. 35:

15, or 'to worship them', or both. For 'to serve them',

cf. Deut. 8:19, 13:3, 28:14. √עבד follows the phrase else-

where in Jeremiah in 11:10, 13:10, 16:11f and 25:6. While

Weippert makes a brave attempt to show that the phrase is not

necessarily a deuteronomistic one,[131] it seems more likely

that here, in the phrase 'and do not go after other gods to

serve them', one of the few indications of deuteronomistic

activity in chapter 35 appears. In Jeremiah, the phrase often

fits badly into its context. It does here, in 13:10 and

especially in 25:6, where the injunction not to go after

other gods occurs after the promise of blessing for obedience!

This awkwardness is another indication that, in 35:15, the

phrase is a late insertion into the rest of the verse, itself

already an insertion into the original text. The phrase

הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי, or something very similar, is found in

the Jeremiah prose at 7:7, 14, 16:15, 23;29, 24:10, 30:3,

and here, and in the poetry at 17:4, which is not a very

close parallel.[132] It is found in the deuteronomistic writings

at Deut. 3:19, 20, 9:23, 1 Kings 9:7 and 2 Kings 21:8. As

with the preceding phrase, there is no reason why it should

not be ascribed to the Deuteronomists. The following phrase

in the verse, however, is not deuteronomistic. וְלֹא הִטּוּ

אֶת אָזְנָם is found in the Jeremiah prose at 7:24, 26, 11:8,

17:23, 25:4, 34:14, here and 44:5, and elsewhere in the

OT at Is. 55:3, 2 Kings 19:16=Is. 37:17, Dan. 9:18 and 14

times in the Psalter and Proverbs. The precise form, how-

ever, that the phrase takes in Jeremiah is found elsewhere

only in Prov. 5:13, which is later than Jeremiah, so de-

pendence on the writings of the Deuteronomists for the origin

of this phrase cannot be asserted. Again it stems from the

Jeremianic redactors.

Even the most radical of scholars retains v.16 as

part of the original conclusion to the passage. It is

couched in the third person plural, unlike vv.13-15, and the

use of √קום Hiph. of one person 'establishing' another human

being's word or commandment is rare, cf. 1 Sam. 15:11, 13,

where Saul establishes Yahweh's covenant, Jer. 34:18, where

the Judaeans establish Yahweh's covenant also, 44:25, 'what

your mouth promises your hands should certainly establish',

and Neh. 5:13, 'cursed be the man who does not establish

this promise'. On the principle that scarcity of use is

likely to indicate genuinenesss, there is here a sign of

the originality of v.16, and if v.16 is established as part

of the original form of the text, then vv.13-15 must be seen

as secondary, on quite different grounds to the arguments

adduced above concerning the particular phrases in those

verses: either the 3rd person material must be seen as sec-

ondary, or else the 2nd. The originality of the 3rd person

v.16 forces the adoption of the latter alternative.

Moshe Weinfeld regards הנני מביא ... את-כל-הרעה

in Jer. 35:17 as a deuteronomistic phrase,[133] but he is un-

likely to be correct. The use of אשר דברתי with the phrase

is very uncommon, and the אל-יהודה ואל-כל-ישבי-ירושלם

is not couched in exactly the same way as the other phrases

in the Jeremiah prose where Judah and Jerusalem are mention-

ed together. 'Behold, I am bringing' is, in fact, a rela-

tively common OT phrase, being found ten times in Jeremiah,

five times in Ezekiel, and in Zech. 3:8, Gen. 6:17, Exod.

10:4, 1 Kings 14:10, 21:21, 2 Kings 21:12=2 Chron. 33:24,

so it may be seen as a standard Hebrew phrase, used in every

period. In addition, the only parallel which 'all the evil

which I spoke against them' has is in Jer. 19:15, which can

hardly be advanced as conclusive evidence for it having stem-

med from a redactor in 35:17. Jer. 35:17 is part of the orig-

inal conclusion to the section, not a creation of the

redactors.

Verses 18 and 19 are similarly part of the original

conclusion to the unit. The phrase לא יכרת איש in v.19 is

sometimes seen as a late, redactional one,[134] on the basis

of its usage elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. However, it

should be noted that all the other uses of the phrase are

connected with the Davidic dynasty[135] or, in one case,[136]

in a context where they are closely linked with the Davidic

dynasty, to its cultic functionaries, and not with any

other group of people in Israel. This could, in fact,

suggest that the phrase איש יכרת לא was <u>first</u> used in the

Promise to the Rechabites, and was then adopted by the

Deuteronomists, because they felt that it was a formula

suitable for application to the Davidic succession. Once it

had been appropriated as a royal phrase, it would have

become regarded as sacrosanct, suitable only for the king

and his servants, and not for anyone else. That this was

the history of the phrase's use is more likely than the re-

verse, <u>ie</u>. that the (late) compiler of Jeremiah 35 adopted

the phrase from the Deuteronomists as, if this were the case,

more occurrences of the phrase in connection with non-royal

groups or individuals would be expected, and it seems in-

trinsically more likely that a particular phrase used to

describe a certain small group would be appropriated to des-

cribe the monarchy than that a particular phrase which was

used to describe the monarchy, and no-one else, would be

appropriated as a suitable description for one particular small

group, and no other. Thus, the appearance of איש יכרת לא

in Jer. 35:19 can legitimately be seen as part of the original

unit. It represents the earliest occurrence of the phrase

in the biblical literature. Similarly, there is no need to

regard the phrase עמד לפני in v.19 as redactional. As will

be shown in the exegetical notes to the verse,[137] 'standing

before Yahweh's face' is found in all the types of Old Testa-

ment literature.

Thus, it appears that the original conclusion to

Jer. 35:1-11 is to be found in vv.12, 16-19, which origin-

ally read as follows:

12. וַיְהִ֞י דְבַר־יְהוָ֛ה אֵלַ֖י לֵאמֹֽר

16. הֵקִ֙ימוּ֙ בְּנֵ֣י יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן־רֵכָ֔ב אֶת־מִצְוַ֖ת אֲבִיהֶ֑ם
וְהָעָ֣ם הַזֶּ֔ה לֹ֥א שָׁמְע֖וּ אֵלָֽי

17. לָכֵ֣ן כֹּֽה־אָמַ֣ר יְהוָ֗ה הִנְנִ֨י מֵבִ֤יא אֶל־יְהוּדָ֔ה וְאֶל־
כָּל־יוֹשְׁבֵי־יְרֽוּשָׁלַ֗͏ִם אֵ֤ת כָּל־הָֽרָעָה֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר דִּבַּ֣רְתִּי
עֲלֵיהֶֽם

18. לָכֵ֣ן כֹּ֣ה אָמַ֣ר יְהוָ֗ה יַ֚עַן אֲשֶׁ֣ר שְׁמַעְתֶּ֔ם עַל־מִצְוַ֖ת בְּנֵ֣י יְהוֹנָדָ֑ב
אֶת־מִצְו͏ֹ֤ת אֲבִיהֶם֙ לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת כְּכֹ֥ל אֲשֶׁ֖ר צִוָּ֥ה אֶתְכֶֽם

19. לֹֽא־יִכָּרֵ֨ת אִ֜ישׁ לְיוֹנָדָ֧ב בֶּן־רֵכָ֛ב עֹמֵ֥ד לְפָנַ֖י
כָּל־הַיָּמִֽים

The entire divine speech is thus addressed in the third per-

son, and announces a definite judgement on the people. It

also has a good chiastic structure:

A   v.16a: The faithfulness of the Rechabites.

B   v.16b: The unfaithfulness of the people.

B'   v.17 : Oracle of Judgement on the people,
              introduced by לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה.

A'   v.18f: Oracle of Salvation for the Rechabites,
              introduced by לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה.

Verses 13-15 come from the redactors, primarily from the

Jeremianic School, but also from the school of the Deutero-

nomists.

What are the date and provenance of this original

unit, Jer. 35:1-12, 16-19? It is to be noted that, apart

from verse 1, the whole passage is autobiographical in style.

Neither Carroll nor Nicholson[138] comment on the fact that

some of the prose narratives in the Book of Jeremiah are in the

first person and some in the third. Presumably, they do

not feel that any distinction should be made between them.

However, the variation in person must be accounted for. If

it were to be argued that the first person prose passages were

originally in the third person, and were then recast into the

first person for greater vividness, presenting Jeremiah him-

self as speaking to his (later) audience, then it must be

asked why the process was not systematically carried out.

Whatever the origins of the third person prose in the Book

of Jeremiah, it seems most natural to suppose that the first

person prose represents none other than the words of Jeremiah

himself, either recorded by Baruch in a dictation situation,

[139] or else written by Jeremiah himself - the tradition cer-

tainly knows of the prophet as a writer,[140] so this conclu-

sion is not impossible. Chapter 35 cannot be ascribed to

the Scroll mentioned in chap. 36, for if the date of 600-598

BCE is correct for the events recounted by chap. 35 (see below),

then they would have occurred after the Scroll incident of

chap. 36, but it could have formed a separate tract or have

formed part of a different scroll, with a different purpose,

eg. for proclamation throughout Jerusalem, or for sending to

Jeremiah's home town of Anathoth, etc. It is more likely

that chap. 35 was originally a separate tract, rather than

part of a larger scroll, as it has its own superscription in

v.1. The fact that this superscription is in the third person

is no argument against the Jeremianic authorship of the chapter - the superscriptions to the Pauline epistles are in the third person, but that does not mean that Romans or 1 Corinthians, for instance, were not written by Paul the Apostle. The date for the writing of Jeremiah 35 was probably immediately following the event itself, in order to ensure that Jeremiah's views were circulated more widely as soon as possible.

This view of Jeremiah as a tractarian, which has a respectable pedigree,[141] entails abandoning Carroll's axiom that the prophets spoke only in poetry,[142] in favour of Holladay's opinion that Jeremiah developed a paraenetic prose form[143] but, as Carroll fails to provide an adequate explanation of the first person prose in Jeremiah, this conclusion is defensible. What is being proposed here is that Jeremiah 35 recounts an actual act of prophetic symbolism performed by the prophet, the account of which derives from the prophet himself, who no doubt would have been well able to remember and record what both he and the other participants in the event had said, so while it was committed to writing after the event in question, it nevertheless is an accurate account of the participants' words. Thus, Jer. 35 presents us with two separate things: an actual event, including the speeches of the participants, and the prophet's own written account of the same event, giving the background (in vv.1-5) to his act.

The dating of the event to c.599 BCE rests on the

linking of the events of Jer. 35:11 with those narrated in
2 Kings 24:2. Jer. 35:11 indicates that the events narrated
in the whole of the chapter occurred while Babylonian and
Syrian forces were rampaging throughout Judah. An attack by
such raiding bands is briefly narrated in 2 Kings 24:1-2, as
the response to a rebellion by Jehoiakim against Nebuchad-
rezzar, after the Babylonians had suffered a (temporary)
reverse at the hands of the Egyptians in late 601 BCE. Nebu-
chadrezzar evidently deployed numerous raiding parties to
contain Judah until he could regroup his main forces to crush
the rebellion. He was not able to move against Judah with his
full army until 598, so the activities of these raiding
bands, and hence the Rechabite incident, may be dated to
600-598 BCE. The fact that the Rechabites say that Nebu-
chadrezzar had 'come up' against the land in v.10 does not
contradict this conclusion. The raiding bands were acting
under Nebuchadrezzar's orders, so it could be said that Nebu-
chadrezzar had 'come up' to Judah, in spirit if not in body,
and, in any case, the inhabitants of Judah would have been
unlikely to have made too much distinction between the 'coming
up' of Nebuchadrezzar himself and the 'coming up' of his troops.

This yields the first definite point of historical
and geographical reference for the material in Jeremiah 35,
and thus also for the Rechabites themselves: Jerusalem,
c.599 BCE. But what of the redactional elements, and what
do they reveal?

The fact that the text was preserved at all, and

reworked in order to apply its message to a different situation, indicates that, at the times when the reactors were active, not only were Jeremiah's words felt to be still relevant, but also that the Rechabites were still very much in existence, and in existence within the land of Israel - if they were not, then the preservation of the text, especially vv.7 and 18f, would have caused acute embarrassment, and would have provided ready ammunition to those seeking to slander the memory of Jeremiah. As will be shown in the exegetical notes to Jer. 35:18f,[144] the implication is not only that the Rechabites were still living in the land of Israel, but also that they were still maintaining their distinctive practices oulined in v.6f.

The foregoing analysis suggests that two, or perhaps even three, groups of redactors, had a hand in shaping the material: one, or two, 'Jeremianic Schools', and the Deuteronomists. To deal with the Deuteronomists first: the existence of a deuteronomistic redaction of the Book of Jeremiah as a whole is indicated by Jer. 52, which closely parallels 2 Kings 24:18-25:30. Nicholson is probably right in his conclusions concerning the date and provenance of the deuteronomistic corpus and the deuteronomistic redaction of Jeremiah, when he places them during the Exile, in Babylon, within the life of the Synagogue, for homiletic purposes.[145] The fact that only slight traces of the Deuteronomists can be found in chapter 35 - probably just the clause

ואשכם אתרי אמרת אליהם אנכי אמרתי לכם לעבדי ישכבע ואשלח אליהם אל-האדמה אשר נתתי

לכם ולאבתיכם - need not cause much surprise. 1 Samuel is

undoubtedly part of the Deuteronomistic History, yet there

is little trace of the hand of the deuteronomistic redactor in

it. He was content to let the passages speak for themselves,

within his own overall editorial framework. The injunction

not to go after other gods to serve them, in order to dwell

in the land that Yahweh has given, while not unintelligible

if dated to the pre-exilic period, makes perfectly good

sense within the context of the Exile in Babylon, as a pro-

mise of restoration to the land of Israel, provided that the

people worship only Yahweh. The example of the Rechabites

provided an ideal vehicle for the promulgation of this message:

not only were they known to be still living in the land of

Israel, their fidelity having ensured that they were not

deported when Jerusalem fell, in either 597 or 587 BCE, but

they also, as will be shown,[146] had a high esteem for the

'Promised Land', a theme evidently important to the Deutero-

nomists also.

Turning to the intervening redaction or redactions,

it is unclear whether we should speak of two sets of 'Jere-

nianic Redactors', one modelling itself closely on the

Jeremianic poetry (Holladay's 'Prototype and Copies' model),

and one using its own distinctive terminology, or whether the

two are, in fact, one and the same set of redactors. Deter-

mining the date and provenance of these redactors more pre-

cisely than between the time of Jeremiah and the time of the

Deuteronomists, is not really feasible. Nicholson recognises

this, and uses it as an argument against the existence of a

non-deuteronomistic redaction at all.[147] However, as has been

demonstrated above with respect to Jeremiah 35, much of the

language in what have been seen as redactional phrases simply

cannot be called deuteronomistic. It is thus likely that there

was at least one 'Jeremianic' redaction of the Book of Jere-

miah, which introduced most of the material now found in Jer.

35:13-15, including the second person address and the con-

ditional threat of judgement. This redaction probably also

postdates 587 BCE. Its message is softer than Jeremiah's

original proclamation, which had announced that the people

stood condemned, that judgement was inevitable. The redact-

ion is saying that a judgement has happened, in 587 BCE,

but if the Exiles will now accept a chastening (מוסר, Jer.

35:13) and repent and be faithful, they will avoid further

calamity, and be returned to the Land, just as the Rechabites,

who had remained faithful all along, never suffered any calam-

ity at all, and were never banished from the Land. It seems

that this 'Jeremianic' redaction, like the deuteronomistic

one, is to be located in Babylon.

The threads of the foregoing analysis may now be

drawn together. The language, the form and the structure of

Jeremiah 35 all suggest that the original form of the unit was

vv.1-12, 16-19, in the form reconstructed by the text-critical

analysis, and that it was a tract written or dictated by the

prophet soon after the events in question, accurately re-

counting Jeremiah's act of prophetic symbolism and the words

of both him and the Rechabites. The purpose of this tract

was to disseminate Jeremiah's views to a wider audience,

either in Jerusalem or beyond, and may be dated to the period

600-598 BCE. Vv.13-15 contain elements of at least two sets of redactions, inserted in order to reapply the prophet's message to the new situation pertaining among the Exiles in Babylon, and in order to exhort the people to renewed fidelity to Yahweh, with the hope of restoration. The latest of these redactions is deuteronomistic, and both it and the 'Jeremianic' redaction(s) find their date and provenance within the Exile, in Babylon, in the context of Synagogue instruction. That Jeremiah's tract was preserved and expanded by the redactors indicates that the Rechabites were able to maintain their singular mode of life through the chaos of the Fall of Jerusalem and beyond, and that they were known to be still living in the land of Israel. This analysis yields several points of solid historical reference, upon which the following exegesis of Jeremiah 35 may be based.

Excursus 1: The Function of Jeremiah 35 in its Present Position in the Book of Jeremiah

The form-critical analysis of Jeremiah 35 has marked an important step on the way towards the correct understanding of the Rechabites, the principal protagonists of that chapter. Hence, it has been important to analyze the chapter as an independent unit, disregarding its present position in the Book of Jeremiah as a whole. The position of the 'Rechabite Chapter' within the Book of Jeremiah makes no difference to the correct understanding of the material contained within that chapter. Jeremiah's tract recounting his dealings with the Rechabites was originally an independent document, with

its own superscription (v.1) and conclusion (v.19), and has

been examined as such. While it is not strictly relevant to

a study of the Rechabites, it is nevertheless interesting

to make a few remarks about the present position of the

'Rechabite Chapter'. The purpose of this excursus, then,

is to offer some such remarks.

It has often been noted that the material collected

into the present Book of Jeremiah is not in chronological

order, and commentators occasionally seek to rearrange the

material in the Book into what they believe is the correct

chronological order.[148] The implicit assumption of these re-

arrangements is that the present order of the Book represents

nothing much more than a haphazard jumble of originally

independent units that have arrived in their present order

more or less by chance. This seems to rather a dangerous con-

clusion, however, and other scholars accept that the 52

chapters of the Book of Jeremiah do present an overarching

redactional framework of some sort, but are generally caut-

ious about "describing the origins which gave rise to such a

collection".[149] This excursus will not attempt to deal with

the redactional framework of the Book as a whole, but solely

with the present position of the 'Rechabite Chapter'.

Jack Lundbom has argued that the four chapters in the

Book of Jeremiah which mention king Jehoiakim, namely chaps.

25, 26, 35 and 36, can be extracted from the Book,[150] and

viewed as "an independent collection of prose narratives

written and arranged by Baruch",[151] with a chiastic struct-

ure, based on the date found in each of the superscriptions,
and on the subject matter of each chapter.[152] However, in
order to do this, he has to regard 'the beginning of the reign
of Jehoiakim', Jer. 26:1, as equivalent to 'the days of
Jehoiakim', 35:1, which leads him to argue that chapter 35
is to be dated prior to 605 BCE. It has, however, been
shown that a date of 600-598 BCE is more likely for the events
narrated in chap. 35. Lundbom also argues that another import-
ant feature of chaps. 26 and 35 is that they "are both accounts
of Jeremiah in the temple".[153] It is true that both stories
speak of Jeremiah being in the Temple, but only in 26 is
this location of any importance. It certainly is not stressed
in 35. Finally, it must be observed that chap. 35 is first
person prose, and chaps. 25, 26 and 36 are all in third per-
son prose, so it is difficult to support Lundbom's content-
ion. It is unlikely that there was ever a cluster of Jehoi-
akim narratives, let alone one with a chiastic structure.

Lundbom tends to regard the present arrangement of
chapters 24-36 as being something of a mistake.[154] Carroll,
who admits that his division of the text is as speculative as
anyone's, is far more positive in his commentary about the
present arrangement of the material, and is probably closer
to the truth than is Lundbom. He believes that chaps. 26-36
should be isolated as a major unit in the Book of Jeremiah,
with its unifying feature being "the word of Yahweh pro-
claimed by Jeremiah".[155] Within this major unit, the 'Rech-
abite Chapter' performs two functions in its present position.
Firstly, along with chap. 36, also set in the reign of

Jehoiakim, it forms an <u>inclusio</u> with chap. 26, another inci-
dent from the time of Jehoiakim, thereby neatly rounding off
the section. Secondly, the position of the story of the
Rechabites immediately following the story of Zedekiah's ab-
rogated covenant (34:8-22) is important. As Carroll comments,

> The strange tale of the Rechabites pro-
> vides a positive contrast to the infidelity
> of the nation and Zedekiah's community
> in 34.8-22. If the abrogated b^{e}rît of
> that story accounts for the Babylonian
> destruction of Jerusalem and the cities
> of Judah, the narrative of the Rechab-
> ite fidelity to its cultural past points
> up the way communities could survive.[156]

These comments are by no means meant to be regarded
as conclusive, but they do suggest that chapter 35 of the
Book of Jeremiah never formed part of any earlier collection
of material. It circulated independently until it was gather-
ed together with the rest of the material (although by whom,
and when, must remain open). When it was gathered together
with the rest of the material into the Book of Jeremiah, it
was placed in its present position deliberately, in order to
form part of the <u>inclusio</u> with chap. 26, and in order to pro-
vide an effective contrast with the tale of Zedekiah's infi-
delity in chap. 34.

Excursus 2: Redactional Elements in Jeremiah 13 and 18

As it has been suggested that a structural paral-
lel may be drawn between Jeremiah 35 on the one hand and Jere-
miah 13 and 18 on the other,[157] it is legitimate to look to

these latter two texts for confirmation of the suggestions

made by this study concerning the redactional stages in the

history of the textual transmission of chap. 35. As with chap.

35, there is almost unanimous scholarly agreement that the

opening sections of chaps. 13 and 18[158] are a unity within

themselves. Most commentators, however, find some evi-

dence of the redactor in the conclusions.[159] As with 35:1-11,

13:1-7 and 18:1-6 must be viewed as incomplete on their own

so, again as with chap. 35, the concluding sections of

chaps. 13 and 18 must either stem _in toto_ from the same source

as the opening sections, or stem _in toto_ from the redactors,

who have removed the original conclusion in each case, or

be amalgams, containing elements of the original conclusions,

expanded by redactional features. As has already been con-

tended,[160] the third of these options is the most likely

one, as there _do_ seem to be elements in these concluding

passages which are best viewed as redactional, but it seems

intrinsically unlikely that a redactor would completely re-

move the original conclusion to a passage, and replace it

with something of his own devising.

Virtually all scholars agree that 13:9-11 is not a

unity, but there such agreement as exists concerning the con-

clusion to 13:1-7 ends. Carroll sees v.10f as expansionary,

stemming from the Deuteronomists;[161] Nicholson follows suit;

[162] Leslie, and probably Peake as well, sees v.9 as re-

dactional;[163] Hyatt sees v.11, but not v.10, as a deutero-

nomistic addition;[164] Cornill argued that only 'as the waist-

cloth clings to the loins of a man, so I made the whole

house of Israel cling to me' in v.11 was original;[165] and

recently McKane has argued that v.9 and v.10f represent

"two separate exegetical comments".[166]

In the face of such scholarly disagreement, it is

wise to proceed with caution. The following initial, and

tentative, suggestions may be made. LXX does not represent

הגבים בשׁרירות לבם in v.10. Given the whole question of

the differences between MT and LXX in the Book of Jeremiah,

it seems to reasonable to conclude that this phrase is a very

late harmonising gloss in MT. Despite Weippert's careful

analysis, her efforts to demonstrate that אמר אלהים + הלך

לעבד + אחרים and/or להשׁתחות להם is not necessarily a

deuteronomistic phrase are unconvincing.[167] It is best to

see וכלי אחרי אלהים אחרים לעבד ולהשתחות להם in 13:10 as

and insertion of the Deuteronomists. If it is argued thatהעם

הזה הרע המאנים לשׁמוע אתדברי והלך בשׁרירות לבם אל אשׁר לא יצלח לכל

is syntactically awkward, then it may be observed that

it is no less awkward if ההלכים בשׁרירות לבם and/or וכלי ... להם

are retained. The awkwardness lies in וִיהִי, 'and let it

become', ie. the third masculine singular jussive of היה .

Neither the third masculine singular, nor the jussive, is

very appropriate to the context. LXX reads ἔσονται , 'and

they will be', which is followed by Vulgate with 'erunt'.

Rudolph wonders if וַיְהִי, 'and it has become' should be read.

[168] This retains the consonantal text and removes the jussive,

but still leaves the switch from plural to singular in the

verse. The noun עם can take either plural or singular, but

to find it taking both in the same sentence is a bit odd.

LXX may well reflect the original reading here, but it could

just as easily be a simplification by the translator of an

awkward Hebrew text. No answer is offered here to the prob-

lems of אֶהְיֶ. Rather, it is noted that the problem exists

whether or not the preceding two clauses are removed as edit-

orial expansions.

V.11 on its own is inadequate as a conclusion to

13:1-7, as it includes no mention of judgement, just a state-

ment that Yahweh made the House of Israel and the House of

Judah cling to himself to be a people, but they refused to

obey. A threat or statement of judgement would be expected,

so if v.11 is part of the original conclusion to vv.1-7, then

it must be joined with either v.9 or v.10, or both. It is,

however, unlikely that v.9 and v.11 stem from the same source,

as they mention two different groups of people - Judah and

Jerusalem (v.9), and the House of Israel and the House of

Judah (v.11).

It has been argued, by Hyatt for example,[169] that

13:11 contains deuteronomistic phraseology. The use of the

verb דָּבַק, 'to cleave', in this verse is compared with its

use in Deut. 10:20, 11:22, 13:4, 30:20, Josh. 22:5, 23:8,

2 Kings 18:6. However, in all of these passages, the refer-

ence is to the people or, in the last case, the king, cleav-

ing to Yahweh, but in Jer. 13:11, Yahweh is the subject of

√דָּבַק Hiph., and the people are the object. Indeed, in no

other place in the Hebrew Bible do Yahweh or a girdle appear

as the subject of √דָּבַק, in any theme. This suggests that

this particular piece of phraseology in Jer. 13:11 is not

deuteronomistic.

It is also sometimes claimed that להיות לעם לשם

ולתהלה ולתפארת ולא שמעו, 'that they might be a people, a

name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen' in

Jer. 13:11 is deuteronomistic, on the basis of Deut. 26:19,

ולתתך עליון על-כל-הגוים אשר עשה לתהלה ולשם ולתפארת ולהיתך

עם-קדש ליהוה, 'and to set you high above all the nations

which he has made, in praise and in fame [lit. name] and in

honour, and that you shall be a people holy to Yahweh ...'.

But the supposed parallel between the two texts is not very

convincing. Admittedly, the same four terms (עם, תהלה,

שם and תפארת) are found in both passages, and seemingly

only in these two places, but the order of the four terms

is different. עם in Deut. 26:19 is qualified, and so is in

the construct, rather than the absolute, state, and in the

Deuteronomy passage only עם is governed by √היה. Admitted-

ly, Deut. 26:18 does speak of Yahweh making Israel 'a people

for his own possession', the same general idea as is found

in Jer. 13:11, but the means of expressing this idea are

different. On the basis of a single appearance of phrases

that are only broadly similar in two texts, literary depen-

dence, and hence redaction, cannot safely be posited. Thus,

it would seem that, other than ההלכי ... בשמיה ... להם, the

originality of vv.10-11 may be upheld.

But what of v.9, כה אמר יהוה ככה אשחית את-גאון

יהודה ואת-גאון ירושלם הרב, 'Thus says Yahweh: Even so will I

spoil the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem'?

גאון is conspicuously absent from the deuteronomistic corpus:
it is not a deuteronomistic word. Unfortunately, √גאה ,
and its derivatives, which include גאון, have a double mean-
ing in biblical Hebrew, both steming from the idea 'to be high'.
Firstly, it denotes the majesty of God, the justified pride
of man or the glory of an object, and, secondly, arrogant
pride or hubris. Kellermann is uncertain whether גאון in
Jer. 13:9 has the good sense or the bad sense.[170] If it has
the former, then this is the earliest use of the term with
this meaning.

There is nothing quite like Jer. 13:9 anywhere else
- √שחת Hiph. is not used with גאון elsewhere - which would
argue for its authenticity. However, as has been already
observed, it does contradict v.10f, so it may be asked
whether it may not be seen as secondary on theological grounds.
The rest of the section has nothing particularly to do with
arrogance or pride, so Leslie, Cornill and Peake may very
well be right in claiming that v.9 misses the whole point of
the section. Hence, it appears that the original form of
Jer. 13:1-11 was vv.1-8, 10-11, except for והלכים בשרירות
לבם, which is very late and harmonising, and ולכו אחרי
אלהים אחרים לעבדם ולהשתחות להם, which is deuteronomistic.
V.9 is redactional, but non-deuteronomistic.

Why was v.9 inserted? The answer depends on whether
גאון is understood pejoratively or not. If it is, then it
could be highlighting Judah's obstinate refusal to hearken to

God, somewhat along the lines of Ezek. 16:56. If it is not,
then it could have been inserted during the Exile in order to
contrast the former greatness of Judah with her current lowly
conditions in Babylon.

As with 13:1-11, there is little scholarly agree-
ment over the presence or absence of redactional elements in
the conclusion of Jer. 18:1-12. Hardly any commentator
doubts that 18:5f is an integral unity with vv.1-4,[171] but
Brekelmans has demonstrated that v.5f on its own cannot form
the conclusion to vv.1-4.[172] Carroll sees vv.7-10 as deut-
eronomistic, and thinks that the motif of 'turning from evil'
in v.11 also stems from the Deuteronomists.[173] Skinner sees
vv.7-10 as redactional.[174] Nicholson regards vv.7-10, 11b-
12 as deuteronomistic.[175] Leslie thinks that the passage has
a deuteronomistic framework, but that vv.7-10 embody the
authentic view of Jeremiah.[176] Bright argues for the unity
of the whole passage, regarding vv.7-10 as developing the
idea expressed in v.4,[177] and he is followed by Weippert,
who provides more detailed arguments.[178] Peake feels that
vv.7-10 present a different application of the figure from
that offered in vv.1-6, and are hence redactional.[179] Hyatt
simply comments that he believes that deuteronomistic phrase-
ology is especially evident in vv.7-12.[180]

The most detailed analysis of Jer. 18:1-12 to have
been published in recent years, however, is that of Brekel-
mans,[181] and his arguments seem to be the most coherent and
realistic explanation of the text. He is careful to point out

that to prove that a text in Jeremiah is non-deuteronomistic,
the purpose of Weippert's Die Prosaraden des Jeremiabuches,
is not necessarily to prove that that text is Jeremianic,
which is what Weippert comes close to claiming.[182] Brekel-
mans argues for the existence of other, non-deuteronomistic
redactions of the Book of Jeremiah,[183] and goes on to demon-
strate the existence of material from two sets of non-deuter-
onomistic redactors in vv.7-12.

For Brekelmans, Jer. 18:4 indicates that Yahweh has
absolute power, and hence v.6 means that Yahweh can do what-
ever he likes with Israel. This makes vv.1-6 incomplete on
their own, as they only make an abstract statement about God's
dealings with Israel, whereas in symbolic passages, there is
usually a concrete interpretation of the symbol. Such a con-
crete interpretation must be sought for in vv.7-12. It is not
found in vv.7-10, which are also non-specific, and do not
apply vv.1-6 to a concrete situation, but it is found in
v.11a, which contains a commission to speak to Judah and
Jerusalem, the messenger formula, specific words and which
makes use of the participle יוֹצֵר, found several times in
vv.1-6.

Thus, Brekelmans sees the original passage as being
vv.1-6, 11a, which was directed against those members of the
people who were doubting that God would ever carry through what
the prophet announced, and which reaffirmed that, when God
wanted to bring disaster upon his people, no-one could hinder
him, or avoid the doom.

Vv.7-10 are clearly a unity but, Brekelmans argues, they have nothing to do with the original saying. Rather, they divert attention from the judgement upon Israel to the fate of the nations. Weippert has shown that the terminology of the verses is not deuteronomistic,[184] and Brekelmans that the 'Alternativ-Form', ie. a speech form where

> blessing and curse, life and death in
> the preaching are put before the people,
> which is called to choose life and blessing,[185]

discerned by Thiel in the passage,[186] need not have been the sole property of the Deuteronomists, and that Jer. 18:7-10 are not in the 'Alternativ-Form' anyway, as they lack the call to the people to make a choice.[187] Brekelmans then goes on to demonstrate that it is the theology of vv.7-10, as much as their language and structure, that is the problem with assigning them to the Deuteronomists. That the nations could convert themselves and participate in the salvation offered by God was not a problem of Jeremiah's time, and is not found in the deuteronomistic texts outside Jeremiah, so there is no reason to ascribe Jer. 18:7-10 to a deuteronomistic school.[188]

He further argues that vv.11b-12 are redactional, but from a different redaction from that which provided vv.7-10. The terminology of vv.11b-12, although perhaps character-istic of the prose of Jeremiah, is not deuteronomistic, and neither is the theology of those verses.[189] The verses are probably exilic, the words of Jeremiah being reinterpreted as an urgent call to conversion, but simultaneously (v.12)

acknowledging that the people have failed to answer this call, thereby justifying the judgement that has come upon them.

Brekelmans suggests that vv.7-10 could well be post-exilic, as they have much in common with Trito-Isaiah and Deutero-Zechariah.[190]

The views of Brekelmans have been deliberately narr-ated at some length, as it seems that his analysis presents the best way of understanding the redactions of Jer. 18:1-12. His conclusions do not conflict with the general thrust of the conclusions of this study concerning redactions of the Book of Jeremiah. Rather, they extend the field of vision somewhat by proposing the existence of a post-exilic redaction of the Book of Jeremiah, as well as such redactions as took place in the exilic period. The fact that he finds no evidence of the hand of the Deuteronomists in chap. 18:1-12 does not nec-essarily mean that there was no deuteronomistic redaction of the Book as a whole, and Brekelmans does not claim this: the stated purpose of his study is not to attempt to disprove the existence of such a deuteronomistic redaction, but to demon-strate that more prudence is required in Jeremianic studies in assigning texts to that redaction, even if they are exilic.[191]

It thus appears that an analysis of Jer. 13:1-11 and 18:1-12 broadly endorses this study's conclusions concern-ing the redactional history of chap. 35, _ie_. that the origin-al passage, a tract written by the prophet himself, has been

supplemented in its conclusion by more than one redaction,

which have not removed the original Jeremianic ending to the

piece. The source of these redactions was not only the Deut-

eronomists, but also at least one so-called 'Jeremianic

School' at work in the Exile. Brekelmans' work on 18:1-12

suggests that there may also have been a post-exilic redaction.

Whether the fact that a ·redaetion is evident in chapter 18

is evidence of a post-exilic reworking of the Book as a whole

cannot be proved. Hence, it would be highly speculative -

and illegitimate - to attempt to suggest that the evidence

of post-exilic work in chap. 18:1-12 shows that the post-

exilic redactors also looked at chap. 35, and left it un-

touched because they knew that the Rechabites were still in

existence, and still maintaining their distinctive prac-

tices, in the post-exilic period. The redactional activity

evident in Jeremiah 35 suggests that the Rechabites survived

the Fall of Jerusalem, and carried on living their dis-

tinctive lifestyle in Palestine during the Exile. To con-

clude any more than this would be to go beyond the evidence

at our disposal.

3.3: EXEGESIS OF JEREMIAH 35

The previous two sections of this chapter have served

to prepare the ground for this third section, the exegesis of

Jeremiah 35. They have established, by means of text- and

form-critical analyses, what the original document penned by

Jeremiah looked like, and what words and phrases in the pres-

ent form of the unit stem from later redactors and/or trans-

lators. They have also concluded that the event in question

occurred c.599 BCE, and that the tract recounting it was wri-

tten soon afterwards.

        The present section aims to offer a verse-by-verse

exegesis of Jeremiah 35, seeking thereby to build up a hist-

orical picture of the Rechabites, the principal protagonists

of the chapter. The main focus of attention in the exegesis

will thus be those verses that deal with the Rechabites and

their practices.

        At this stage, it will be helpful to provide a re-

minder of the conclusions of the study of those biblical verses

outside Jeremiah 35 which have been thought to refer to the

Rechabites, carried out in Chapter Two of the present work.

It was shown that 1 Chronicles 2:55 does not mention the

Rechabites and that, even if it did, it would still not link

them genealogically with the Kenites so, whatever they were,

the Rechabites were not Kenites. It was shown that they do

not appear in 1 Chron. 4:12 either and that even if they did,

they would still not be linked with copper, so the likelihood

that they were metalworkers is thereby reduced. It was shown

that Nehemiah 3:14 almost certainly does not refer to a Rechab-

ite, but that 2 Kings 10:15f does refer to the founder of the

group, Jonadab, who lived in the days of Jehu. This Jonadab

was the son of one Rechab, but he consciously reinterpreted

his patrynomic into a title, probably a prophetic one.

Jonadab had close connections with Elijah, Elisha and the Sons

of the Prophets, and his followers were also a prophetic group.

By focussing directly on his followers and their
practices, this picture of Jonadab – and of the Rechabites –
will be further explored and confirmed.

Verse 1

While the formula 'The word which came to Jeremiah
from Yahweh ... saying' is a common one in the Book of
Jeremiah,[192] that is no reason to conclude that it is re-
dactional. It has already been shown that its presence is
needed to open the unit,[193] and that its third person style
does not preclude Jeremianic authorship.[194]

For 'son of Josiah', in 'in the days of Jehoiakim
son of Josiah, king of Judah', see above.[195] According to
2 Kings 23:34, Jehoiakim had been installed as king in place
of his brother Jehoahaz, by the Pharaoh of Egypt. Jehoahaz
had himself been made king by the 'people of the land' (2 Kings
23:30) in preference to his older half-brother (cf. vv.31,36),
Jehoiakim/Eliakim. Gray summarises Jehoiakim's character
neatly when he writes,

> from what we know of Jehoiakim it is
> likely that Jehoahaz was a man of stronger
> character than his older brother, who
> seems to have been an unprincipled political
> adventurer, who sought his future in sub-
> mission to whatever major power seemed at
> the moment likely to prove victorious.[196]

Jehoiakim reigned from 608 to 598 BCE.[197] Just as no precise
date is given for the units identified as structural parallels
to Jer. 35, ie. Jer. 13:1-11 and 18:1-11, no precise date is

given for the events recounted here. Jer. 35:11 and 2 Kings
24:1-2 suggest, as has already been shown,[198] a date of
c.599 BCE, however.

Verse 2

The opening word of the verse, 'Go!', is, in fact,
an infinitive absolute (הָלֹוךְ) rather than an imperative.
For this use of the infinitive absolute, see G-K 113y,
aa-bb. It is common in the Book of Jeremiah with √הלך.[199]

Nelson Glueck thought that 'the House of the Rechab-
ites' here in v.2 revealed that the Rechabites lived "in a
compound of their own, withdrawn from the rest of the commu-
nity".[200] Robert Carroll follows this line when he says that
בֵית הָרֵכָבִים "here ... probably refers to the house in the
city to which they moved when the Babylonians entered the land".
[201] The use of the same term, however, in v.3 and MT v.5,[202]
indicates that nothing more than the whole Rechabite community
is denoted, and that it has nothing to do with their living
habits in Jerusalem. Contra Carroll,[203] it is unlikely that
the same phrase would have two different meanings in two succ-
essive verses.

The term 'chamber', לִשְׁכָּה, used here, denotes,
on the whole in biblical Hebrew, a room connected with a sanc-
tuary. In 1 Sam. 9:22 it denotes the room at a High Place
(בָּמָה) where the sacrificial meal was eaten. Here, and in
Jer. 36:10, 2 Kings 23:1, 1 Chron. 23:28, 28:12, 2 Chron
31:11, it denotes various rooms in the First Temple. In

Ezekiel 40-48, it is the term used for the rooms of the

priests in the vision of the restored Temple. In Ezra 8:29,

10:6, Neh. 10:38-40, 13:5, 8, it describes various rooms in

the actual restored Temple. The only other meaning that

has is to be found in Jer. 36:12, 20f, where it denotes a

scribe's room in the royal palace. The room used by Jeremiah

in the Rechabite incident and the one used by Baruch in 36:10,

seem to have both been open to view.

Verse 3

The name Jaazaniah, here spelt יאַזֹנְיָה, means

'Yahweh will hear'. Alternative spellings of the name are

יאַזֹנְיָהֽוֹ and יָזַנְיָה(וּ) . Other holders of the name are found

in 2 Kings 25:23, Jer. 40:8, 42:1, Ezek. 8:1, 11:1. The

fact that all the other holders of the name Jaazaniah are

either quite clearly Israelites or Judaeans, or else very

closely involved with Judaean politics, suggests that the

Jaazaniah in Jer. 35:3 is also a native of the land of Isra-

el. For יאַזַנְיָה, LXX[BXA] here read ἰεχονιαν , but this is

not evidence of a different Hebrew text: LXX[BA] also read

ἰεχονιας for יאַזַנְיָה in Ezek. 11:1. Jaazaniah is depicted

here in Jer. 35:3 as the current head of the Rechabite commun-

ity.

Jaazaniah's father is called Jeremiah, יִרְמְיָהוּ,

the same name as the prophet. A third Jeremiah is found in

Jer. 52:1. Noth is at a loss to explain the Massoretic point-

ing יִרְמְיָ֥ה, as it has no possible etymology.[204] He suggests

that, just as LXX ἀκεμια(ς) renders the Hebrew אֲקִימָה, so
LXX εἰρεμιας suggests pointing יִרְמְיָהוּ as יִרְמְיָהוּ, 'Yah-
weh will raise up'. BDB tentatively derives it from √רמה
III, from which רְמִיָּה II, 'slackness', found in Prov. 10:4,
12:24, 27, 19:15, Jer. 48:10, is derived, and proposes an
etymology 'Yahweh looseneth'.[205] Noth's proposal, on balance,
seems preferable, and is not negated by the fact that in Jer.
35:3, LXX[-A] reads εἰρεμιν, 'Jeremin', for MT's יִרְמְיָהוּ.
The LXX reading is probably an attempt to avoid confusing this
Jeremiah with the prophet Jeremiah, who has already appeared
in v.1 of the chapter. In 52:1, LXX renders יִרְמְיָהוּ
correctly by εἰρεμιου, but no possible confusion with the
prophet Jeremiah can arise here, as the prophet does not ap-
pear at all in chap. 52. Therefore, the LXX translator felt
no need to change the name of Zedekiah's maternal grandfather,
whereas he had felt a need to change that of Jaazaniah's
father in 35:3.

Jaazaniah's paternal grandfather has the name
Habazziniah, Hebrew חֲבַצִּנְיָה. Neither Noth not BDB offers any
etymology of this name, which is found only here. It is,
like Jaazaniah and Jeremiah, Yahwistic. LXX admittedly reads
the name as Χαβασιν (ie. חבצין?), but the loss of the theo-
phoric element may be as much due to assimilation to the pre-
ceding εἰρεμιν as anything else, and not evidence of a diff-
erent Hebrew Vorlage.

The fact that four of the five personal names asso-
ciated with the Rechabites, ie. Jonadab, Jaazaniah, Jere-

miah, and Habazzaniah are Yahwistic, and that the fifth,

Rechab itself, is attested elsewhere as an Israelite proper

name,[206] suggests very strongly that the Rechabites were an

Israelite group, rather than Kenites, or some autonomous

non-Israelite grouping. If they had not been Israelites,

non-Israelite personal names would have been expected for

them.

From the ב֫כ in the phrase ב֫רכֿהֿ-רֿ֫בֿ-בֿכֿ-ֿתֿא֫ו,[207]

it is plain that Jeremiah took all the Rechabites to the

chamber of the sons of Hanan. The fact that the whole 'House

of the Rechabites' fitted into a single Temple chamber sug-

gests that the total size of their community was not very

great.

Verse 4

ב֫רֿהֿֿ֫לֿאֿהֿ שֿ֫אֿ, 'man of God', is found only here

in the whole corpus of the Latter Prophets.[208] Why Igdal-

iah - or Hanan[209] - should be so termed is not stated. As

has already been noted,[210] both the Targum, with ֿרֿ֫רֿ אֿ֫בֿֿֿ,

and Peshitta, with ֿ֫סֿ֫רֿֿֿ֫סֿֿ֫֫בֿֿֿ֫, regard the person in ques-

tion as a true prophet. There are variations among the Ver-

sions over ֿבֿֿֿ֫, ֿ֫נֿֿֿ and ֿֿ֫֫רֿֿ֫סֿרֿ֫א֫,[211] but these probably

just reflect the fact that we are dealing with persons other-

wise completely unknown, and should not be taken as evidence

of a different Hebrew text. If 'man of God' is a desig-

nation of Hanan, then the 'Sons of Hanan' could have been

his disciples. Porter, however, points out that "we can-

not exclude the possibility that 'sons' were Hanan's actual

children".[212] As 'man of God' occurs nowhere else in the Book

of Jeremiah, while נָבִיא and נְבִאִים are frequent, Porter

also wonders whether something other than 'prophet' is meant

by the use of 'man of God' here. He notes that the term is

used of Moses in Deut. 33:1 and Josh. 14:6, and of David in

2 Chron. 8:14 and Neh. 12:24.[213] It is, however, hard to

ascertain what 'man of God' could mean if it did not denote

something like 'prophet' here. If Hanan was a prophet, then

he would presumably have been in sympathy with Jeremiah, but

why he had a chamber in the Temple must remain a mystery.

Maaseiah son of Shallum, named in this verse, may

have been the father of Zephaniah, cf. Jer. 21:1, 29:35, 37:3.

This Zephaniah may in turn be identical with the Zephaniah of

52:24=2 Kings 25:18, the 'Second Priest'. In any event, the

fact that he is used as the king's messenger (cf. 21:1) in-

dicates that Zephaniah was a man of some importance. Maaseiah

may have also been the cousin of Jeremiah the prophet.[214] It

is certainly true that Maaseiah's father and Jeremiah's uncle

have the same name (cf. 32:7).

Maaseiah is called 'keeper of the threshold', שֹׁמֵר

הַסַּף. Jer. 52:24 indicates that the three men who held this

post were extremely important cultic officials, who ranked

after the two chief priests.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that the location

of the chamber of the sons of Hanan is described so precisely,

our knowledge of the actual layout of the First Temple is so

scanty that it is impossible to locate the site of the incident with any certainty. As Duhm comments, the detail with which the chamber's location is described stongly suggests that the author of the chapter was familiar with the layout of the Temple before its destruction.[215] Given that the present study has already concluded that Jeremiah wrote the chapter as a tract, soon after the events in question, the precision with which the chamber is located is yet another pointer towards the validity of that conclusion.

Verse 5

It has already been noted above[216] that the LXX reading κατα προσωπον αὐτων reflects the more primitive reading than the בֻנֵיהֶם בֵּת בְּנֵי לִפְנֵי of MT in this verse. It is mentioned again here because, as was shown in Chapter One, the most recent article on the Rechabites, that by Keukens, on the basis of the MT reading here, argues that the Rechabites were really Jonadab's house-slaves.[217] Keukens is of the opinion that the use of בֵּת בְּנֵי here is analogous to the use of בֵּת בְּנֵי in Eccles. 2:7 and to that of בֵּת בֶן in Gen. 15:2, 3, both of which seem to mean 'house-born slave(s)'. He does not even mention, let alone consider, the LXX reading. Given that the LXX reading is almost certainly here prior to that of MT, Keukens' arguments may summarily dismissed, arguments which he himself, for somewhat different reasons, admits are rather spurious.[218]

<u>Verse 6</u>

For Jonadab ben Rechab, see the discussion of
2 Kings 10:15f, 23, in Chapter Two. [219] Here in Jer. 35:6,
the Rechabites call him 'our father', אבינו. While אב can
denote blood paternity or ancestry, it can also mean 'founder',
'teacher', 'leader' and so on. It also seems to have been a
prophetic title, as is revealed by 2 Kings 2:12, 13:14, and
possibly also 1 Kings 13:11f.[220] It has already been argued
that the Rechabites were founded by Jonadab in the days of
Jehu as a prophetic group, so the Rechabites' veneration of
Jonadab as 'father' could simply denote that Jonadab was view-
ed as their leader and founder. However, overtones of blood
ancestry cannot be completely excluded. When Jonadab found-
ed his group, his support may have come largely from his own
family. If the Rechabites also practiced endogamy, as will
be argued in Chapter Four,[221] then, in course of time, all
the members of the community would be able to trace their
ancestry back to Jonadab, whether or not they were origin-
ally related to him. At this stage, it is better to leave
the nature of the Rechabites' association open. They may have
been a clan, or a prophetic group, or even both. At this
stage in the inquiry, they will be referred to as the 'Rech-
abite Community', 'community' being the most neutral term
available. To call them a 'sect' at this stage begs the ques-
tion whether they were a religiously separated group and, also,
'sect' has come to have pejorative overtones, especially in
the Christian tradition.[222] In Chapter Four, the Rechabites
<u>will</u> be examined as a sect, but using 'sect' with its strict

sociological definition.[223]

The Rechabites claim that Jonadab 'laid a command'
on them, ie. צוה עליהם. Keukens argues that על + צוה
denotes a command made by a superior to an inferior, where
the superior is not bound by the terms of that command him-
self.[224] Keukens once again defeats his own arguments, how-
ever, by admitting that על and אל are used interchange-
ably after צוה Pi. in the Book of Jeremiah. As he comments,

> Es ist zwar riskant, aus der Präposition
> על bei צוה Pi. weitere Schlüsse zu ziehen,
> zumal besonders im Buch Jeremia על und אל
> promiscue gebraucht werden.[225]

But, he continues, "dennoch soll hier der Versuch gewagt
werden".[226] In addition to the interchangeability of על and
אל in Jeremiah, it should also be noted that צוה + על is
not used again in Jer. 35. Rather, צוה + suffix is found,
so it is highly unlikely that any of the nuances which Keuk-
ens claims to find in צוה + על should be imparted to the
relationship between Jonadab and the Rechabites. It is far
more likely that Jonadab observed those same commands that
he laid on his followers.

The first of Jonadab's commands to his followers is
'You shall not drink wine ... forever', ... לא תשתו יין
עד עולם. It has often been held that wine-avoidance is a
symbol of nomadism. This was the position taken by Budde,
when he wrote:

> vine-culture is, fundamentally, only
> taken as the flower of the settled life.[227]

- vines taking more than a year to reach maturity. As the
Rechabites were banned not only wine, but also the planting
of vineyards, it was clear - to Budde - that the Rechabites
were nomads.

There are two, connected, implicit assumptions be-
hind Budde's contention. Firstly, that 'wine' in Jer. 35:6
denotes 'fermented juice of the grape' and not 'any intoxi-
cant', and secondly, that the prohibition on planting vine-
yards is to be connected with the prohibition on drinking
wine.

As will be shown when verse 7 is considered below,
228 the order of the terms in the list of Rechabite prohib-
itions, ie. 'drink no wine' - 'build no houses' - 'sow no
seed' - 'plant no vineyard' - 'have nothing' - 'live in tents',
suggests that, in fact, the prohibition on drinking wine
and the prohibition on planting vineyards have nothing to do
with each other.

Once this conclusion is accepted, then the ques-
tion whether 'wine', ‏יין‎ , in Jeremiah 35 denotes 'ferment-
ed juice of the grape' or 'intoxicants in general' needs to be
re-examined carefully.

In the chapter, the word ‏יין‎ is used, but not
either of the other Hebrew words for intoxicants (‏שכר‎,
‏תירוש‎). Those who have concluded that it denotes 'fermented
grape juice' have generally failed to answer, or even raise,

the question whether or not the Rechabites were permitted to
consume any other form of intoxicant, such as those formed
from dates, grain, etc. That such non-vine intoxicants were
known in the Ancient Near East is plain from Egyptian evi-
dence for the alcoholic fermentation of sugary fruit juices
or honey;[229] from Arabic evidence for the love of nomads for
nabīdh, a fermented date juice;[230] and possibly from Song
of Songs 8:2, which may refer to a fermented pomegranate
juice, although this is not entirely clear.[231]

The use of the word יין in Jer. 35 is in itself
inconclusive. While it may legitimately be proposed, as
a general rule of thumb, to understand יין in biblical Hebrew
as 'fermented grape juice' and שכר as 'non-grape intoxicants',
there are nevertheless places in the Hebrew Bible where the
two terms take on a certain degree of synonymity. They
are often found together,[232] and where they are it is clear
that a comprehensive reference to all intoxicants is meant.
There are also places where only one of the two terms appears,
yet the reference still seems to be an equally comprehensive
one. In Ps. 69:13, שכר שתי means 'drunkards' in general,
not 'those who drink non-vine intoxicants' in particular, and
while there are places where יין is clearly meant to denote
the fruit of the grape (14 times approx.[233]), the vast major-
ity of the occurrences of the word are either completely neut-
ral (approx. 50 times), or else refer to effects of its
intoxication, either for good or for bad, rather than to what
it is made of (approx. 49 times). Most informative in this
respect are the instances in Num. 6:3f, 20. In v.3f, the

Nazirite is prohibited יין, שכר, vinegar from יין,

vinegar from שכר, the juice of grapes, fresh grapes, dried

grapes, all that is made of the grape-vine, and the kernels

(? Heb. החרצנים) and husks (? Heb. זג) of grapes,[234] ie.

all intoxicants and all vine products. Here, יין seems to

denote 'fermented juice of the grape'. However, in v.20, it

is said that after the completion of his or her vow, the Naz-

irite is permitted to drink יין again. It cannot be claimed

that non-vine intoxicants remained barred to the Nazirites

after the completion of the vow, so יין here must cover <u>all</u>

intoxicants, not simply grape-wine.

Thus, it is clear that, lexically, the use of

יין, and no other Hebrew term for intoxicants, in Jer. 35

is no argument in support of the contention that the Rechabites

were only banned fermented grape juice, and not other intoxi-

cants as well. Given that the ban on planting vineyards pro-

bably has nothing to do with the ban on יין, the 'wine'-

prohibition in Jeremiah 35 is more likely to have been a ban

on intoxicants in general, rather than on the fruit of the

grape. Note that the Rechabite prohibition, unlike that of

the Nazirite, makes no mention of a ban on the consumption of

other vine products. Given that no such mention is made, it

would be logical to assume that, as Jer. 35:6f probably rep-

resents the sum of Jonadab's commands,[235] the consumption of

these products was not banned to the Rechabites, but only

their cultivation.[236]

Incidentally, this conclusion, that the Rechabites

were banned all intoxicants, is supported by the rabbinic

traditions about the Rechabites. The Mekhilta of Rabbi Sim-

eon bar Yohai to Exodus 18:27, quoted byYalkut Shim[c]oni to the

Prophets 323, makes it clear that it regards the Rechabites

as שׁתי מים, 'the drinkers of water', an appellation

which strongly suggests that they were thought to have ab-

stained from all intoxicants, whatever their origin.[237]

If this line of interpretation is correct, then the

view that sees the Rechabites as nomads becomes even less ten-

able. Date-wine was apparently a favourite drink among Arab

nomads,[238] so teetotalism is no indication of nomadism.[239]

Frick and Gray thought that the wine prohibition indicated that

the Rechabites were itinerant metalworkers, who were banned

alcohol so as to preserve their trade secrets, which could

have been divulged under the influence of alcohol, a notor-

ious loosener of lips.[240] However, once the supposed link

with the Kenites is removed (קין being thought to mean

'smith') and Jonadab's appellation ben Rechab is seen as a

true patrynomic that was reinterpreted as a prophetic title,

rather than as a description of Jonadab as a chariot-maker,

what little evidence there is for seeing the Rechabites as

metalworkers disappears completely. Note, also, that not

only is wine prohibited to the Rechabites, but so also is the

building of houses, the sowing of seed, the planting of

vineyards and the 'having' of anything. If the Rechabites

were metalworkers, it seems a little unlikely that the com-

mand to maintain their practices would be expressed so oblique-

ly. Positive reasons should be sought for all the commands in

the list found in Jer. 35:6f.

There are other 'teetotal' groups to be found in the
Bible. Serving priests were required to be abstinent, accord-
ing to Lev. 10:9 and Ezek. 44:21, but the Rechabites do not
seem to have had very much to do with the Temple.[241] Nazirites
were similarly abstinent (Num. 6:3f, Am. 2:12, cf. Judg. 13:
4, 7, 14), but the differences between the Rechabites and the
Nazirites are as great as, or greater than, the similarities,
so it is unlikely that too close a connection should be drawn
between the two.[242] Isaiah 28:7 suggests that prophets were
required to be teetotal as well, and this is probably the
best background on which to see the Rechabite prohibition. It
has already been noted that ben Rechab was probably a patro-
nymic that was reinterpreted as a prophetic title similar to
the ‎ופרשיו ישראל רכב of 2 Kings 2:12, 13:14. It will be
shown that the rest of Jonadab's prohibitions were similarly
part of the prophetic lifestyle, and that Jeremiah's Promise
to the Rechabites in 35:19 also implies that they were prophets.

The motive for the prophetic avoidance of intoxicants
is easy to discern. Prophets as much as priests were required
to distinguish between the holy and the profane, the pure and
the impure, which was why serving priests were required to be
abstinent. However, unlike priests, prophets were always
'on duty', so they were required to be permanently abstinent,
because alcohol would have clouded their ability to give
oracles. In similar vein is the advice given in Prov. 31:4f,
where wine is said to be 'not for kings', for the same reason.

The condemnation of the drunken priests and proph-
ets in Is. 28:7 demonstrates that prophets were meant to be
abstinent. Similarly, there is no evidence that Elijah,
Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets, the group which is
emerging as the closest parallel to the Rechabites in the He-
brew Bible, drank any intoxicants either. Elijah, like the
man of God in 1 Kings 13, seems to have habitually drunk
water, 1 Kings 17:4, 11, 19:6, and there is no evidence
that Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets did not follow his
example.

Thus, it is clear that Jonadab's command not to
drink wine in Jer. 35:6 was a ban on all intoxicants, not on
the juice of the grape, and that the best explanation of
this prohibition is that the Rechabites were not nomads or
metalworkers, but prophets, who were required to be abstin-
ent so that they would be able to carry out the prophetic
function of giving oracles.

In v.6, Jonadab lays his command on 'you and your
sons', וּבְנֵיכֶם אַתֶּם. The conclusion of v.8, however, which
reads 'we, our wives, our sons and our daughters', indi-
cates that the Rechabites were not some celibate male order,
but a whole family community, men, women and children,
practicing a common discipline. In his 1970 Ph.D. thesis on
Ancient Israelite cities, Frick argued that the Rechabites
were Israelite soldiers.[243] While it is true that soldiers
did abstain from wine, and also lived in tents, as the
Rechabites did, as part of the ritual of military purifi-

cation, it is also true that abstaining from women was also part of that ritual of purification practiced by the (male!) army.[244] Furthermore, Deut. 20:7, which grants exemption from military service if a man is recently married, indicates that while the men went off on campaign, the women and children stayed at home. Yet the Rechabites are depicted as a whole family community, living in tents, so it seems unlikely that they were soldiers. They may have had a connection with Holy War, but that connection was through the prophet's role in Holy War, not the soldier's.[245]

Verse 7

John Calvin was of the opinion that the opening command of Jer. 35:7, 'and do not build a house', **בַיִת לֹא תִבְנוּ**, meant that the Rechabites were permitted to build houses for other people to live in,[246] but this is hardly the most natural inference from the command and the account of its fulfillment in v.9. Abramsky took his cue from his observation that, unlike the other commands - not to drink wine, not to sow seed, not to plant vineyard - the prohibition on house-building includes a positive command, **כִּי בָאֳהָלִים תֵּשְׁבוּ**, which suggested to Abramsky that tent-dwelling was something more than a simple description of the living habits of the Rechabites.[247] He went on to argue, on the basis of Gen. 4: 20 and 25:27, that the Rechabites were shepherds.

Frick, however, following Riemann, has observed that a non-agricultural lifestyle, as practiced by the Rechab-

ites, does not necessarily denote a pastoral lifestyle.[248]

Indeed, it is possible to adduce some evidence to suggest

that it would be wrong to see the Rechabites as shepherds.

Firstly, pastoral nomadism involves a regular leading out of

the flocks to pasture on the steppes (מִדְבָּר - which also de-

notes the desert proper). Yet, the word מדבר never appears

in any of the material connected with the Rechabites. This

strongly suggests that the Rechabites had nothing to do with

shepherding. Secondly, Jeremiah 35 reveals that, when Nebu-

chadrezzar's armies started ravaging the land, the Rechabites

fled to Jerusalem (v.10), but it seems a little odd for

shepherds to have fled to a city! Cities would have been a

prime target of any foreign attack, and shepherds would

almost certainly have had to have abandoned their flocks to

have entered one. Surely, if shepherds were seeking safety

in a time of military unrest, they would have fled, with

their flocks, to the steppes?

These arguments of Frick and Riemann are telling,

and their conclusion, that the Rechabites were not shep-

herds, is warranted. An examination of Gen. 4:20 and 25:27,

the two texts that Abramsky advanced for his contention that

the Rechabites were shepherds, will, in fact, serve to re-

inforce Frick and Riemann's position, not Abramsky's.

In both Gen. 4:20 and 25:27, the phrase to 'dwell

in tents', $\sqrt{ישׁב}$ + (ב-) אהל , appears. In Gen. 4:20,

Jabal the son of Lamech is described as הוּא היה אבי ישׁב

אהל ומקנה, 'he was the father of those who dwell in tent and

cattle'. While 'dwell in tent and cattle' sounds harsh to

English ears, it may be explained as an instance of the

rhetorical device known as 'zeugma',[249] and hence there is no

need to emend the text. It is often argued that the text de-

picts Jabal as the father of nomadism.[250]Note, however, that

מקנה is a very broad term, denoting all kinds of livestock.

Skinner recognises this, and says that "the whole Bedouin

life is thus assigned Jabal as its progenitor",[251] but it

should be pointed out that, while sheep and goats <u>are</u> Bedouin

livestock, cattle and oxen, also included in מקנה, are

not. As Gottwald observes, in the Near East these latter

animals were bred only in the settled zone,[252] so the use

of מקנה in Gen. 4:20 is ambiguous, and does not necessarily

refer to the animals of the pastoral nomad, so to claim that

the Rechabites were shepherds on the basis of the analogy of

this verse is to claim more than Gen. 4:20 actually offers.

In Gen. 25:27, Jacob and Esau are compared as

follows: ויגדלו הנערים ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש שדה, ויעקב

איש תם ישב באהלים , RSV 'When the boys grew up,

Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob

was a quiet man, dwelling in tents'. This is also often seen

as depicting Jacob as a pastoral nomad and, hence, because

Jer. 35:7 also employs ישב + אהל , as implying that the

Rechabites should also be seen as pastoral nomads. But this

cannot be sustained. While Jacob is commanded to fetch two

good kids from the flock in Gen. 27:9, the implication is that

the flock is Isaac's. Isaac was thus a shepherd, but he is

also depicted as an agriculturalist (26:12), as a tent-

dweller (26:17) and as a hunter (27:1-4). Jacob's stew in

25:29-34 is made from lentils (עֲדָשִׁים), and not from lamb,

and 25:29 implies that Jacob and Esau lived in the same place

- presumably in tents like their father. All this suggests

that the contrast in 25:27 is not between the fully nomadic

hunter and the semi-nomadic shepherd, as Abramsky likes to

think,[253] but between the man of action and the man who,

like the women, 'stays at home'.

Not only is Abramsky on uncertain ground with his

interpretations of Gen. 4:20 and 25:27, but also it appears

that he is mistaken in his conclusion that 'to dwell in tents'

denotes pastoral nomadism. As Gottwald further observes,

pastoral nomads

> were not restricted to tents, but often
> lived for varying periods in grass or wood
> huts, in mud houses, with wind screens or
> in caves. Moreover, there were certain
> activities of settled communities in which
> the tent was often used. For example,
> armies on expedition customarily lived in
> tents, as did royal hunting parties.
> Agriculturalists who had considerable wealth
> in livestock, or who suffered a shortage
> of suitable building materials, occasion-
> ally lived in tents. It was not uncommon for
> cultivators of the soil, especially where
> the fields were widely spread, to spend
> part of the year in huts or tents, particu-
> larly during harvest ... It is apparent that
> the tent can only be taken as indicative of
> pastoral nomadism when there are other less
> ambiguous traits associated with it.[254]

As Gen. 4:20, 25:27 and Jer. 35:7 do not have "other less ambiguous traits" associated with tent-residence, it is perilous to conclude that Jabal, Jacob or the Rechabites were pastoral nomads.

Groups other than semi-nomadic shepherds also regularly dwelt in tents: itinerant craftsmen, merchants, hunters, brigands - and perhaps also Elijah and the early Sons of the Prophets. Cummings has argued that 2 Kings 6:1-7 is a passage which seeks to legitimise the transition to house-dwelling made by the הנביאים בני under Elisha.[255] He observes that Elijah had a marked proclivity for moving about: Tishbe, Kerith, Zarephath, Carmel, Horeb and the lengthy itinerary of 2 Kings 2.[256] Not even at Zarephath, where he resides in a makeshift shelter upon the flat roof of a house (1 Kings 17:19) does Elijah reside in a permanent dwelling. In this connection, it is possible that מתשבי in 1 Kings 17:1 is, contrary to most commentators, in fact correctly vocalised, with the meaning 'of the sojourners of', and is thus also an indication of the peripatetic lifestyle of Elijah. As virtually all the other appearances of תושב are to be found in the post-exilic collections conventionally designated by P and H, certainty cannot be attained here. The non-P/H occurrences are Ps. 39:13 and 1 Chron. 29:15, which is linked with Ps. 39:13, but whether formal dependence and, if so, in which direction, can be established, is unclear. It is dubious whether either Ps. 39:13 or 1 Chron. 29:15 originate in the pre-exilic period.[257] The Encyclopaedia Judaica records that

in the opinion of some scholars the desig-

nation "the Tishbite of the inhabitants

of Gilead" supports the hypothesis that

Elijah did not live in one specific place

in Gilead, but was a member of either

the Kenites or the Rechabites, sects

which led a nomadic existence.[258]

Unfortunately, EJ does not specify which scholars hold this

view, one which it itself does not share:

The accounts of [Elijah's] wanderings

(1 Kings 17) indicate that his with-

drawal from society was a matter not

of principle but of necessity (perse-

cution, famine).[259]

It is probably wrong to divorce Elijah so rigidly from the

Rechabites - which, of course, does not mean that Elijah was

himself a Rechabite. That Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets

dwelt in houses is unmistakeable,[260] but it also seems es-

tablished that Elijah did not. Cummings' argument, that the

Rechabites under Jonadab represented some sort of 'alternative

candidate' for the succession of the mantle of Elijah, seems

highly likely. If Elisha occasioned a split in the prophetic

community over the question of house-dwelling, then Jonadab

and the Rechabites represent that group among the prophets

which remained loyal to the itinerant lifestyle typified by

Elijah, albeit regularising it into tent-dwelling,[261] poss-

ibly because, unlike the solitary Elijah, the Rechabites were

a whole community living the itinerant life.

In pursuing this line, of seeing the Rechabites as

being in some sense connected with Elijah, Elisha and the

—

Sons of the Prophets, it is illuminating to ask whether the

other features of Rechabite discipline, <u>ie</u>. not sowing seed

and not planting vineyard, are found in the Elijah-Elisha

cycles. While nothing is said explicitly, and extreme

caution is required when advancing an argument from silence,

it seems that, like the avoidance of wine, these prohib-

itions <u>were</u> also observed by Elijah, Elisha and the Sons of

the Prophets. They seem to have consumed the fruit of the

earth, <u>cf</u>. 1 Kings 19:6, 2 Kings 4:42-44, but it is not

the <u>eating</u> of bread that is prohibited in Rechabite discipline,

but rather the sowing and the growing of the seed.

If the Rechabites and Elijah, Elisha and the Sons

of the Prophets all observed a discipline in which wine was

avoided, in which houses were not dwelt in (until Elisha's

reforms), seed not sown nor vineyard planted, but an itin-

erant lifestyle followed (in tents in the case of the Rechab-

ites), then a reason for this series of rules must be dis-

covered.

It has already been argued that wine was avoided

because the consumption of alcohol would have hindered their

ability to function as prophets. The explanation of the series

of commands in Jer. 35:7 is to be found in a somewhat un-

expected quarter: in Ps. 107:35-38.

These verses read:

.35 יָשֵׂם מִדְבָּר לַאֲגַם מַיִם

וְאֶרֶץ צִיָּה לְמֹצָאֵי מָיִם

<div dir="rtl">

36.וישב שם רעבים
ויכוננו עיר מושב

37.ויזרעו שדות ויטעו כרמים
ויעשו פרי תבואה

38.ויברכם וירבו מאד
ובהמתם לא ימעיט

</div>

RSV:

35. He turns the desert into pools of water,
    A parched land into springs of water.
36. And there he lets the hungry dwell,
    And they establish a city to live in;
37. They sow fields and plant vineyards,
    And get a fruitful yield.
38. By his blessing they multiply greatly;
    And he does not let their cattle decrease.

The significance of these verses for the present purposes lies in the fact that, in them, agriculture, specifically sowing fields and planting vineyards (v.37), and pastoralism (v.38), are seen as arising out of a sedentary, or even an urban, life (v.36). עיר מושב is not found elsewhere in the Old Testament outside of this Psalm, so its precise meaning is not clear – the English versions usually render it as 'an inhabited city', probably correctly.

Bearing this description in mind, we can now return to Jeremiah 35. In v.6f, the order of the commands of Jonadab is 'drink no wine' – 'build no houses' – 'sow no seed' – 'plant no vineyard' – 'do not have anything' – 'live in tents'. This order seems at first sight to be peculiar, as wine and vineyards are separated from each other by houses and seed, and houses and tents are separated from each other by seed, vineyard and 'anything', whereas it would

perhaps be expected that 'drink no wine' and 'plant no

vineyards', and 'build no houses' and 'live in tents', would

be joined directly to each other. However, given the evi-

dence of Ps. 107:35-38, and the conclusion that the Rechabite

wine-prohibition is a prohibition on all intoxicants, not

simply on fermented grape juice, the order of the commands

is sensible. As in Ps. 107:35-38, seed and vineyard (and

'anything') are seen in Jonadab's commands as being part and

parcel of the sedentary life, ie. of the house-dwelling

life. The prohibition on planting vineyards is not related

to the prohibition on drinking wine, but to the prohibition

on living in houses.

Thus, the Rechabite prohibitions may be broken

into two: drink no wine, Jer. 35:6; and do not live in

houses or practice sedentary/urban occupations, such as plant-

ing or sowing vineyards, but live an itinerant, tent-dwelling

life. It thus appears that the Rechabites were 'anti-urban',

and were 'anti-urban' without being 'nomadic'. They were,

rather, itinerant.

Why were they so opposed to the urban lifestyle

that they sought to avoid it completely? In the closing

pages of his Ph.D. thesis, Frank Frick has shown that many

of the Old Testament prophets whose words have been preserved

spoke out against urbanization in Ancient Israel.[262] Their

proclamation seems to have been made for at least two reasons.

Firstly, the construction of defensive fortifications was

implying that the people were failing to place their whole

trust in Yahweh their God for their defence.[263] Secondly,

urbanization, which seems to have been heavily Canaanized

in Ancient Israel, was leading to increases in the evils of

society, such as the exploitation of the poor by the rich,

oppression, greed and so on.[264] Joseph Blenkinsopp has re-

cently pointed out, in connection with the "distinctive attire

.... simple diet and physical separation from the amenities

of city life" of the ninth century prophets, that

> prophecy can consist not just in a
> commission to speak but in the adoption
> of a certain style of living that
> dramatises the rejection of what passes
> for reality in the society as a whole.[265]

It is this style of prophecy that the Rechabites

adopted. Their tent-residence was a symbol of their trust in

Yahweh — in human terms, one is vulnerable in a tent in a way

that one is not in a house — and a striking reminder to the

urban Israelites of their own lack of trust. The Rechabites'

avoidance of agriculture symbolised their criticism of opp-

ressive economic practices and the other evils of urban society.

It might be argued that the fact that the Rechabites

turn up in Jerusalem in Jer. 35, having fled there from be-

fore Nebuchadrezzar's troops (v.11), argues against this

interpretation of their practices. If they were anti-urban,

what are they doing in the Judaean capital? But it is possible

to reside within a city without adopting a typically 'urban'

lifestyle, as the shanty settlements found in and around

many present-day South American and South African cities, and

the 'down and outs' to be found under the arches of Charing

Cross railway station in London every night, indicate. The

Rechabites could have been resident in Jerusalem, during the

time of the emergency, without conforming to the urban life-

style. Indeed, the text makes it clear that the Rechabites

claimed that they had obeyed <u>all</u> Jonadab's commands (v.10)

and that this claim is upheld (v.18). Thus, the Rechabites'

residency in Jerusalem is no objection to this theory.

The foregoing explanation of the meaning of Jonadab's

list of commands has worked with the implicit assumption that

Jer. 35:6f represents the sum of Jonadab's commands, rather

than being indicative of other laws which the Rechabites foll-

owed. Abramsky finds it difficult to decide between these two

options,[266] but it actually seems more probable that in Jer.

35:6f we have the sum of Jonadab's prohibitions on his follow-

ers, rather than a selection of them. Within the context of

Jeremiah 35, where the Rechabites are simply instructed to

drink wine, not to disobey any of their other rules, there

is strictly no need for them to repeat the details concerning

houses, seed and vineyard, which are, in fact, superfluous

to the matter in hand. The fact that they <u>do</u> repeat them makes

it seem as if they are repeating the whole teaching of Jonadab,

as it had been understood and handed down through successive

generations of Rechabites.

Jonadab's commands are followed by a promise, למען

תחיו ימים רבים על-פני האדמה אשר אתם גרים שם, 'that you may

live many days in the land wherein you are sojourners'. While

האדמה may simply mean 'ground', as the 'earth's visible

surface', and while it often has this meaning when it is

preceded by פני־, the following clause here, ie. אשר אתם

גרים שם, especially the שם, strongly suggests that here

denotes the Promised Land, Cannan. If it denoted the

ground, בו rather than שם would be desiderated, yielding

a meaning 'upon which you are sojourners', rather than 'where-

in you are sojourners'. Along with הארץ in v.11, which there

also denotes the Promised Land, האדמה is the only geograph-

ical term to occur in the material concerning the Rechabites,

which leads to the conclusion that 'The Land' was important

in their ideology, in some strangely paradoxical way. They

were commanded to abstain from sowing seed in the land and to

abstain from some of the fruits of the land, in order to

live many days in that land where they were sojourners. Which

is the paramount element in this promise, ie. 'living many

days' or 'in the land', is unclear – was the punishment for

infidelity to Jonadab's commands seen as being premature death

or expulsion from 'The Land'? Perhaps it is wrong to try to

separate the two, as they could have been regarded as being

equivalent by the Rechabites: to be apart from האדמה was

the equivalent of death.

While Frick quotes this final clause of Jonadab's

speech to the Rechabites when he cites Jer. 35:6f,[267] he

does not comment on it, so presumably he either attaches

no significance at all to it, or else, as for him the Rechab-

ites' prohibition on wine was intended to ensure that they did

not divulge their metalworking secrets to others, he under-

stands the consequence clause to have some meaning like 'in
order that you may not divulge your trade secrets and so lose
your jobs'! This, of course, sounds somewhat ridiculous
as an interpretation of 'in order that you may live many
days in the land wherein you are sojourners', and it un-
covers a serious problem, not only with Frick's theory, but
with most theories that have been advanced concerning the
Rechabites: they fail to take adequate account of all the
scant data available, and so yield pictures that are, at
best, distorted or partial or, at worst, completely wrong.
It is important to listen to the whole text, and not just
the parts of it that fit our particular theory, before form-
ing opinions about the Rechabites, or about anything or any-
one else in the Old Testament, for that matter.

It is unlikely that the distinction between the
noun גֵּר and the substantive participle גָּר, which is used
here in Jer. 35:7, should be pressed. √גּוּר has something
of a broad range of meanings in biblical Hebrew. The noun
גֵּר is frequent, usually denoting a resident alien, the
status of whom is clearly indicated by the fact that he is
often linked with the fatherless and the widow.[268] By and
large, the resident alien is required to keep the same laws
as the native Israelites. Deut. 29:10, and its link with
Joshua 9, reveals that גֵּר was also used to denote the non-
Israelite population of Canaan, and that these גֵּרִים were
generally employed in menial tasks. Lev. 19:34 provides the
justification for the Israelite care of the גֵּר: Israel
themselves had been גֵרִים in Egypt.

This leads to the second meaning of ‏גור‏. It is used to describe the Israelites in Egypt eight times, to describe Abraham among the Sons of Heth once, and Moses in Midian twice. Once, in Jer. 14:8, it is used of Yahweh, in a passage which describes and bewails his neglect of the land.

There are also a number of cases in the Hebrew Bible where the idea of the people as sojourners in the land of Israel and/or life is found. Thus, Lev 25:23 states that 'the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners (‏גֵרִים‏ ‏וְתוֹשָׁבִים‏) with me'. Compare also Pss. 39:13, 119:19 and 1 Chron. 29:15. In Judg. 17:7-9, the Levite is spoken of as seeking a place to sojourn, and the laws for the protection of society often class the Levites and the ‏גֵרִים‏ together.[269]

In Ps. 105:12=1 Chron. 16:19, the Patriarchs in Canaan are described as 'few in number, of little account and sojourners (‏גֵרִים‏) in it', and in the Patriarchal Promises, Canaan is often referred as 'The Land of your Sojournings', ‏אֶרֶץ‏ ‏מְגֻרֶיךָ‏, cf. Gen. 17:8, 28:4, 36:7, 37:1, Exod. 6:4.

This understanding of the Levites and the Patriarchs, as 'sojourners' within the land of Canaan, seems to be the best background on which to understand the use of the term in connection with the Rechabites. Like the Levites, like

the Patriarchs, the Rechabites had no land of their own,
yet were living within the land of Israel. They were all
landless Israelites within Israel, so they shared a common
designation as 'sojourners'.

Kellermann argues, on the basis of 2 Chron. 15:9,
30:28, that גֵּרִים also denoted fugitives from the Northern
Kingdom, who had settled in Judah after 722 BCE, and that
this explains the importance of גֵּרִים in Deuteronomy.[270]
While it is true that 2 Kings 10:15f indicates that the Rechab-
ites originated in the north, and while it is true that they
must have come south at some point, as Jer. 35 portrays them
in the Judaean capital, it is unlikely that this meaning of
√גור is applicable here. It is quoted as part of Jonadab's
speech, which was formulated in the north, long before the
Fall of Samaria - the Rechabites were living as 'sojourners in
the land' many years prior to 722 BCE.

Spina has recently suggested that √גור originated
as a term with overtones of social unrest or conflict, espe-
cially surrounding the circumstances in which people initially
became גֵּרִים.[271] This suggestion does not fit the Levite in
Judg. 17 or the Patriarchs in Ps. 105 very well, but it may
nevertheless have a bearing on the Rechabites and on the reasons
why they were described as 'sojourners'. Jonadab founded his
group as a response to the socio-religious situation in Samaria
in the time of the Omrides. The unrest caused by that socio-
religious situation would provide an adequate background for
the Rechabites becoming 'immigrants[272] in the land'.

Keukens thinks that the use of the participle גָּרִים
here should be compared with גֵּר בֵּיתִי in Job 19:15 which,
for him, denotes strangers living in the land who, as people
of a lower legal status, enjoy the protection of a 'house'.
[273] As the 'sojourning' and the 'house' are not connected
in Jer. 35, Keukens' proposed link with Job 19:15 really seems
rather unlikely and, in any case, his interpretation of
גֵּר בֵּיתִי there is probably also incorrect.[274]

By the rabbinic period, גֵּר had also come to de-
note a 'proselyte', and this meaning probably underlies those
rabbinic traditions which see the Rechabites as non-Israelites.
[275] Their personal names, and the conclusions reached in
Chapter Two concerning 1 Chron. 2:55 and 4:12, suggest that
they were, in fact, full-blooded members of Israel.

The best way to understand גָּרִים here in Jer. 35:7
is, by analogy with the descriptions of the Levite in Judg.
17:7-9 and of the Patriarchs in Ps. 105:12, as a means of
describing landless Israelites living in the land of Canaan.
But having said this, it is also possible to apply Spina's
overtones, of social unrest in connection with why people
opted to become גָּרִים, to the Rechabites and the time of
their origin in the days of the Omrides.

The question of precisely <u>how</u> obedience to Jonadab's
commands led to the Rechabites enjoying the reward of 'long
life in the land' is one of some importance, and will be
considered when the Rechabites are examined as a sect in Chap-

ter Four.[276]

Verse 11

Abramsky perceives a stark contrast between the
וֵישֶׁב בִּירוּשָׁלַ֫יִם of this verse and the וַנֵּ֫שֶׁב בָּאֳהָלִים at the
start of v.10,[277] and is inclined to think, as is Carroll,
[278] that the Rechabites abandoned their tent-dwelling when
they came to Jerusalem. Elliott Binns, however, thinks
that there is no reason to doubt that they maintained their
tent-dwelling in the city, and that they would not have been
the only group so residing in Jerusalem at that time.[279] It
has already been observed above, in connection with v.7,[280]
that it is possible to reside in a city without adopting an
urban lifestyle, so it is not illegitimate to conclude that
the Rechabites were still maintaining their tent-residency
even after their arrival in Jerusalem.

However, the fact that they did flee to the city
when they were threatened by military attack does indicate
that they had compromised one of the motives for their avoid-
ance of houses, sowing seed and planting vineyard. It was
shown above that the motive was two-fold: a protest against
cities as fortified defences which implied a lack of trust in
Yahweh, and a protest against cities as sources of societal
evils. Their Jerusalem tent-residency meant that they were
still maintaining their social protest, but it also meant
that, when they were put to the test, they too felt more
secure behind human defences than divine ones. They had main-

tained the letter of Jonadab's commands - even though they
were in the city, they were not living in houses - but they
had compromised the spirit of those commands.

Verse 13

As has already been shown,[281] Jer. 35:13 is a crea-
tion of the 'Jeremianic' redactors, who sought to reapply the
original oracle of judgement, found in v.16f, to the Exiles,
with the message: look at the Rechabites. They survived the
Fall of Jerusalem, and are still in Palestine. You were
faithless, so have been judged, but if you will now accept
the discipline of Exile and amend your ways, you will be
restored to the land. מוּסָר thus here denotes discipline or
correction, specifically that imposed by Yahweh on the people
through the conditions of the Exile, rather than chastisement.
[282] Thus the verse holds out the hope of restoration to the
Jews in Babylon.

The fact that the original Rechabite incident could
not have ended at v.11[283] makes the opening phrase of the di-
vine instruction in this verse, ie. הָלֹךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ לְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה
וּלְיוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם, unnecessary as part of the original unit.
Jeremiah was in the midst of the 'men of Judah and the inhab-
itants of Jerusalem' already, so a command to 'go and speak'
to them would be superfluous, but as a message to the (later)
Exiles, put in Jeremiah's mouth by the redactors, it is
acceptable. The redactors make Yahweh command Jeremiah to take
his message, drawn from the example of the Rechabites, to the

Jews in Babylon.

Verse 14

It has already been shown that שכם Hiph. inf.
absol. followed by anotherverb in the infinitive absolute is
a feature of the Jeremiah prose tradition.[284] Literally,
שכם Hiph. means 'to rise up early'.[285] When it occurs in
the infinitive absolute followed a second verb also in the
infinitive absolute, it means 'persistently'. As Carroll
puts it,

> this graphic metaphor (used often enough
> in the Jeremiah tradition to border on
> cliche) describes the persistence with
> which the deity sent his prophets to the
> people.[286]

Verse 15

It has already been demonstrated that the phrase
'my servants the prophets' in this verse comes from the
'Jeremianic' redactors.[287] It is possible that the phrase was
inserted here by the redactors precisely because they under-
stood the Rechabites in the same way as this study, ie. as
a prophetic group. The reference here is not only to the
general sending of prophets by Yahweh, but also to the
specific case of the Rechabites. The redactors thus also
viewed the Rechabites as Yahwistic prophets.

Verse 16

The implication of this verse is that the Rechabites
obeyed the whole teaching of Jonadab. Although מִצְוָת here is
singular, it must denote all of the instructions of v.6f.
This is certainly the understanding of the MT in v.18, which
reads וַתִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו – a correct interpretation, even
though LXX is probably more primitive here.[288] This is a
further indication that the Rechabites had maintained their
tent-dwelling existence within the walls of Jerusalem.

Verses 18-19: The Promise to the Rechabites

On text-critical grounds, it has been argued that
the earliest form of Jer. 35:18f ran as follows:

לכן כה אמר יהוה יען אשר שמעו בני
יונדב בן־רכב את־מצות אביהם
לעשות כאשר צום אביהם לא יכרת
איש ליונדב בן־רכב עמד לפני
כל־הימים

> Therefore, thus says Yahweh, because
> the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab
> have obeyed the command of their father
> to do that which their father commanded
> them, there will not lack a man to
> Jonadab the son of Rechab standing before
> me forever.[289]

J.D. Levenson has perceived in this Promise to the Rechabites
an instance of the 'Covenant of Grant' identified by Moshe
Weinfeld:

> This type of covenant is different in

essence from the more familiar "treaty
covenant", well-known in Biblical circles
.... In nuce, whereas 'the grant is a
reward for loyalty and good deeds already
performed, the treaty is an inducement
for future loyalty' ... 'The grant', in
short, '... is an act of royal benevo-
lence arising from the king's desire to
reward his loyal servant'.[290]

Thus, the outstanding fidelity of one generation of the

Rechabites wins for the clan[291] the gift of eternal survival,

a gift which Yahweh will maintain, even if the Rechabites'

descendents should fall short of their father's fidelity.

As parallels to this, Levenson cites the promises to David

contained in 2 Sam. 7:14-15 and Ps. 89:31-38.[292] What he does

not go on to observe is that both 2 Sam.7:14-15 and Ps. 89:

31-38 expect David's descendents to maintain David's fidelity,

and that both say that Yahweh will punish any backsliding

from that fidelity, even though he will not withdraw his

blessing. By inference, it must be asserted that the 'Cove-

nant of Grant' made to the Rechabites(made in Jer. 35:19)is

made on the expectation that the Rechabite community will

continue to observe the commands of Jonadab. There is no men-

tion of any abrogation of those commands, and the comparison

with 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89 indicates, rather, that those

rules were to still have binding force for the Rechabites.

Thus, it is legitimate to claim rather more than Levenson

does . He is correct to say that

the purpose of ... the chapter about the
Rechabites is to commend to the citizens
of Judah the faithfulness this curious

> group exemplified, rather than, as some
> have believed, to advocate a return to
> the nomadic or semi-nomadic existence which
> was the manifestation of this faithfulness.[293]

But he is not correct to say that

> here, faith and the fulfillment of commands
> have become worthy in the sight of YHWH,
> whether it is faith in him and fulfillment
> of his commands or not,[294]

implying that the actual content of the commands was not the

will of Yahweh for the Rechabites. It seems clear, however,

that the Promise to the Rechabites, with its implied continu-

ation of the Rechabite discipline, reveals that the content

of that discipline was part of Yahweh's will for the Rechabites,

and for the Rechabites alone. There is no indication that

the life of the Rechabites is being set up as some sort of

normative Yahwism, which all the people are expected to foll-

ow, but it is regarded as an acceptable form of life and

worship in Yahweh's eyes.

What of the actual content of the Promise or, more

specifically, what does עמד לפני mean?[295] Some of the rabb-

inic traditions about the Rechabites thought that it meant

that they became priests.[296] Calvin dismissed this, and

thought that it simply meant that some Rechabites would al-

ways be living and would not lose their just reward.[297]

Gelin thought that one was in the presence of Yahweh when

living in his territory,[298] and that עמד לפני here denoted

the continued presence of the Rechabites in Israel. Volz was

of the opinion that it denoted the continuance of the relig-

ious peculiarity of the sect.[299] Elliott Binns, Peake and

Feinberg all note that עמד לפני is usually used of priests, but express caution when it comes to claiming that this is its meaning here.[300] Carroll thinks it denotes nothing more than survival.[301]

What is needed is an investigation of the use of the phrase עמד לפני יהוה in the Hebrew Bible, before its meaning in Jer. 35:19 can be determined properly. Such an investigation is here offered.

עמד לפני יהוה is used of the people, the Levites or the priests in the cultic activity of either the Tent of Meeting or the Jerusalem Temple in Lev. 9:5, Deut. 10:8, 18:7, Jer. 7:10, Ezek. 44:15, Ezra 9:19, 2 Chron. 20:9, 20:13, 29:11. Deut. 4:40 speaks of the people 'standing before Yahweh' to hear his words, again presumably within a cultic context. Judg. 20:28 speaks of Phinehas standing לפניו - the suffix could denote either the Ark or Yahweh, but in reality the two cannot be separated, cf. 1 Sam. 6:20. 1 Kings 3:15 speaks of Solomon standing before the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh in the Temple - once again a cultic reference. The same idea is repeated in 1 Kings 8:22 and 2 Chron. 6:12.

The phrase is also used with the sense of 'resisting Yahweh', or being able to endure his presence or the presence of his acts. So 1 Sam. 6:20, Jer. 49:19, 50:44, Neh. 1:6 (standing before the indignation of Yahweh); Ps. 76:8, (before the anger of Yahweh); Ps. 107:17 (before the cold of Yahweh). It hardly needs to be said that this particular mean-

ing of עמד לפני יהוה is not suitable for the instance of
the phrase in Jer. 35:19!

It is also used to denote the act of intercession.
So Gen. 18:22, 19:27. Gen. 18:22 ואברהם עודנו עמד לפני
יהוה, 'but Abraham still stood before Yahweh', is gener-
ally regarded as a Tiqqun Sopherim, a scribal correction,
which altered an original reading ויהוה... אברהם, as it was
felt that this could have conveyed the 'heretical' view that
Yahweh was Abraham's servant.[302] J. Skinner argued for the
priority of the reading of the MT, and doubted the need to
posit a Tiqqun Sopherim. He commented that the supposed orig-
inal reading does not improve the sense, and the present
form of MT is presupposed by Gen. 19:27.[303] To these comments
may be added the observation that if the change was made, and
on reverential grounds, then it has not been carried out with
any consistency: in Exod. 17:6, Yahweh declares that he
will 'stand before' Moses, the same idiom as is found in
Gen. 18:22. Whichever is the correct original reading in
Gen. 18:22, Gen. 19:27 is sufficient evidence from the peri-
copé of the use of עמד לפני יהוה to denote non-cultic
intercession.

In Jer. 15:1, Moses and Samuel are said to 'stand
before Yahweh'. In the context, it seems that the reference
here is also to the act of intercession.[304] Jer. 18:20 ex-
plicitly asserts that 'to stand before Yahweh' means 'to
intercede':
Remember how I stood before thee,

to speak good for them,

to turn away thy wrath from them. (RSV)

Ezekiel 22:30 speaks of the righteous man who would stand in the breach before Yahweh to avert his wrath. That this also denotes the act of intercession is revealed by Ps. 106:23, which uses the expression of Moses at the time of the incident of the Golden Calf. Exod. 32:11-14 shows that Moses averted Yahweh's wrath by the ministry of intercession - an idea poetically expressed in Ps. 106:23 by 'standing in the breach before Yahweh'. The same meaning attaches to the use of the phrase in Ezek. 22:30.

The fourth use of יהוה לפני עמד, and it is probably wrong to separate it from the third,[305] is as an indication of the relationship between a prophet and his God. So 1 Kings 17:1, 18:15 (Elijah), 2 Kings 3:14, 5:16 (Elisha), Jer. 15:19 (Jeremiah). Of particular interest in this context is 1 Kings 19:11, Yahweh's command to Elijah to 'go forth, and stand upon the mount before Yahweh', which implies that the prophets had a peculiar, personal relationship with Yahweh, beyond that contained in the Cult. Indeed, this idea may be an extension of that expressed in 1 Kings 22:21= 2 Chron. 18:20, where the spirit of prophecy is said to stand in the presence of Yahweh, ie. in his council (and counsel!).

This survey of the use of יהוה לפני עמד indicates that it never had the meanings 'being alive', 'dwelling in the Promised Land' or 'surviving forever' in biblical Hebrew,

211

so it is unlikely that any of these meanings are correct for

the use of the phrase in Jer. 35:19. As already indicated,

the idea of resisting Yahweh is alien to the present context,

which leaves three possibilities, all 'religious' - serving

God in the Cult, exercising a ministry of intercession, and

standing in relation to Yahweh as a prophet. Which meaning or

meanings is/are applicable here? Given that it has been shown

that v.19 is part of the earliest layer of the text, and that

it stems from the prophet himself, it is legitimate to suggest

that it does not denote cultic service here. The only time

that יהוה ־לפנ עמד does have this meaning in the Book of

Jeremiah (7:10), it is pejorative in meaning. In addition,

35:19 would scarcely have been preserved by the redactors in

the Exile if it had had this meaning. The Temple had fallen;

whatever religious rites that were being carried out on its

site were of a very haphazard and occasional nature,[306] so

it would have been a fallacy to have preserved a text that

asserted that a particular group would continue to carry out

the cultic functions forever. Thirdly, if it is correct to

conclude that the 'Covenant of Grant' in Jer. 35:19 implies

that the Rechabites were expected to continue their distinc-

tive practices, then it may be wondered how much at home they

would have felt in the Jerusalem Cult, seeing as they had had

a rather ambivalent attitude towards it throughout their pre-

vious history.[307]

It thus seems that לפנ עמד in Jer. 35:19 denotes

either 'intercession' or 'acting as prophets', or both. The

two concepts probably should not be separated. Gen. 20:7,

where Abraham is described both as a prophet and as an intercessor, has already been mentioned. In addition, Jer. 15:19, where Jeremiah's prophetic office is described as 'standing before Yahweh', and 18:20, where the same phrase is used to describe his intercession, should be noted. In Jer. 15:1, the intercession of Moses and Samuel is spoken of - yet both are depicted as prophets in the biblical tradition.[308] Thus, it is to be concluded that the Promise to the Rechabites is a promise that they will not cease exercising a ministry of prophecy and prayer before Yahweh.

Is the Promise granting something new, or reaffirming something already present? Syntactically, the Niphal imperfect in אֹל יִכָּרֵת אִישׁ is capable of either interpretation. In Jer. 35:7, the reward for keeping Jonadab's commands was said to be that the Rechabites would live many days in the land where they were sojourners. In v.19, the promise is that they will never cease 'standing before Yahweh' forever. It has already been shown that the list of commands in v.6f is best seen as a series of injunctions to maintain the lifestyle appropriate to Yahwistic prophets. It is also clear that the עֹמֵד לְפָנַי in v.19 also indicates that the Rechabites would continue as prophets. In that sense, the promise in v.19 is a vigorous reassertion of the validity of their present practices, and is none the less forceful for that. Perhaps what <u>is</u> new in the final promise is that, because of their fidelity to those commands, the Rechabites will exercise that ministry <u>forever</u> (כָּל־הַיָּמִים), rather than just for 'many days' (יָמִים רַבִּים), as in v.7. When it

is recalled that the promise in v.19 was made when Judah was
being overrun by ravaging military bands and when a full-scale
invasion by Nebuchadrezzar was imminent, it is clear that
it would have provided hope for the Rechabites that they
would survive the calamity, and not only survive it, but
also remain in Israel, continuing their ministry of proph-
ecy and prayer.

And it seems clear from the text and its redactions
that that is precisely what did happen, although the Rechab-
ites disappear from the pages of the Bible after Jeremiah
35. While it is not impossible that this group of Yahwistic
prophets became incorporated into the official theocracy
set up by Nehemiah, it is by no means certain that this was
the case. It is not likely that the rabbinic traditions about
the Rechabites reflect a subsequent history such as this. As
Chapter Five of the present study will show, it is more like-
ly that these traditions were the result of various groups in
the late Second Temple period adopting the title 'Rechabite'
as a self-description.

Conclusion

The argument about the meaning of the Promise to
the Rechabites in Jeremiah 35:19 has been deliberately devel-
oped with as little reference as possible to the other feat-
ures in the chapter which point towards an original milieu
for the Rechabites as a prophetic group alongside Elijah,
Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets, found in 1 Kings 17-
2 Kings 13. These were: the fact that the Rechabite pro-
hibitions seem to have been observed by Elijah and, except

for the house-building/dwelling prohibition, by Elisha and
the Sons of the Prophets as well; the fact that the wine pro-
hibition is best seen against a prophetic background - alcohol
being an impediment to the prophetic function of giving
oracles; the fact that the rest of Jonadab's commands are
best seen as a command to shun the sedentary life and its
accompaniments - the urban life signifying a lack of trust in
Yahweh and a growth in social inequality, both abuses con-
demned by the prophets by their words and by their lifestyle;
and the fact that the redactors chose to insert 'my servants
the prophets' in v.15.

Now that the Promise to the Rechabites in v.18f
has also been seen as a prophetic term, the internal evi-
dence from Jeremiah 35 for seeing the Rechabites as a group
of Yahwistic prophets seems overwhelming - and does more
justice to the text as a whole than any view that sees them
as shepherds, soldiers, metalworkers, Kenites or anything
else. Once the conclusions reached in Chapter Two concerning
1 Chron. 2:55, 4:12, Neh. 3:14 and especially 2 Kings 10:15f
are added to these conclusions concerning Jeremiah 35, it
becomes plain that the onus is on those who seek a different
explanation of the Rechabites to find convincing alternative
explanations to the ones gathered here, which will be fur-
ther reinforced by the material in Chapter Four.

In seeing the Rechabites as prophets, the position
taken by Cummings is supported,[309] but his line of reasoning
is pushed even further. Thus, the Rechabites must be seen as

a prophetic group, who exercised this function in Israel

from the time of their inception in the mid- to late-ninth

century in Israel right down to the Fall of Jerusalem in 587

BCE, and beyond.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE RECHABITES IN THEIR SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL

CONTEXT

The previous two chapters of this study have taken

as their starting point the biblical texts which either men-

tion, or have been thought to mention, the Rechabites:

1 Chron. 2:55, 4:12, Neh. 3:14, 2 Kings 10:15f, 23,

Jeremiah 35 passim. While the analysis of the biblical texts

has yielded a relatively full picture of our group, there are

numerous points of detail which remain as yet unexamined,

either because the biblical texts did not lead directly to a

consideration of them, or else because to have examined them

at the relevant points in Chapters Two and Three would have

created an imbalance in the presentation of the data. The

purpose of this fourth chapter, therefore, is to offer a

thematic approach to the study of the Rechabites, in order

to complement the foregoing textual approach. The themes

selected for consideration are: possible Ancient Near Eastern

parallels to the Rechabites; Chariots and riding in the Old

Testament – the background to the term 'Rechabite'; the

Rechabites as a sect; the Rechabites' means of sustenance;

the Rechabites and the Cult; and the Rechabites and the

Nazirites.

It is hoped that the study of these various themes,

when coupled with the study of the biblical texts, will yield

as complete a picture as it is possible to paint of the hist-

orical Rechabites. Therefore, this present chapter will

finish with a conclusion to the whole of the first part of

this thesis, 'The Rechabites in the Bible'. Part Two of the

present thesis, comprising Chapter Five, will examine the

use of the biblical traditions about the Rechabites by the

Qumran Scrolls and Community, by the rabbinic literature,

and by the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.

POSSIBLE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PARALLELS TO THE RECHABITES (4.1)

In pursuit of the attempt to understand the Rechab-

ites correctly, several scholars have resorted to searching

for possible parallels to them from elsewhere in the Ancient

Near East. From at least the time of Plumptre onwards,[1] it

has been quite common to compare the practices of the Rechab-

ites with those of the early Nabataeans, as recounted in the

work of Diodorus Siculus. More recently it has been proposed

that the early Amorites should be viewed as parallels to the

Rechabites. In this section these two proposals will be

examined in turn and it will be shown that the early Nabataeans

and the early Amorites were anything but similar to the Rechab-

ites.

The Rechabites and the Nabataeans

The passage in Diodorus Siculus which describes

the customs of the early Nabataeans, which have been thought

to offer a parallel to the customs of the Rechabites, is

XIX.94.2ff. Not only do Old Testament scholars cite this

passage from Diodorus as a parallel to the Rechabites, but

Nabataean scholars have also tended to cite Jeremiah 35:6-10

as providing a parallel to the customs of the early Naba-

bataeans![2] This widespread acceptance, from both fields, of

the viability of a positive comparison between the Rechab-

ites and the early Nabataeans, makes it extremely important,

for the purposes of this study, that this supposed link is

critically investigated and evaluated, something which

apparently has not been undertaken before.[3]

At first sight, the comparison between the two

groups appears to be a valid one. Diodorus Siculus XIX.94.

2ff reads:

Χρησιμον δ'εστι των αγνοουντων ενεκα
διελθειν τα νομιμα των Αραβων τουτων, οις
χρωμενοι δοκουσι την ελευθεριαν διαφυλαττειν.
εχουσι τοινυν τον βιον υπαιθριον, πατριδα
καλουντες την αοικητον την μητε ποταμος
εχουσαν μητε κρηνας δαψιλεις εξ ων δυνατον
στρατοπεδον πολεμιον υδρευσασθαι. νομος
δ'εστιν αυτοις μητε σιτον σπειρειν μητε
φυτευειν μηδεν φυτον καρποφορον μητε οινω
χρησθαι μητε οικιαν κατασκευαζειν· ος δ'αν
παρα ταυτα ποιων ευρισκηται, θανατον αυτω
προστιμον ειναι. χρωνται δε τω νομω τουτω
διαλαμβανοντες τους ταυτα κτωμενους
αναγκασθησεσθαι ρα διως υπο των δυνατων
ενεκα της τουτων χρειας ποιειν το προσταςςομενον.

> For the sake of those who do not know,
> it will be helpful to state in some detail
> the customs of these Arabs, by following
> which, it is believed, they preserve their
> liberty. They live in the open air, claiming
> as native land a wilderness that has neither
> rivers nor abundant springs from which it is
> possible for a hostile army to obtain water.
> It is their custom neither to plant grain,

set out any fruit-bearing tree, nor
to drink wine, nor construct any house,
and if anyone is found acting contrary
to this, death is his penalty. They follow
this custom because they believe that those
who possess these things are, in order to
retain the use of them, easily compelled
by the powerful to do their bidding.[4]

The text goes on to indicate that the Nabataeans
were pastoralists, raising both camels and sheep in the
desert, and merchants, trading in frankincense, myrrh
and spices (Diod. Sic. XIX.94.4f). Elsewhere, it is stated
that they live a life of brigandage (II.48.2).

Cohen has warned against ascribing too great a
historical reliability to the Classical references to the
Nabataeans,[5] but both Geer and Negev believe that Diodorus'
account, written in the first century BCE, but detailing
events that occurred in 312 BCE, is based on a genuine eye-
witness report, that of Hieronymus of Cardia.[6] A recent
monograph devoted to Hieronymus of Cardia has confirmed that
Diodorus Siculus' account _is_ that of Hieronymus and, further,
has demonstrated the essential accuracy of Hieronymus' work,
particularly in the section devoted to the Nabataeans.[7] Thus,
it may be safely concluded that our passage is an authentic
account of the Nabataeans in the fourth century BCE.

Hence, the passage in Diod. Sic. XIX.94 is a legi-
timate basis for the proper understanding of the customs of

the early Nabataeans, despite the fact that it is the only

evidence available for this period of Nabataean history. It

is most improbable that the text of Diodorus/Hieronymus has

any dependence, literary or otherwise, on the text of Jer.

35:6-10. The order of the elements is different, and a

different vocabulary is used, as a comparison between the

passage in Diodorus and LXX-Jer. 42 (= MT-Jer. 35) makes

clear:[8]

> LXX: μητε πιητε οινον
>
> Diod. Sic.: μητε οινω χρησθαι
>
> LXX: οικιαν ου μη οικοδομησητε
>
> Diod. Sic.: μητε οικιαν κατασκευαζειν
>
> LXX: σπερμα ου μη σπειρητε
>
> Diod. Sic.: μητε σιτον σπειρειν
>
> LXX: αμπελων ουκ εστι ημων
>
> Diod. Sic.: μητε φυτευειν μηδεν φυτον καρποφορον

In addition to the underlined differences in vocabulary,

Diodorus/Hieronymus does not explicitly state that the Naba-

taeans lived in tents, although it is clear that they did so

- "this fact, it seems, our authorities took for granted, and

for this reason they failed to mention it".[9]

Having established that Diod. Sic. XIX.94 preserves

authentic historical material concerning the fourth century

BCE Nabataeans, and that it has no direct dependence on Jer.

35, the following features which the Nabataeans and the

Rechabites had in common may now be outlined:

(1) not planting grain;

(2) not planting vineyards - it is surely legitimate

to assume that the 'fruit-bearing trees' of the passage in

Diodorus Siculus included vines;

     (3) not drinking wine;

     (4) not building houses;

     (5) living in tents;

- seemingly a remarkable correspondence of practice.

It should also be pointed out, however, that there were some features of Nabataean life, as recounted by our text, which either have no correspondence with Jeremiah 35, or else stand positively at variance with it:

     (1) the Nabataeans were brigands and merchants. There is nothing in Jer. 35 that explicitly details the occupations of the Rechabites. Implicitly, Jer. 35 reveals that they were prophets;

     (2) the Nabataeans were pastoralists. It has been demonstrated elsewhere in this study that not only is there no evidence to suggest that the Rechabites were shepherds, but also that the available data accords better with the view that this was <u>not</u> their occupation;[10]

     (3) the Nabataeans were desert-dwellers - the terms ἀοικμτος and ἔρημος are used to describe their habitat. It has already been pointed out that the geographical terms used in connection with the Rechabites are האדמה and הארץ, denoting the cultivated, Promised Land.[11] There is no evidence that the Rechabites ever lived in, or had any love for, the desert;

     (4) Diodorus/Hieronymus states that contravention of the laws of the Nabataeans was punishable by death. It is hard to assert, on the basis of the biblical material, that

the Rechabites had recourse to similar punitive measures.

Admittedly, the promise in Jer. 35:7 is "that you may live

many days in the land wherein you are sojourners", but the

antithesis, _ie_. the punishment for, or the consequence of,

disobedience, cannot really be interpreted as capital pun-

ishment executed by other members of the Rechabite community.

Expulsion from the community was more likely to have been the

form of punishment exercised by the Rechabites against re-

calcitrant members.[12]

The most significant contrast between the Rechabites

and the Nabataeans, however, lies in the _motives_ for their

practices. Jonadab enjoined the Rechabites to keep their

discipline "in order that you may live many days in the land

wherein you are sojourners". The Nabataeans observed their

practices in order to preserve their political freedom:

> the customs of these Arabs, by following
> which, it is believed, they preserve their
> liberty.

> They follow this custom, because they believe
> that those who possess these things are ...
> easily compelled by the powerful to do their
> bidding.

Jane Hornblower has shown that $\frac{?}{\epsilon}\lambda\upsilon\theta\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha$, 'freedom',

is probably a motif of Hieronymus' history, and that he used

the example of the freedom-loving Nabataeans to convey a ser-

ious message to the increasingly despotic Antigonus Gonates.[13]

Nevertheless, the assumption that Hieronymus has invented

this motive for the Nabataean pratices, in order to make his

point, is unwarranted. Rather, he has used the observed

Nabataean pratices, and their motive, to drive his message
to Antigonus home.

Thus, the stated motives for the Nabataean prac-
tices in Diod. Sic. XIX.94 are genuine - and they are different
from the motives underlying the practices of the Rechabites.
But if a valid comparison between the Rechabites and the Naba-
taeans is to be drawn, a similarity not only, or even
primarily, of _practice_ must be discerned, but also, and
primarily, a similarity of _motive_, _ie_. it is incumbent
upon those who believe that there _is_ a parallel between the
Rechabites and the early Nabataeans to demonstrate convinc-
ingly that 'living long in the land' as prophets and 'freedom
from political subjugation' in the desert are synonymous terms.
To date, it appears that no scholar, either Old Testament
or Nabataean, who mentions the similarity of practice even
mentions the difference of motive, let alone tries to recon-
cile them. The two motives are _not_ synonymous, and can only
be equated by a tortuous interpretation of one, or other,
or both, of them. So, while there _is_ a certain degree -
by no means exact, as the list of differences demonstrates -
of similarity of practice between the two groups, the dis-
similarity of motive along with the fact that the Rechabites
avoided the desert while the Nabataeans lived nowhere else,
is such as to render the supposed parallel untenable. The
early Nabataeans thus do not form a parallel to the Rechabites,
and the Rechabites do not form a parallel to the early
Nabataeans.

Excursus 3: Earlier Evidence for the Nabataeans

          Diodorus Siculus/Hieronymus of Cardia is our only

definite source for the early history and practices of the

Nabataeans. Various attempts have been made to link the

Nabataeans with the biblical Nebaioth (Gen. 25:13, 28:9,

36:3, Is. 60:7, 1 Chron. 1:29) and the Assyrian Na-ba-a-a-ti

and similar[14] and thus to discover earlier attestations of the

Nabataeans.[15] The argument hinges on the spelling of Nebaioth

(‏ח(י)בנ‎) and Nabataean (Nbtw in the nominative), and on

whether the shift from Assyrian and Hebrew t to Nabataean ṭ

is phonologically acceptable. That it is phonologically

acceptable is contended, notably by Negev and Eph'al.[16] If

Bartlett and Broome are right, then presumably the practices

of the Nabataeans can also be read back several centuries, so

it would be unwise to build a criticism of the proposed para-

llel between the Rechabites and the Nabataeans on the basis

of the chronological gap between Diodorus/Hieronymus and

Jeremiah, as Riemann does.[17] However, it is by no means

certain that Bartlett and Broome are right, so it seems best

to adopt a 'not proven'attitude, and follow Bowersock's view

that

          there is no secure basis for iden-
          tifying [the Nabataeans] with the
          Nebaioth of the Old Testament or with
          peoples of similar names in Assyrian
          documents.[18]

Excursus 4: Strabo's Witness to the Nabataeans

          It is highly informative to compare what is recounted

of the Nabataeans of the fourth century BCE in Diod. Sic. XIX.
94, with what Strabo, a first century BCE eyewitness, says
of them:

Diod. Sic. XIX.94.3	Strabo, Geography, XVI.4.26
The Nabataeans do not plant grain, or set out any fruit-bearing trees.	"Most of the country is well-supplied with fruit".
They do not use wine.	They hold drinking bouts (συμποσια) and pour out libations (σπενδοντες) to their deity - both practices which involved the use of wine.
They do not construct any houses.	"Their homes, through the use of stone, are costly, but, on account of peace, the cities are not walled".[19]

Thus, Diodorus Siculus/Hieronymus of Cardia presents a view
of the Nabataeans as nomadic, Strabo sees them as sedentary.
In the 200-300 years since Hieronymus made his observations,
seemingly adopted by Diodorus without any regard for the actual
state of affairs in the first century BCE, the Nabataeans had
moved from a predominantly nomadic lifestyle to a predomin-
antly sedentary one. This rapid transition also cautions
against drawing too ready a comparison between the Rechabites
and the early Nabataeans.

There are also other Classical witnesses to the
Nabataeans, viz. Josephus, Antiquities XIV, 16, 80f, 362;
XVII, 54, 120; War I, 125f, 159, 167, 574; Plutarch, Lives,
Pompey 41, Demetrius 7; Pliny, Natural History, VI, 144 and
the anonymous Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, 19. None of

these references, however, add anything to our knowledge of the early Nabataeans, as they are mainly geographical references to Petra or accounts of political and military relations between Judaea and Nabataea in the period c.100 BCE - c.100 CE.[20]

The Rechabites and the Amorites

In 1974, M.S. Seale proposed that the customs of the Amorites of the Ur III period (c.2000 BCE), as recounted in various Sumerian literary texts, formed a parallel to the customs of the Rechabites and, since, in Seale's opinion, the Amorites were nomads, it was hence evident that the Rechabites were also nomads, providing "a valuable clue to what the whole people were like before they became sedentary".[21]

The customs of the Amorites thus need to be examined to see if they do, in fact, reflect a nomadic culture, and whether they do form a parallel to the customs of the Rechabites. In addition, the whole understanding of the concept of nomadism needs to be appraised at this point.

The texts that have been thought to reveal the nomadic character of the Amorites have been conveniently gathered together by Buccellati.[22] They describe the Amorites as:

'a tent dweller (buffeted?) by the wind and rain';
'the one who does not know city(-life)';

'the Amorite of the mountains';

'the awkward man living in the mountains';

'the one who does not know (ie. cultivate) grain';

'the one who digs up mushrooms at the foot of the
mountain';

'who eats uncooked meat';

'who, on the day of his death, will not be
buried';

'the Amorite, a ravaging people, with canine
instincts, like wolves ...'.

In addition, two texts from Drehem depict the Amorites as

pastoralists, bringing their sheep and goats into the

commercial centre.[23]

Superficially, these texts again, like that of

Diodorus Siculus on the Nabataeans, do seem to offer certain

parallels to the customs of the Rechabites. But they must be

carefully evaluated. Seale accepts them as reflecting the

true nature of the Amorites,[24] but it is to be noted that

the evidence

is neither direct nor impartial testimony
concerning the way of life and the techno-
logical and cultural baggage of the
Amorites, but simply a vivid picture of
how they were seen by the Mesopotamians.
It is a picture subject to all the mis-
understandings and generalisations that
go with the descriptions of the 'foreigner'
in strongly ethno-centric civilisations.[25]

Indeed, in following this line, Haldar went so far as to

assert that this Sumerian description of the foreign Amorites

was simply a derisory and contemptuous account of the seden-

tary Amorites in Mesopotamia, by the culturally superior

Sumerians[26] but, as Kay Prag comments, it seems "unnecessary
to treat the few texts that are available in such devious
fashion".[27] Rather, the line taken by Liverani and Prag
should be followed. Some of the Sumerian statements, such
as 'the Amorite who lives in a tent', are undoubtedly based
on direct experience. Others have become drastically general-
ised, such as the claim that the Amorite is one 'who does not
know grain', while still others can only be seen as having
originated either in Sumerian ignorance of Amorite customs,
or else in sheer prejudice against them. The descriptions of
the Amorite as one 'who has no tomb' and 'eats raw meat' fall
into this category. As Prag puts it, "it would be surprising
if these people practiced no burial rites of any kind".[28]
It would also be surprising if people in the Intermediate
Early Bronze-Middle Bronze Age (c.2350-1900 BCE) ate meat
without first cooking it.

Seale's outlook can thus already be shown to be
deficient, because of his uncritical acceptance of the
Sumerian texts about the Amorites. His understanding of nomad-
ism may also be subjected to a radical critique. It is illum-
inating to observe that in the same year that Seale published
his The Desert Bible, a devastating critique of the Pastoral
Nomadic model for the origins of Ancient Israel, by Norman
Gottwald, appeared.[29] Seale, following Moscati[30] et al,
worked with what may be termed the 'developmental concept
of nomadism', in which the Arabian Desert was viewed as the
original home of the pastoral nomads, who in successive waves
invaded the settled zone, dispossessed the settled agricult-

uralists, and then settled down and became agriculturalists
themselves. This developmentalist view had the implicit
assumption that desert/nomadism = prior/culturally lower and
sown land/agriculture = later/culturally higher, thereby
presenting pastoralism and agriculture as radically opposed
and conflicting socio-economic modes. This model, however,
has been shown to be in error. Not only is it unlikely that
the Arabian Desert could have ever housed the numbers of people
required for the model to work, particularly before the dom-
estication of the camel around 1200 BCE, but it has also
been demonstrated that pastoralism in fact developed as a
socio-economic marginal specialisation from the agricultural
village.[31] Pastoral, or transhumance, nomadism is a socio-
economic mode of life based on the intensive domestication of
livestock. This requires a regular movement of both animal
and breeder. With his primary need for pasturage and water
for his herds, the pastoral nomad is, in fact, closely
linked to the settled zone, only leading his herds out to
the steppes, in the Ancient Near East at any rate, during
the winter rainy season. There is thus, in reality, a close
symbiosis between the nomads and the settled peoples - during
the summer dry season, the nomad brings his flocks back to
the settled zone to find pasturage and water, often grazing
his animals on the stubble of harvested fields, which bene-
fits the agriculturalist, whose fields are thereby fertilised
for the coming season. It is clear that pastoral nomadism and
agriculture were often carried on within the same human
community in the Ancient Near East. Indeed, they were no
doubt sometimes engaged in by the same person.

Once this radically altered perception of nomadism is appropriated, it is clear that the former view of pastoral nomadism, as being independent of, chronologically prior to, and culturally lower than, sedentary agriculturalism, is completely untenable. Thus, the central thesis of Seale's book, that the Hebrews began as a nomadic people, collapses.[32]

Returning to the Amorites, there are indications that this understanding of agriculture and pastoral nomadism may also be applied to them. Liverani observes that in Bronze Age Syria there was an ethno-linguistic unity between nomadic and sedentary peoples, Amorite being the only language attested in the region in the period 2300-1600 BCE, and that the area had several fully developed cities in the third millenium BCE, such as Ibla and Gubla.[33] Kay Prag's extensive investigation of the area concluded that

> EB.MB [ie. Intermediate Early Bronze-Middle
> Bronze Age] society includes a sedentary
> element in the population with people
> inhabiting both permanent villages and
> well-established camp-sites, with clear
> evidence ... for the practice of at least
> seasonal agriculture. There is evidence
> for herds of sheep or goats ... which
> may represent the mainstay of the economy.[34]

Archaeology has thus substantiated the conclusion that EB.MB society was essentially 'dimorphic' in character in the Ancient Near East. Agriculture and pastoralism were not opposing poles, but complementary parts of the same society. J.T. Luke has pointed out that the Mari text ARMT XIII 39

depicts the Iaminites, an 'Amorite' tribe, as "semi-nomads who combined sheep pasturing with village agriculture on a seasonal basis".[35] Finally, mention may also be made of the Egyptian story of Sinuhe, which dates from much the same period.[36] When he flees from Egypt, Sinuhe comes to the land of Upper Retenu, which seems to have been in the highlands somewhere to the east of Byblos, ie. in Amorite country. Its ruler, at any rate, has an Amorite name, Ammi-enshi. Sinuhe describes it as

> a good land, named Yaa. Figs were
> in it, and grapes. It had more wine
> than water. Plentiful was its honey,
> abundant its olives. Every (kind of)
> fruit was on its trees. Barley was
> there, and Emmer. There was no limit
> to any (kind of) cattle.[37]

Once again, the land is depicted as being both agricultural and pastoral. Presumably, pastoral transhumance was practiced.

If, as the previous paragraphs have shown, there is evidence to suggest that the Amorites were agriculturalists as well as pastoralists, where does this leave the Sumerian texts? It is likely that the Sumerians had only had contact with various itinerant groups of Amorites - not only pastoral nomads operating far from their native settled zone, but also raiding parties, merchants, silversmiths, fugitives and the like, none of whom would have been practicing agriculture at the point at which the Sumerians came into contact with them. Given that Sumerian ignorance and prejudice had led to the

unlikely conclusion that the Amorites did not bury their dead,
is it not equally possible that the same ignorance and pre-
judice led them to assert that the Amorites were non-agricult-
uralists? These various itinerant groups may also have been
tent-dwellers, confirming the observation made earlier,
that the tent is no certain sign of pastoral nomadism.[38]

Thus, the Amorites of the Ur III period do not
form a parallel with the non-agricultural Rechabites. Given
the close symbiosis between agriculture and pastoral nomadism,
it is unlikely that the Rechabites formed part of that socio-
economic matrix - they were avowedly non-agricultural, and
there are strong indications that they were non-pastoral as
well.[39] The quoted extract from Sinuhe indicates that the
Amorites did not practice teetotalism, so there is no parallel
with the Rechabites there either. The fact that the Hebrew
people did not have a nomadic origin makes those views which
see the Rechabites either as 'survivals' of a nomadic age or
as a conservative returning to that former age as a reaction
to present evils untenable. The discipline of the Rechabites
was something new, something revolutionary, and their socio-
economic location needs to be sought for elsewhere. Frick
proposed that they were Kenite metalworkers,[40] but it has
already been shown that this view has little to commend it.[41]
As argued in Chapters Two and Three of the present study, the
least unsatisfactory location for the Rechabites is as a pro-
phetic group, similar to Elijah, Elisha and the Sons of the
Prophets. It is to this latter group and its leaders that the
Rechabites should be compared, and not to the early Nabataeans

or the Amorites - or any other group in the Ancient Near East.
The next section of this chapter will pursue this comparison.

4.2: CHARIOTS AND RIDING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT - THE BACK-

GROUND TO THE TERM 'RECHABITE'

It should be immediately obvious that רֶכֶב, and
its plural רֶכָבִים are derived in some way from √רכב, 'to
mount, ride'. The ideas expressed by this root are wide-
spread in both literal and metaphorical senses in the Hebrew
Bible. The purpose of this section is to examine the meaning
of √רכב, to attempt to ascertain what part of speech רֵכָב
represents, to investigate chariots and riding in Ancient
Israel, and then to go on to explore the references to Yahweh
riding upon a chariot, with special reference to the occur-
rences of this concept in the Elijah-Elisha stories. On the
basis of this background, the attempt will be made to answer
the question 'What did the title Rechabite mean?'

The Root Meaning of רכב

For the verb רכב Qal, BDB offers a meaning 'mount
and ride, ride', and for the Hiphil, 'cause to (mount and)
ride'.[42] Thus, it views the action conveyed by √רכב as
being essentially horizontal - 'riding along', rather than
'mounting up'. S. Mowinckel asserted that, while the basic
meaning of √רכב was 'to mount', its usage in the Old Testa-
ment is

about (mounting and) riding upon

a horse (or any other animal) and
of (mounting and) driving a chariot.[43]

Thus, he too sees the horizontal movement, whether riding
or driving, as paramount, with the vertical movement simply
being the necessary preliminary to the horizontal - one has
to 'mount', either onto a horse or into a chariot, before
one can 'ride along'. Thus, the Hebrew words רֶכֶב, מֶרְכָּב
and מֶרְכָּבָה, all derived from √רכב, denote 'a vehicle for
travelling along', and not 'something which holds you up'.

W. Boyd Barrick,[44] expressly drawing on the work of
de Langhe and Moran,[45] has recently, however, argued that
√רכב contains no hint of <u>horizontal</u> movement, but denotes
<u>vertical</u> movement alone. It only means 'to mount', not
'to ride along' as well.

He begins by pointing out that in 1 Kings 13:13-14,
2 Sam. 13:29, 2 Sam. 22/Ps. 18:11, 2 Kings 9:16, 1 Kings
1:38 and 2 Sam. 6:3, "horizontal vehicular movement follows
the action of <u>rkb</u> and is expressed by a second verb".[46] רכב
differs from √עלה, 'to go up', in that the latter simply
implies vertical movement, whereas the former includes the
relationship of the traveller to his destination, <u>ie.</u> עלה
means 'to go up', רכב 'to mount upon'.[47] Thus the parti-
ciple רֹכֵב

> designates not a 'rider' (<u>ie.</u> someone
> who moves forward while upon a vehicle)
> but someone who 'mounts' or is 'mounted'
> upon a vehicle[48]

- Barrick makes it clear that both animal and wheeled trans-

portation are denoted by his choice of the noun 'vehicle'.[49]

He compares the English noun 'Mountie',[50] thereby betraying

his American origin - 'Mountie' may be acceptable English west

of the Atlantic, but hardly east of it!

Barrick dismisses Ullendorff's argument that the

meaning 'to join together', attested for rkb in Arabic,

Syriac, Ethiopic and post-biblical Hebrew, is the original

meaning of the root. As he comments,

> the underlying concept is the super-
> impositionality of the act of 'mount-
> ing'... a rōkēb is an equestrian,
> a man 'joined' to a horse or other
> vehicle. The act of 'placing upon'
> (rkb in the Hiphil) becomes the act of
> 'joining together' and not the reverse.[51]

He goes on to demonstrate that the meaning 'to mount'

for רכב, without any necessary notion of horizontal move-

ment, fits the vast majority of the instances of the word

in biblical Hebrew, whether used of men or of Yahweh.[52] The

only three exceptions he finds in the MT, leaving out the crux

interpretum Hos. 10:11, are 2 Kings 9:28, 23:30a and 1 Chron.

13:7a.[53] In interpreting these passages, Barrick follows Moran.

> From the fact that in each passage
> the transport of an inanimate object
> is involved (a dead body, the Ark),
> Moran deduces that rkb in Hiphil 'has
> been assimilated to verbs with similar
> denotations (carry, etc.) '.[54]

Thus, the fundamental meaning of רכב as 'to mount' is

sustained.

Barrick's analysis is thorough and convincing, and
is adopted here. The root רכב denotes 'to mount up' onto an
animal or a wheeled vehicle, and not 'to ride along'. What-
ever form of speech רָכָב/רְכָבִים is, it is to do with mount-
ing, or being mounted upon, something, not to do with riding
or driving something along.

The Precise Meaning of רָכָב

BDB correctly regards רָכָב as being invariably a
proper name, and tentatively suggests that its meaning is
'band of riders'.[55] Gesenius claims that its meaning is
'horseman',[56] but Noth is unable to offer an etymology for
the name.[57] Leaving aside those names such as זֶרַע, זֵתָן
and עֵדֶן, where the םָ ־/ןָ ־ form represents a diminutive
affix, Sērē-Qāmes pointing is not common in proper names in
the Hebrew Bible. Apart from רָכָב, עֵשָׂו ,'Esau', קֵדָר,
'Kedar', and תֵּימָן,'Teman' are about the only ones, but none
of these names exhibits a plural form analogous to בֵּית
הָרֵכָבִים, which is the only plural form of רָכָב to be attest-
ed. The lexicons usually derive רֵכָבִים from a proposed gentil-
ic רֵכָבִי,[58] but it should be noted that members of a partic-
ular blood grouping are usually denoted by בְּנֵי/בֶּן + gentilic
in singular. In those cases, such as אֲדוֹמִים, 'Edomites',
where the plural form of the gentilic is found, it is usually
not preceded by anything. The form בֵּית הָרֵכָבִים seems to be
completely unique, both because it uses 'house of', rather

than 'son(s) of' and because רכבים is preceded by the defin-

ite article. It should also be noted that Jonadab is called

בן-רכב, and not בן-רכבי. These points make it likely

that רכב in בית הרכבים is, in fact, not a gentilic,

but rather represents a proper name that has been reinterpret-

ed into a title. This conclusion is supported by the fact,

already observed,[59] that the Rechabites venerated Jonadab

as their 'father' and founder, yet were called 'Rechabites',

and not 'Jonadabites'.

It is important to attempt to ascertain the meaning

of this proper name. One line of approach would be to com-

pare it with those Hebrew common nouns, such as חקר, לבב,

נכר, עדר, צלע, שער and שכר, which have the <u>Şēre</u>-

<u>Qāmeş</u> pointing but, unfortunately, these nouns display no

common relationship to their respective roots, so they shed

little light on the meaning of 'Rechab'. Perhaps the way for-

ward is to compare רכב with the personal name which uses this

pointing with the same three letters as its root,   <u>ie</u>. קדר,

'Kedar'.[60]

Most of the times that 'Kedar' appears in the Hebrew

Bible, it simply denotes the Bedouin tribe,[61] or its epony-

mous ancestor.[62] In Ps. 120:5, dwelling among the 'tents of

Kedar' is used as a poetic expression for living among foreign

peoples.

In all of these references, the name 'Kedar' seems

to have no definite etymological link with √קדר, 'to be dark',

and it is probable that it originally had no etymological
meaning at all. In Song of Songs 1:5, however, the woman
describes herself as 'very dark ... like the tents of Kedar'.
Here, the idea of darkness inherent in √קדר is important to
the analogy. 'Kedar' seems to be here understood as meaning
something like 'swarthy' or 'black', as well as still de-
noting the Bedouin tribe, ie. it was thought to have a mean-
ing not very different from that of the Qal participle of
√קדר, used substantively.

By analogy with this, it may be suggested that the
proper name 'Rechab', like the proper name 'Kedar', origin-
ally had no meaning at all but, again like 'Kedar', was later
invested with a meaning, a meaning that was not much differ-
ent from that of the Qal substantive participle of √רכב.
The instances of the name 'Rechab' in 2 Samuel 4 and in Jona-
dab's patrynomic reflect its use without any specific meaning,
while its use in בית הרכבים in Jer. 35 reflects its use with
a meaning – if it was still neutral, one of the forms רכב
רכב , רכבי or הרכבים would be expected, not בית
הרכבים. The meaning with which 'Rechab' was invested was
very close to the meaning of רֶכֶב, ie. 'he who mounts some-
thing, or is mounted upon something'. Thus, the Rechabites
were 'The House of the Mounted Ones'. 'Rechab' was probably
invested with this meaning by Jonadab himself, for a specific
reason. Before that reason can be ascertained, it is nec-
essary to investigate the concepts surrounding √רכב in bibli-
cal Hebrew more closely.

Chariots and Riding in Ancient Israel

What could one mount up on to, be mounted on (both

רכב Qal) or cause someone to mount up on to (רכב Hiphil) in

Ancient Israel? Firstly, and most obviously, one could mount

those things represented by the cognate nouns רֶכֶב, רְכוּב,

מֶרְכָּב and מֶרְכָּבָה. רְכוּב is found only once, in Ps. 104:3,

where it denotes Yahweh's vehicle. מֶרְכָּב is also rare, being

found only in 1 Kings 5:6, where it means 'chariot', Lev.

15:9 ('a saddle') and Song of Songs 3:10 ('the seat of a

litter'). By far the most common of these words are רֶכֶב

and מֶרְכָּבָה. The former usually functions as a collective noun,

and is best rendered into English as 'chariotry', but this is

not invariable. In 1 Kings 22:35, 38, 2 Kings 9:21, 24,

10:16 and 2 Chron 35:24, for instance, רֶכֶב is used to denote

a single chariot. In 1 Kings 22:35, the same vehicle, the

chariot of the king of Israel, is termed both מֶרְכָּבָה and

רֶכֶב. מֶרְכָּבָה is the usual term for an individual chariot.

On the form of the word, G-K 85e: the <u>mem</u>-preformative is a

<u>mem</u>-instrumental. The plural מֶרְכָּבוֹת is occasionally found in

parallel with רֶכֶב, as in Judg. 5:2.

In the Ancient Near East, the chariot seems to have

had a two-fold function, but in societies where military prow-

ess and social status were closely intertwined, the distinc-

tion between the two functions, that of a machine of war and

that of a sign of high social status, should not be pressed

absolutely. Evidence for the second function is provided from

the Old Testament by Gen. 41:43, where Joseph's status as

Pharaoh's right-hand man is indicated by his being mounted in
Pharaoh's second chariot; by 2 Sam. 15:1, where Absalom
prepares a chariot and runners (cf. 1 Sam. 8:11), in order
to indicate his aspirations for the throne, and not in order
to stage a military coup d'état; by 1 Kings 1:5, where Adon-
ijah imitates Absalom's act, for the same reason; and by
Jer. 17:25, 22:4, where the kings and princes of the David-
ic line enter into Jerusalem mounted upon chariots.[63]

The military function of the chariot was, however,
the primary one. Indeed, it was the main mobile combat weap-
on in the Ancient Near East for much of the biblical period,
horsemen being used as scouts and messengers but not as cav-
alry, until late in the period. The early Israelites did not
possess any chariots at all, as is revealed by the Exodus and
Reed Sea traditions in Exodus 14-15; by the texts which speak
of the Canaanite 'chariots of iron', Josh. 17:16, 18, Judg.
1:19; by the Song of Deborah in Judges 5; and by the tradit-
ions which speak of the Philistine chariotry, with the impli-
cation that Israel had none, 1 Sam. 13:5, 2 Sam. 1:16.[64]
David obviously must have had a few chariots for Absalom and
Adonijah to have each used one, but 2 Sam. 8:4 (cf. Josh.
11:6) indicates that the weapon, even when it was captured
in battle, was not generally adopted: hamstringing the horses
and, presumably, the burning of the chariots[65] was the pre-
ferred way of dealing with the unfamiliar weapon.

It was only under Solomon that the chariot was really
adopted as a military weapon by Israel. 1 Kings 10:26 sugg-

ests that there were some 1400 chariots in Solomon's army,
compared with just a hundred in David's.[66] Solomon even built
chariot cities.[67] It does seem, however, that the <u>manufac-</u>
<u>ture</u> of chariots was never practised to any great extent
within Israel itself. 1 Kings 10:29=2 Chron. 1:17 indicates
that, in general, they were imported from Egypt.[68] Hence,
Israel's chariotry became symptomatic of her trust in foreign
nations, rather than in Yahweh, <u>cf</u>. Is. 31:1, Ps. 20:8,
where the reference is once again to 'chariotry and its span-
horses'.[69]

After the division of the Kingdom following the death
of Solomon, the principal chariot cities, Hazor, Megiddo
and Gezer, fell to the Northern Kingdom, but 2 Kings 3:7,
8:21, Is. 2:7, 31:1, Mic. 1:13, 5:9 indicate that a chariot
force was maintained, and even increased, in Judah. However,
the Judaeans seem to have never completely mastered the weapon.
At any rate, it is clear that Sennacherib's invasion of Judah
in 701 BCE, when everything but Jerusalem fell, was accom-
plished without fighting a single battle in which chariots
were engaged.[70] There is evidence for the use of chariots
in Judah after this date as the means of royal transportation,
[71] but not for the existence of a whole chariot-corps.

In the Northern Kingdom, the chariotry prospered
somewhat. 1 Kings 16:9 suggests that during the time of Elah,
the force was large enough to be spilt into two corps. It says in
Shalmaneser's annals that King Ahab deployed 2000 chariots
against him at the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE.[72] Even allow-

ing for the usual exaggeration, the sum is still considerable.
However, the wars between Israel and Aram seriously depleted
this branch of the army, as 2 Kings 7:6 and 13:7 suggest. It
was never rebuilt: Sargon of Assyria captured only 50 char-
iots when he conquered Samaria, compared with some 300 at
Hamath.[73]

Thus, the chariot was never an indigenous weapon in
Ancient Israel. Most of the references to it in the Hebrew
Bible are to the chariots of foreign armies. It was popular-
ised by Solomon, largely through wholescale importation, but
neither the Israelites nor the Judaeans ever seem to have com-
pletely mastered it as a battle weapon.

Of course, the chariot was not the only vehicle,
wheeled or animal, upon which one could 'mount' (רכב√).
In the Old Testament, the verb is used of mounting upon
camels,[74] asses or mules,[75] horses[76] and, once, a cart.[77]
The verb is also used in connection with a number of Mytho-
poeic ideas, mainly describing Yahweh mounted upon clouds,
Cherubim, etc. These will be dealt with below. As has al-
ready been pointed out, cavalry as an organised military
force was not found in the Ancient Near East at all until
late in the period - the warrior on horseback was not intro-
duced into the Assyrian army until the days of Ashurnasipal II
(883-859 BCE)[78] and, in Israel, the first use of cavalry
seems to have been under Simon in 136-135 BCE.[79]

Militarily, horses were used for scouting, and for

carrying messages, but the usual mounts in the Ancient Near

East prior to the Persian period were the ass, the she-ass

and the mule. The latter particularly was the mount of royal-

ty and nobility, cf. 1 Kings 1:33, 38, 44. Mowinckel thinks

that the beast referred to in Zech. 9:9 is also a mule.[80]

Thus, in biblical Hebrew, √רכב is used to express

the idea of mounting, or being mounted on, chariots, horses,

asses, mules, camels and - in one case - a cart. all this

presents a wide range of possibilities - military, royal,

noble, etc. - for the 'Mounted Ones', ie. the Rechabites,

depending upon what they regarded themselves as being mounted

upon, and depending upon why they thought they were mounted

upon it. However, this question cannot be addressed until

the mythopoeic uses of √רכב, and especially its uses in the

Elijah-Elisha stories in 2 Kings 2-13, have been examined.

The suceeding sections will be devoted to these subjects.

Chariots and Riding Imagery: √רכב used in connection with

Yahweh

There are a number of places in the Hebrew Bible

where the God of Israel appears as the subject of √רכב, or

where the chariots of God are spoken of. Apart from the

references in 2 Kings 2-13, which will be dealt with separ-

ately, these verses are the subject of the present section.

These references are all poetic, and are to be

found in Deut. 33:26, 2 Sam. 22/Ps. 18:11, Is. 19:1, 66:15,

Hab. 3:8, Pss. 68:5, 18, 34, 104:3. Although it does not
use √רכב with God as its subject, or speak directly of God's
chariots, Psalm 20:8 will also be considered here.

A number of these verses have been identified as
being very ancient, by F.M. Cross, D.N. Freedman et al.
These are Deut. 33:26, Ps. 68:5, 18, 34, Hab. 3:8 and 2 Sam. 22/
Ps. 18:11.[81] These texts, along with various others that
speak of Yahweh as the divine warrior, but do not use √רכב,
have been gathered together by P.D. Miller, Jr.[82] As he comm-
ents, while the fact that all these references are ancient
is important, the precise dating of them is not essential for
the present purposes.[83] Each of these texts will be examined
in turn, to see what light they shed on the concept of the
heavenly 'Mounted One' in Ancient Israel.

Deuteronomy 33:26

There is none like God, O Jeshurun,   אין כאל ישרון
Who rides through the heavens to your help   רכב שמים בעזרך
And in his majesty through the skies. (RSV)   ובגאותו שחקים

The textual difficulties of this verse are widely
recognised.[84] Cross and Freedman restore a consonantal רכב שמים
[ב]גאות שחקם   רכב בעל   for lines 2-3, and render it
'(he) who rides the heavens mightily, who rides gloriously
the clouds'. Barrick, however, objects that

> the 'heavens' are not a vehicle upon which
> one either 'rides' or 'mounts'; conceptually
> šāmayīm must refer to where the verbal action

takes place or to where the deity perform-
ing that action is located.[85]

He proposes reading ‮שׁחמט‬[‮ב‬] ‮ברכב‬ ‮בעז‬ ‮שׁמים‬[‮ב‬] ‮רכב‬,
ie. '(he) who is mounted (upon a vehicle) in the heavens in
power, mounted (upon a vehicle) in majesty in the clouds'.[86]

It should be noted that both Cross and Freedman and
Barrick are adopting an easier reading when they emend ‮בעזר‬
‮ובגאותו‬ to ‮גאות‬[‮ב‬] ‮רכב‬ ‮בעז‬. However, Barrick's contention
that the 'heavens' are not a vehicle seems valid, and ‮רכב‬
‮שׁמים‬ can sustain the meaning 'who is mounted (upon a vehicle)
in the heavens' by assuming one of three things: the final
‮ב‬ on ‮רכב‬ is serving as a 'double duty consonant', represent-
ing also the preposition ‮ב‬ at the beginning of ‮שׁמים‬; or there
is an 'implicit preposition' at the beginning of ‮שׁמים‬; or
the ‮ב‬ at the beginning of ‮שׁמים‬ has been lost by haplography.
Whichever of these options is adopted, there is no need to
emend the rest of the text of the verse in order to yield the
same idea as will be found in the other texts to be considered
here, namely, of God being mounted on a chariot, or some
other vehicle, riding through the heavens to the aid of Israel.

Deut. 33:26 forms part of a hymn, consisting of
Deut. 33:2-5, 26-29.[87]

> A hymn of praise to Yahweh, describing
> the conquest of Canaan in terms of a theo-
> phany of Yahweh and his heavenly host
> leading the armies of Israel.[88]

Given that this is the context of v.26, it is clear that the
vehicle upon which Yahweh is mounted is viewed as a military

vehicle, even if the precise nature of that vehicle is not
specified here.

Psalm 68:5

Sing to God, sing praises to his   שִׁירוּ לֵאלֹהִים זַמְּרוּ שְׁמוֹ

     name,

Cast up a highway for him who rides   סֹלּוּ לָרֹכֵב בָּעֲרָבוֹת

     through the deserts;

His name is Yahweh, exult before him! בְּיָהּ שְׁמוֹ וְעִלְזוּ לְפָנָיו

     (RSV margin)

          Psalm 68 is once again a war poem or poems,[89] cf.
vv.2, 8. Most scholars are inclined to argue that רֹכֵב בָּעֲרָבוֹת
is to be either equated with the epithet rkb [c]rpt, 'rider
of the clouds', used of Baal in the Ugaritic texts, or else
emended to רֹכֵב עָרָפוֹת, to make the correspondance exact.[90]
Notice should be taken, however, of John Day's recent
discussion,[91] which argues that עֲרָבָה is well attested in
Hebrew with the meaning 'desert', which _does_ make good sense
in the context of Ps. 68:5, and that סֹלּוּ, used in the same
stich as רֹכֵב בָּעֲרָבוֹת, is found elsewhere in the Old Testa-
ment with the meaning 'cast up a highway', _cf_. Is. 40:3.
Nevertheless, Day concludes that

> it is still likely that Yahweh is here con-
> ceived of as riding on a cloud (_cf_. Ps. 68:34
> ...), _ie_. it is thinking of him as riding
> on a cloud _through_ the deserts. It is also
> possible, perhaps even probable, that the
> expression רֹכֵב בָּעֲרָבוֹת is a deliberate dis-
> tortion of the epithet rkb [c]rpt.[92]

Thus, if he is right, the verse reveals that Yah-
weh the divine warrior was mounted upon a cloud to come to the
help of his people. This conclusion is not contradicted by
the remaining texts to be examined.

Psalm 68:34

To him who rides in the heavens,   לרכב בשׁמי שׁמי קדם
        the ancient heavens;
Lo, he sends forth his voice, his   הן יתן בקולו קול עז
        mighty voice. (RSV)

Barrick's rendering of the relevant line is to be
preferred to that of the RSV: '(he) who is mounted (upon a
vehicle) in the most ancient heavens'.[93] That a cloud is en-
visaged as Yahweh's vehicle is strongly suggested by the use
of קול in the second half of the verse, which can mean
'thunder' as well as 'voice'.[94]

Psalm 68:18

With mighty chariotry, twice ten   רכב אלהים רבתים
        thousand,
Thousands upon thousands,   אלפי שנאן
The Lord among them,   אדני בם
Sinai in the holy place (RSV margin)   סיני בקדשׁ

Miller, following Albright, has argued that lines
2-4 should be emended and understood as meaning

        A thousand warriors/archers of the Lord,
        When he came from Sinai with the holy ones.[95]

If he is right, then the military imagery in the verse be-
comes even more marked. A discussion of the legitimacy of
these proposed emendations is not undertaken here, however,
as the primary present concern is with רכב אלהים, 'chariot-
ry of God'. Given that the hymn is very ancient, and given
that the chariot was not introduced into Israel until the time
of the monarchy, the term 'chariotry of God' cannot refer to
Israel's own army. "It is obviously the divine army which
here marches forth to fight for Israel".[96] As Israel had no
chariots at all at this time, it is legitimate to ask from
where she derived the ideas of God as a charioteer and of
God's chariotry. The answer seems to be that these concepts
have a Canaanite background, cf. Ugaritic rkb ^{c}rpt, and the
discussion of Ps. 68:5 above. This Canaanite background will
be examined more fully below.

Habakkuk 3:8

Was thy wrath against the rivers, 0   הבנהרים חרה יהוה
      Yahweh?
Was thy anger against the rivers,   אם בנהרים אפך
Or thy indignation against the Sea, אם בים עברתך
When thou didst ride upon thy horses, כי תרכב על סוסיך
Upon thy chariot of victory? (RSV) מרכבתיך ישועה

    The RSV has emended the last line of the verse.
Literally, it reads 'Thy chariots are victory'.

    Hab. 3:3-15, while heavily imbued with mythopoeic
imagery, such as 'the rivers' in our verse, nevertheless
depicts Yahweh's military intervention against Israel's enemies.

As Miller puts it,

> whereas in the other texts examined, the
> focus has been upon the conflict of Yah-
> weh's hosts against the enemies of Israel
> with the chaos battle brought in as part
> of that conflict, in Habakkuk 3 the chaos
> battle dominates, but its motive is for
> historical deliverance of the עם יהוה.
> The result is the same - the theophany of
> Yahweh and his various forces to fight
> the historical enemies of Israel.[97]

On the antiquity of the Psalm, see also Miller.[98]

Mowinckel has shown that the reference in Hab. 3:8
is not to Yahweh riding horses and driving chariots, but
that the mention of horses in the verse refers to the span
horses of the chariotry, and not to cavalry. The horses and
chariots in the verse are divided because of what Mowinckel
terms "the rhetoric-poetic rules of the bipartite line, the
thought rhyme".[99] Thus, the picture is once again of Yahweh
coming to the rescue of his people mounted in his heavenly
chariot, an image reinforced by the mention of Yahweh's
horses in Hab. 3:15.

2 Samuel 22/Psalm 18:11

He rode upon a cherub and flew,   וירכב על־כרוב ויעף
He was seen/came swiftly upon the   וירא/וידא על־כנפי־
       wings of the wind. (RSV)   רוח

Again, it is better to render וירכב as 'and he

mounted', rather than as 'and he rode'.[100] From the point

of view of parallelism, the יִרְאָ of Ps. 18:11 is probably

preferable to the יִרְאָ of 2 Sam. 22:11, but ד and ר were

always easily confused in Hebrew orthography. Mowinckel was

of the opinion that the כְרוּב here was a reference to the

'Cherub-chariot', an idea linked with the vision of the throne

wagon/Cerub wagon in Ezekiel 1.[101] Barrick supports this

view, but additionally cites Ps. 104:3, where the phrase

עַל-כַּנְפֵי-רוּחַ occurs in connection with a cloud-chariot

(רֶכֶב), but without any mention of a Cherub, ie. the figure

in 2 Sam. 22/Ps. 18:11 is again of a cloud chariot. Like the

other texts we have been considering, the Psalm is a military

one, recounting the intervention of the divine warrior in his

people's affairs.

This group of texts reveals a conception of Yahweh

as the divine warrior, coming to save his people mounted

upon his heavenly chariot, a chariot made up of the clouds

and the wind. Thus, there are really two motifs present, not

only that of the divine warrior, but also that of the storm

god. It has already been observed that the idea of Israel's

divine charioteer could not have been an extension of the

chariotry of Israel's earthly army, as the texts which refer

to Yahweh as a charioteer <u>predate</u> the introduction of the

chariot into Israel. The contention here is that there was a

fusion of the Canaanite storm/military god imagery[102] with

Israel's historical experience of Yahweh's miraculous inter-

vention in battle by means of climatic changes. The probabil-

ity of this contention will be demonstrated by an examination

of the relevant Canaanite material, and by an examination of
the divine charioteer motif in Israel.

The Canaanite Background

The weather-god mounted upon a cloud-chariot was
a widely held concept in the Ancient Near East. There is a
Mesopotamian seal, dated to the period 2360-2180 BCE, which
shows

> the weather-god mounted in a four-wheeled
> chariot drawn by a lion-griffin, on which
> stands a goddess holding bundles of rain or
> lightning.[103]

In the Mesopotamian Creation Epic, Marduk is described as
follows: 'he mounted the storm-chariot ... he harnassed it to
a team of four'.[104] Weinfeld also mentions the occurrence of
the image in the Assyrian recension of Atrahasis, and in
Hurrian and Ugaritic myths.[105] In these Hurrian and Ugaritic
myths, the storm-god also appears as the divine warrior.

It is at this point that Baal's epithet, rkb
^{c}rpt, found in the Ugaritic texts, needs to be examined.
This title is normally rendered 'rider of the clouds', but
Ullendorff and Brock have both argued that rkb here means 'to
gather', as it does in post-biblical Hebrew, Ethiopic and
other Semitic languages,[106] and that the epithet should be
translated as 'gatherer of the clouds'. It must be emphasized
that there is no evidence from Ugaritic itself for the meaning
'to gather' for rkb. The instances of the epithet rkb ^{c}rpt

do not demand that <u>rkb</u> be rendered as 'gatherer' in any of

them, and the other, admittedly very few, instances of the

root in Ugaritic demonstrably have the meaning 'to mount'.

Text 14.2.73ff[107] reads

^{c}l <u>lzr</u>. [mg]<u>dl</u>   Go up onto the tower

(74) w^{c}l <u>lzr</u>.[mg]<u>dl</u>   And

<u>rkb</u> (75) $\underline{\text{tkmm}}$. <u>hm</u>[t]   Mount the shoulder of the
                                       wall.

And 14.4.165ff

w^c<u>ly</u> (166) <u>lzr</u>. <u>mgdl</u>   And he did go up onto
                                     the tower,

<u>rkb</u> (167) $\underline{\text{tkmm}}$. <u>hmt</u>   Did mount the shoulder of
                                     the wall.

In both cases, the root <u>rkb</u> appears in parallel with ^{c}<u>ly</u>,

'to go up'. It has already been observed that the meaning 'to

gather, join together' can be shown to be a semantic develop-

ment from an original meaning of 'to mount',[108] but as the

meaning 'to gather' is not attested for <u>rkb</u> in either bibli-

cal Hebrew or Ugaritic other than in <u>rkb</u> ^{c}<u>rpt</u>, it seems most

unlikely that it has this meaning in <u>rkb</u> ^{c}<u>rpt</u>. The epithet

must be rendered as 'he who mounts upon the clouds'. The

image is the same as the one in Ps. 104:3, where Yahweh is

said to make the clouds his chariot.[109]

      As Kapelrud observes, the epithet <u>rkb</u> ^{c}<u>rpt</u> is a

'decidedly poetic expression',[110] and is only found in poetic

texts. It is hardly ever found on its own, but usually

appears in parallel with <u>b^{c}l</u>, <u>aliyn</u> <u>b^{c}l</u> or, once, <u>zbl</u> <u>b^{c}l</u>.

This fact should be of some help in seeking to elucidate the

precise meaning of <u>rkb</u> ^{c}<u>rpt</u>, except that it occurs both in

texts which speak of Baal as a warrior and in those in which

his fertility side is spoken of. Thus, 2.4.7ff reads

w^{c}n. k&r. whss	But Kothar-and-Khasis
	answered (him)
lrqmt (8) lk. lzbl. b^{c}l	'Truly, I tell you, O
	prince Baal,
&nt. lrkb. ^{c}rpt	'I repeat (to you), O
	rider of the clouds,
ht. ỉbk (9) b^{c}lm	'Now (you must smite) your
	foes, O Baal.'

And 2.4.27-29,

yq& b^{c}l wyšt. ym	Baal dragged out Yam and
	laid him down,
ykly &pt. nhr	He made an end of judge
	Nahor,
(28) bšm. tg^{c}rm. ^{c}&trt	Ashtart rebuked the Name
	(saying),
b& lảlỉyn. [b^{c}l]	'Scatter (him), O mighti-
	est [Baal]!
(29) b&. lrkb. ^{c}rpt.	'Scatter (him), O rider
	of the clouds!
kšbyn. zb[l. ym.]	'For prince [Yam] is our
	captive'.

rkb ^{c}rpt also occurs in parallel with aliyn b^{c}l in

4.3.11, 4.5.122, 5.2.7 and 10.1.7. The term ảlỉyn is derived

from the root l^{c}y, which means 'to prevail, be strong', and

thus has the meaning 'the one who prevails', which is pres-

umably a term with overtones of warfare. This supposition is

borne out by the contention of Albright and Virolleaud that

ảlỉyn is an abbreviation of 'al'iyu qurâdîma qâriyêya ba'arsi

malhamati, 'I prevail over the heroes who meet me in the land

of battle'.[111] If ảlỉyn b^{c}l is a military term, it seems

fair to contend that <u>rkb</u> <u>^crpt</u> is also a military term.

This contention is supported by 3.3.35, 3.4.48 and 3.4.50, where <u>rkb</u> <u>^crpt</u> appears in parallel with <u>b^cl</u>, but there are also places where the epithet is used of Baal in his function as a storm and fertility god. Thus, 3.2.38ff reads,

[t]ḥspn. mh. wtrḥs	She [sc. Anat] scooped up water and washed (herself),
(39) [t]l. šmm. šmn. års	Dew of heaven and oil of earth,
rbb (40) rkb ^crpt	Showers of the rider of the clouds,
ṭh. šmm. tskh	Dew that the heavens poured upon her.

And 19.1.42ff,

sb^c. šnt (43) ysrk. b^cl	For seven years shall Baal fail,
ṯmn. rkb (44) ^crpt	For eight the rider of the clouds,
bl. ṭl. bl. rbb	Without dew, without showers.

These two ideas, warrior in a chariot and fertility god are not, in fact, irreconcilable. Baal's activities as a divine warrior in the Ugaritic texts are confined entirely to the mythical sphere. He fights against Yam/Nahar and Mot, the forces of chaos, but not against the earthly enemies of the inhabitants of Ugarit. But the myth of the battles of the gods is a fertility ritual, corresponding to the cycle of the seasons upon earth. Baal's success against

his divine enemies produces plenty, his failure dearth.
Hence, Baal is both a weather god and a war god, and his
epithet rkb ^crpt reflects this two-fold nature.

The great difference between Baal as a weather god/
divine charioteer and Yahweh as the same lies in the very
fact that the former's activities are limited to the mythical
sphere. Baal battles against the monsters of the deep, which
threaten the fertility of the land. Hence, the image of
Baal as divine warrior and the image of him as weather god
fuse quite naturally together. The activities of Yahweh, how-
ever, although described in very similar terms, are invari-
ably directed against Israel's earthly enemies, as the exam-
ination of the relevant biblical data revealed. The image of
the storm god/divine charioteer was appropriated and trans-
formed by Israel.

The Divine Charioteer in Israel

How did this image of God as the divine warrior
who comes in his cloud-chariot to save his people from their
enemies become appropriated into the faith of Israel? After
all, the normative Israelite understanding of fertility did
not view it as being the result of Yahweh's successful battle
with the primordial beasts of the deep. The suggestion made
here is that this appropriation occurred because Israel's
experience of divine salvation in her most formative battles,
notably the Exodus from Egypt, was of a salvation wrought
through dramatic changes in the climatic conditions, the role

of Israel's soldiery being confined to 'mopping up' and plun-

dering operations.

In taking this view, the arguments put forward by

M.C. Lind[112] are being built upon. His basic view is "that

Yahweh as God of War fought for his people by miracle, not

by sword or spear",[113] miracle being defined as

> an act of deliverance that was outside
> Israel's control, beyond the manipulation
> of any human agency ... faith meant that
> Israel should rely upon Yahweh's miracle
> for her defence, rather than upon
> soldiers and weapons. The human agent in
> the work of Yahweh was not so much the
> warrior as the prophet.[114]

Lind establishes his thesis by examining what he terms the

'Primary History' in the Hebrew Bible, ie. Genesis-2 Kings,

particularly focussing on the Exodus, which he regards as

having been the paradigmatic salvation event for Israel.[115]

He takes to task those scholars who have played down the div-

ine element in Israel's experience of warfare, singling out

Schwally, who ascribed the accounts of divine help rendering

human activity unnecessary to late Judaic historical writing,

[116] Pedersen, who saw the accounts of divine aid as poetic

representations of Israel increasing "its psychic strength

through its god",[117] von Rad, who argued that "the emphasis

on miracle in those narratives that exclude or downgrade the

value of human fighting is not historical but theological",

and that it arose in the post-solomonic era,[118] and P.D. Miller,

Jr, who saw ancient Holy War as a 'synergism', or a combin-

ation of divine and human activity, where the downplaying of

the human role was the result of reinterpretation.[119]

Lind's investigation of the relevant texts, prim-

arily Exodus 15, reveals that, far from being a late re-

interpretation, the emphasis on Yahweh's miraculous deliver-

ance of his people is deeply embedded in what are generally

recognised as some of the most ancient texts in the whole of

the Hebrew Bible.

While Lind mentions the fact that Yahweh's deliver-

ance at the Reed Sea is executed by means of a nature miracle,

while Yahweh is termed מלחמה אִישׁ, 'man of war', in the

Song of the Sea (Exod. 15),[120] he does not stress the point,

and he certainly does not mention the idea that Yahweh's sal-

vation by means of nature miracles or sudden climatic changes

and Yahweh as the divine charioteer are two parts of the same

image. However, there are enough places in the Old Testa-

ment where Yahweh's intervention in battle is described as

taking place through changes in the weather to permit the

contention that this was Israel's understanding of her God's

means of deliverance. In Exodus 15, a very ancient compo-

sition, the Egyptian army is said to have been destroyed by

Yahweh 'blowing with his wind'. In the Song of Deborah, also

very ancient, Judg. 5:20f, it is recounted in successive

verses that the stars from heaven fought against Sisera's

forces, and that the river Kishon swept those forces away,

which again sounds like an account of a sudden change in cli-

matic conditions causing a flash flood. In Josh. 10:11, the

Amorite kings suffer more from hailstones sent by Yahweh

than from the army, and in 1 Sam. 7:10, the Philistines are

discomfited before Israel, not because of the Israelites,

but because Yahweh 'thundered with a mighty voice'. On each

of these occasions, Yahweh's deliverance was prayed for, or

announced, by a prophetic figure: Moses, Deborah, Joshua

or Samuel. That Joshua was a prophetic figure is revealed by

Joshua 24, and Lind argues that

> in the light of the lack of other
> prophetic leadership in the Book of
> Joshua, it might be that he functioned
> throughout the time of the conquest in
> more of a prophetic role than the narra-
> tives imply,[121]

and that the emphasis upon him as a war leader was largely a

retrojection made in the days of the monarchy.[122]

The references just cited should be sufficient to

show that, in her earliest period, Israel viewed Yahweh's

intervention in war in terms of his control of the weather to

the advantage of Israel and to the disadvantage of her enemies.

Thus, the fused images of the divine warrior and the storm

deity riding his cloud-chariot were quite naturally adopted by

Yahwism from Canaanite beliefs, but were 'historicised' into

the experience of Israel in the process. Hence, Yahweh as a

warrior was viewed as a charioteer from Israel's earliest per-

iod, despite Israel's own lack of chariotry in the same period,

because the clouds were seen as Yahweh's chariot. When he

intervened to save his people, Israel experienced Yahweh's

actions as sudden, dramatic changes of weather.

Lind, following Glock, further argues that this belief in Yahweh as the chariot-warrior coming to save his people actually influenced the Israelites against adopting the chariot as a weapon of war.[123] The destruction of chariots and the hamstringing of horses in the pre-monarchical and early monarchical periods was due to political and military necessity, but that was not the only reason. There was also a conscious rejection of the weapon in order to demonstrate trust in Yahweh the warrior, who alone possessed chariotry - the clouds.

> Israel's faith in Yahweh as warrior
> led her to reject the military exped-
> iency of developing sophisticated
> weaponry such as horses and chariots
> even to the time of David.[124]

Other than the prose references in 2 Kings 2-13, the only verses that remain to be dealt with in this study of רכב in connection with Yahweh are Is. 19:1, 66:15, Ps. 20:8. Ps. 104:3 has already been dealt with in connection with 2 Sam. 22/Ps. 18 and rkb ^{c}rpt. Is. 19:1 speaks of Yahweh riding upon a swift cloud to Egypt, in order to stir up civil strife there. That it was thought that Yahweh's 'stirring up' (v.2) of the Egyptians was due to changes in the weather is evident from verses 5-7:

> And the waters of the Nile will be dried up,
> And the river will be parched and dry:
> And its canals will become foul,
> And the branches of Egypt's Nile will diminish
>   and dry up,
> Reeds and rushes will rot away.

There will be bare places by the Nile,
On the brink of the Nile,
And all that is sown by the Nile will dry up,
Be driven away and be no more. (RSV)

The verses are the account of a drought: Yahweh battles

against Egypt by withholding rain, which results in civil

war in the land as the people struggle to obtain water.

Is. 66:15 again links Yahweh's chariots to the

weather and to war: 'Yahweh will come in fire, and his char-

iots like the stormwind, to render his anger in fury, and

his rebuke with flames of fire' (RSV). Thunder and lightning

are depicted as part of Yahweh's weaponry of destruction.

As in Hab. 3:8, the horses and chariots referred

to in Ps. 20:8 are the chariotry and its span horses.[125] The

chariotry in this verse is earthly chariotry, so it reflects

the same idea as the other verses that have been considered

here. Earthly chariotry is alien to Israel, because Yahweh

is Israel's charioteer. Hence, the contrast in Ps. 20:8 is

quite explicitly between chariotry and Yahweh, rather than

between weaponry in general and Yahweh. As the Psalm is a

'Royal Psalm', it clearly dates from the period of the mon-

archy, when chariotry was becoming well-established in Israel.

The verse thus may, in fact, be something of a counter-

reaction to excessive royal reliance on (earthly) chariotry,

with a corresponding lack of trust in Yahweh.

The Prophetical Stories and Chariot Imagery

Within the so-called 'Prophetical Stories' found
in the first thirteen chapters of the Second Book of Kings,
there are four places where the chariot imagery that has been
the subject of the present discussion so far is found: 2 Kings
2:11f, 6:17, 7:6 and 13:14. It is important to discuss
these texts as part of the background to the meaning of the
term 'Rechabite', because Jonadab's appearance in 2 Kings
10:15f is contemporary with that of Elisha, and it has already
been argued in Chapters Two and Three that the Rechabites and
the movement represented by Elijah, Elisha and the Sons of
the Prophets had close connections with each other.

2 Kings 13:14

2 Kings 13:14 is considered first because commentat-
ors have usually accepted that it forms part of the original
layer of the story within which it is found, whereas the other
verses to be examined are often seen as being the product of
later expansions of the narratives.

2 Kings 13:14-19 purports to be the last act of the
dying Elisha. Certainly, the verse immediately following
the conclusion of the story speaks of his death. The king of
Israel, Joash, comes to see Elisha, and weeping cries out
רכב ישׂראל ופרשׁיו, 'The Chariotry of Israel and its Horses'.
[126] Elisha then commands the king to take up bow and arrow,
and places his hands on the king's when he has done so. At

Elisha's instruction, the king then opens the window and
shoots an arrow eastward, while the prophet cries, 'Yahweh's
arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Syria' (v.17).
Elisha then commands the king to hit the groud with the remain-
ing arrows. The king does so three times, but is rebuked by
Elisha for not continuing: 'then you would have struck down
Syria until you had made an end of it, but now you will smite
down Syria only three times' (v.19).

The narrative in 2 Kings 13-14 seems to be in some
chronological disarray, and this makes it difficult to judge
whether the reference to Joash in 13:14 is genuine, or whether
it is an editorial insertion of the Deuteronomists, as Galling
suggests,[127] harmonising the story with Joash's three known
victories over Aram. Joash is introduced in 13:10f with the
usual deuteronomistic formula, but this is immediately foll-
owed, in v.12f, by a notice of his death. By v.13, he has
been resurrected again, as the king who visits the dying
Elisha. He crops up again in v.25, defeating Hazael. Except
for the regnal synchronism in 14:1, he now disappears again
until 14:8. 14:8-14 recount the war between Joash and Amaziah
king of Judah, and 14:15f represents another notice of Joash's
death.

Within the overall schema of the narrative, it is
13:12f which are out of place. These verses are not deuteron-
omistic, whereas 14:15-16 are, so 13:12f could be a later
insertion. It seems best to follow Gray's reconstruction of
the redactional history of the text.[128] The original order of

the narrative was 13:10-11, 14-25, 14:8-16, 1-7, 17-29.

13:12f are no part of the original narrative. The account of

Amaziah's challenge to Joash (14:8-14) was then transferred,

along with the deuteronomistic conclusion to Joash's reign,

to its present position, because of its date in the reign of

Amaziah, which is the subject of chapter 14. After this

transference,

> a later hand supplemented the deficiency of
> the epilogue in chap. 13 by inserting 13:12f,
> rather anomalously, immediately after the
> Deuteronomistic introduction to the reign of
> Joash.[129]

Nevertheless, 13:14-21 may still have been displac-

ed from its original context at the end of the Elisha cycle by

the Deuteronomists, and

> placed in its present context as a prelude
> to the account of the Israelite recovery
> from the oppression of Aram.[130]

Perhaps the repositioning was also intended to equate the

saviour mentioned in 13:5 with Elisha.[131] Gray thinks that

13:14-21 originally belonged after 8:29.[132]

Given all this uncertainty, it is unwise to form

any firm conclusions as to whether the story really did con-

cern Joash, or whether it was originally some other king of

Israel who went to see Elisha, or to attempt to ascribe a

precise date to the events narrated in the piece. That it

was an historical event, however, is virtually undisputed.

For the present purposes, the important phrase in
13:14-19 is רכב ישׂראל ופרשׁיו, 'The Chariotry of Israel and its
Horses'. The phrase is usually thought to be connected with
Elisha's activities in the wars with Aram, which made him
worth a whole army.[133] Galling, however, is more percept-
ive, when he asks why chariotry was chosen as the term of
comparison.[134] If Elisha's influence was thought to be equiv-
alent to that of an army, why is he specifically equated with
only one branch of it? Galling is of the opinion that the
origin of the epithet must be sought for in the historical
situation at the time of Elisha. He rejects any possible
links with those texts which speak of Yahweh as a charioteer,
on the grounds that Elisha is called 'The Chariotry of Israel',
and that Yahweh does not appear in the passage.[135] Galling
seeks the answer in the place where Israel had encountered
earthly chariotry, namely in Aram, where the deity rkb 'l,
who had a heavenly chariot-corps, is attested. He claims
that, as so often in the history of religion, an idea belong-
ing to an opponent was appropriated and transformed. In this
case, the heavenly chariot-corps was 'earthed' into the Yah-
wistic prophet Elisha.[136]

While the idea of searching outside Israel for the
solution to a particular perplexing feature of Israelite relig-
ion is not intrinsically invalid, it should only be resorted
to when no satisfactory answer can be obtained from within
Ancient Israel itself. It is, in fact, perfectly possible
to explain the origin of the term רכב ישׂראל ופרשׁיו on the
basis of a purely Israelite background. Chariotry was well-

established in the Israelite army in the time of Elisha,[137]
so the Israelites were not unfamiliar with the weapon. The
conception of Yahweh as the divine charioteer was also well-
established at the time - the most significant texts in this
regard predate the chariot's introduction into Israel. Thus,
the title 'The Chariotry of Israel and its Horses', may be
explained as follows. The wholescale adoption of chariotry by
Israel was indicative of her lack of faith in Yahweh, cf.
Is. 31:1. The title וּפָרָשִׁיו יִשְׂרָאֵל רֶכֶב was adopted by Elisha
for two reasons. Firstly, as a counterblast to that excess-
ive reliance of the Omrides on political and military strength,
as typified by the alien weapon, the chariot. Secondly, as
a reminder to Israel that her true chariotry was Yahweh's
chariotry of the skies, which won battles through weather
changes. As the role of the prophet was to proclaim Yahweh's
military action, he was, in some sense, seen as the vehicle
of that action, and hence he himself came to be called 'The
Chariotry of Israel and its Horses'. The title does not con-
trast the chariotry of Israel with the chariotry of Yahweh,
as Galling thinks,[138] but with the chariotry of 'the nations',
as Israel's true chariotry is the chariotry of Yahweh. Thus,
the title reflects the same attitude as Ps. 20:8, 'Some boast
of chariots and some of horses, but we will boast of the name
of Yahweh our God'. Israel's true chariotry is the divine
chariotry, proclaimed and symbolised by the Yahwistic proph-
et. Thus, the epithet stems from the traditions of Holy
War, not from those of secular warfare. The king's cry is
not one of despair at the impending loss of his most valuable
weapon, but is rather a request for the aid of the divine

chariotry in his war against Aram. That that request for aid

is answered is indicated by the symbolism of preparing and

shooting eastward the arrow, for the bow was the primary

weapon in chariot warfare,[139] cf. 2 Kings 9:24, with the

prophetic cry, 'Yahweh's arrow of victory, the arrow of

victory over Aram'(2 Kings 13:17).

This interpretation of the origin of the title רכב

ישראל ופרשיו, as a rejoinder and reminder that Israel's

true chariotry was the divine chariotry of Yahweh, proclaimed

and symbolised by his prophet, will be borne out by the other

three texts to be considered in this section.

2 Kings 7:6

The second verse to be examined here occurs in the

complex 2 Kings 6:24-7:20 which, although likely to have

originally been numerous separate anecdotes, now forms a story

with an overarching unity, recounting the siege of Samaria

by Aram and the resultant famine, Elisha's prophecy of relief

and the coming of that relief. The lepers who decide to desert

to the camp of the besieging Aramaeans (7:4) discover it com-

pletely deserted (7:5).

> (v.6) For the Lord had made the army of the
> Syrians hear the sound of chariots, and
> of horses, the sound of a great army, so
> that they said to one another, 'Behold,
> the king of Israel has hired against us
> the kings of the Hittites and the kings of
> Egypt to come upon us'. (v.7) So they fled
> away in the twilight ... (RSV)

Verse 6 is usually rationalised by commentators,

who argue that it is to be explained as meaning, for example,

that a rumour was spread abroad in the Aramaean camp, poss-

ibly by one of the Sons of the Prophets, that Israel had

hired help fom the Hittites and from Egypt.[140] However, when

it is remembered that the idea of the divine chariotry was

very ancient in Israel, and that this chariotry was thought

to act through climatic changes, an alternative explanation

may be offered. A similar phenomenon to that recounted in

2 Kings 7:6 is found in 2 Sam. 5:24, where Yahweh tells David,

> And when you hear the sound of marching in
> the tops of the balsam trees, then bestir
> yourself, for then Yahweh has gone out
> before you to smite the army of the Philistines.

W.R. Smith and H.W. Hertzberg both link this verse to tree

oracles, Robertson Smith arguing that the sound "can only be

some rustling sound, as of wind in the branches ... and re-

quires a soothsayer to interpret it",[141] Hertzberg relating

it to the _sight_ of "distinct, waving movements in the tops

of the trees",[142] although how he derives this from the

'sound of marching' is unclear. Robertson Smith is surely

right to relate the sound to wind in the branches, but it is

unnecessary to argue that it is an oracle-sign requiring inter-

pretation. Wind and thunder can produce curious sounds, even

sounds like that of an approaching army, either on foot or

in chariots. It is this concept that underlies both 2 Sam.

5:24 and 2 Kings 7:6. Given that Yahweh's heavenly army,

particularly his chariot-corps, was thought to make its effect

on Israel's enemies through climatic changes, there is every

reason to accept that it was some sort of climatic phenomenon

which the Aramaeans in 2 Kings 7 heard: to them it sounded

like an earthly chariot force; in reality, it was an unusual

climatic phenomenon, ie. it was Yahweh's heavenly chariot-

corps - which routed the Aramaeans.

Yahweh's prophet Elisha plays a leading role in

the proclamation of this victory of Yahweh's heavenly chariot-

corps. In 7:1, he foretells the end of the siege, cf. 7:16.

Although he is not called 'The Chariotry of Israel' in this

passage, it is clear that Elisha is once again closely linked

with it.[143] As the one who proclaims the intervention of

Yahweh's army, he can in some sense be equated with that

(chariot-)army.

2 Kings 6:17

2 Kings 6:8-23 is the story of the sending of troops,

by the king of Aram, to surround Dothan, in order to cap-

ture Elisha. When the servant of the man of God arises in

the morning, he discovers 'an army with horses and chariots

... round about the city' (v.15), and appeals to his master

in desparation. In response, Elisha prays, 'Yahweh, I pray

thee, open his eyes that he may see', whereupon the ser-

vant is granted a vision: 'the mountain was full of horses

and chariots of fire round about Elisha' (v.17). The Aram-

aean host are then smitten with blindness at the prayer of

Elisha (v.18), who leads them to Samaria, where their sight

is restored (v.19f). At Elisha's command, the king of Israel

prepares a great feast for the Aramaeans, and then releases

them (v.22f).

It is clear that the story was not originally a
unified whole, and that it has undergone expansionary act-
ivity, no doubt intended to magnify the person of Elisha.
In v.23, the force that was sent to take Elisha is described
as one of the גְּדוּדִים, 'bands', which suggests that they
were a semi-nomadic raiding party, rather than part of the
Aramaean army proper. This conclusion is supported by the
king's action in feeding and releasing the Aramaeans - if
they had been regular soldiers of Aram, they should have
been killed. The fact that they were spared suggests that
they were members of a tribe, which was only in loose alli-
ance with Damascus, whose co-operation Israel felt it valu-
able to cultivate. The fact that the Aramaean force was
easily outnumbered in Samaria suggests that it was not very
large. However, in vv.8-14, the impression is given that this
is an official large-scale military expedition, dispatched
on the orders of the (unnamed) king of Aram. This no doubt
represents hagiographical elaboration.

Verses 15-17 also seem to be an intrusion into the
story. The incident contained in them plays no role in the
development of the narrative, Elisha's servant does not
appear outside them, and the vision of the horses and char-
iots of fire has no connection with the blinding of the Aram-
aean forces.

Even though they may be a later expansion, vv. 15-

17 nevertheless represent

> the traditional belief about Yahweh's war.
> As in the Exodus, no Israelite army was
> involved, but only a prophetic personality.[144]

Viewing the verses as a later theological reflection is better

than following Gray's attempts at rationalisation.[145] The

fragment is thus true to Israel's understanding of Yahweh's

intervention in war, and to her perception of the role of

the prophet, particularly Elisha, in the conduct of that

war. As Miller observes,

> the imagery is especially similar to Ps.68:18,
> where Yahweh is pictured as coming from
> Sinai with chariots and warriors.[146]

2 Kings 6:17, with its talk of horses and chariots

of fire thus stands in the tradition of Yahweh as a chariot-

eer intervening with his heavenly hosts to save Israel, usual-

ly through climatic changes, although there is nothing about

changes in the weather mentioned here.[147] It also reaches a

degree of reflection and reassurance which stands at the heart

of all the Israelite theology of Holy War: 'Fear not, for

those who are with us are more than those who are with them'

(v.16).

2 Kings 2:11, 12

The final occurrence of the chariot imagery in the

Prophetical Stories comes in 2 Kings 2, the narrative of

Elijah's assumption into heaven. Although it appears first

in the Hebrew Bible, the examination of it has been left until

last because it is the only occurrence of the chariot imagery

in which Elijah appears, and it has often been claimed that

the connection between Elijah and chariot imagery is here

secondary.

Having crossed the Jordan, Elijah and Elisha are

walking along,

> (v.11) and as they still went on and talked,
> behold, a chariot of fire and horses of
> fire separated the two of them. And Elijah
> went up by a whirlwind into heaven. (v.12)
> And Elisha saw it and he cried, 'My father,
> my father! the chariotry of Israel and its
> horses!' And he saw him no more. Then he
> took hold of his own clothes and rent them in
> two pieces.

It is customary to argue that the title רכב ישראל

ופרשׁיו, used here of Elijah, has been transferred from

2 Kings 13 by a later redactor, in order to strengthen the

links between Elisha and his noted predecessor, ie. the title

is secondary here.[148] This may very well be true, but it

cannot be argued, as is frequently done, that it must necess-

arily be so on the grounds that, as Elijah is never mentioned

as participating in Israel's battles, the title 'The Chariot-

ry of Israel and its Horses' is an inappropriate designation

for him. Yahweh's war, in which his prophets acted as pro-

claimers and, hence, as participants, could, on occasion,

be directed not against Israel's enemies, but against Israel

herself[149] or, rather, against the apostate elements within

Israel, which at times seemed to make up the whole of Israel,

cf. 1 Kings 19:10, 14. And Elijah most certainly is depicted

as participating in Yahweh's war against Israel. He pro-

claims the drought in 1 Kings 17:1, and drought is a weapon

in Yahweh's arsenal, as Is. 19:1 reveals. He fights against

the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). Thus, the

epithet ‏רכב ישׂראל ופרשׁי‎, as an indication of the prophet's

role in Yahweh's war, cannot be a priori denied to Elijah.

If it has been transferred to him from Elisha, it is never-

theless a correct interpretation of the person and work of

Elijah.

Most commentators also wish to separate the refer-

ence to the whirlwind and the reference to the horses and

chariots of fire in v.11 from each other, although there is

little agreement as to which is original and which is expan-

sionary.[150] That more than one source may have been combined

cannot be entirely ruled out, but it should be remembered that

the foregoing investigation has demonstrated that there was a

close link in Israelite thought between the idea of divine

chariotry – of which the horses and chariots of fire are

certainly an instance – and climatic phenomena – of which the

whirlwind is certainly one. This connection was very ancient

in Israel; indeed, it seems to have been adopted and trans-

formed from Cannaanite beliefs. There is hence nothing in-

trinsically improbable in the combining of these two ideas in

2 Kings 2:11. Gray mentions, but rejects, the idea that the

horses and chariots of fire could represent natural phenomena,

such as the dust-devil and the sirocco.[151] Given the rich

background to the divine chariotry motif traced in the course

of this section, Gray seems to have been mistaken in his re-
jection of this idea. It is probable that the horses and
chariots of fire are the same as the whirlwind, as the char-
iotry of fire was the divine chariotry, which was thought to
be linked with climatic phenomena. This is certainly the
interpretation of the passage offered by Ecclesiasticus 48:9,
which is addressed to Elijah and reads, 'You who were taken
up by a whirlwind of fire, in a chariot with horses of fire'.
It is also possible that the connection between the whirlwind
and the horses and chariots of fire was of some influence on
the author of 2 Kings 6:15-17, who would then have thought
that some sort of climatic changes were involved with Elisha's
dealings with the Aramaeans.

The Rechabites

On the basis of the rich background traced at length
in the preceding paragraphs, some suggestions concerning the
title 'Rechabite' may now be made. It has been shown that
√רכב means 'to mount upon something', and not 'to ride along',
and that רֶכֶב probably means something like 'he who mounts',
ie. it has a meaning not very different from that of the sub-
stantive participle רֹכֵב. The distinction between the two
arose because רֶכֶב was originally a name without any precise
meaning, and was only invested with such a precise meaning
by Jonadab ben Rechab himself. Thus, the Rechabites were
'Those who mount' or, rather, 'The Mounted Ones'. But what
did they regard themselves as being mounted on? The most ob-
vious answer would be a chariot (רֶכֶב, מֶרְכָּבָה), although

√רכב is used of mounting upon other things also. The fact

that there is such a rich store of divine chariotry imagery

in the Hebrew Bible, much of it very ancient and deriving

ultimately from Canaanite sources, depicting Yahweh as the

divine charioteer coming on the storm to save, and occasion-

ally to fight against, his people through weather changes,

makes it possible that the Rechabites were connected with the

Holy War traditions of Israel, in the specific sense of taking

their self-understanding from this conception of Yahweh as

the divine charioteer. This conclusion is supported by the

occurrence of the divine chariotry imagery in connection

with the prophets Elijah and Elisha, who proclaimed Yahweh's

intervention in battle, either for or against Israel, and

so symbolised, and thus became equated with, the divine

chariot-corps. It has already been argued in Chapters Two

and Three that there was a close connection between the Rech-

abites and the movement represented by Elijah, Elisha and the

Sons of the Prophets. The further constellation of ideas ass-

ociated with √רכב, common to both the Rechabites and Eli-

jah and Elisha as a title, strengthens this contention.

Thus, the Rechabites were a group of prophets (and

prophetesses!), and were associated with the Holy War trad-

itions of Israel, not as soldiers, but as the proclaimers

of Yahweh's intervention in the Holy War, a war that could

as well be against Israel as for her. Thus, if the compil-

ation of 2 Kings 10 reflects the correct chronological order

of events, and Jonadab really <u>did</u> accompany Jehu to Samaria,

then he would have done so in order to proclaim Yahweh's

intervention in the battle against Baalism. If the compil-
ation is incorrect, as this study has concluded, and 2 Kings
10:15f have nothing to do with Jehu's journey to Samaria, then
it still indicates that Jehu received prophetic support for
his reign, although not necessarily for the massacre of the
worshippers of Baal.

It is appropriate to raise here the question of
why Jonadab ben Rechab appears in 2 Kings 10, rather than
Elisha or one of the Sons of the Prophets. It has already
been noted that Cummings has pointed out that the 'Three
Swords' prophecy of 1 Kings 19:17 leads to the expectation
that Elisha will accompany Jehu in the narrative.[152] Instead,
the previously unknown Jonadab appears. Cummings' argument
is highly suggestive: he is of the opinion that we here have
a trace of a split in the prophetic circles in the Northern
Kingdom following the death of Elijah, a split between Eli-
sha and the Sons of the Prophets on one hand and the Rechab-
ites on the other, occasioned by the issue of house-building.
Cummings argues that 2 Kings 6:1-7 is a story legitimising the
building of houses by the prophets, and that something only
needs to be legitimised if it is challenged.[153] As has been
shown in this study, there were very great similarities be-
tween the Rechabites and Elisha/the Sons of the Prophets,
except that the former lived in tents, and would thus repre-
sent the necessary challenge to prophetic house-dwelling.

Given the meagre evidence available, this thesis
is perhaps incapable of definitive proof, but conflict within
prophetic circles within the Northern Kingdom was known at this

time, as 1 Kings 22 demonstrates. It is also possible that
2 Kings 2:9 supports this theory. In the verse, Elisha asks
Elijah that he may inherit a 'double portion' of his spirit.
Deut. 21:17 reveals that the 'double portion' was the regu-
lar inheritance of the first-born son, so Elisha is evident-
ly requesting that he should become Elijah's successor.
What is curious, and generally not dealt with by commentat-
ors, is why Elisha felt it necessary to be so appointed.
The answer is surely that either Elisha was Elijah's natural
successor, cf. 1 Kings 19:19-21, but his position was under
threat of usurpation - by Jonadab? - and so Elisha requests
a confirmation of his own status from the master, or else it
is Elisha who is the usurper, displacing Jonadab, Elijah's
natural successor, but with Elijah's connivance. If this
suggestion is correct, it is a further indication that the
Rechabites and Elisha/the Sons of the Prophets represent no-
thing less than prophetic rivals for the inheritance of Elijah.
Elisha and his followers have the dominant role in the narr-
atives in 2 Kings, but this may simply be the result of
editorial activity, rather than a reflection of the actual
situation. It is worth recalling that Jeremiah 35 demon-
strates that the Rechabites were still in existence in c.600
BCE - long after the demise of the Sons of the Prophets.

The suggestion that the Rechabites originated in a
split in the prophetic circle around Elijah will be examined
further in the next section of this chapter, when the Rechab-
ites are examined using the sociological concepts of 'sect'
and 'schism'. The reason why house-building should have been

the cause of the split will also there be explored. Whether

or not the suggestion is finally proved to be correct, the

fact still remains that the best setting upon which to under-

stand the title 'Rechabite' is that of the divine chariotry,

of Yahweh as the divine charioteer coming to save, or to

fight against, his people, using climatic phenomena. This

intervention was announced by Yahweh's prophets, who thus

symbolised what they proclaimed, and so came to be called,

in the case of Elijah and Elisha, 'The Chariotry of Israel

and its Horses'. The Rechabites were a prophetic group,

closely linked with Elijah, Elisha and the Sons of the Proph-

ets, and also proclaimed Yahweh's military intervention

through climatic changes, and so adopted the title 'The

Mounted Ones' - the Rechabites.[154]

4.3: THE RECHABITES AS A SECT - THE USE OF A SOCIOLOGICAL MODEL TO EXPLAIN AN OLD TESTAMENT PHENOMENON

It has become popular in contemporary biblical

scholarship, particularly in North America, to seek to

apply insights from the Social Sciences to the Old Testament.

This development is to be welcomed. The use of such insights

serves to alert biblical scholars to the Nomothetic elements

of Israelite religion, as well as to its Idiographic features

- and, of course, the particular can only be properly under-

stood once the general has been properly recognised and under-

stood.[155] The application of Social Science models to the

Old Testament also has a heuristic value, in that it can

present a new means of approaching the data and, hence, it

can pose new questions of the Old Testament - and scholarship
is as much about asking the 'right' questions as finding the
'right' answers. As J.G. Gager has put it,

> new answers arise not so much from new data
> as from new questions; and new questions arise
> from new theories, new hypotheses and new
> assumptions.[156]

The application of such models to the Old Testament
is, however, by no means a completely straightforward task.
The Old Testament does not provide anything like a full pic-
ture of life in Ancient Israelite Society, yet, despite the
advances made in biblical archaeology, it remains the pri-
mary source of material concerning that Society - and the
information that it provides is nothing like adequate enough
for many Social Scientists. There is also often a communi-
cations blockage between Social Scientists and Old Testament
Scholars, proficiency in both disciplines being rare.[157]
In addition, models are often adopted from the Social Sciences
uncritically, with the Old Testament data sometimes being
moulded to 'fit' the model in question, or even being ig-
nored altogether.[158] It is perhaps, then, not surprising
that the use of models drawn from Sociology, Anthropology,
Psychology, and so on, has not, with a few noted exceptions
such as John Rogerson, Robert Carroll and Keith Whitelam,[159]
commanded much popularity in the U.K., and that one British
scholar, Cyril Rodd, has dismissed the whole exercise as
futile.[160]

The fact, however, that the exercise is a diffi-

cult one should not mean that it should not be attempted,
for the potential gains are great. The exercise is one that
needs to be undertaken with caution, and it is fortunate that
Malina, Herion and Rogerson have all recently offered sugg-
estions as to how to go about applying Social Science models
to biblical studies.[161] As the sociological approach to the
Old Testament is still relatively unfamiliar in Britain, their
views are here summarised, even if the result is that the
introduction to this section of the present chapter is rather
longer than might be expected.

First of all, it is important to be aware of the
purpose and limitations of the Social Sciences. By their
very nature, The Social Sciences are generalising sciences.
They

> look to how meanings are imposed on men and
> seek to explain human behavior in terms of
> typicalities. They underscore generalities,
> the common elements of meaning typical of a
> given social group.[162]

In so doing, the Social Sciences construct models, abstract-
ions of similarities, in order to attempt to explain as much
of the complex as possible in terms of the simple. Herion
terms this 'Reductionism'[163] and, as Malina points out,
this is merely a reflection of what all human beings sub-
consciously do:[164] the human mind can only cope with a very
limited number of concepts at any one time, so it 'chunks'
data, in order to understand it.

> Human beings, it seems, cannot make sense
> of their experiences and their world with-
> out making models of it, without thinking

in terms of abstract representations
of it.[165]

It is clear that no one model can ever explain
100% of the observed variance, so every model must be used
with a clear regard for its limitations. Herion summarises
this position neatly, when he writes,

> the reduction of complexity always entails
> a certain methodological risk since the line
> separating the enlightening epitome from
> the vulgarizing distortion can sometimes be
> very fine.[166]

This limitation on the use of models is recognised
by Social Scientists, as the following two quotes from
Bryan Wilson, a leading Sociologist of Sects, clearly
demonstrate:

> The types that sociologists construct are
> reifications. Their inherent danger is that,
> instead of being useful short-hand summaries
> of crucial elements in the empirical cases
> they are meant to epitomize, they become
> caricatures remote from empirical phenomena.[167]

> Ideal-types are not empty boxes into which the
> sociologist drops appropriate cases; they
> are, rather, to be used to make us aware of
> the specific historical, organizational,
> compositional or other features of a sect that
> depart from our hypothetical system of logical
> relationships. The type should always turn
> us back to historical or empirical data so that
> we can explain those features of a case which

contradict our hypothesized common-sense
assumptions.[168]

Unfortunately, many Old Testament scholars who use

sociological or other Social Science models do not recognise

the limitations of these models, and seek to use them almost

as a substitute for the data provided by the Hebrew Bible it-

self. This seems to be due to what Herion terms 'Positivism'.

Many scholars coming from the Humanities tend to regard the

more 'scientific', or 'objective', approaches to knowledge

used by the Social Sciences as being somehow 'better' than the

more 'subjective' approaches used by History, Theology and

Philosophy, and so as being above criticism.[169] If a Social

Science model is going to be used in biblical studies, it

must not be used uncritically. It must be remembered that

basic to all models is their falsifiability.

This is part of the problem with P.D. Hanson's use

of Troeltsch's Church-Sect typology in his analysis of the

situation in post-exilic Judah.[170] Not only does he not

criticize Troeltsch's typology, but he also shows himself

unaware of the developments made in the Sociology of Sects

since Troeltsch's pioneering work appeared in 1911. The

present study seeks to examine the Rechabites as a religious

sect, using 'sect' in its strictly sociological sense, mean-

ing 'a religiously separated group', without any of the

pejorative overtones so often associated with the word. But

unlike Hanson's use of the typology, an effort will be made

to present a fairly comprehensive survey of the sociological

study of sects, before applying the typology. It is hoped

that the use of sect typology will illuminate the study of the

Rechabites from a new direction, that some new hypotheses

will lead to some new questions, and thus to some new answers,

about this phenomenon in Ancient Israel.

With these preliminary cautionary remarks made, we

may now go on to offer a history of the Sociology of Sects,

to outline the features of sects in general, to explain the

adopted typology more fully, and then to seek to apply it to

the Rechabites. It is proposed to then go on to examine the

Sociology of Schism, to see if this can shed any light on

the origin, rather than the character, of the Rechabites.

A History of the Sociology of Sects

Put at its simplest, a sect may be defined as 'a

religiously separated group', but to say that almost raises

more questions than it answers. Separated from what? How?

What features do sects have in common with each other? Socio-

logists have been addressing these questions throughout the

twentieth century, and it is important to detail the views of

the leading scholars in the field.

The original sectarian typology was formulated by

Ernst Troeltsch, a pupil of Max Weber, in 1911.[171] His

typology was based almost entirely on a study of mediaeval

Catholicism. At its heart was the dichotomy between the

'Church' and the 'Sect'. Put briefly, he characterised the

Church as "overwhelmingly conservative", desiring "to cover

the whole life of humanity", utilising "the state and the

ruling classes" to further that desire. This, in practice,

meant that the Church was "dependent upon the upper classes

and upon their development".[172] At the opposite end of the

pole stood the sects, small groups in comparison with the

Church, aspring after personal inward perfection, and seeking

direct personal fellowship between the members of each group.

Thus, there was renunciation of any idea of dominating the

world. Having no desire to incorporate the forms of social

life, the sects' attitude to the world, state and society

varied from tolerance to indifference to outright hostility.

Sects were connected with the lower classes and, according

to Troeltsch, had the following characteristic features:

> lay Christianity, personal achievement
> in ethics and in religion, the radical
> fellowship of love, religious equality
> ... indifference towards the authority of
> the state ... directness of the personal
> religious relationship, criticism of official
> spiritual guides and theologians, the appeal
> to the New Testament and the Primitive Church.[173]

This Church-Sect dichotomy, as a sociological

formulation, is the basis of all subsequent sociological

research into sects and sectarianism. The model has been

considerably developed, as it fails to adequately describe

the complexities of the various forms of religious organisation,

and does not provide a comprehensive, and hence useful,

classification of the nature of sects. Hence, Troeltsch's

typology is really rather simplistic, and not very useful
in sociological analyses of sectarianism.

Richard Niebuhr, followed by Liston Pope, pro-
vided the next stage in the development of the typology.[174]
For them, a

> sect arises as a schism from a parent
> ecclesiastical body, either a church or a
> previous sect. It then becomes a distinct
> and independent type of religious organization,
> but moves, if it survives, increasingly
> towards the Church type.[175]

It was axiomatic of the Niebuhr-Pope formulation that sects
inevitably became denominations. Niebuhr regarded this process
as being caused by the birth of children to first-generation
sect members, forcing the sect to take on the character of
an educational and disciplinary institution, ie. a denomin-
ation.[176] Pope placed the origin of this process even earlier,
pointing out that

> from the beginning there are relations -
> careless husbands, aged mothers - who are
> not signatories to the contract, but for
> whose religious welfare ... the new sect
> has a derived, but inescapable, responsi-
> bility. The conventicle becomes a parish
> almost immediately.[177]

Also, as members of the sect, originally at the margins of
society, approach the centre of that society, so the sect
becomes more churchly.

> The sect ... represents a reaction,
> cloaked at first in purely religious guise,
> against both religious and economic

institutions. Overtly, it is a protest
against the failure of religious institutions
to come to grips with the needs of marginal
groups, existing unnoticed on the fringes
of cultural and social organization. But
as the sect begins to force its way into
the cultural pattern and to become entrenched
as an institution within the cultural
fabric, it passes from sect type to church
type. Then new sects arise, in protest
against the failure of old sects and of
society to distribute their benefits more
impartially.[178]

Thus, for Pope and Niebuhr, there was an inevit-
able evolution from sect to denomination. Pope even provided
a list of some 21 indices of that transition, ranging from
position in the cultural scene (cultural periphery denoting
sectness, cultural centre churchness) to the type of hymns
used in worship (folk music indicating sectness, stately
and liturgical hymns churchness).[179]

The problem with this list of indications of the 'sect-
ness' or 'churchness' of a given movement is that, seemingly,
each of the 21 is to be assigned equal weight in the evalu-
ation – but can the type of hymns used in worship be assigned
an equal value to the attitude toward the prevailing culture,
for instance? In addition, the Niebuhr-Pope formulation fails
to explain adequately those sects which successfully maintain
their isolation, either vicinal or cultural, from society
at large, cf. the Amish Mennonites and the Exclusive Brethren
respectively. Niebuhr does, in fact, mention the Mennonites,

[180] and implies that he regards them as a continuing sect,
which stands somewhat at variance with his earlier assertion
that all sects become denominations.[181]

It is clear that the sectarian typology formulated
by Niebuhr and Pope is not one that is applicable to all sects
in every age. Rather, it is highly culture-specific. As
Benton Johnson put it,

> those radical 'anti-worldly groups', which
> Troeltsch would unhesitatingly have called
> sects, cannot be understood so clearly
> in terms of [Niebuhr's] sect-to-church
> hypothesis. The major historical trend
> of the Amish, the Shakers, or to a
> lesser extent the Quakers, can scarcely
> be understood as a simple process of
> 'accomodation' to the values of outer
> society. It seems safe to say that despite
> some astute and valuable observations
> that Niebuhr makes in presenting his sect-
> to-church hypothesis, the actual
> developmental sequence he poses is pretty
> much confined to voluntarist Calvinist
> sects in a mobile society.[182]

Johnson himself proposed a somewhat different typ-
ology for understanding 'church' and 'sect'. Rather than
basing the typology on attitudes to secular culture, as
Niebuhr and Pope had done, which led to the conclusion "that
once sects had relaxed their opposition to worldly ways, they
are churches",[183] he based it on the 'process of justification',
arguing that a body which dispenses justification, or sal-

vation, through liturgical and ritual ceremonies performed
by religious functionaries could be called a 'church', while
one in which the strict adherence to a set of ethical norms
guarantees salvation could be called a 'sect'. Johnson is
absolutely right to point up the importance of 'interior'
factors for the correct understanding of the 'church' and the
'sect', and his conclusions are utilised below. Where he
goes astray, however, is in downplaying the importance of
'attitudes to the world' in sect-typology, for if someone is
to be 'saved', the question is not only 'How?', but also
'From what?'

The four scholars so far considered, Troeltsch,
Niebuhr, Pope and Johnson, all worked with a simple Church-
Sect dichotomy. A major breakthrough in the Sociology of
Sects came when J.M. Yinger observed that this simple ideal
type was by no means adequate to cover the full range of the
observable data. By using two criteria, the degree of inclu-
siveness of the members of a society, and the degree of
attention to the function of social integration as contrasted
with the function of personal need, he proposed a six-stage
'spectrum', without asserting that any one stage would nec-
essarily evolve into any other.[184] Firstly, there is the
Universal Church, which supports the integration of a society,
while simultaneously satisfying the personal needs of individ-
uals at all levels of society, thus containing sectarian im-
pulses within itself. The Universal Church is a very rare
phenomenon. Secondly, there is the Ecclesia, which also
reaches the bounds of society, but is less successful than the

Universal Church at incorporating sectarian tendencies.

Established National Churches fall into this category. The

third stage along the spectrum is occupied by the Class Church

or Denomination, which is still in substantial harmony with

the secular power structure, but is limited by class, racial

or even regional boundaries. The fourth position is taken by

the Established Sect, which is a development from one of

the two remaining categories. A sect will, after a short

period of time, either disintegrate, or else become moulded

into a formal structure with techniques for admitting new

members and for preserving their common interests. Some sects

develop into denominations, generally those which emphasize the

problems of anxiety and sin, while sects that are primarily

concerned with the evils of society become Established Sects.

The fifth position in the spectrum is occupied by the Sect

itself. Following Troeltsch, Yinger divides sects into three

types, according to their response to an undesired situation

- acceptance, opposition or avoidance, the last being the

most common response. Finally, there is the Cult, which is

a small, short-lived and often local group, gathered around

a dominant leader. Its beliefs and rites are often very much

at variance with those of the rest of society. It rarely

outlives the death of its leader, and is almost entirely

concerned with the individual, with little regard for ques-

tions of social order.

Yinger's work is important, but it does not repre-

sent the only approach in the Sociology of Sects. Bryan Wil-

son, who has dominated the field for the last 25 years,

approaches the subject from a slightly different angle.[185]

He has always maintained his basic typological formulation,

but has at the same time has modified it in several respects.

The important feature of his work, from the point of view

of the application of sect-typology to the Old Testament, is

that while, like all the other typologies detailed here,

Wilson's typology was originally formulated in order to class-

ify sectarianism in a Christian, Western context, he has

also successfully applied it to primitive, non-Christian

societies.[186] This suggests that his classification is a more

appropriate one to apply to Ancient Israel than the others.[187]

It will be recalled that Hanson uncritically adopted Troel-

tsch's typology without asking whether it was possible, or

even ever intended, to apply that typology to a non-Christian

and non-Western setting.

Starting from the question, 'What shall we do to

be saved?', Wilson develops his typology of sects on the

basis of the Weberian notion of 'Responses to the World' and

on conceptions of the supernatural. He details seven poss-

ible responses. Firstly, the Conversionist, which says

that men must change in order to be saved. Secondly, the

Revolutionist, which says that the world is evil, and sal-

vation will come by divine intervention, which men must await.

Thirdly, the Introversionist, which says that, instead of

men or the world being changed, the world must be abandoned,

so that the sectarians can cultivate their own holiness. The

fourth response is the Manipulationist, which seeks the manip-

ulation of the world, often by esoteric or occult means, for

the benefit of the individual, benefit being seen in terms

of those things which are generally well-regarded in the

world. The fifth is the Thaumaturgical, where 'salvation'

is seen in terms of immediate release from tensions and diff-

iculties, gained by special, almost magical, dispensations

by supernatural agencies from the normal laws of causality.

This response differs from the Manipulationist in the highly

particular nature of salvation, and in the absence of any

clear idea of the benefits likely to accrue. The sixth res-

ponse is the Reformist response, in which the world is seen

as evil, but that evil, in some of its manifestations,

may be overcome by reform in accordance with the dictates

of conscience. The final response is the Utopian one,

where an attempt is made to find a basis for a radical re-

construction of the world. The world is evil because men

have created an evil system. Salvation is attained by return-

ing to the basic principles by which the creator intended

men to live. It is, of course, possible that some groups

may embrace more than one of these responses, either simul-

taneously or successively.

> Excluding only the conformist response -
> the acceptance of existing agencies of
> salvation - these appear to be the seven
> possible types of solution to the central
> religious quest. All of them assert that
> salvation is to be attained, and that at
> least some men should attain it. The
> supernatural agencies are said to have
> acted, to be acting or be intending to
> act to this end. Men must acknowledge
> this, and do as they are enjoined in

order to be saved.[188]

This typology of sects is the most comprehensive
one available and, as <u>Magic</u> <u>and</u> <u>the</u> <u>Millenium</u> demonstrates,
it can be applied to sectarian responses in non-Christian,
'primitive' settings, as well as to those in the more 'trad-
itional' Christian milieux. For this reason, Bryan Wilson's
typology is adopted for the present purposes (without rejecting
other typologies where they do not contradict Wilson's), and
the Rechabites will be examined as an instance of a sect of
his third type of response: the Introversionist.

Features of Sects

While all sects have different practices and out-
looks, it is nevertheless true that all sects that fall into
one of the seven categories proposed by Bryan Wilson will
have features in common with each other - otherwise the con-
cept of categories would not exist! It is also true, how-
ever, that any group which may be called a sect must have at
least some features in common with all other sects, for the
concept of a 'sect' to have any value at all. The purpose
of this section is therefore two-fold. Firstly, the feat-
ures of sects in general will be outlined, and secondly,
those of Introversionist sects in particular will be detailed.
With this data, drawn largely from B.R. Wilson's obser-
vations of actual sects in numerous different settings, it
will be possible to examine the Rechabites as an instance of
an Introversionist sect.

In 1982, B.R. Wilson proposed the following ideal type for all sects.[189] They tend to be exclusive movements, refusing to allow dual allegiances. They tend to claim that they have a monopoly of complete religious truth, which others do not enjoy – this truth provides the framework for all aspects of faith and practice. They are usually lay organisations, generally rejecting the religious division of labour and denying any special religious virtuosity to anyone except, in some cases, their own founders and leaders. Religious obligations are thus equal for all 'who accept the truth'. Sects are implicitly marked by voluntarism – an individual chooses to be a sectarian, and he is normally required to show some mark of merit in order to be accepted as a sect member. Sects exercise concern for sustained standards among their members, exercising sanctions against the wayward. They are protest movements.

Some of these points can be elaborated somewhat. Proof of personal merit for membership can be demonstrated by knowledge of the sect's doctrine, by an affirmation, or even by the recommendation of existing members of the sect who are in good standing. The sanctions exercised against the wayward can include, ultimately, the expulsion of the persistent recalcitrant. The sect regards itself as an elect, a gathered remnant, possessing some sort of special enlightenment, and hence it expects personal perfection of its members. All sects seek to keep their members separate from the from the world, either by isolation – minimising contact with outsiders – or by insulation – the imposition of

> behavioral rules calculated to protect
> sect values by reducing the influence of
> the external world when contact necessarily
> occurs.[190]

As a sect is a protest movement, it asserts a teaching and
commandment different from those of the 'orthodox', but that
alternative is never a complete and total rejection of all
elements in the orthodox tradition, otherwise the sect could
not be recognised as a protest movement. Rather, the sect
espouses and maintains a set of different emphases, with some
elements omitted from, and some added to, the 'orthodox'
set of beliefs with, more importantly, an alternative prin-
ciple and source of authority. Although the sect is a relig-
ious protest group, it does not invariably mean that the
group against which it is protesting is also religious - it
could represent a religious protest against secular society.

It was said above that the Introversionist response
to the world was to abandon it, and to direct the attention
of sect members away from the world solely onto the sect
community. This may be achieved by vicinal isolation, where
the group sets up its own community away from all others, as
in the case of the Amish Mennonites or the Hutterites, or
else by cultural isolation, where the members are permitted
no friends and few, if any, close acquaintances outside the
sect community, as in the case of the Exclusive Brethren. The
member of an Introversionist sect is a member of the sect be-
fore he is anything else, and he finds his friends within the
sect group. There is a strong in-group morality, and usually

strict endogamy as well — spouses are found from within the
sect community. This serves to retain a very high proportion
of second-generation sect members. Thus, the sect fellow-
ship serves as the members' whole society. Expulsion from it
(for moral laxity) will inevitably mean the loss of everything
and everyone near and dear to the member. Thus, while origin-
ally the intent of the abandonment of the world was the
preservation of the members until the moment of salvation, be
it death or the Advent, in practice, in Introversionist
sects, the community itself becomes nothing less than the locus
of salvation for the sectarian – a concept that is, in fact,
very close to the Durkheimian belief that the deity was a
representation of the society in question.[191]   As Bryan
Wilson puts it,

> purity in the community becomes the basis for
> salvation, and for purity to prevail, ex-
> clusion of the impure, as a type of religious
> hygiene, becomes essential.[192]

Thus, evangelism is generally not practised by Introversion-
ists, and new members from the world are often not readily
admitted, as the sect community exists to save its members
from the world, not to go out to save the world.

Introversionist sects, as part of their isolating
mechanism (which is often only a defence mechanism, pre-
serving the community's distinctive piety), frequently make
sacred the distinctive practices of their daily life, partic-
ularly dress, customs and language, even though these prac-
tices may have originally had no religious import whatsoever.
This tendency is not simply a result of innate human conser-

vatism. It is also a clear indication of the all-pervasiveness
of the sacred. Introversionists

> are sometimes seen as conservatives ... but
> they seek only to conserve a range of elements
> of the received tradition, and often embrace
> entirely new revelations and new forms
> within which to accomplish the preservation of
> this separate way of life.[193]

Introversionist groups which adopt vicinal isolat-
ion can only really do so if they take up a communistic way
of life. This way of life is often agricultural, as in the
case of the Amish Mennonites and the Hutterites. Among less-
developed peoples, it has been found that the autonomous
Introversionist movement appears to rely on the Quietistic
Prophet for its inspiration. Of course, not all Introversion-
ist sects are autonomous, _ie_. start out life as an Intro-
versionist sect. Many are mutations of other responses,
such as the Revolutionist or the Reformist. The non-arrival
of the Advent, or the failure to change society, induces
the group to abandon the world altogether, and to withdraw.

The Rechabites as an Introversionist Sect

Having outlined the features of sects in general,
and of Introversionist sects in particular, it should now
be possible to depict the Rechabites in terms of this typology.
It is clear that they were indeed a sect, a religiously sep-
arated group, who separated from 'the world', as a protest
against the social and religious evils of society in Israel

under Ahab. They had a concept of 'salvation', in that they believed that adherence to their rules would ensure 'long life in the land'. The standard promise of blessing, _ie._ salvation, in the Old Testament is of long life in the land, even if the regular formula is different from that found in Jeremiah 35.[194] The Rechabites seem to have been a 'lay' organisation - everyone in the community, men, women and children, had the same obligations and so, presumably, the same privileges. They apparently had no religious virtuosos, except their own founder, Jonadab, and possibly their current leader, but this is far from certain. Jaazaniah appears as the Rechabites' leader in Jer. 35:3, but he plays no distinct role in the story - in v.6, it seems as if all the Rechabite men reply to Jeremiah's invitation to drink wine. They seem to have had no priests, and no liturgical means for the dispensation of justification. That justification, or salvation, seems to have been achieved by keeping Jonadab's (ethical) commands - another sectarian feature.[195] Thus, the Rechabites must have felt that they were able to dispense with the sacrificial system of justification offered by the Samaria and Jerusalem Temples, and by other shrines, yet at the same time remaining fervent Yahwists.

There is also sufficient evidence available to describe the Rechabites as an instance of the Introversionist response, rather than as an instance of any of the other responses identified by B.R. Wilson. They were certainly not Conversionist, Manipulationist or Thaumaturgical. They do not appear, in Jeremiah 35 at any rate, to have had the

the attitudes typical of the Reformist response, and they do
not seem to have had a concept of salvation by divine inter-
vention, so they were hardly Revolutionists. Winckler thought
that Rechabite discipline represented "a deliberate attempt
to create an imagined ideal state of human life",[196] which
sounds very like a description of a Utopian sect. It is true
that, in their practical effects, a vicinally isolated Intro-
versionist sect and a Utopian sect may appear to be very much
the same and, indeed, as movements may embrace more than
one response simultaneously, presumably some sects may be
both Introversionist and Utopian. Nevertheless, Bryan Wilson
has always been very careful to draw a distinction between
Introversionists and Utopians - the former see "the world as
irredeemably evil and salvation to be attained only by the
fullest possible withdrawal from it",[197] while the latter
seek "to reconstruct the world according to some divinely
given principles, to establish a new social organization in
which evil will be eliminated".[198] Thus, the identification
of the Rechabites as Introversionists whose community devel-
oped like those described by Wilson in Magic and the Millenium,[199]
rather than as Utopians, hinges on the contention that they
sought to abandon the world, rather than to reconstruct it.
That their programme was one of abandonment is clear from the
observation that they apparently did not seek to attract
others to their lifestyle, which they would have done if they
had regarded that lifestyle as an "ideal state of human life".
Thus, the Rechabites are best seen as an instance of the
Introversionist response.

The Rechabites practiced vicinal isolation, up until the time that they fled to Jerusalem. This isolation would help to account for the scarcity of references to the Rechabites in the Old Testament. Their lifestyle would have meant keeping themselves away from others as much as possible. That way of life was evidently communistic, and it seems not unreasonable to propose that they were endogamous. Jonadab is revered as אב, 'father', in Jer. 35. While this term is capable of a broad range of meanings beyond parenthood or ancestry, it is not impossible that, over time, with intensive inter-marrying of all members of the sect, each member really was, in some sense, descended from, or at least related to, Jonadab. According to Jer. 35:7, the purpose of keeping Jonadab's commands was that 'you may live many days in the land wherein you are sojourners'. Thus, failure to keep these commands would entail loss of long life in the land. It was pointed out above that, for an Introversionist sect, the sect community becomes the member's sole socio-religious matrix, expulsion from which would entail the loss of everything and everyone near and dear. This is tantamount to social, religious and cultural death. This strongly suggests that the Rechabites <u>did</u> practice expulsion for failure to keep Jonadab's rules - the wayward Rechabite would be cast out from his society, <u>ie</u>. the Rechabite community. To be cut off from his society, and from his God - for the Introversionist sectarian, the two virtually coinhere - spells nothing less than death. Observation of Jonadab's commands resulted in 'long life in the land', because not only were they injunctions to maintain a prophetic lifestyle, but also

they marked off the Rechabites as a separated community, a community into which virtually all its members were born and raised hardly knowing anything or anyone other than the sect and fellow sect-members. Jonadab's rules probably functioned also as a means of excluding impurity ('the world') from the community, but precisely how the specific commands functioned to do this, in Rechabite mentality, lies beyond the scope of an analysis drawn from sect-typology.

It was observed that vicinally isolated Introversionist sects are frequently agricultural. However, it is clear that the Rechabites were non-agricultural, and probably non-pastoral as well.[200] It will be proposed later in this chapter that the Rechabites were dependent on alms for their existence.[201] If this is the case, then the Rechabites must have had some degree of contact with the outside world: being dependent on it for food, they could not have abandoned it completely. Complete isolation is, however, very uncommon among Introversionist movements, even among those which practice vicinal isolation. Minimal contact is practiced if necessary. As Bryan Wilson puts it,

> sects of this type insulate themselves,
> avoiding other men in all but the most
> essential concerns of everyday life[202]

- and food certainly is an essential concern of everyday life! In connection with this point, it is interesting to ask whether the laws in Lev. 19:9f, Deut. 24:19-22, concerning the leaving of the gleanings in the fields, to be collected by the orphan, the widow and the sojourner, were

at least partly designed to allow the Israelites to leave

food for groups such as the Rechabites, ie. to give them

alms, while at the same time allowing the Rechabites to

largely maintain their isolation from society at large when

receiving those alms.

Introversionist sects often make sacred the dis-

tinctive practices of their daily life, particularly customs,

dress and language. There is no direct evidence for archaic

dress and language among the Rechabites, although it is

possible that Elijah and the Sons of the Prophets may have had

distinctive marks and dress, cf. 1 Kings 20:35-41, 2 Kings

1:8. It is possible, however, that Jonadab's commands,

which in Jer. 35 seem to have the force of sacred law for

the Rechabites, could originally have been pragmatic,

commanding the Rechabites to live as prophets, and only

in time took on a distinctively sacred character. E. Isichei

has observed that a sectarian will often value the barriers

around his sect so highly that he will identify them with

the sect's continued existence, even if he is unable to

provide a rational explanation of his attitude.[203] Is it

possible that this is what happened with the Rechabites? The

commands were originally pragmatic, being injunctions to

maintain the prophetic lifestyle, but in time that pragmatism

was largely lost, the commands became sacralised, and the

members of the sect clung to them more as the badge marking

them out as Rechabites than as essentials of the life of

prophets, without properly knowing what actual practical

function those commands originally had. This proposal would

help to explain why the Rechabites felt that they were able

to claim that they had kept all Jonadab's commands, while

at the same time being false to the spirit of those commands.

Part of Jonadab's commands stemmed from prophetic anti-urbanism,

yet the Rechabites appear in Jerusalem in Jer. 35. As they

were still living in tents, they had kept the letter of the

commands. If they had been fully aware of the meaning of

those commands, they would not have fled to the city. With-

in this context, the Promise to the Rechabites in Jer. 35:18f

could be functioning as much as an exhortation as an oracle

of salvation. The divine word is urging the Rechabites to

return to the spirit, as well as to the letter, of their

commands, to live as prophets again.

By coming to Jerusalem, the Rechabites evidently

abandoned their vicinal isolation. Nevertheless, their

distinctive practices, which were maintained, would have

resulted in cultural isolation (or, at least, severe

insulation) in the new, urban setting. Other Introversionist

sects, such as the Exclusive Brethren, have successfully

maintained such isolation in urban settings.[204] Thus, the

Rechabites probably felt that they were able to maintain their

all-important isolation from 'the world', even in the city.

It has been argued in this thesis that the Rechabites

are best understood as a prophetic community. Is it possible

to reconcile this with the evidence that also suggests that

they were an Introversionist sect? R.P. Carroll has observed

that one of the ways of avoiding dissonance is by separation.

He seems also to suggest that the Rechabites represent an
exclusivist movement among the prophets,[205] even if he does
not develop this idea in his later writings.[206] He further
notes that "it could be argued that the communities of proph-
ets tended to keep themselves away from the cities".[207] Even
though they kept themselves away from the cities, these
communities of prophets nevertheless had direct involvement
in socio-political activity, cf. 1 Kings 20:35ff, 2 Kings
9:1ff. It also appears that it was normal for members of
the wider Israelite society to go to consult a prophet on
the Sabbath or New Moon, cf. 2 Kings 4:23. Such involve-
ment in society on the part of Introversionist sects is not
excluded by the model.

> The sect withdraws from the world, or
> allows its members to be active in the
> world only for human betterment at the
> behest of conscience and at the periphery
> of human concern.[208]

Given these observations, would it be possible to suggest
that the Rechabites functioned as a vicinally isolated Intro-
versionist group of prophets who, like other prophetic groups,
were normally only available, for the dispensation of
oracles in return for some sort of gift, at set times,
namely the New Moon and the Sabbath? Thus, contact with out-
siders, for human betterment, was practiced by the Rechab-
ites, but was nevertheless rigidly proscribed.

Thus, the data at our disposal permits us to say,
with some degree of certainty, that the Rechabites are an
instance of an Introversionist sect in Ancient Israel. They
have features in common with Introversionist sects from other

ages and cultures. They do not, however, fit the ideal

type perfectly. Like any sect, they have unique features. In

particular, their actual practices for maintaining their

isolation, not drinking wine, not building houses, not

sowing seed or planting vineyard, but living in tents, are

quite unparalleled, and this uniqueness is underscored by

the Rechabites' general character as a sect demonstating the

Introversionist response. Looking at the Rechabites as an

Introversionist sect has also raised new ideas and new ques-

tions for discussion, over the exercise of sanctions against

wayward members of the community, over the community's means

of sustenance, over whether Jonadab's commands were origin-

ally pragmatic and whether that pragmatic function was properly

understood after those commands had become sacralised, and

over whether the Rechabites were able to serve as a community

of prophets and as a vicinally isolated sect. Obviously,

none of these questions can be settled with any certainty,

but it is hoped that none of them conflict with any of the

biblical data that we have about the Rechabites, and that

none of that biblical data has been neglected in the exercise.

If these two hopes have been fulfilled, then the conclusions

reached here are at least as probable as any others which use

all the available data about the Rechabites, and it is hoped

that they commend themselves as the most reasonable account

of this Old Testament group.

The Sociology of Schism and the Rechabites

The foregoing analysis has dealt with the Rechabites

after they came into being, after they became an Introvers-
ionist sect. There is, however, also scope for the appli-
cation of sociological analysis to the origin of our group,
to the schism that led to the formation of the Rechabites. The
following paragraphs will attempt to do this, firstly out-
lining the theory, and then seeking to apply it to the
Rechabites.

While Bryan Wilson's analyses of sect <u>development</u>
have been extensively used above, it has to be admitted that
he has not provided anything like a full theory of sect
<u>origins</u>. He confines himself to listing five ways in which
sects can originate: a charismatic figure presents new
teachings; internal schism within existing sects; from a
more-or-less spontaneous association of like-minded 'seekers';
from attempts to revitalize beliefs and practices within a
major religious movement; or from non-denominational re-
vivalism.[209]

What Bryan Wilson says may very well be true, but
it hardly constitutes a theory of the Sociology of Schism.
For such a theory, we have to turn to the work of J. Wilson
[210] and R. Wallis.[211] John Wilson's Sociology of Schism is
derived from Smelser's theory of collective behaviour, and
works with the concepts of structural strain, structural
conduciveness, the mobilising agent, the precipitating factor
and social control.

Central to his model is the concept of structural

strain, which is a disjuncture between norms and values, or between roles and norms - accepted norms are no longer fully appropriate to the system's values. A schismatic group is a movement which has its origins in a dispute over norms and allegations that the main group has departed from those implicated in the values of the original movement.

While this concept of strain lies at the heart of any schism, the existence of strain within a movement does not automatically mean that schism will occur. The factor of structural conduciveness suggests other elements that need to be present in some form and combination before schism can occur. J. Wilson proposes the following: easy clique formation increases the likelihood of schism; so does a situation where the group is organisationally highly centralised or, conversely, highly decentralised; the type of authority legitimation is important; if the movement's organisation itself has a sacred aspect, schism is less likely; and the attitude towards the group's ideology is also important, schism being more likely near the ends of the continuum, ie. where there is extreme dogmatism, such that all innovation is heresy, and where there is completely open truth, so that anyone can claim to have revealed it.

While structural strain and structural conduciveness increase the likelihood of a schism occurring in a given group, that schism will not take place without a precipitating factor, such as a speech or an event, to trigger it, or without an agent, usually a charismatic leader, to

mobilise it.

The factor of social control in this model refers
to

> those authorities which play a part in
> defining the social position of the
> group and which have the power of
> discipline over the group.[212]

It is, in fact, more influential on groups once they have
been formed, rather than during their formation, so is not
relevant to the present study.

Roy Wallis' 'Theory of Propensity to Schism' may be
summarised as follows: A schism involves the breaking away
from a group of an individual who is able to secure the support
of some part of that movement's following. To do so, he
must be able to secure a legitimate claim to their allegiance.
Thus, schismatic propensity is directly proportional to the
perceived availability of sources of legitimation within a
movement. Schism involves the mobilisation of alternative
means of legitimation to those employed by the movement's
power-holders, or the mobilisation of the same means of
legitimation, where access to those means is widely dis-
persed throughout the movement.

Wallis goes on to say that Weber observed that the
greatest force for a break with an existing institutional order
is that wielded by a charismatic leader. Hence, charisma is
the principal form of authority which legitimates a schism.
Wallis also observes that schism is often characteristic of

the early stages of a movement's life-cycle, and that it also
occurs disproportionately often upon the death of a charis-
matic leader - the leader's death has a destabilising influ-
ence on the movement, especially if a number of heirs can
claim to have been designated.

J. Wilson's theory of schism is fuller than Wallis',
but Wallis has pointed up an important factor not made ex-
plicit in Wilson's typology, namely, the importance of
perceived availability of sources of legitimation being
influential on the propensity to schism. The two typologies
are thus complementary, and not contradictory, and they
are both employed in the present examination of the origins
of the Rechabites.

The present study has argued that, while the comm-
ands of Jonadab in Jer. 35:6f represent opposition to the
social and religious policies of the Omrides, the Rechabites
originated in a schism within the movement represented by
Elijah, Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets. If this
contention is accepted, then what John Wilson and Roy Wallis
have to say is pertinent. The fact that propensity to schism
is greater upon the death of a charismatic leader, when there
are several heirs-apparent, finds its counterpart in the claim
that the split between Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets on
the one hand, and Jonadab and the Rechabites on the other,
occurred soon after the death of Elijah. Jonadab had sources
of legitimation for his schism: he had his own charismatic
authority (the Rechabites regarded his commands as law); and

the following of his own family (the Rechabites called him 'father').

What Wallis says about schism being characteristic of the early stages of a movement's life-cycle is also important for the present purposes, as it seems that the Prophetic Guild Movement under Elijah/Elisha/Jonadab was inspired as a response to the Omrides.

J. Wilson's emphasis on the importance of a precipitating factor in the origin of schism is also of note. It will be recalled that Cummings argued that the Rechabites and the Sons of the Prophets represent two halves of the prophetic movement, who split over the issue of building and living in houses.[213] At first sight, it may appear surprising that an issue that seems to be as comparatively minor as house-building would have been the cause of a major split in the prophetic movement. However, the issue of houses is not a minor one, for anti-urbanism, symbolised by the rejection of houses and sedentary occupations, was one of the lynch-pins of the movement. It has been shown above that Jonadab's commands were only two-fold: do not drink wine, and do not live a sedentary life.[214] It is also clear that house-building was not the only issue at stake. It was as much a dispute over who was Elijah's real successor as anything else. The house-building served as the precipitating factor of the schism. It was, so to speak, 'the last straw which broke the camel's back', the camel, in this case, being Jonadab.

A hypothesis of the origins of the Rechabites may
now be proposed. A hypothesis it may be, but if it is found
to be correct, then certain important consequences follow.
The Northern Prophetic Guild Movement was founded by Elijah,
as a protest against the social, political and religious
evils that had arisen in Israel under the Omrides. The move-
ment did not drink wine, as alcohol would have affected the
prophets' ability to give oracles, and it shunned urbanism
and its related pursuits, notably agriculture, as the city
was seen as the principal cause and symbol of those evils it
was protesting against. On the death of Elijah, Elisha
assumed control of the movement, exercising a highly central-
ised authority. At least some members of the movement, part-
icularly Jonadab himself, felt that Jonadab had a claim, at
least as good as Elisha's, to that leadership, because of
his own charismatic authority, because of his family's prest-
ige in the movement and because of his own connection with
Elijah. Thus, a situation of structural strain was created.
The highly centralised authority of Elisha and the extreme
dogmatism of the movement's ideology form the structural con-
duciveness for schism. The mobilising agent is the person of
Jonadab, and the precipitating factor is the issue of house-
building. When Elisha sanctioned the building of permanent
dwellings, the 'opposition' within the Prophetic Guild Move-
ment seized on this as being heretical and false, not only
to the legacy of the itinerant Elijah, but also to the
movement's anti-urban ideology, and used it as an excuse to
advance the claims of Jonadab for the leadership of the move-
ment. The result was schism, part of the group following

Elisha, and part Jonadab, who made formal laws out of the

practices previously followed by the whole of the movement,

laws now found in Jer. 35:6f.

This hypothesis has been formulated as one way of

explaining the origin of the Rechabites, by the use of a model

drawn from Sociology. Admittedly, the hypothesis does go

beyond the information given in the biblical sources. But

it does not contradict that information. Rather, it views

it in a fresh light. The hypothesis points up very clearly

how the use of different models, with different presuppos-

itions, can yield very different results. Older Old Testament

scholarship, working with the concepts of Evolutionism and

Survivals, which were the sociological perspectives of that

time, saw the Rechabites as a survival from Israel's nomadic

past. Now that the concepts of Evolutionism, Survivals and

Nomadism have been severely criticised - 'disproved' even[215]

- and now that the ancient origin of the Rechabites, formu-

lated on the basis of 1 Chron. 2:55, has been seriously called

into question,[216] the way is clear for the use of another

model, and for the formulation of a new hypothesis, one

which seeks to take account of all the data. As the data

available from the Old Testament is at best patchy, and that

from outside the Bible completely non-existent, this hypo-

thesis is incapable of definitive proof. But that does not

negate its value. If it commends itself as the most probable

explanation of the origin of the Rechabites, then it has

served its purpose. It also has a heuristic value, in that

it presents a challenge to further research into prophetic

, groups, into the personal following of 'charismatic' leaders
and into prophetic conflict - already a thriving area of re-
search in biblical studies.[217]

4.4: THE RECHABITES' MEANS OF SUSTENANCE

If the proposed connection between Elijah, Elisha
and the Sons of the Prophets on the one hand, and Jonadab
and the Rechabites on the other, is a valid one, then it is
legitimate to look to the Elijah-Elisha stories for evidence
of the economic means of support of the Rechabites, given
that the texts that deal directly with our group are silent on
the matter. The overwhelming picture presented by 1 Kings 17-
2 Kings 13 in this respect is of individuals and groups with-
out any economic specification, dependent on alms, on gifts
made in return for prophetic services rendered, or on what
grew of itself (2 Kings 4:38-41). In 1 Kings 17:6, Elijah
is dependent on what the ravens, or the Arabs, if Gray is
to be believed,[218] bring him. In v.10f, he asks the widow
of Zarephath for alms. In 2 Kings 4:8-13, Elisha is cared
for by the woman of Shunem simply because he is a 'holy man
of God', and not because the woman is desirous of a reward
- Elisha's gift of a son is not only unlooked for, but also
undesired! In vv.42-44, the man from Baal-Shalishah brings
his gift completely voluntarily, seemingly without asking
for an oracle. Other texts indicate that it was normal to
offer a prophet some sort of gift when going to consult him,
cf. 2 Kings 8:8f, where Ben-hadad sends rich gifts to Elisha
along with his request to be told whether he would recover

from his sickness, and 2 Kings 5, where Elisha refuses to

accept Naaman's gift, and Gehazi attempts to change this.

Outside of the Elijah-Elisha complex, 1 Sam. 9:7ff also in-

dicates that it was normal to take a gift when going to

consult a prophet, as does Mic. 3:5-8, which shows that one

of the abuses of prophecy was to 'prophesy' good things to

those who provided food for the prophets and evil to those

who did not, ie. that the temptation for a prophet to change

his message in accordance with his client's ability to pay

was always great.

Given that the Rechabites were also prophets like

Elijah, Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets, it may be legit-

imately concluded that they also depended for sustenance on

what they were given, either as alms, or as gifts in return

for their oracles, and on what they could collect by scav-

enging. Such a conclusion is more warranted than one which

claims that they were shepherds, metalworkers or house-slaves.

4.5: THE RECHABITES AND THE CULT

Ascertaining the attitude of our group toward the

Temple Cultus at Jerusalem and elsewhere is not easy. When

the Rechabites were seen as representatives of the 'Nomadic

Ideal', it was relatively easy to ask, with Budde,

> can it be supposed that the Rechabites
> observed the feasts of the first-fruits
> (offering of sheaves), Pentecost (cele-
> bration of the completion of the grain
> harvest) and Ingathering (the feast of the

> vintage)? It is inconceivable. Wine
> they abhorred, they could never have lent
> themselves to the celebration of feasts
> for the successful issue of labours which
> in the name of their God were strictly
> forbidden. They must have asserted that
> these festivals did not belong to Yahweh –
> that they were a foreign worship. Jonadab
> forbade his descendents to follow agri-
> culture and vine-growing for the very reason
> that these, according to his convictions,
> inevitably led to idolatry.[219]

However, when the Rechabites' lifestyle is seen as having

nothing to do with a harking back to some imagined ideal desert

life, and nothing to do with a protest against culture per

se, but to do with living the prophetic lifestyle, such an

assertion of the Rechabites' hostility to the Cult cannot

be maintained.

Very recently, Robert Carroll has suggested that

the Rechabites would have rejected a religion which "thought

of a deity who dwelled in a magnificently built house",[220]

they themselves being semi-nomadic tent-dwellers. This is in

a similar vein to Robertson Smith's claim that the Rechabites

had a taboo on entering houses.[221] Where these views flounder,

however, is on the fact that the Rechabites do not refuse

Jeremiah's invitation to come to the 'House of Yahweh', Jer.

35:2, but only his invitation to drink wine. Given that they

had maintained their distinctive practices, and that the

commands in Jer. 35 represent the sum of those practices,[222]

it may be concluded that if they had had a fundamental opp-

osition to the Temple, and a taboo on entering houses, they

would have refused to have entered the Temple, and Jeremiah's

invitation to them to have done so would have occasioned the

test of their loyalty to their ancestral commands. Just as

Jonadab's prohibition on sowing seed and planting vineyard

did not mean that the Rechabites were prohibited the con-

sumption of the fruits of agriculture (the prohibition on

wine being covered separately), so the prohibition on house-

building and dwelling did not mean that the Rechabites were

forbidden to enter a house. Thus, the conclusion that the

Rechabites had a completely negative attitude to the Temple

and to the Cult is unwarranted.

Paul Riemann almost goes to the opposite extreme,

when he claims that

> the usual interpretation leaves un-
> explained the obvious similarities
> between the Rechabites and the Nazirites,
> whose association with divine service
> is clear; the appearance of the Rechab-
> ites, the only two times that they are
> mentioned in the O.T., in the vicinity
> of the capital cities and the major temples;
> Jeremiah's prophecy that the Rechabites
> would not lack a man to 'stand before
> Yahweh', a phrase which usually indicates
> sevice in worship ...; the notion of
> sojourning (Jer. 35.7), which is prominent
> in the so-called Holiness Code (cf. Lev.
> 25.23), from priestly circles, and which is
> connected with the Levites (cf. Dt. 18.6),
> and the later tradition that the Rechabites
> were cultic personnel ... The Rechabites may
> have been an order, or even a family ...
> devoted to Temple Service; Jehu may have

chosen J(eh)onadab to help him in his
Temple massacre because he was a Temple
insider, rather than because he was a
"nomad" violently opposed to cult; tee-
totalism may have been a reaction against
the orgiastic rites of Canaan; life in
tents may reflect an interest in Holy War,
or in the role of the tent shrine in the
tribal league, and so on.[223]

All these points are disputable. As the next section
of this chapter will show, there is little evidence of a
connection between the Rechabites and the Nazirites, beyond
the fact that both were abstinent, so the fact that the
latter were connected with the Cult is no evidence that the
former were. It is by no means certain that Jonadab really
did accompany Jehu in his Temple massacre, as the mention
of Jonadab in 2 Kings 10:23 looks like a gloss, so it is
equally uncertain that 2 Kings 10 places Jonadab in the vic-
inity of a major Temple or that he was a Temple 'insider'.
The phrase, 'to stand before Yahweh', does often, but not
invariably, denote service in worship, and it has been
argued in this study that, in the case of the Rechabites,
it does not.The notion of 'sojourning' is found throughout
the Hebrew Bible, not simply in H, and the Patriarchs as
well as the Levites are said to have 'sojourned' in the land
of Israel. The later Jewish debates about whether the Rech-
abites became priests or members of the Sanhedrin arose from
reflections on Jer. 35:19, and not from any historical
reminiscences of the Rechabites serving as priests.[224] The
teetotalism practiced by the Rechabites was because of their

function as prophets, as was their tent-residency, which was part of a protest against the evils of urbanisation in Ancient Israel.

In fairness to Riemann, it should be said that he is not attempting to provide a firm hypothesis that the Rechabites were cultic personnel, but rather to demonstrate that the data available concerning them need not be interpreted as reflecting the 'Nomadic Ideal'.

Thus it seems that both the view that the Rechabites rejected the Temple Cult completely, and that that they embraced it wholeheartedly, have little to commend them. Rather, they seem to have had a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards it. When the Rechabites were examined using the sociological category of 'sect' above, it was observed that they seem to have had no priests, and no liturgical means for the dispensation of justification. That justification, or salvation, living long in the land where the Rechabites were sojourners, seems to have been achieved by keeping Jonadab's (ethical) commands. Thus, the Rechabites must have felt that they were able to dispense with the sacrificial system of justification offered by the Samaria and Jerusalem Temples, and by the other shrines, yet at the same time remaining fervent Yahwists.

The attitude of Elijah, Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets towards the Yahwistic Cultus is also hard to determine. Aubrey Johnson wished to see them as being closely connected

with the old Israelite cultic sites,[225] but H.H. Rowley

and, more recently, R.R. Wilson have disputed this,[226]

Rowley observing that the mere fact that a group of prophets

appear at or near a sanctuary is no evidence that they had

anything to do with the official cultus of that sanctuary,

Wilson likening the Sons of the Prophets to a peripheral

possession cult, which by definition stands on the edge of

society, away from the central cultus. Admittedly, Elijah

offers sacrifice at the old Yahwistic shrine on Mount Carmel

(1 Kings 18), and hence rabbinic tradition made him, like

the Rechabites, into a priest, but the rituals are unusual,

and

> there is no indication that they were
> part of the normal worship of Yahweh
> or that Elijah regularly had cultic functions.[227]

In addition, Elisha instigates the destruction of the Temple

of Baal in Samaria (2 Kings 9), and it is possible that after the

Jehu Revolt Elisha and the Sons of the Prophets relaxed their

opposition to the central Cult, and joined with it.[228]

However, the overall picture presented by 1 Kings 17-2 Kings

13 is not one of prophetic groups having particularly close

contact with the regular shrines. This suggests that the

Northern Prophetic Guild Movement, from which the Rechabites

sprang, prior to the success of Jehu's revolt, shared that

fundamental ambivalence towards the Yahwistic Cult held by

the Rechabites. It was not rejected outright, it was not

embraced wholeheartedly; it was seen as unnecessary to the

life of the movement. After the revolt of Jehu, the Sons

of the Prophets seem to have become Conformists. At any rate,

they disappear completely from the pages of the Bible. The
Rechabites were evidently more suspicious. At any rate, they
maintained their Introversionist identity right down to the
time of the Exile.

4.6: THE RECHABITES AND THE NAZIRITES

As well as being identified with the Kenites and
held to be paralleled by the early Nabataeans, the Rechabites
have also been connected with the Nazirites, both by older
scholars, such as Oesterley and Robinson,[229] working with
the 'Nomadic Ideal' hypothesis, and by more modern scholars,
such as Soggin, who have sought to salvage something of the
hypothesis by using the concept of 'semi-nomadism' (generally
without saying what is meant by 'semi-nomadism'):

> If we want to compare the Nazirite with
> anyone else, we should think of the sect of
> the Rechabites described in Jer. 34 [sic]:
> these were a group which tried to maintain
> the ideals of semi-nomadic life in Palestine,
> viewing them as a privileged condition for a
> relationship with God. They therefore rejected
> agricultural produce which came from sedentary
> farming, especially wine, and permanent build-
> ings, except when the latter provided refuge
> in case of danger, usually in fortified places.[230]

Now that this study has seriously called into question
the contention that the Rechabites had anything to do with a
supposed 'Nomadic' or 'Semi-nomadic Ideal', the question of
possible links between the Rechabites and the Nazirites needs
to be reopened and re-examined in the light of the fresh
understanding of the Rechabites offered by this thesis.

Answering the question of possible links is made
more difficult by the fact that the biblical data concerning
the Nazirites is anything but uniform. The 'Law of the Nazir-
ite' in Numbers 6 envisages a temporary Nazirate, entered into
voluntarily, with vows not to cut the hair, to avoid wine
and to avoid pollution through contact with a dead body. At
the end of the period of consecration, the hair is shaved and
cast into the altar fire, the Nazirite makes certain offerings,
and rejoins normal society. However, the picture of the
Nazirites presented elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible stands at
variance with this. Despite the prohibition placed upon his
mother in Judg. 13:4, there is no indication that Samson avoid-
ed wine, cf. Judg. 14:10. He did not avoid corpses, either
(14:8, 19). Only his hair remained unshorn, 16:17, but his
Nazirate was for life, not for a limited period, 13:5, 16:17.
Samuel also appears to have Nazirite elements in his birth
narrative, especially if the LXX is followed in 1 Sam. 1:11,
but again there is evidence elsewhere in 1 Samuel which sugg-
ests that he did not avoid wine, cf. 9:11ff, 11:14ff, 16:2ff.
Neither did he avoid corpse defilement, as his slaughter of
Agag (15:32f) reveals. His Nazirate was also permanent. Amos
2:11f suggests that the Nazirites were, like the prophets, a
class of 'Holy Ones' raised up by Yahweh, presumably to a
lifelong ministry. Am. 2:12 also suggests that the Nazirites
avoided wine, but says nothing about their hair or about avoid-
ing corpse defilement. Gen. 49:26 and Deut. 33:16, both pieces
of ancient poetry, call Joseph אֶחָיו נְזִיר, 'separated from
his brothers' or 'consecrated by his brothers'. In these verses,

Joseph's consecration is marked by "agricultural bounty and
military prowess".[231]

From the examples of Samson, Samuel and Joseph,
it would seem that the Nazirate in Israel's early period had
something to do with warfare, whereas in the post-exilic peri-
od, as revealed by Numbers 6 (P), it had become a means of
personal holiness. It has been suggested that, in the pre-
exilic period, the term 'Nazirite' was a loose term applic-
able to anyone devoted to Yahweh,[232] but two factors argue
against this supposition. Firstly, Am. 2:11f places prophets
and Nazirites in parallel with each other. If the prophets
were a readily identifiable collection of people in Israelite
society in the time of Amos, then it is reasonable to assume
that the Nazirites were one also. Secondly, Judg. 16:17
explicitly connects the Nazirate with long hair, and this is
borne out by the other uses of נזר√ in the pre-exilic period,
which connect it with the hair. Thus, Jer. 7:29 uses נֵזֶר
of a woman's long, unshorn hair; 2 Sam. 1:10, 2 Kings 11:12,
Pss. 89:40, 132:18 use it of the crown of the king, ie. the
fillet which ties back the hair. In Exod. 29:6, 39:30, Lev.
8:9, it denotes the High Priest's diadem, and in Lev. 25:
5, 11, נְזִיר is used metaphorically of an unpruned vine.

All this suggests that the Nazirate was an ancient,
distinct office in Israel, connected in some sense with Holy
War, originally marked solely by long hair. Judges 13 was
probably composed later than chapters 14-16,[233] and so the
idea that Samson was supposed to be abstinent is a late creation,

serving to transform the Samson narratives into the story of "the violation of the Nazirite's vow".[234] Am. 2:11f would then be the earliest evidence (8th century BCE) for abstinence among the Nazirites. The avoidance of corpse pollution, in reality impossible for a lifelong Nazirite,[235] would only have been introduced when the vow became a temporary one - in the exilic or post-exilic period, according to the evidence of Number 6.

With this sketched outline of the probable development of the Nazirate, it is now possible to examine the connections and parallels, if any, between the Rechabites and the Nazirites. Discounting the avoidance of corpse pollution as a late development, the first point of difference between the two, in the pre-exilic period, is that there is no evidence that tent-residence was ever part of the Nazirate, nor that it involved avoiding the sowing of seed or the planting of vineyard. There is also no evidence that the Rechabites left their hair unshorn - a feature of the Nazirate from its earliest period. The Rechabites lived as community of men, woman and children, practising a common discipline. This does not appear to have been a feature of the Nazirate. Samson appears as a singular individual. Certainly, his wives were not Nazirites - or even Israelites. 1 Sam. 8:1-3 shows that Samuel had sons, so he presumably also had at least one wife, but there is no indication that they followed the same customs as Samuel himself. It might be argued from Am. 2:11f that, just as there were groups of prophets, so there were also groups of Nazirites, but this is very tenuous indeed: not

all prophets were part of groups (eg. Amos himself, Am. 7:
14), so Am. 2:11-12 does not necessarily argue for the exist-
ence of groups of Nazirites.

This leaves the avoidance of wine, which is common
to both Rechabites and Nazirites, from the eighth century on-
wards. It has already been argued that the Rechabites' refusal
to drink wine was indicative of a ban on all intoxicants,
rather than on fermented grape juice in particular.[236] Num-
bers 6 forbids the Nazirites to consume any intoxicants either,
and there is no reason to doubt that this was the case in the
pre-exilic period also. It has already been argued, on the
basis of Is. 28:7, that the Rechabites were ordered to avoid
all intoxicants because alcohol would have impaired their
ability to function as Yahweh's prophets, and it is not im-
possible that a similar idea led to the introduction of the
ban on intoxicants in the Nazirate. On Numbers 6, Snaith
has commented,

> It is known that among some peoples, the
> drinking of alcohol was regarded as a means
> of securing divine revelation, on the theory
> that what a man said when he was not in con-
> trol of his tongue was the word of some other
> personal agency in control of him. If such
> practices were connected by the Hebrews with
> heathen divination, then this would secure
> their prohibition with the strictest care on
> specially sacred occasions and for specially
> sacred people.[237]

To say that the prohibition on intoxicants in the

case of the Rechabites and in the case of the Nazirites arose

from similar motives, ie. from an understanding of the proper

function of Yahweh's servants, in contradistinction to the

practices of the servants of other deities, is not necessarily

to say that one drew its inspiration from the other. Serving

priests were required to be abstinent also (Lev. 10:9, Ezek.

44:21), and the Nazirate may have adopted its abstinence

from the example of the priests, rather than from the exam-

ple of the prophets, as represented by the Rechabites.

However, the possibility that the Nazirate adopted its prac-

tices from the example of the Rechabites cannot be ruled out:

in Am. 2:11f, prophets and Nazirites appear in parallel with

each other, and Amos prophesied in the reigns of Jeroboam II

of Israel and Uzziah of Judah, ie. in the first half of the

eighth century BCE, Jonadab ben Rechab lived in the reign

of Jehu, ie. in the second half of the preceding century.

Thus, it is impossible to argue in favour of a

close connection between the Rechabites and the Nazirites in

the pre-exilic period: the former did not leave their hair

unshorn, the latter did live in tents or in communities,

and did not avoid the sowing of seed or the planting of

vineyard. It is possible, however, to see the avoidance

of intoxicants, practised by both (by the Nazirites from

the time of Amos at the latest), as originating in a common

understanding of the functions of the servants of Yahweh as

requiring abstinence, so as to be able to function as proph-

ets or as 'specially sacred people', in contrast to the

custom of using alcohol in non-Yahwistic divinatory processes.

4.7: CONCLUSIONS: THE RECHABITES IN THE BIBLE

The foregoing study of the biblical Rechabites,
based on a careful reading of the relevant biblical and extra-
biblical texts, coupled with some sociological analyses, and
informed by the views of previous commentators, has yielded
a picture that is perhaps a surprising one. The traditional
view of the Rechabites, originally advanced in a cogent form
by Budde, which held that they were a group of nomadic past-
oralists, a Kenite clan clinging to the ancient desert life-
style in the belief that that was what the desert deity
Yahweh had commanded them, has been shown to be untenable,
even in those versions that have preferred to call the Rech-
abites 'semi-nomadic', rather than 'nomadic'. It has also
been shown that the more modern views concerning the Rechab-
ites are equally untenable. The view of Gray and Frick, that
the Rechabites were a group of itinerant metalworkers, falls
through lack of positive evidence, and through failing to
consider all the meagre data available. The view of Keukens,
that they were the house-slaves of Jonadab, falls through
being based on a series of questionable exegetical claims.
The present attempt to provide a systematic and full-scale
study of all the available data has led to an endorsement of
the view held by Cummings, and certain other scholars before
him, perhaps even including St Jerome, that the Rechabites
were a group of prophets closely related to Elijah, Elisha
and the Sons of the Prophets. What Cummings proposed briefly
has been here worked out fully, and what he proposed simply
has here been more finely nuanced. It is thus now possible

to paint as full a picture as one is able of the Rechabites

in the Bible, before moving, in Part Two of this study,

to an examination of the various ways in which the biblical

traditions about the Rechabites were used in later Jewish

writings.

The Rechabites originated in the Northern Kingdom,

in the days of the Omrides, in the ninth century BCE. They

were not Kenites, as has often been claimed, so it is im-

possible to argue that the Rechabites' origins in Israel were

very ancient. Rather, 1 Chron. 2:55, 4:12 do not mention

the Rechabites, but refer to the geographical movement of a

group of Kenites who originally came from a place called Beth-

Rechab, which had nothing to do with the Rechabites. The

origins of the Rechabites lie in a schism in the Northern

Prophetic Guild Movement after the death of Elijah. Elijah

had founded this movement in protest at the perceived social,

political and religious evils of the policies of the Omrides.

Being prophetic, the movement was teetotal for, like the

Nazirites, they believed that it was wrong for the sacred

servants of Yahweh to have their judgement clouded by alcohol.

In the case of the prophets, drunkeness would have impaired

their ability to give oracles. The movement was also itiner-

ant, shunning permanent dwellings and occupations associated

with the sedentary, urban life, notably agriculture and past-

oralism, although the fruits of these occupations, vegetables,

meat and milk, were permitted to the movement's members.

The reason for this discipline was because urbanism was re-

garded as symbolic of the nation's lack of faith in its God,

and because the city was viewed as the cause of most of the
evils against which the movement was protesting. The move-
ment's protest was as much by its lifestyle as by its words.
Its members lived on alms, on what they were given in return
for their oracles, and on what they were able to obtain by
scavenging.

One of the members of this movement was Jonadab, or
Jehonadab, ben Rechab, who had been part of the Samarian
nobility, perhaps even of the Omride court. He joined the
movement together with a number of the members of his family,
and enjoyed some considerable prestige in the movement, and
had an almost charismatic authority. At any rate, Elijah's
designated successor, Elisha, regarded Jonadab as a threat
to his own position, and sought a reaffirmation of his own
status from Elijah, before the latter's assumption into
heaven.

Following the departure of Elijah, Elisha assumed
control of the Prophetic Guild Movement. Jonadab and his
family and supporters, however, were unwilling to accept
this, and the movement found itself in a situation of strain
and tension. When Elisha sanctioned the building of permanent
dwellings by that part of the movement known as the Sons of
the Prophets, this proved too much for the opposing faction.
Not only was Elisha being false to the legacy of Elijah, he
was also abolishing one of the central tenets of the movement,
namely, its opposition to urbanism. This 'heresy', along
with Jonadab's prestige and support, led to a schism in the

movement, the Sons of the Prophets siding with Elisha, Jon-
adab's family and supporters siding with him.

Jonadab set about organising his followers. He
coined a title for them, 'The House of the Rechabites',
based on his own patrynomic, 'Rechab', which he invested with
the meaning, 'The Mounted One'. In so doing, he was con-
sciously imitating the title, 'The Chariotry of Israel and
its Horses', used of Elijah and Elisha. Both titles allud-
ed to the ancient belief that Israel's true chariotry was not
the imported, earthly chariotry used by the army, which
once again indicated a lack of faith in Yahweh on Israel's
part, but was the chariotry of the skies, the chariotry of
Yahweh, which fought to save, and occasionally to fight
against, Israel, through climatic changes.

Jonadab also regularised the practices of his foll-
owers, and promulgated them as a formal law, which was to
be observed by the whole community of his followers, men,
women and children, with a promise of long life in the land
where they were sojourners, ie. were landless Israelites,
living in the Promised Land, as the reward for obedience.
These practices were essentially the practices of the Proph-
etic Guild Movement, but they also functioned as an insu-
lating mechanism, separating the group from outside life
almost completely. Thus, the impurity of 'the world' was
excluded from the group, and 'long life' assured. The group
was also isolated vicinally, practised communism, and was
largely endogamous: the children who were born to the comm-

unity, which may legitimately be called a 'sect', were
brought up within, and found their spouses from, the comm-
unity. Any backsliding from Jonadab's rules was punishable
by expulsion which, as the sect member was thereby cut off
from his world and from his God, was tantamount to death.
The group's members had a rather ambivalent attitude towards
the the sacrificial cultus of Samaria and Jerusalem, and of
other shrines, yet were nevertheless fervent Yahwists, and
gave their children Yahwistic names. They revered Jonadab
as their 'father'. Through their endogamy, most members
of the sect _were_ related to him in some way, but the title
also referred to his actions in founding the group, and in
providing it with its laws.

Although Jonadab supported Jehu's revolt, but
probably not the wholescale massacre of the worshippers of
Baal, his group nevertheless maintained its independence and
distinctive lifestyle after the revolt's success, whereas
the Sons of the Prophets seem to have relaxed their opposition
and conformed. Either the Rechabites regarded the revolt as
insufficiently drastic, or else the reforms failed to last.
In any event, their maintained their isolation for almost
250 years after the time of Jehu. At some point, they also
moved south from Israel to Judah, perhaps following the Fall
of Samaria in 722 BCE.

While they continued to act as prophets, in time
the precise reason why they observed some of their practices
became somewhat obscured. The function of those practices in

separating the Rechabites from the rest of society became
more important than their function of maintaining a prophetic
lifestyle. In particular, the reason why they lived in
tents was lost, so when Nebuchadrezzar's bands starting rav-
aging Judah in c.599 BCE, the Rechabites were able to flee
to the 'safety' of Jerusalem, while still living in their
tents, without apparently being aware that the reason why
they were supposed to be living in tents was because they
were opposed to life in the city!

It was in Jerusalem that Jeremiah, in response to a
divine command, as his own elegantly-written prose tract
tells us, found them. Following Yahweh's commands, he
brought the whole of the Rechabite sect into a chamber of the
Temple, and invited them to drink wine. From their refusal
to disobey their father's commands, Jeremiah drew a lesson
for his hearers and observers: the Judaeans have persistently
disobeyed Yahweh, so they shall be condemned, as Yahweh
promised; the Rechabites have consistently obeyed Jonadab's
commands, and so will be saved, as Jonadab promised.
Yahweh's Promise to the Rechabites, given through Jeremiah
his prophet, was that they would never cease 'standing before'
him. It was a promise that they would remain as Yahweh's
prophets (with an implicit exhortation to return to that
function properly), that they would maintain their dis-
tinctive practices and remain living in the Promised Land,
despite the imminent disaster.

And they did survive the Fall of Judah in 597-587

BCE, and did remain living in the Land, practising their

distinctive lifestyle. The exilic redactors of the material

that became the Book of Jeremiah knew this. When they came

to the tract concerning the Rechabites, they added various

words and phrases, in order to reapply its message to the

situation of the Exiles, but they did not remove or change

any of the material that they had inherited - if the Rechab-

ites had no longer been in existence, then the redactors

would have altered the text so that it no longer said that

they were, or else they would have left the tract out of

their compilation of the 'words of Jeremiah' altogether.

The subsequent history of the Rechabites must be

a matter for speculation. The Malchijah ben Rechab who

appears in Neh. 3:14 has nothing to do with the Rechabites

- Rechab is attested as a personal name in Ancient Israel

independent of the Rechabites, and there is no other indi-

cation in the verse that Malchijah is connected with them.

There is no other mention of the Rechabites elsewhere in the

biblical literature of any period, and by the time we reach

the Qumran, rabbinic and Pseudepigraphical literature, to

be examined in Part Two of the present study, we are in the

realms of tradition, not of history. The Rechabites may have

become incorporated into the cultic hierarchy in the post-

exilic theocracy of Nehemiah, but given their ambivalence to

the Cult detected in the course of this study, this is un-

likely. It is more likely that they died out in the late

exilic or early post-exilic periods, but precisely when and

why they died out must remain a mystery - perhaps they had in-
sufficient offspring to continue the sect, or were killed off
by plague, or perhaps even by attack. At any rate, the
references in the Jewish literature are sufficiently unlike
the biblical references to make it certain that they do not
refer to the historical Rechabites, so we are unjustified
in claiming that the Rechabites survived beyond the end of
the sixth century BCE.

Even if the Rechabites were extinct by the end of
the sixth century, they nevertheless represent no mean
achievement in the history of Israel. As a group, they sur-
vived for around 300 years, maintaining their distinctive
practices and outlook. Even if their influence on Israel-
ite and Judaean society was marginal, they nevertheless stood
as a symbol and reminder of true Yahwistic faith, as a sym-
bol and reminder of the prophetic critque of the social
system of Israel, a critique expressed as much by their life-
style as by their words. If their quiet message was not
heard by society at large, that was not their fault. They
had fulfilled their vocation, they had received their prom-
ised salvation of 'long life in the land'. They survived the
Fall of Jerusalem, and not only escaped the destruction and
the chaos, but did so still maintaining their lifestyle and
practices, within the land of Israel. Depicted like this,
and this picture accords better with the available data than
any of the other theories advanced about them, the Rechabites
represent a concrete Old Testament example of 'watchmen for
the house of Israel' (Ezek. 3:16-21, 33;1-9). The biblical

Rechabites were not shepherds, metalworkers or house-slaves,

but prophets, and acted as such in the land of Israel from

the second half of the ninth to the end of the sixth centuries

BCE.