

their father sees that he can no longer get his way (having the brothers go again to Egypt without Benjamin) he takes charge, and gives a hortatory discourse instructing the sons as to how they are to go about things. In brief, "Israel" comes through this dialogue with a certain dignity and ends up by taking charge as clan-head and issuing orders to his sons. "Israel" therefore characterizes the whole dialogue, even including the earlier parts. (4) In Gen 45:25-27 the sons return to Canaan to tell "Jacob" their father the good news that Joseph is still alive. Initially numbed with surprise, "the spirit of Jacob their father" revives (end of v27). I assume that the shift to the name "Israel" in 28 reflects that his decision to go see Joseph is not simply a personal one but a far-reaching decision as clan-head. (5) We likewise find "Israel" as clan-head setting out for Egypt in 46:1 and receiving a vision from God. In the vision interestingly enough, God calls him "Jacob," his more intimate personal name -- and "Jacob" he remains for most of the following passage. Space fails me to trace this interesting variation any further.

I now have come -- by a very circuitous route -- to the discussion of the Ishmaelites and the Midianites of Gen 37:25-36; and 39:1. As far as the textual references go, we find "Ishmaelites" in 37:25 and in 28b and in 39:1 but "Midianites" in 28a and in 37:36. To summarize: in 37:25 a caravan of Ishmaelites is cited; in 37:36 Midianites sell Joseph to Potiphar; and in 39:1 Ishmaelites sell Joseph to Potiphar. In 37:28, Midianite merchants pass by and someone pulls Joseph out of the pit and sells him to the Ishmaelites. The whole critical separation of this passage rests on two assumptions: (1) One document (J) refers to Ishmaelites; another (E) to Midianites. 39:1 presents a special problem; Speiser feels that it resembles E (who, rather than J, gives the proper name Potiphar) in spite of referring to the Ishmaelites (a J trait) and in spite of the fact that all of chap. 39 is assigned to J.<sup>15</sup> (2) That the two are necessarily separate groups. It is the latter assumption that needs examination.

To begin with, if "Ishmaelites" and "Midianites" refer to the same group the passage smooths out completely and becomes quite coherent. But is there any external objective evidence as to such identification? There is, in fact. Judges 6-8 records Gideon's struggle with the Midianites. After the victory Gideon requested a share of the spoil, i.e., a golden earring from each one's share. To this is appended the parenthetical note (Judg 8:24b): "It was the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear golden earrings." Here, apparently, "Ishmaelite" is used as a generic name for a group of peoples having a similar lifestyle (Gen 16:12) and including the Midianites.

To get back, however, to the text of Gen 37:18, my simple contention is: the Midianite merchants (*'anasîm midyanîm soharîm*) are simply not introduced and integrated into the story as they should be if they are meant to be new participants moving onto the stage. I refer, again, to the cases cited above where new participants are made focal by multiple representation. It seems to me somewhat inconceivable that a new group should be introduced, in 28a, and not made the subject of at least one of the verbs that follow in this verse. Judah's proposal to sell Joseph was agreed on by the brothers in verses 27-28; if someone else besides the