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Social changes in Israel during the early monarchy in accordance with the archaeological data of settlements of Iron age I –II.

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ABSTRACT

The social changes that affected ancient Israeli society in the early period of the United Israeli monarchy of the X-IX centuries before the birth of Christ are described here. The paper deals with modern data obtained as a result of excavations carried out on the territory of Israel in the late XX – early XXI centuries and confirming these changes in the period of The United Kingdom of Israel in the X century BC. A comparative historical research method was used. Purpose of research is to prove real social changes in the Israeli society of the early monarchy on the basis of archaeological data. At the beginning of the period, the Israeli people are a community of agricultural tribes defending themselves with the help of a militia. At the end of the X century, based on the analysis of the structure of the city, weapons from Khirbet Qeiyafa and other data, we can talk about the construction of fortified military settlements, the formation of a professional army in Israel, the service class, and the beginning of social stratification.

Keywords:

Biblical archaeology, David, Israel, fortress, Jerusalem, Judea, Khirbet Qeiyafa, Sha'araim, social stratification, The United Kingdom, X century debate

АННОТАЦИЯ

Описаны социальные изменения коснувшиеся древнеизраильского общества в ранний существования единой Израильской монархии X-IX веков до Рождества Христова. Рассматриваются современные данные полученные в результате раскопок произведенных на территории Израиля в конце XX – начале XXI вв. и подтверждающие эти изменения в период единого Израильского царства в X в. до Р.Х. Применяется сравнительно-исторический метод исследования. Цели и задачи исследования: доказать реальные социальные изменения в израильском обществе ранней монархии на основании археологических данных. В начале периода израильский народ представляет собой сообщество сельскохозяйственных племен, обороняющихся с помощью ополчения. В конце X века, на основании анализа устройства города, оружия из Хирбет Кейафы и других данных можно говорить о построении укрепленных военных поселений, формировании в Израиле профессиональной армии, служилого сословия и начале возникновении социального расслоения.

Ключевые слова

Библейская археология, Давид, дебаты о X веке, Единое Царство, Иудея, Иерусалим, крепость, социальное расслоение, Хирбет Кейафа, Шаараим.

INTRODUCTION.

In modern biblical archaeology, the emergence of the United Israeli monarchy in the XI — X centuries BC is one of the issues actively discussed by scientists¹. No less important is the question of social transformations in Israeli society during this period. A number of skeptical authors, most notably Israel Finkelstein (Tel-Aviv University)², denied the possibility of a United kingdom during this period. Very important data was obtained as a result of excavations in 2008-2013 under the leadership of Y. Garfinkel, the tel of the Iron Age fortress Khirbet Qeiyafa³. These excavations proved, on the one hand, the reality of the existence of the state during this period, on the other hand, the topic for discussion of the social model of Israel of this period was open.

¹ See, for example: Dever. W.G.A 10th C.BCE State in Judah: The witness of Archaeology and the Bible//City of David. Studies of Ancient Jerusalem/The 20th Conference – ed. E. Meiron. – 2019. Pp. 17-34

² Finkelstein I., N.A. Silberman. David and Solomon. – New York, London, Toronto, Sydney. – 2006. Finkelstein I., Mazar A. The Quest for the Historical Israel. Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel / Ed. by B.B. Schmidt. Leiden – Boston. – 2007. Finkelstein I., Herzog Z., Singer-Avitz L., Ussishkin D. Has king David's palace in Jerusalem been found?//Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University. – vol. 34, № 2. – Tel Aviv University. – 2007.

³ Garfinkel Y., Ganor S. Khirbet Qeiyafa. Vol. 1. Excavation report 2007 – 2008. – Jerusalem. – 2009. Garfinkel Y., M. Mumcuoglu. Solomon's Temple and Palace: New Archaeological Discoveries – Jerusalem. – 2016. Garfinkel Y., Ganor S., M. Hasel. Khirbet Qeiyafa. Vol. 4. Excavation report 2007 – 2013: Art, Cult, and Epigraphy. – Jerusalem. – 2018.

Purpose of this research is to prove real social changes in the Israeli society of the early monarchy on the basis of archaeological data.

METHODS.

The paper uses the comparative-historical method and the method of field observations. The author repeatedly, during the 2008-2013 seasons, went to the excavations of the Iron age fortress of Khirbet Qeiyafa. The work on the study of ceramics etc. held at the State Museum of Israel in Jerusalem. The Dating of the Material to the Late Bronze age – Iron age IIA is based on relative and absolute chronology. Relative chronology – early Iron age IIA, as indicated by fragments of ceramic vessels. According to the radiocarbon method, the ruins of such a settlement as Khirbet Qeiyafa can be dated to the XI – X centuries. The absolute dating of Khirbet Qeiyafa is based on organic material (4 burnt olive pits), studied at the University of Oxford.

RESULTS.

Based on the analysis carried out in the article, the emergence of the military estate in Israel during the era of the monarchy of King David can be considered proven. The paper also shows the need for the existence of a large unified state on the basis of the existence of peripheral fortresses of the Iron Age. This makes it possible to move the upper boundary of the formation of social stratification by at least a hundred years in comparison with the popular concepts of our time. The dating issues and the problems of the existence of the United Kingdom of Israel have been discussed by me earlier in several paper⁴.

DISCUSSION.

The political organization of the Israeli during the early period of settlement in Canaan and the period of the Judges differs so much from the neighbours. Edom, Moab, and Ammon were monarchies; the Canaanite cities (Jerusalem, Gazer, Megiddo, Taanach, and Beth-Shean) maintained the structure of city-states, each with its own king. Israel was a Confederation or Union of tribes united not by a political figure, but by a religious Union. Until the Tenth century we find no trace of a standing army

⁴ Тимофеев А., прот. Единое царство времени Давида и Соломона. Современные данные на основании археологических раскопок в пределах территории колена Иуды // Материалы ежегодной научно-богословской конференции Санкт-Петербургской духовной академии 30.09.2015. – СПб.: Изд-во СПбПДА, – 2015. С. 65-70. Тимофеев А., прот. Проблема существования объединенной израильской монархии в X веке до Р.Х. в свете современных исследований Иудеи//Христианское Чтение, N 2. – Санкт-Петербург. – 2016. Сс. 167 – 180.

or service class. Israel defends itself against its enemies with the help of a militia assembled by Israeli judges⁵.

We can date the Judges` period from the end of the late Bronze age, i.e. from the XIV century to the end of the Iron age I, i.e. to the XI century. In the XII-XI centuries, Israel strengthened its position in the Central mountainous part of Palestine⁶. To the credit of the Israelis is the introduction of a new type of agriculture – on terraces. The first terraces appear at the end of the bronze age. Terracing made it possible to use actively mountainous areas and made it possible to increase the area of fertile land many more times. The Canaanites did not build terraces and preferred to cultivate the land in the valleys. At the same time, Israel has to constantly repel the invasions of foreigners and fight with the surviving city-states of the Canaanites. The Israelis are essentially peasants who raise a militia in the case of war.

The archaeological data corresponds with the description of this period in the book of Judges. The religious center of this period till to the conquest of Jerusalem – was Shiloh, which housed the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. The history of the Ark of the Israelites in Shiloh during the Judges' period can be reconstructed from the Old Testament texts and the results of excavations which were made by Danish archaeologists in 1926 and 1929.

After the end of the campaign of conquest, the tabernacle was moved there from Gilgal (Nav. 18:1). In the first half of the XI century, the role of priest was performed by Eli, who was the teacher of Samuel (1 Sam. 1 et seq.).

Around 1050 B.C., after the defeat of the Philistines at Aven-Ezer (1 Sam. 4), Shiloh was burned (Jer. 7:12; Jer. 26:6). This is confirmed by the results of the excavations. For the next thirty years, Israel had to endure the power of the Philistines, and the main religious symbol – the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant-was located in Kiriath-Jarim⁷.

The only direct archaeological evidence of the time of Saul's reign was found during the excavations of his capital at Gibeah, or Gibeah of Saul, the ruins of which are located on the site of the current hill of Tel el-Ful.

⁵ Mazar A. Archaeology of the land of the Bible.10,000 – 586 B.C.E. – New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland. – 1992.

⁶ Мазар А. Археология Библейской земли. – Иерусалим, – 1996. Мерперт Н.Я. Очерки археологии библейских стран. – Москва, – 2006.

⁷ Тантлевский И.Р. Царь Давид и его эпоха в Библии и истории. – Санкт-Петербург, – 2016. Сс. 180-189

This hill is located at an altitude of 800 m above the sea level and 5 kilometers North from Jerusalem, on the main road North to Bethel, Shiloh, and Shechem (which corresponds to the description of Gibeah in Judg. 19:11-13).

Excavations were first carried out here in 1868 by C. Warren on the initiative of The Palestine Exploration Fund. The most important excavations were conducted in 1922-23 and in 1933 by W. F. Albright, a representative of The American School of Oriental Research. Five periods of settlement of this place, from the XII century BC to the time of Roman rule, were found.

There was a small settlement here during the XII century, but it was destroyed, probably as a result of civil strife (cf. Judg.20). At the end of the XI century BC, a rectangular fortress of 35 x 53 m was built here. The fortress was surrounded by a double wall-a casemate, built of rough-hewn stones, the space between which was filled with small stones and fragments; at the corners there were 4 powerful towers. Some of the rooms in the casemate were used as storage facilities. Albright believed that the fortress was built by Saul, but other scholars suggest that it was built by the Philistines and then conquered by Saul.

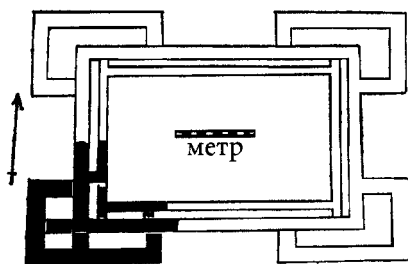


Fig. 1. The fortress of Saul in Gibeah.

The Fortress-Palace had at least two floors. Saul's family lived on the second floor. Artifacts which were found in the fortress show us the simplicity of life of its inhabitants. Two of the most characteristic weapons of the time were found there — bronze arrowheads and stones for slings. A variety of earthenware vessels were also found there, including cooking utensils (a large number of coarse, sooty cooking pots, small bowls and plates). It's interesting that, all pottery was exceptionally functional and devoid of decoration. The most elegant items were small black polished pitchers for incense and oil, and pitchers of pink or yellowish-brown colour, which, in some cases, were decorated with circular stripes of red or brown. An iron plow was also found, which indicated the cultivation of land in the vicinity of the fortress. It seems to be the first known Israeli iron product. The fortress, however, did not have a fortified garnison near it and was a large fortified house.

Despite its strength, the fortress was destroyed during Saul's lifetime, probably before the battle of Michmash (1 Sam. 13-14).

As we know from the Bible, the reign of David was marked by the capture of Jerusalem, which, due to its extremely favorable geographical location, was inevitably to become the capital of the Kingdom of David⁸. Control of Jerusalem, — wrote K. Kenyon, — meant in fact control of all of Palestine, since it is located on the Central ridge, which is the only way from North to South... Without the possession of Jerusalem, unity [of the North and South] would be impossible⁹.

The author of the article considers the study of peripheral Iron age fortresses within the tribe of Judah to be the most promising at the moment. These fortresses were built continuously from the time of Saul to Rehoboam.

Extensive archaeological research, done mainly by Nelson Glueck and Yochanan Aharoni, was carried out in the late 1950s and 60s. It quickly became apparent that there was once a real network of fortresses in the Central part of the Negev desert.¹⁰

These fortresses consist of a casemate wall around a courtyard, but apart from this there are significant variations in the layout and architectural details. Aharoni accordingly divided fortresses into four main types:

- 1) with protruding towers of fortresses, including those from Kadesh-Barnea, Uza, and Tel Arad;
- 2) a rectangular fortress without towers, including Nahal Raviv, Qasr er-Ruheibeh, Be'er har Boger, Mishor ha-Ruah, and a fortress North of Kadesh Barnea;
- 3) irregular fortresses, including `Ayn of Cudais, Givat Reed, Nahal Lacan, and Yotvata;
- 4) the fortress is surrounded by a polygonal wall, including the fortress above Ein Gedi and Har Hesron.

At least 50 fortresses have been discovered in the Negev desert in Israel. These fortresses were probably built by Solomon in the mid-10th century BC to protect the southern borders of Egypt and Edom. If they weren't built by Solomon, it would be King David. It is rather unlikely that Saul built them, since he did not yet have enough resources and time free from wars. Solomon is clearly the best choice from a historical, biblical, and archaeological point of view.

⁸ Reich R. Excavating the City of David Where Jerusalem's History Began. // Israel Exploration Society and Biblical Archaeology Society, Jerusalem – 2011.

⁹ K. Kenyon. Archaeology in the Holy Land. – 3-d ed. – 1970

¹⁰ Glueck N. The Negev// Biblical Archaeologist. – 22 . – 1959. – pp. 82-97. Aharoni Y. Forerunners of the Limes Iron Age Fortresses in the Negev // Israel Exploration Journal. – 17 . – 1967. – pp. 1-17.

It is obvious that the Pharaoh Sheshonk destroyed some of the fortresses in 924 BC. we have a list of cities etched in stone in the temple of Amun in Karnak, since we know that the fortresses lasted relatively short time, this is perfectly consistent with the activities of Solomon as a Builder, only 25 years before the invasion of Sheshonk¹¹.

Some of these fortresses require redefinition again. For example, the well-known biblical place Kadesh-Barnea, mentioned in Gen., Deut. and other places can hardly be defined as Ein El-Qudeirat, at least there is important evidence for revision¹².

R. Cohen conducted excavations of these fortresses from 1965 to 1983. He identified four different types of architectural plans¹³.

Fortresses have the following form: 1) roughly oval in plan; 2) others are rectangular, but with unequal sides; 3) the third type is square; 4) finally, two fortresses are rectangular in shape, but with protruding towers at the corners and sides. Let's put aside the fourth category, because fortresses with towers coming to the surface in the corners and on the sides date from the VIII to VI centuries BC, i.e. much later, in the era of the divided kingdoms. The other three types are fortifications of the early period. They are identical in ceramics and date from the X-XI centuries BC. It is obvious that such small fortresses with garrisons had neither the possibility nor the meaning for independent existence without a strong centralized state.

It is very important for the further discussions to look at the recent excavations (2007-2013) made by J. Garfinkel in Khirbet Qeiyafa, who discovered the Jewish city of the XI–IX centuries BC And the oldest example of ancient Israeli writing¹⁴.

Garfinkel presumably identified the site of Khirbet Qeiyafa with the city of Shaarayim mentioned in the Holy Scripture (Nav.15:36), as it is a unique example of a city with two gates (Sha'araim – from Heb. “City of gates”) . According to the complex of ceramics and radiocarbon Dating of several olive

¹¹ The second part of the inscription, which contains more than 10 names, seems to be dedicated to cities in the Negev. Only some of the names can be identified with cities known from the Bible. These include Arad, Megiddo etc.

¹² Cohen. R. Did I Excavate Kadesh-Barnea? Difficulty of site identification and absence of Exodus remains poses problem// Biblical Archeological Review. – 7:03 (May/Jun). – 1981

¹³ Cohen R. The Fortresses King Solomon Built to Protect His Southern Border., 1985
[<http://www.bible.ca/archeology/fortresses-king-solomon-built-to-protect-his-southern-border-rudolph-cohen-1985ad.html> 11.09.2015]

¹⁴ Garfinkel Y., Ganor S. Khirbet Qeiyafa: Sha`arayim // The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures, 2008. Vol. 8. P. 1–10; cit by: Breaking News—Evidence of Cultic Activity in Judah Discovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa. Biblical Archaeology Society. 05/08/2012 [<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/artifacts-and-the-bible/breaking-news—evidence-of-cultic-activity-in-judah-discovered-at-khirbet-qeiyafa> [data 11.06.2015]

stones, the city belongs to the iron age IIA and existed only for a short time, from the end of XI century and up to the beginning of the X century BC. Dating of the city is very accurate and due to the existence of only two layers: the Iron age layer IIA and a small fortress of the Hellenistic period in the upper layer. It was destroyed by some invasion before Sheshonk. The invasion was evidenced by stones for throwing tools, stuck even in ceramic vessels.

What were the characteristics of settlement in Judea at the beginning of the Iron age IIA? On the one hand the traditional trend in archaeology dates the construction of fortified cities to the 10th century BC, on the other hand, proponents of low chronology date the same construction activity to the 9th century BC. Herzog and Singer-Avitz suggested that the Iron age IIA should be divided into two stages in the South. By the early iron age IIA, they included the following settlements: Arad XII, Beersheba VII, Lachish V, Batash IV, and Masos II. Those were not fortified cities; rather, fences with houses which were located on the edges of the settlement. Based on their analysis, it was only at the end of the iron age IIA, around the middle of the 9th century BC, that fortified settlements were first built: Arad XI, Beersheba VI, and Lachish IV¹⁵.

Qeiyafa definitely was identified as a Jewish city¹⁶. The absence of pig bones and the cult without images almost unequivocally proved that the settlement belonged to the Jews. On the portable altar from Khirbet Kaafi there were no images. At the same time, a similar Canaanite altar from Tel Rehov contained numerous images of female deities (Astartes).

Khirbet Qeiyafa was surrounded by a massive wall with an escarpment gallery 700 meters long and 4 meters thick. The city had several unique characteristics. The area of the city was about 2.3 hectares, which means that it is much larger than many other Jewish cities of this time, only Jerusalem and Lachish are larger in size. The special layout of the city proved by the Garfinkel expedition: the originally laid sewer system, planned before the construction of houses and streets; the layout of rooms in casemate walls for public use (which is not typical for ancient cities); finally, the uncharacteristic

¹⁵ Mazar A. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000–586 B.C.E.* Anchor Bible Reference Library. – Doubleday. – 1990.

¹⁶ The Dating of Khirbet Qeiyafa To the Iron age IIA is based on relative and absolute chronology. Relative chronology - early Iron age IIA, as indicated by clay fragments. The characteristic Philistine bichromic bell-shaped vessels known in large quantities from layer X in tel Kasil and layer IV in tel Mikne are virtually absent. Thus, the settlement cannot be dated to the end of the Iron age I. There is currently a debate about the end date of Iron age I: 1000 BC or 920-900 BC. Radiocarbon method Khirbet Qeiyafa cannot be dated to the 11th century BC Absolute Dating of Khirbet Qeiyafa based on four burnt olive pits, studied at Oxford University.

The average for these four measurements, as shown by Christopher Bronk Ramsey of the University of Oxford, is 2844±15. After calibration, the Dating corresponds to 1026-975 BC (59.6%) or 1051-969 BC (77.8%). Since Khirbet Keyafa is an iron age IIA site, Garfinkel settled on Dating after 1000 BC, i.e. 1000-975 BC (59.6% probability) or 1000-969 BC (77.8% probability). These dates correspond to the time of king David (circa 1000-965 ad). BCE) and are too early for king Solomon (circa 965-930 BCE).

administration of the Philistines and Canaanites (the absence of a Royal Palace) suggests that the city was planned and managed from some external administrative center. The massive construction of the city walls of Khirbet Qeiyafa, which required 200,000 tons of stone, and the Eastern city gates of two stones weighing about 10 tons each, indicated the power of a centralized state, rather than an independent city, as Finkelstein suggested.

The absence of the usual social stratification for Canaanite and Philistine cities, which was reflected in the monotony of houses, i.e. the absence of a contradiction between "palaces" and "slums" indicated that the settlement belonged to Israeli society in the early period of the monarchy. The houses were quite monotonous, belonged to people with approximately the same income. They were built according to the same plan along the walls, and had storage rooms in the back.

Ceramics revealed the existence of a centralized system in ancient Judea . administrative system: more than 300 simple impressions were found on the handles of container jugs. Similar impressions were known from other monuments of the early iron age, but so far they had been found in limited quantities. Throughout the iron age and the Persian period, container jars in Judea were marked in a similar way ("l'melech" – "belonging to the king", rosettes, stars, lions, etc.). The seals on the handles of the jars (a tradition unique to Judea) told us about the centralized food supplies from the regions to the center of the state.

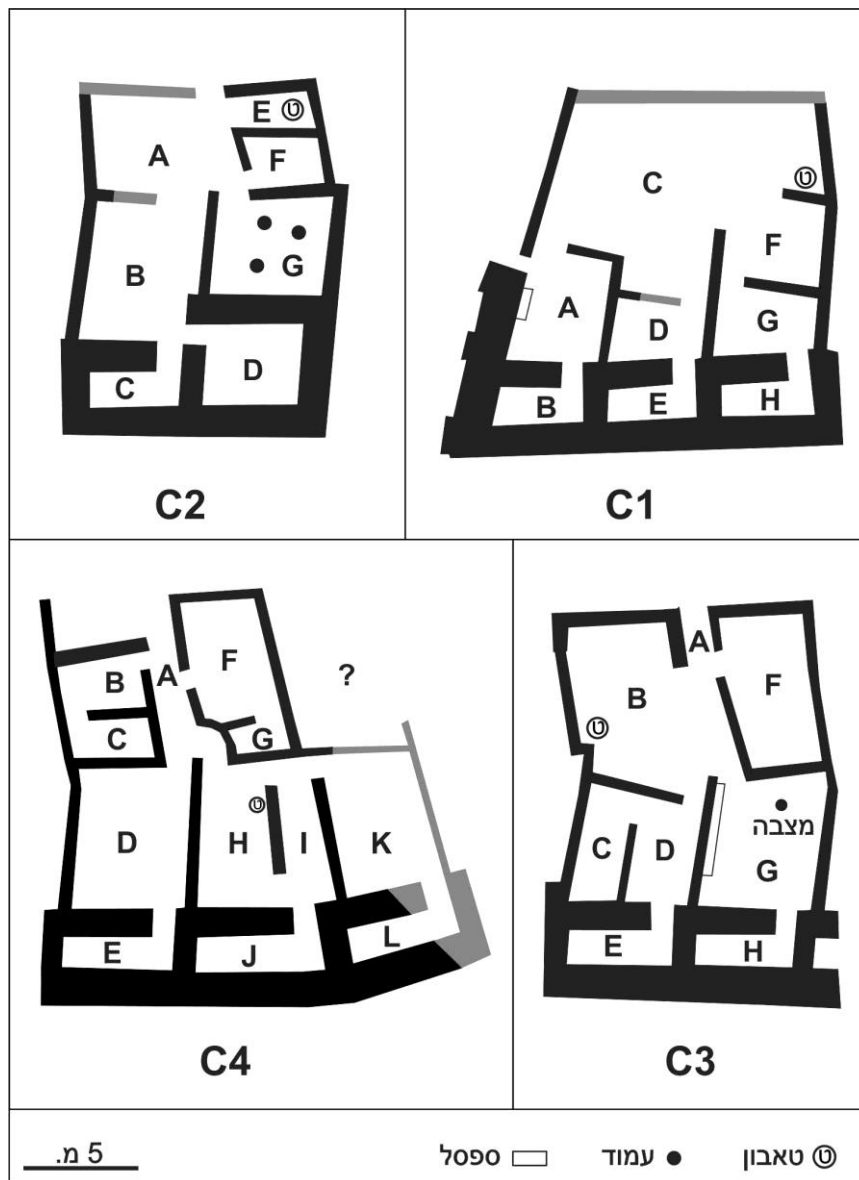


Fig.2. plan of excavation of houses in Khirbet Qeiyafa (according to Garfinkel Yu. The Kingdom of David in light of the finds at Khirbet Qeiyafa// The City Of David. Research of ancient Jerusalem. Jerusalem, – 2011.

At the excavations in Khirbet Qeiyafa, a large number of iron weapons was found, which was understandable if we take into account the military significance of the city. In practice, the city was a paramilitary settlement on the border. Iron spearheads and arrows, axes, and swords were found.



Fig. 3. Curved iron swords, daggers, axes, arrowheads, spearheads from the excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa. Garfinkel Y., Ganor S., M. Hasel. Khirbet Qeiyafa. Vol. 4. Excavation report 2007 – 2013: Art, Cult, and Epigraphy. – Jerusalem. – 2018. – P. 169

The Philistines brought a tradition of fairly long straight iron swords, the use of which requires great physical strength. From another point of view, in Canaan, starting at least from The middle bronze, Crescent – shaping bronze swords was common – such as the Egyptian "hopesh", the ancient Greeks had analogues-a shorter curved sword called "kopis" (possibly a tracing paper from the Egyptian name). Impressively that, iron curved swords from Khirbet Qeiyafa, were not the replicas of the khopesh, represented a certain synthesis of weapons. The curved shape of the sword, anticipating the combat form and function of the saber, made it easier to hit the hand in a circle and allowed you to inflict wounds with a quick secant movement. Compared to bronze weapons, which could not be used for fencing, but only for stabbing because of the fragility of the bronze, the iron curved sword was a much more advanced weapon. They could be applied and stabbing and secant-cutting blows, while saving power. The bronze hopesh was an attempt to reduce the load on fragile bronze due to a strong bend. However, it was not uncommon to find Crescent-shaped hopeshi broken just near the handle (the author often saw similar cases in Museum collections). Most likely, these fractures were obtained due to excessive load when colliding with a solid obstacle or armor.

It should be noted that the use of the swords required serious professional skills, which indicate that there was at least professional military personnel in Khirbet Qeiyafa. These were not militia peasants, but people who spent a lot of time training with weapons. The sword in the hands of the

militia is dangerous, first of all, to himself, then to the surrounding colleagues, and only last of all to the enemy. Thus, we can talk about the formation of the service class. This correlates well with the story of the “strong” - גִּבּוֹרִים , who served to King David (1 Par. 29. 24)

The inscription on the ostrakon found by the Garfinkel expedition is made in proto-Canaanite script, most likely in Hebrew. Although only a few words are clearly readable. In any case, this proves the existence of literacy at this time, including among the service class.

At the same time, there is almost no Philistine ceramics in the city. What does the location of Sha'araim mean near the major Philistine cities – opposite the largest city – Gath, which is about 12 kilometers away? Apparently, only that the fortress city belonged to a large, independent from the Philistines and centralized Kingdom, which has a fairly powerful armed forces in the area. The subsequent destruction of the city as a result of a military operation by the Philistines even before the invasion of Pharaoh Sheshonk suggests that this fortified city was one of the key strongholds for which there was competition.

CONCLUSION.

Thus, the emergence of the military class in Israel in the era of the monarchy of King David can be definitively proven. The article also shows the need for the existence of a large unified state on the basis of the existence of peripheral fortresses of the Iron Age. This makes it possible to move the upper boundary of the formation of social stratification by at least a hundred years in comparison with the popular concepts of our time, like Finkelshtein`s concepts.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the author considers it extremely promising to continue studying small settlements and fortresses of the Iron age in the southern part of Judea for a better understanding of the history of the origin and existence of the ancient Israeli monarchy.

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