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The Purpose of the Book of Numbers

in Relation to the Rest of the Pentateuch and Post-Exilic Judaism

Thesis presented for the Degree of D.Phil.

Trinity Term, 1961

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Introduction

A mosquito once landed in a nudist colony. "How very excellent," he was heard to remark, "But just where do I begin?" This is the dilemma faced by any critic dealing with the pentateuch. If he examines the whole, then he is open to the charge that he has carried his conclusions about one book over into his consideration of the others. On the other hand, when he treats one book by itself, he is always in danger of a certain off-balance. This thesis falls into the latter class of investigation; it is therefore admitted that there are a certain number of loose ends, although every attempt will be made to see Numbers in the context of the pentateuch as a whole. Nonetheless it is apparent that it is legitimate to consider a book of the pentateuch by itself. For example, Genesis, although written as part of a series in its present form, can be dealt with as a book having meaning in itself. The theory that the present division of the pentateuch into five books is a result of a mechanical process after the work was completed is not axiomatic. To the contrary it will be argued that the Book of Numbers is a book in the same sense that Genesis is a book, namely a part of a series, but with a specific theme and purpose of its own.

The investigation will deal with three problems; first, the original nature of the material or its Gattung; secondly, how this material was transmitted, whether in a document or simple source; and thirdly, the purpose of the position and arrangement of this material in the present form of the book.

The second problem, namely, whether older documents can be isolated out of the present pentateuch cannot be solved from the consideration of a single book. But the examination of the evidence as found in Numbers can be a useful corrective. Noth[1] pointed out that although he considered the documentary analysis of Genesis as certain, he was reluctant to endorse the theory that these sources can be and must be found in other books of the Old Testament. The result of the examination in Numbers as carried out in this thesis is agnostic in tone. It is apparent that at one time a "ground document", J or G, must have existed in the pre-exilic period. It is also clear that parts of Numbers and Exodus belong together in distinction to this ground document. However, the arguments advanced for working out the original form of these old documents in Numbers are for the most part unconvincing.

But it is the third problem, the final form of Numbers that is the main interest of the investigation.[2] It is usual in pentateuchal criticism to argue that three pre-exilic or partially exilic documents, J,E, and D were added to each other and then combined with a post-exilic document P by a redactor (R^{JEDP}). It is also usual to distinguish strata within P itself; P^g the original document; P^s material added later; and P^x miscellaneous material that defies explanation.[3] It will be argued that the grounds adduced

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1 Noth, M., Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I, Halle, Max Niemeyer, 1943, p.180, f.n.3.

2 The validity of the answer here does not directly depend on the answer given to the problem of documentary sources.

3 The terminology here is that of Gray.

for distinguishing these strata in P are insufficient. Furthermore since P forms the framework of Numbers and the pentateuch as a whole, the most likely solution to the question of the final form is that it is the work of P; that is, P shaped the pentateuch by adopting older traditions and adding to them. P was never an independent source, and there never was an R^P.

In most critical investigations the attention has been focussed on the relation of P to the other parts of the pentateuch, but not enough attention has been paid to the historical situation from which it sprang, nor to the influence of the reform programme of Ezek.40-48 and the place of Deuteronomy. When these factors have been considered, it is a priori possible that the pentateuch achieved its present form at a given time; that is, that it is not the product of additions and accretions over several centuries. Naturally the proof of this thesis lies outside the bounds of the present investigation; but the unity of form in Numbers is best explained as the work of a single person or school.

Although it is not possible here to attempt a detailed historical examination, it is necessary to draw attention to specific problems whose answers demanded the form and shape of material in Numbers and other pentateuchal books.

The economic sitation after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 cannot be ignored. The extent to which Judah was devastated by the various campaigns of foreign powers since the death of Josiah is difficult to describe in detail; but it is certain that

Jerusalem and other cities had been destroyed and archeological evidence suggest that the land's level of prosperity under the kings was not re-attained until several centuries later.[4] At the same time part of the population had been deported. Although the actual number of the exiles may not have been high in proportion to those that were left,[5] the loss of most of the administrative and religious leaders could not but cripple Judah.

Socially the exile precipitated divisions within the people of Israel by accentuating old tensions and presenting new problems. The geographical and administrative differences dividing Samaria, Judah, and the exiled community in Babylon permitted the flowering of ancient rivalries and new theologies which it was the task of the pentateuch to reconcile.

In Judah cultic worship and thought seems to have continued. It seems probable that the deuteronomic history work was completed at this time[6]; liturgical forms of lament such as found in Lamentations developed;[7] and sacrificial worship continued at the site of the ruined temple.[8] The law code used was basically that of Deuteronomy despite the inapplicability of many of its provisions.[9] The Levites

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4 See G.E.Wright, Biblical Archeology, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, (1957), p.199.

5 Janssen, E., Judah in Der Exilzeit, Göttingen, Vandehoek und Ruprecht, pp.25-39.

6 Noth, M., Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien; Janssen, Judah in der Exilzeit, pp.12-18.

7 Zech. 7.2f.

8 Jer.41.5.

9 For example the assumption of the people as an independant state with a king at its head, the laws of war which would be no longer applicable in a Babylonian province, and the describing of membership in Israel in national and political terms.

were regarded as full fledged priests.[10]

In the community of exiles in Babylon attention turned to the prophetic utterances of Ezekiel in order to find some firm divine guidance in the chaos which the destruction of Jerusalem produced in traditional piety.[11] Ezek.40-48 has been characterized by Bentzen as the battle plan of the Zadokite priesthood. The low opinion of the Levites and the subordination of the monarchy could not but raise opposition once a re-establishment of Judah as a separate entity became possible.[12]

The measure of the tensions and differences can be found in the delay in the rebuilding of the temple. Economic difficulties no doubt played their part, but problems over the design, the cult, and the priesthood of the temple all must be considered. The struggle for power amongst the royalty, the priesthood of Jerusalem, the Levites, and the people which had its roots in the time of the monarchy was continued so that obviously the temple could not be built until it was decided what sort of plan it should follow and the type of cult, administration, and the priests it should have. In these matters the material used by P seems to have aimed at reconciling opposing views; Levites were not to be priests of the first order, but their rank was due to honorable selection rather than as a

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10 It is possible that priesthoods other than the Levitical were also in Jerusalem.

11 For the dominance of the prophet in a disorientated society, compare the influence of "prophets" in the cargo-cults in islands of the South Pacific.

12 Bentzen, A., Studier over det Zadokidiske Praesterkabs Historie, in Festschrift udgivet af Københauvns Universitet, Copenhagen, 1930, pp.50 f.

punishment for disobedience; the laity were not excluded entirely from taking part in the rite of sacrifice, but their position was strictly defined. The theological meaning of the temple was a compromise between the traditions of the tent of meeting as a place of Yahweh's occasional appearance and the tabernacle as a place of his permanent dwelling.

What was most important in this period was the instruction and encouragement of the people. The second exodus theme became the means for this as seen in Is.40. The whole structure of Numbers in its present form aimed at unifying and organizing the Israel of that time by giving a picture of a unified and organized Israel at the time of the first exodus; but this picture was not only for encouraging but also for warning the Jews of the Persian period, for the emphasis put on the necessity of obedience in Num.13,14, 32, and other passages shows the homiletic interest of the final author of the Book of Numbers.

Before beginning, the terminology used will be exactly defined. By"source" is meant that from which a single passage or series of passages has been drawn. A source is essentially simple; a legend, a law, a series of laws which have meaning in themselves but which have not been included in a larger whole. By "document" on the other hand, is meant a comprehensive body of material, oral or written, often heterogenous in origin, that has been welded into a single whole that envisages a theological interpretation of its separate parts. Finally, rather than using a P siglium, the person responsible for the final form of Numbers and perhaps the rest of

the pentateuch will be referred to as "the final author." This does not mean that he created all his material himself; but the forming and shaping of what lay before him was done in such a creative manner that the word "author" is more appropriate than "redactor." The fact that "author" rather than "authors" is used is for convenience only; but if a school of writers was responsible for Numbers, its members worked with complete unity of purpose.[13]

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13 References to the Numbers commentaries of Gray, Baentsch, and Holzinger will be to the names of the authors only.

Chapter 1 Numbers 1-4

It is obvious that in Num.1 a new section in the pentateuch has begun. Here there is no more question of the miscellaneous collection of laws and groups of laws which characterized Leviticus, but rather the ordered description of the camp is the next logical step after the setting up of the tabernacle at the end of Exodus. It is important to note that in Ezekiel also attention is paid to the whole organisation of Israel as well as that of the temple in order to extend the law of the Lord to every facet of the life of the new community. That the same concern is shown in Numbers is a sign of the intention of the final author to preserve and adapt the theological ideas of Ezekiel. As will be shown, this ordering of Israel is an integral part of the plan in Numbers, for as Israel is organised before setting out on a new stage of its history, namely the wandering toward the promised land, so comes another organisation in Num.34 at the beginning of the next stage, the entry.

The section Num.1-4 forms a convenient unit to consider as a whole, for after the census, the ordering of the camp, and the duties of the Levites, the continuity is broken by the laws of chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 1 contains three distinct forms; the name list of the tribes (vv.5-15), the census list (vv.20-43), and a special note about the Levites (vv.47-54).

The name list of the heads of the twelve tribes contains twenty-four names, some of which have a form known in the time of

the judges, others a form more typical of the post-exilic period.[1] The order in which the tribes occur is almost identical to the order of tribes in vv.20-37 and in chapters 2, 7, and 10.[2] It seems probable that the displacement of Gad from third to eleventh place in v.14 was a scribal error and that originally all lists go back to the same source. Any other explanation of the difference requires a certain amount of kindness.

The dating of this list is very difficult. The fact that some names appear early and some appear late does not help very much; for obviously early names could be inserted into a late list or names may appear post-exilic simply because by accident we do not find them earlier. Furthermore, there is no real reason to

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1 Noth, Die Israelitische Personennamen im Rahmen der Gemeinsemitische Namengebung, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1928 assumes without further argument that this list can be dated in the time of the judges. It is true that sentence names such as Elizur are more common in the time of the judge than in the post-exilic period; here 8 or 10 such names occur out of a total of 24. But "El" names occur either in the time up to the beginning of the divided monarchy or, more commonly in the post-exilic period. Here in this list the El names are also well represented, 6. There is no real reason from the form of the names given here to conclude that the list is either post-exilic or from the time of the judges. In other name lists in Numbers, such as 13.4-15 or 34.19-28 only the accidental occurance of a Persian name permits any more definite conclusion. For a recent survey of names in the Mari material, see Ch.-F.Jean, "Les noms propre de personnes dans les lettres de Mari et dans les plus anciens textes du Pentateuque," in La Bible et l'Orient, Cahiers de la Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses, 34, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1955, pp.121-128.

2 In vv.5-15 the displacement of Gad from third to eleventh place would be a natural mistake for a scribe who knew that Judah was the third oldest son of Jacob, if Levi is omitted. The order of the list of tribes in Num.26 varies from that in 1.20-37 only in the order of Manasseh and Ephraim.

consider this list as a whole; it may be a compilation of various pieces of varying antiquity.

A clue is given by the fact that of this name list the only figures mentioned outside Num. 1, 2, 7, and 10 are Nashon and Amminadab of Judah,[3] the brother- and father-in-law of Aaron respectively in Ex.6.23. Now the system of the twelve tribes had disappeared in Israel since the time of the monarchy, but certain Judah traditions could be expected to linger in circles in Judah and among the exiles drawn from there. Traditions of other tribes in a raw form could not.[4] Therefore in constructing a picture of the old twelve tribe alliance in action, the author could only get known historical personages for Judah; the other names he probably chose at random or even drew from among his contemporaries.[5]

Therefore it seems probable that this name list is contemporary with the present form of this chapter with the exception of one old fragment. The list was drawn up in answer to the literary necessity to name the captains of the hosts of Israel if one was going to describe the composition of the camp.

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3 It is true that some of the other names occur elsewhere in the Old Testament, but they do not refer to the chiefs as found in this list.

4 Tribal traditions did survive, but usually in a form assimilated to the general history of Israel; for example, the judges.

5 Compare the habit of medieval monks who in designing gargoyles for a church often caricatured known persons, even their bishop or abbot.

On the other hand Noth[6] considers that this list with its names dates back to the time of the judges. If this is correct, here again a specifically Judah bias can be seen, for the fact that Aaron is connected by marriage to the chief of Judah would add to the importance of the tribe

The census list in vv.20-46 together with the similar list in chapter 26 present two problems; first, how were the impossibly high numbers reached; and secondly, if the census lists are not free compositions, how old are they and what was their original purpose?

One solution to the problem of the numbers has been by gematria, that is by reading the letters in a phrase as numbers. For example Bentzen[7] argues that the number 603,550 was arrived at by multiplying the numerical value of בן־שרא by 1000 and adding the value of נ ש א . The result is 603,551 which was rounded off to 603,550. However, Noth[8] argued that the use of letters as numerical figures is not earlier than the Hellenistic period of Hebrew history. Furthermore there are two weaknesses in gematric explanations; one is the extremely arbitrary way in which the key phrase is decided and the rather forced means to arrive at the right answer; the other is that even if the total number is explained, there remain twelve random numbers for tribal totals.

Recently G.E.Mendenhall[9] has made an interesting suggestion regarding the census lists in Num.1 and 26. Such lists are ubiquitous

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6 Noth, Das System der Zwölf Stämme Israels, Stuttgart, 1930, p.17.

7 Bentzen, A., Introduction to the Old Testament, Copenhagen, Gad, vol.2, p.34.

8 Noth, Ibid., pp.131-2.

9 Mendenhall, G.E., "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26," JBL, 77 (1958), pp.52-66.

in all ancient cultures where they served the dual purpose of a basis for levying taxes and a register of men of military age.

Now apart from a centralized military command, in the ancient orient we also find armies based on a tribal system where local chiefs organized and led the number of men required of them. This later system is what we find in Israel in the period of the amphictyony. But the absence of a permanent central command does not imply the absence of organisation within a tribe. Therefore, taking up Petrie's suggestion that אֶלֶף does not mean 1000 but rather the subsection of a tribe,[10] we have in Numbers 1 and 26 lists dating from the time of the old amphictyony which record the contribution of various groups to the strength of each tribe. Noth had already argued for the pre-monarchical origin of Num.26;[11] Mendenhall's theory would establish the numbers given as also historical. For if eleph does not imply 1000, we should understand that Reuben, for example, did not have 46,500 men in Num.1.21, but rather 46 groups making up a total of 500 men. This reduces the totals in Num.1 and 26 to 5550 and 5750 respectively, armies quite probable in the time of the amphictyony.

However, at the time of David a new centralized army was established in the place of the old folk militia. This army was organized into definite numbers in which eleph came to mean a unity of 1000 men. Therefore, the author of Numbers, only knowing this latter meaning of eleph, misread the old amphictyonic documents and produced

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10 See Jud.6.15.

11 Noth, Zwölf Stämme, pp.122-132.

the astronomical figures we have now.

Mendenhall therefore draws four conclusions. First, the census lists in Num.1 and 26 represent old traditions of tribal quotas committed for war on specific occasions. Secondly, eleph originally referred to a contingent of troops under its own leaders that a group sent to the massed army of its tribe. Thirdly, the amphictyonic system broke down under the monarchy when a royal army was established with units of approzimately 1000. The reading back of this system into previous lists produced their abnormally high figures. Finally, the size and organization are in harmony with what we know of the armies of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.

There is one obvious criticism of Mendenhall's arguments; that is, the lists in Num.1 and 26 are not the same in form. Whereas Num.26 gives the "sons", i.e. the clans of each tribe, Num.1 gives the tribal leader only. It was the listing of the clans that led Noth to postulate Num.26 as an old document, for the Samaritan ostraca proved that at least some of the clans mentioned were actually districts around Samaria. Num.1, on the other hand, does not have any marks of antiquity of this sort; it merely gives the tribes in much the same order as in chapter 26 with similar figures for each tribe.

Therefore conclusions differing from those of Mendenhall have to be reached. It appears that the author had one ancient document before him, the census list of Num.26. For his literary purposes he needed two, as will be shown below. He therefore constructed a second census with the first as his framework, but instead of clan

names he substituted names of leaders as befitted his desire to describe a people on the march.

It is of interest to inquire just what a census implied for the author of Numbers. War and taxes as Mendenhall has pointed out, were the usual reasons for a census, but as the author here stood at the end of several hundred years of history, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a census had specific Israelite associations for him.

It is surprising how few records of censuses there are in the Old Testament. Saul's numbering of the people before Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sam.11.8) and Micmah (1 Sam.13.15) are the only records before David's ill-fated attempt.(2 Sam. 24; 1 Chr.21) Mendenhall even suggests that this unwillingness to number led to a weakness in the armies of the monarchies that contributed to their downfall.[12] However, whether or not the provision for a census in Ex.30.12 originated in exilic times, in Ezra 2 and Neh. 7 there is a census list, ostensibly of those who returned to Palestine from Babylon.

Both the Davidic and post-exilic censuses took place at turning points in the history of Israel, one at the passing of the period of the judges into a centralized monarchy; the other at the re-establishment of Judah as a separate, if dependant entity. Therefore it is not at all surprising that the author of Numbers felt it either necessary or significant to put censuses at the two main turning points of history in his work, the leading of the people out of Egypt to become the people of Yahweh and the preparation of these

nomads to enter the Promised Land.[12] For the latter, Num.26, he used an old document that lay ready to hand; for the former he found it convenient to imitate the old document with reservations. The use of the census, then, is purely literary; there would be no practical applications such as taxes, military levies, or even for geneologies, since Num.1 does not bother to repeat the clans of the tribes which could be expected if geneology were the interest. But it is of interest to note that in Ezra the census list is linked closely with gifts for the temple. Six chapters later in Numbers there is an elaborate description of gifts for the tabernacle. It is perhaps possible here that there is an indirect exhortation to support the failing finances of the post-exilic temple.

The note on the Levites in vv.47-54 seems to be an interruption, a sort of foreign body in the text, for Aaron is not mentioned with the Levites, giving grounds that perhaps this comes from a pre-Aaronic time, and it is said here that the Levites were not numbered, though in fact in Num.3 and 4 they were. Eerdmans[13] has even argued that since the census in Num.3 and 4 is post-exilic, therefore the statement that no census was taken must be pre-exilic.

However, the explanation follows from the fact that this section is a literary work on the part of the final author of Numbers. The motifs of the census and the order of the camp are too closely

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12 Obviously Ex.38.26 is directly connected to Num.1. It is therefore possible to suggest some sort of displacement or insertion by a redactor. However, what is to us an illogical anticipation may not have been anathema to Hebrew thinking.

13 Eerdmans, B.D., The Composition of Numbers, Oudtestamentische Studiën, VI, Leiden, Brill, 1949, p.107.

bound up with these verses. As has been seen, the census was a literary composition, and it will be argued below that the order of the camp was a post-exilic invention. In the light of what has been said about the rest of Num.1, it is possible to see the purpose of vv.47-54. As the pentateuch was designed to be read in public, it was necessary that each section should be comprehensible in itself. Therefore as it was necessary to explain why the Levites had not been included, a short anticipation of chapters 3 and 4 was added for the sake of clarity. The argument that vv.47-54 stand in contradiction to v.2 ignores that although theoretically all Israelites were children of Israel, the term "Children of Israel" could be used to denote the laity as opposed to the priests and Levites.(So, Num.3.40) The attempt to drive a wedge between vv.47 and 48 on the grounds that the former says the Levites were not numbered and the latter says that it was commanded that they should not be, is too fine a logical distinction. Obviously, the first sentence introduces the fact; the second the reason for it. As far as the absence of any reference to Aaron is concerned, it should be noted that it is not said that the Levites were appointed priests; they were put in charge of the tabernacle, much in the same terms as their duties are outlined in chapters 3 and 4.

It is now possible to see Num.1 as a unity. The intention of the author was to describe the hosts of Israel, beginning with a list of its captains and a census of its numbers. Because the priestly castes were of particular interest to him he treated them separately in later chapters, but it was necessary to include a note to

keep them before the attention of his hearers and readers.

In Num.2 the description of the camp has been characterized by Eerdmans[14] as an ancient source. He argues for this view on two grounds. First, in 2.2 there is no fear of the holiness of the tent, therefore it is pre-exilic. Secondly, in 2.34 it is said the Children of Israel set forward though at this time the command to move had not been given. However the first argument is unjustified, for the Israelites pitched round the tent of meeting, not by it and the second argument unfounded for what is described is habitual action, not a specific event.

The question of the unity of this chapter presents some difficulty. The attempt of Baentsch to eliminate the repetition of the numbers of chapter 1 as secondary does not take into account the fact that repetition was no offence to the Hebrew mind. However it is much harder to decide about the possible insertion of v.17, the place of the tent of meeting on the march. It is especially significant that in v.24 Ephraim is said to set forth third, whereas in the present form of the text Judah, Reuben, and the tent of meeting have already gone before. Furthermore v.17 does not seem in agreement with Num.10.17-21 where only the sanctuary is carried in this position.

However, it has already been seen that any mention of the Levites before chapters 3 and 4 has not been to give detailed descriptions of their position, but only to keep them in the remembrance of the audience. Therefore it might have been sufficient to indicate generally where they came without greater precision at this point.

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14 Eerdmans, Numbers, p.107.

As far as Ephraim's moving third is concerned, it is necessary to remember that the attention of this chapter is directed to the four sidedness of the camp. Therefore Ephraim, the third side, was shown as moving third in relation to the rest of the camp, the Levites being irrelevant in this case.

The same desire to keep the Levites in mind accounts for their mention in the general summary in vv.32-4.

Therefore it can be assumed that chapter 2 is a unit designed as part of the picture of Israel in Num.1-4. This is especially evident from its use of the order of tribes in chapter 1, which itself was a literary device.

Very little attention has been drawn to the significance of the peculiar arrangement of the tribes in chapter 2.[15] Obviously it was developed from the description of the temple in Ezekiel.

Bentzen has argued that in the post-exilic period the destruction[16] of the Jerusalem temple records must have had a serious effect, for in the ancient near-east a temple had to be built according to the specifications of the deity. With the loss of the Jerusalem records it was necessary either to reconstruct according to what memories remained or else to invoke prophetic authority for the design of a new temple. Following this suggestion, it seems likely that the description of Solomon's temple in 1 Kings 6-8.13 was preserved by the deuteronomic school precisely for this purpose. Naturally this description was not in accord with that favored by the Zadokite school who invoked a prophet's authority for rebuilding in a different

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15 See G.E.Cooke, Ezekiel, The International Critical Commentary, p.525.

16 Bentzen, A., Studier over det Zadokidiske Praestakabs Historie, in Festskrift udgivet af Københavns Universitet, Copenhagen, Bianco Lunos, 1931, pp.49-50

style to avoid the sins of impurity implicit in the design of the old temple. Inasmuch as the pentateuch as we have it probably represents the compromise between these two views,[17] it is not surprising that it projects its own picture back to the time of Moses, thus gaining an authority more ancient and honorable than Solomon's, yet at the same time accepting the principle of antiquity, thus making it possible to modify Ezekiel's plans.[18]

Here Ezekiel's influence is apparent, for in Ezek.40 the temple is in the middle of two concentric square courts, each with its wall. Here the Levites and the sons of Aaron correspond to the walls of the interior court of Ezekiel's temple, and the secular tribes of Israel to the walls of the outer court. The fact that in Num.3.38 the Aaronites pitch on the eastward side of the tabernacle suggests that not only do they have the place of honour, but also that they alone have the right to sacrifice, since the altar was on the east side of the temple.

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17 Elliger has argued that the description of the tabernacle in Exodus, although coming from Jerusalem temple records, has only been included for the purpose of illustration. "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung," ZTK, 49 (1952), p.130. He is correct in saying that here there is no justification of every instrument and practice of the Jerusalem temple since the description is not detailed and omits items such as the bronze sea that were in the Solomonic temple grounds. However, the extent to which the final author of the pentateuch dwells on this theme would best be explained by attributing to him a desire to preserve or present a sacred pattern for the rebuilding of the temple.

18 For example, as the temple in Ezekiel the temple in the pentateuch lacks some of the objects in the Solomonic temple such as the two pillars in front and non-Levites are not allowed within the sacred area. However, on the other hand the Zadokite priesthood is not the only one recognized in the final form of the pentateuch.

Therefore it can be seen that the purpose of chapter 2 is directly related to that of chapter 1; for it is a description of the formation of the Children of Israel which contains links with the material that precedes and follows. At the same time the very arrangement of the camp, however improbable it might be historically, had a theological significance for the audience for which the pentateuch was designed, for it showed the Children of Israel as a community organized around its centre of worship.

The importance attached to the question of the priestly castes can be gathered from the length and complexity of chapters 3 and 4 which follow the relatively uncomplicated chapters just discussed. In order to understand this product of various rivalries reaching far back into Israel's history, an extended excursus on priests and Levites is necessary.

In the Old Testament cultic officials are called priests and/or Levites, the two terms are sometimes identical, sometimes not. When a distinction is made between the two groups, the priests are known as Zadokites or Aaronites. The general solution is that in some circles at some periods all Levites were priests but not all priests were Levites; that in the milieu represented by Ezekiel the Zadokites were that part of the Levites to which the priesthood was limited; and that in the present form of the pentateuch the distinction between priests and Levites was continued, but the priesthood was enlarged beyond the borders of the Zadokites, priests being called sons of Aaron.

The geneological data in the pentateuch shows the complexity

of the problem of the Levites. In Ex.6.16-25 is the schematic arrangement that became normative.[19] Levi is shown as having three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari from whom stem all Levites. It seems probable that onto these three sons have been spliced units of tradition originally unconnected with the main geneology, for example, the table of the sons of Aaron.[20] Num.3.1-4, 17-21, and 26.57 follow this plan, but in Num.26.58 the sons of Aaron are shown as the Libnites, Hebronites, Mahlites,[21] Mushites, and Korahites which in Ex.6 are grandsons or great-grandsons of Levi. Obviously this different tradition represents another attempt to bring order out of the chaos existing among the Levitical families. This difference in viewpoint shows at the same time the difficulty of arrangement and the necessity for it felt by the Israelites. The continuation of this schematization is found in Chronicles.[22]

There are two important factors here relating to the examination of Numbers. The first is the relative position of Gershon and Merari; Gershon is older but has no grandchildren recorded, whereas on the other hand Kohath is the grandfather of Aaron. This bears on the change of position in Numbers 4, as will be seen below.

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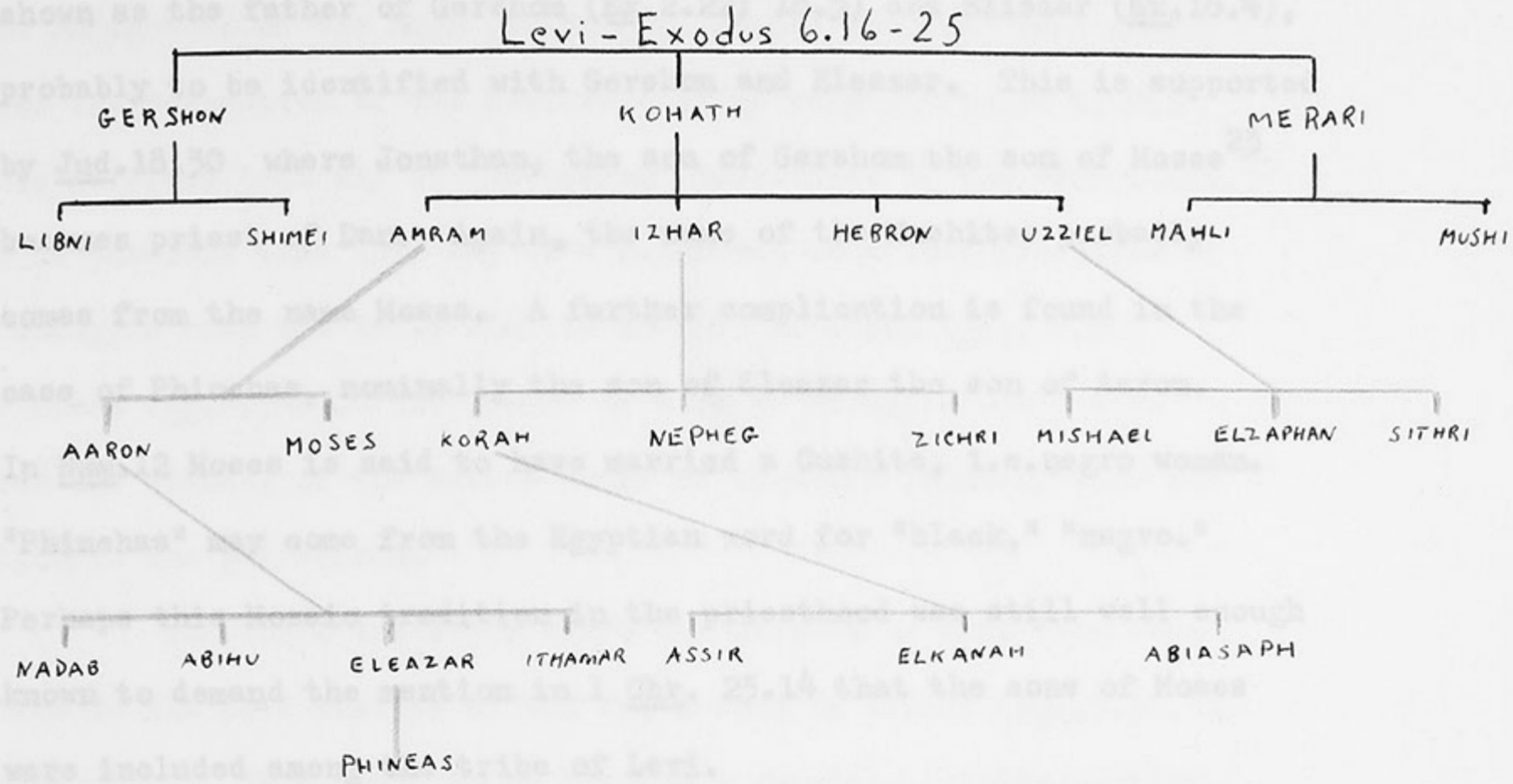
19 See table, p.14 a.

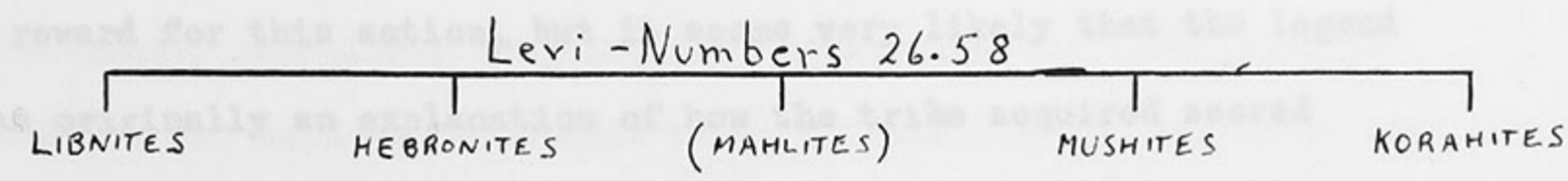
20 For a complete examination of this question see the excellent article of K. Möhlenbrink, "Die Levitische Überlieferungen des alten Testaments," ZAW, n.f.11(1934), pp.184-231. Möhlenbrink's approach may be criticized on two points; first his assumption that different documents followed each other in linear succession; secondly, that the Greek is always preferable to the Hebrew text.

21 Not in the Greek.

22 See Möhlenbrink, ibid., pp.197 ff. It has been argued against Möhlenbrink that this schematisation was not normative for the post-exilic period since Ezra 2.40 and Neh. 10.9f give other geneologies. But in Ezra and Nehemia it is not a question of clans but immediate forbearers.

The Generations of Levi





The other factor is the importance of Moses as a priestly ancestor. which is only thinly veiled by the present format. Moses is elsewhere shown as the father of Gershom (Ex.2.22; 18.3) and Eliezar (Ex.18.4), probably to be identified with Gershon and Eleazar. This is supported by Jud.18.30 where Jonathan, the son of Gershom the son of Moses[23] becomes priest of Dan. Again, the name of the Mushites probably comes from the name Moses. A further complication is found in the case of Phinehas, nominally the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron. In Num.12 Moses is said to have married a Cushite, i.e.negro woman. "Phinehas" may come from the Egyptian word for "black," "negro." Perhaps this Mosaic tradition in the priesthood was still well enough known to demand the mention in 1 Chr. 23.14 that the sons of Moses were included among the tribe of Levi.

It is possible to supplement the information derived from geneologies by considering the remains of what at one time were Levite foundation legends. Gen. 34 and 49.5 do not enter in here because they are not sacral legends.[24] However in Ex.32 the Levites prove their faithfulness by slaying those involved in the golden calf incident. It is not said that they received the priesthood as a reward for this action, but it seems very likely that the legend was originally an explanation of how the tribe acquired sacred functions. No doubt the unfavorable reference to the Aaronites led to a pruning down of the incident.

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23 That the Hebrew text has been changed to read "Manasseh" is shown by the fact that the] occurs above the line. Cp. versions.

24 The relation of the earlier secular tribe Levi with the later sacral tribe remains beyond this investigation; however the balance of probability seems to lie with the theory that a sacral tribe took over the legends of a lost secular tribe because of the chance similarity of their names.

The second Levitical legend as found in Deut.33.8 ff. is very difficult to explain. It is clear that Urim and Thummim, later the prerogative of the high priest (Ex. 28.30; Lev.8.8) were at one time the possession of the Levites. It is very difficult to fit this reference into any of the present narratives of the pentateuch.[25] It is possible that this may be a reference to a lost tradition of a struggle with the deity similar to that of Jacob (Gen.32.24) or Moses (Ex.4.24f). The result of such as struggle would have been the winning of the sacred means of Urim and Thummim, thus the right to the priesthood.

The third tradition about the Levites is that they were given to the Lord instead of the first born of Israel (Num.3.12,41; 8.16). This would be an honorable function for the Levites, since in protecting the first born of Israel they would have a special status. The fourth foundation legend, however, presupposes their subordination, for they are given to Aaron and his sons as a gift (Num.3.9; 8.11-13). Finally in Ezekiel it is bluntly stated that apart from the sons of Zadok, the Levites are to be demoted for their failure to serve Yahweh loyally (Ezek.48.11). The last two traditions are obviously relatively new, but that concerning the first born is related to the ancient wilderness feast of Passover and may therefore have been connected with the ancient wilderness sanctuaries of Kadesh (Meribah and Massah) and Sinai.

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25 See S.R.Driver, Deuteronomy, International Critical Commentary, 1902. Also S.Lehming, "Massa und Miriba," ZAW, n.f.32(1960), pp.71-77.

The process which set up strains within the ranks of the priesthood was a gradual limiting of priestly functions to certain castes.[26] A Levitical priest, once a desirable option (Jud.17.7) became gradually an almost unavoidable necessity (1 Kings 12.31) till it became possible to talk of "the priests, the Levites" (Deut. 18.1 etc.). However complications developed because of the naturalization of the Jerusalemite Zadokite priesthood[27] and the gradual centralization set in motion from the time of the building of Solomon's temple. An increasing number of frogs in a steadily diminishing pond necessarily entailed stratification; for even from the time of Josias the Levites were apparently being subordinated (2 Kings 23.9). During the exile the Levites were probably the sole priests left in Jerusalem whereas the Zadokites had been deported.[28] Bentzen [29] has argued that Ezekiel represented the platform of a small puritanical body within the Aaronites whereas P represented the official platform. However, though it is possible that Zadok is never mentioned in the pentateuch because of the desire to avoid anachronisms, it is extraordinary that Aaron is never mentioned in Ezekiel. It seems more reasonable to suppose that the Zadokites were originally distinct from the Aaronites, although they submitted to being incorporated into the Aaronites as part of the terms of a

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26 See J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels, Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1899, pp.118-49.

27 So H.H.Rowley, "Zadok and Nehushtan," JBL 58(1939), pp.113-141. In contrast E.Auerbach, "Die Herkunft der Sadokiten," ZAW, n.f.8 (1931), pp.327-8.

28 Mal.2.4; 3.3.

29 Bentzen, Studier, p.50.

compromise. Therefore the narrow picture in Ezekiel was the view of all the exiled priests, but the settling on an Aaronite priesthood was the compromise of a century of conflict.

It is now possible to examine Num. 3 and 4 in detail in the light of the preceding discussion.

A short geneological abstract is given in vv.1-3 of Num.3. The occurence of Moses' name is peculiar since no mention is made of his generations. There are two possible explanations; either "Moses" has crept into the text here as "Aaron" has in other parts of Numbers or else a list originally containing the generations of Moses has been shortened. It is relevant to note in connection with this last conjecture that in Ex.6 no mention is made of the sons of Moses although old traditions about them did exist.

Of the four sons of Aaron, two of them, Nadab and Abihu belong together in the traditions. Here it is explicitly stated that Nadab and Abihu had no sons; it seems likely that this is an attempt to forestall or refute claims in post-exilic times to Aaronic descent through the two eldest sons. Originally Nadab and Abihu must have been priesthoods that were destroyed or discredited or both.

Eleazar and Ithamar were the two trunks onto which the post-exilic priesthood was grafted. Möhlenbrink[30] considers that since Ithamar, though nominally the youngest, was shown as the leader of all (Ex.38.21) or part (Num.4.28,33; 7.8) of the Levites, therefore

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30 Möhlenbrink, "Levitische Überlieferung," p.215.

he was originally the chief son of Aaron but was replaced by Eleazar. Certainly in 1 Chr. 24.3 the successful Zadok is descended from Eleazar whereas the defeated Ahimelek derives from Ithamar whose descendants are exactly one half as numerous as those of Eleazar. This seems to be a part of the post-exilic compromise where priesthoods other than the Zadokite were admitted, but on an inferior footing.

The present form of 3.1-4 is closely related to Ex.6.23. However, the special emphasis placed on four sons only, of which only two had issue indicates the polemical direction given to this ancient geneology and the purpose of its inclusion in this chapter. An example of strict application of geneological criteria is found in exclusion from the priesthood of several families in Ezra 2.62

The command to Moses in 3.5-10 is connected with the consecration ceremony of the Levites as described in Num.8.5-22, for in both cases the verb for "present" קרב is used with a cultic significance.[31] As will be shown later, Num.8.5-22 is a complex section resulting from the imposition of a specifically Aaronite interpretation on an old ceremony. Therefore, since the related passage, 3.5-10, shows none of the irregularities caused by the process of this imposition, the passage is best explained as being dependant on Num.8. A sign of the carrying out of the Aaronite interpretation is found in the use of the expression "they are wholly given" נתנים נתנים. In 8.16 the Levites are wholly given to

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31 Against Gray. See Num.8.9, 10 where קרב is used of bringing the Levites to a ceremony which is sacrificial in origin.

the Lord, whereas in 3.9 they are wholly given to Aaron and his sons. The late date of 3.5-10 is further evident from the failure to mention the ark, the carrying of which was one of the main functions of the Levites in Deut.10.8. The origin of these verses, then, can be seen as a literary composition to explain and modify the older passage which follows immediately.

The passage 3.11-13 is composed of two originally distinct parts; a Levitical foundation legend, v.12, and a law relating to the first born, v.13. That these two verses have separate origins is shown by the unexpected reference to cattle in v.13 which has caused much sorrow and travail for the final author of Numbers and modern commentators alike.

Now there are three concepts presupposed by this passage; firstlings, rescue from Egypt, and, implicitly, Passover. The relations among these concepts are far from clear or even agreed upon by scholars,[32] not is it possible here to discuss the question thoroughly. However, three things should be noted. First,the law in v.13 relates to animal first born only.[33] Secondly, it is paralleled by other laws in Ex.13 but literary dependence either way is unlikely. Thirdly, the first born, deliverance from Egypt, and Passover are intimately connected.

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32 See N.H.Snaith, The Jewish New Year Festival, London, S.P.C.K., (1947), esp. pp.13-25.

33 Thus it is not a question here of the festival of unleavened bread. Any discussion of the problem should take into account the difference in treatment and presumably the difference in origin of animal first born and agricultural first fruits.

It is unlikely that this independent law was combined with the Levitical foundation legend by the author of Numbers whose purpose was to show the subordination of the Levites to the Aaronites and who found it necessary to preface this section with vv. 5-10. It is more likely that the uniting of vv.12-13 took place in a Levitical sanctuary where it was necessary to give reasons for why the Levities are separate and why the first born have to be redeemed. It is obvious that the law and the tradition reinforce each other mutually. Furthermore, Passover in pre-Israelite and non-Israelite culture was represented by seasonal apotropaic festivals,[34] that is times when special protections were needed against special supernatural dangers. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Levites in Num.8.19 protect the people from the danger of the presence of the sanctuary.

In vv.12-13, then, there are the remains of an ancient Levitical foundation legend which guaranteed the monopoly of the Levites because they alone were chosen to guard the people from the dangers of holiness in a way similar to that of the Passover lamb in the apotropaic festival. This idea continued in priestly traditions in the repeated affirmation that priests were to protect the people from the sanctuary, but the especial Levitical associations with the first born were dropped when other priesthoods gained the ascendancy.

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34 Snaith, New Year Festival, p.21.

In its present context the ancient tradition represented by vv.11-13 has been inserted for the sake of the Levites, but at the price of the introduction of vv.5-10. Here is another sign of the working out of the compormise between Ezekiel and the deuteronomic school; the Levites could retain the dignity of their traditions, but their position would be subordinate to that of the Aaronites.

The section Num. 3.14-37 has been linked with the preceding parts of the chapter by the emphasis on males one month old and up, i.e. the age after which a child is redeemable (Num.18.16), it being understood in this case that as this is the first time redemption came in, all males over one month would be included.

The geneology in vv.17-20 is identical with that in Ex.6.16-19. What is important is the result of comparing vv.21-26, 27-31, and 33-37 with the Levitical census in Num.26.57-62. In Num.3 are given the genology down the the grandchildren of Levi, the number in the census for each son's house, the place of camping, and the duty to the sanctuary. In contrast, in Num.26.57, 62 are given only the sons of Levi in the geneology and the total number of all Levites without breaking it down into the numbers of the sons' houses. Furthermore, in Num.26 are included irrelevant fragments such as the rival list of the sons of Levi in v.58 and a repetition of the descent of Moses and Aaron in vv.59-61. In general Num.26.57-62 does not have the same form as the sections dealing with the other tribes, but rather is a sort of rubble of heterogenous fragments. It is possible then, that the section dealing with the Levites has been taken out of the original source behind chapter 26 by the final

author of Numbers, modified in terms of his camp ordering, and welded into chapter 3. It has already been argued that Num.2 is modelled on chapter 26. The reason why only this section dealing with the Levites should be borrowed rather than copied from Num.26 is that matters of geneology were of great interest in the case of the Levites, but less important in the case of other tribes.

If Num.26 lies behind this section, then what has been said about the census figure in chapter 1 may be applied here, reducing the figures to 500, 600, and 200 for Gershon, Kohath, and Merari respectively. The position in the camp is all important for the author of these chapters since it reflects his view of the temple. In this respect it is important to note that Kohath has the position of honour next to that of the Aaronites. Similarily in the question of duties the Kohathites have the honour of at least being able to carry the ark and other most holy items. With regard to the pushing and shoving that went on within the ranks of the Levites themselves, it is interesting to note that in number, position, and duty the Kohathites are superior to the other two families, although they are mentioned second. It is probable that the order of names in this chapter was dictated by an ancient geneological list; however, once out of the realm of geneology, as in chapter 4, the order would be changed to correspond more with the actual hierarchy existing among the Levitical families at the time of the writing of Numbers.

In Num.1 the author may have composed a list of heads of tribes. Therefore it is not surprising here that he has done the same. Eliasaph of Gershon may have been copied from Eliasaph of Gad

in Num.1.14, just as Zuriel of Merari may derive from Zurishaddai the father of the prince of Simeon in Num.1.6. However, in line with the policy to use known names where ever possible, the author set down Elizaphan the son of Uzziel (Ex.6.22) for Kohath. Why the sons of Izhar (Ex.6.21) or Elizaphan's older brother Mishael were not used is not clear; perhaps some clan claiming descent from Elizaphan had gained ascendency at the time of writing. At any rate, what is important, is the intention of the author to describe an organized camp in which the ordering of the Levites was in no way less complete than the ordering of the other tribes; therefore it was necessary to find or to invent chiefs of families.

This desire to round off all descriptions would cause the insertion of v.38, the Aaronites who camp on the east side of the camp.

Two other additions to the section call for comment. The first is the faulty addition of the numbers in v.39 where 22,000 appears where Macauley's schoolboy will tell you that 22,300 is the correct sum. Obviously this was done in order to prepare the way for the redemption of the first born in vv.44f. The number of the firstborn of Israel was 22,273 as given in v.43. If the correct number of Levites, 22,300 had been given, there would have been no reason to redeem the firstborn of Israel since there would have been more Levites than firstborn. Therefore the addition has been falsified in the interest of the last part of the chapter.

The other addition is the sudden intrusion of Eleazar in v.32. This reflects the struggle within the Aaronites; for although Ithamar (4.28,33; Ex.38.21) was traditionally in charge of the

subordinate temple Levites, the shift in power in the favour of Eleazar prompted the author to insert Eleazar's name in the section dealing with the most important Levitical family and further to dignify him with the imposing title "chief of the chiefs of the Levites" to assert his hegemony over any other leader.

The section 3.40-51 has been correctly called a casuistic addition to vv.11-13.[35] It had been necessary to include vv.11-13 in this chapter as part of the compromise with the Levites. However there was the danger that anybody hearing this legend would come to the conclusion that it was no longer necessary to redeem the firstborn. Therefore this additional story was created to show that the few firstborn not oovered by the taking of the Levites had to be redeemed in the normal manner for the normal price. The fact that the number of first born Israelites is disproportionate to a population of 600,000 men was not a concern of the author here; his purpose seems to have been to show that even the comparatively small surplus of 273 had to be accounted for. Furthermore in vv.48 and 51 the author has seized another opportunity to assert a right for the Aaronites, namely the gift of redemption money as laid down in Num.18.15-16.

The mention of the cattle of the Levites redeeming the cattle of the Israelites has caused some trouble, for in no law existing in the pentateuch is it permissable to redeem the first born of clean cattle. It has been suggested that this law came from

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35 Baentsch.

a period otherwise unknown when clean cattle could be redeemed, or else that unclean cattle only are referred to here. However, the most likely explanation is that the original legend contained in vv. 11-13 was not concerned with the law of redemption as such but only intended to give a reason why the Levites should be separate from other tribes. Presumably their cattle were also included in this separateness, but with the inclusion of this tradition within a legal corpus the implicit difficulty is apparent. However it is important to note that there is no census of Israelite cattle recorded and in v.46 f. the cattle are no longer mentioned, perhaps on the ground that if nothing is said, nothing will be remarked.

In considering the whole of chapter 3 in the light of the analysis advanced, it is possible to see how it represents the work of a single author rather than a stratification of documents. Certain older traditions such as the Levitical foundation legend and the geneologies were modified and included in the whole, but a single purpose can be seen behind this work. The purpose was part of the over all plan to establish a solid basis for post-exilic Judaism according to the compromises and innovations agreed upon over a period of years. Thus the position of the Levites was inferior, but solidly guaranteed. The exact ordering of the temple could be argued from the camping pattern observed in the wilderness. Fianlly, inconveniences arising from the conflict of foundation legends with actual laws were smoothed over by a special casuistic section. All this can be best explained as the work of a single author or school working at one period in time.

It has been argued that the major part of chapter 4 is simply a literary expansion of chapter 3. However the uneveness of the material relating to the three sons of Levi in chapter 4 plus the intrusion of apparently miscellaneous fragments of information suggest that the problem is more complicated.

The section dealing with the Kohathites, vv.1-15, is different in form and length from the sections dealing with the Gershonites and the Merarites. It seems possible that this section contains an ancient tradition relating to the Kohathite that may date back as far as the time of the united monarchy. It is certain that temples were known in Israel before Solomon (1 Sam.1.9), therefore the traditions attesting the existence of a tent of meeting in the time of David (2 Sam.6.17; 7.2) show that the idea of a tent sanctuary was a living idea that came into conflict with the temple theology. The first part of Nathan's message to David (2 Sam.7.5-7) shows the deep seated objection to a temple where God could be said to dwell. Von Rad[36] has defined the difference between the tent and temple conceptions as the difference between a place where Yahweh would appear when the occasion demanded it and a place where Yahweh was always present as assured by the presence of the ark there.[37] In Deuteronomy the ark is simply a box for the

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36 Von Rad, G.,"Zelt und Lade," NKZ, 42 (1931), pp.476-498. Eissfeldt criticizes Von Rad's conclusion that the ark was a canaanite institution in "Lade und Stierbild," ZAW, n.f.17 (1940/41), pp.190-215. The distinction between tent and temple was made by Max Löhr, "Zum Hexateuchproblem," OLZ, 29(1926), pp.5-6.

37 For the combination of these two ideas in the pentateuch, see A.Kuschke, "Die Lagervorstellung der priesterschriftlichen Erzählung," ZAW, n.f.22 (1951) and K.Elliger, "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung," ZTK, 49 (1952), p.131.

tables of the law;[38] the account of the making of the ark in Exodus also assumes this tradition, though some sort of permanent holiness implicit in the ark idea has been transferred to the Kipporeth, "mercy seat." This would give the historical background for the fact that the latest stratum of the pentateuch has a certain ambivalence as to the appearance of the Lord; it is not clear whether he was always in the tabernacle or whether he appeared from time to time.

Whatever its theological significance might have been, the tent of meeting was transferred to the temple of Solomon along with the other holy objects (1 Kings 8.4). It is therefore likely that traditions about the tent of meeting continued to be preserved which would explain why the materials that were used to construct the tabernacle according to the account in Exodus could be given with such detail. There is no doubt that such traditions underwent a number of changes and that in particular the description of the tent of meeting in Exodus has been brought into line with the form of the Solomonic temple.[39] However in Numbers a separate piece of this old tradition, namely the instructions for dismantling, was used for establishing the authority of the Aaronites and therefore did not undergo modifications with the temple in view. If this explanation

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38 Von Rad, "Zelt und Lade," p.493 states that the idea of Deuteronomy goes back to an older idea of the ark but he does not suggest where this idea may have come from.

39 For example, the entry to the tabernacle was at the end rather than at the side. See A.Alt, "Zelte und Hütten," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel, vol.3, Munich, C.H.Beck, 1959, pp.231-242. Of course the influence of the form of the tent of meeting on the design of the Solomonic temple must not be discounted.

of the curious section in vv.3-14 is correct, it would help to explain two difficulties. The first is the age of 30 given for Levitical service, a direct contradiction to Num.8.24 where the age is 25. The figure may have come from the old tent of meeting source which dated from a time when Levites had the responsibilities of priests. The second difficulty is that the staves were not to be removed from the ark in Ex.25.15; whereas in Num.4.8 the staves are inserted after the wrapping.[40] For a stationary ark in the temple as seen in Ex.25 there could be no reason for removing the staves; in fact from 1 Kings 8.8 it seems that their use was to let the presence of the ark be known. However, in Num.4 the unaltered tent of meeting source envisages an ark that is going to be wrapped up and carried. Therefore the staves are inserted only after the wrapping has been completed.[41]

There are three reasons why this tent of meeting regulation can be considered part of an original Kohathite rather than Aaronite tradition. The first reason is that after an introduction relating to the Kohathite, the Aaronites are suddenly inserted; yet they are not mentioned by name in the body of the instructions as is done in Lev.1 for example. The second reason is that the section 17-20 with v.15 protest so strongly against the Kohathites doing the labour themselves, that it can only be concluded that there was every

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40 Gray suggests that the verb may mean "adjust" rather than "insert." But if the staves are attached to the side of the ark by means of rings, it is hard to see what adjustment could be possible.

41 Whether or not a tent of meeting originally contained an ark is immaterial here since the tradition comes from the Davidic tent of meeting which had had the ark put into it. Furthermore it is also apparent that the ark was taken out from time to time (2 Sam.11.11)

danger of this happening. The third reason is that theoretically the Aaronites were Kohathites; it is probable that they joined themselves on to Kohath in order to obtain Levitical descent; but as part of the process of becoming members of the most powerful Levitical family, it would be natural for them to assume all the prerogatives themselves and to assign their so-called relatives to a lower position in the priestly hierarchy.

The motif of a census of adult Levites in chapter 4 is obviously a literary device of the author of Numbers, for he was faced with the unwieldy tent of meeting tradition that had to be included somewhere. Therefore, as his material was held together by the theme of the ordering of the camp, he could include miscellaneous fragments by postulating a second census of the Levites to set down the exact details of their duties as adults. Whether the numbers given here come from a previous source or are his own invention cannot be said.

The mention of Eleazar in v.16 is the reflection of an ancient priestly tradition. Nominally, Eleazar is a son of Aaron, but there is reason to believe that he was originally the heros eponymous of a priesthood which was only later related to the Aaronite. This is most obvious in Num.19 where Eleazar performs a rite, although Aaron is still alive. In Num.4.16 Eleazar is given a particular duty, the description of which looks like an expanded version of Ex.25.6. What is especially significant is his responsibility for the oil for the light, for the candlestick of the light had more than an illuminatory function. In Ex.40.25,

Lev.24.1-3, and Num.8.1-4 the lighting of the lamp was a prerogative of the chief cultic official. Therefore the giving of the charge of the oil along with the other sacred materials to Eleazar signifies that although he is not yet high priest, his succession to the office is assured. This reflection of ancient priestly tradition found its way into the Kohathite section because of the common subject of the ordering of the sacred objects.

The sections dealing with the Gershonites and the Merarites do not differ markedly from the parallel sections in chapter 3. Most of the differences are explicable as minor elaborations. The formulae at the end of vv.37 and 45 which have Moses obeying his own commands may be the result of a later corruption. The figure of Ithamar appears very little in the pentateuch. From Ex.38.21 we learn that he was once a dominant figure, but is apparent that he has been replaced by Eleazar. The mention of Ithamar with relation to the Gershonites and Merarites is the last faint flicker of the tradition preserved in Exodus.

The origin of chapter 4, then, can be seen as the necessity of incorporating an old Kohathite tradition and modifying it to fit the post-exilic compromise. By the process of association an old Eleazar tradition was also introduced. In order to fit these old forms into the pattern underlying the book of Numbers, the author introduced the device of a second census which necessitated the mention of the other two Levitical clans along with Ithamar to correspond to the Kohathite section. Because there was no material relating to Gershon and Merari other than that already found in chapter 3, the

author had to content himself with more or less a repetition in chapter 4. The form given to chapter 4, then, can be seen as a copy of the form of chapter 3; but it is not just an extension or a reiteration; rather Num.4 is a carefully designed section created to transmit ancient but unwieldy material.

There are three expressions found in the four chapters just discussed and in the rest of Numbers that require explanation.

The first expression is "in the Wilderness of Sinai" which at first sight contrasts with "in Mount Sinai." However it is a question of a fine theological distinction; for after Moses had obeyed the commands he had received on the mountain and had built the tabernacle, the cloud and the glory of the Lord descended upon it (Ex.40.34). This meant that it was no longer necessary to ascend the mountain in order to meet the Lord. This point is illustrated in Lev.7.38; it is said that the Lord commanded Moses on the Mount that sacrifice should be offered in the Wilderness of Sinai. Therefore the difference in formula found in Numbers is deliberate.[42] The one section that seems to contradict this, 3.1, confirms the argument, for the sentence is referring back to the time of the revelation on the mount. The point which the author wishes to make here is that the Aaronite priesthood has existed from the very time of the first revelation to Israel, and therefore such a priesthood is established eternally.

The second expression is "the stranger." The word

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42 Num.1.1, 19; 3.14; 9.1,5; 10.12.

in Hebrew has the sense not of "foreigner" but of someone who does not belong to the same family. For example, in Deut.25.5 the widow is not to marry a zar, i.e. someone who is not of her late husband's family. In Numbers the word refers to the ordering of the cult, for the verb translated "draw near" קרב usually carries a sacrificial significance. Therefore the intention of the ordinance "the stranger that draws nigh will be put to death" is to restrict the priesthood to a certain group of related individuals. The question arises, which group? Here again is a sign of the shifting of authority from the Levites to the Aaronites, for whereas in 1.51 the law relates to the Levites, in 3.10, 38; 17.5; and 18.7 it has been applied to the Aaronites. In Num.18.4 it has been broadened to include both Levites and Aaronites in distinction to laymen. Therefore, this is an ancient law of Levitical sanctuaries which has been given a new meaning by the context in which the author placed it.

The third group of expressions is "the tent," "the tent of meeting," and "the tabernacle" which alternate without apparent reason. It is first necessary to notice that "the tent" was only a part of the whole represented by "tent of meeting" or "tabernacle"; for example in Num.3.25 it is said that Gershon's charge in the tent of meeting shall be the tent, etc.[43] On occasion "the tent" could stand for "the tent of meeting" (Num.9.17; 2 Sam.7.6). On the other hand "the tabernacle" and "the tent of meeting" appear to be synonymous, for the presence of the Lord was manifested in both of

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43 On the basis of Ex.40.19 the reading of the Greek has been accepted here.

them (Ex.40.34).[44] It is remarkable that "tabernacle" in the singular seldom appears outside of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Chronicles.[45] It is possible, then, that "tabernacle was a word used more in late priestly circles, though in usuage it was indistinguishable from "tent of meeting."[46]

If the present analysis is correct in substance, then chapters 1-4 are the work of a single author or a school with a united purpose. The description of the organisation and numbers of the Israelite tribes was not the result of an arid pedantic interest but rather the response to the urgent need among all Israelites for a canonical book describing cult organisation, priestly officials, and, above all, the salvation pattern which had come to play such a large role in their religious life (cp. Is.40). There is no need to postulate a series of editors or redactors. The only additions to the completed form of these chapters were the obvious insertions of Aaron's name next to Moses' and a few textual corruptions. Unevenesses and even self contradictions exist, but both their number and their significance have been over-estimated. In some cases we are dealing with old sources; but not enough evidence remains to postulate documentary sources.

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44 See also Ex.39.32; 40.2,6,29. Kushke, "Lagervorstellung," argues that the"tabernacle"was a later term indicating a dwelling temple in contrast to the old southern tradition of a tent of meeting where theophanies took place from time to time.

45 Six exceptions; Josh.22.19,29; Ps.26.8; 74.7; 78.60; Ezek.37.27

46 See Kushke, op.cit., pp.84-86.

Chapter 2 The Laws in Numbers 5-6

In order to discuss the order and form of the material in Num.5-6 it is first necessary to consider what is known and suggested about ancient near-eastern and Israelite laws.

There is a considerable amount of ancient near-eastern legal material available in Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, etc. of which the Code of Hammurabi is the most famous and the most curious. The distinctive character of this Code led Jirku[1] following Koschaker[2] to argue that there were two distinctive kinds of series of laws. On one hand there is the law code (Gesetzkodex) in which individual laws are united to form a whole with an introduction, conclusion, and definite framework throughout. On the other hand there is the book of rights (Rechtsbuch) which is a simple compilation of laws without any over-riding system. The Code of Hammurabi and the Decalogue in the Old Testament are example of law codes; the Summerian, Old-Assyrian, and Hittite laws along with the Code of the Covenant, the Code of Holiness, and the Code of Deuteronomy are examples of books of rights. Following on from this conclusion Jirku suggested that the laws in the Old Testament now found in books of rights were originally contained in formal law codes whose form was shattered by a process of anthologizing. Thus laws now found in the Old Testament are the

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1 Jirku, A., Das Weltliche Recht im Alten Testament, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann, 1927, p.13.

2 Koschaker, P., Quellenkritische Untersuchungen zu den "altassyrische Gesetzen," in Mitteilung der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft, (E.V.), 1921, 3, pp.79f.

debris of documents originally comparable with the Code of Hammurabi.

Jirku is correct insofar as the Code of Hammurabi is a skilfully arranged drafting of three hundred different rulings, a contrast with the lack of order in other law collections.[3] However, Driver and Miles point out that since there is no attempt to deal exhaustively with every subject of legislation in the Code of Hammurabi,[4] it is not possible to call this work a code of law in the modern formal sense of the term. Hammurabi was a reformer of the law and a legislator; he did not claim to republish the whole existing law in an improved form; rather subjects were chosen because they required amendment or emphasis by republication.[5] If a similar methodology on a smaller scale characterized those responsible for the form of the pentateuch, this would explain how small units of disparate laws could exist by themselves, for they were codified to change or preserve old customs. A hypothetical body or bodies of extensive complementing laws need not be postulated. Furthermore, this method of law writing would account for the fact that apparently small isolated sections of legal material were used in the construction of a document, for they could exist on their own as did other small units of tradition.

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3 It has been questioned whether the Sumerian and Akkadian laws are really collections of laws; they may be legal extracts or a series of school texts. This would explain their disjointed form.

4 Driver, G.R., and J.C.Miles, The Babylonian Laws, Oxford, (1956), vol.1, p.45.

5 For example, the Code deals with a false charge of murder, but not attempted murder; with striking a father, but not parricide. Driver and Miles, op.cit., pp.45-6.

Thus Num.5-6 need not be a detached piece or pieces of Leviticus or any other large legal complex.

Ancient near-eastern law was administered in city states, therefore a large number of legal traditions arose.[6] There would thus be a practical reason for the promulgation of a series of laws of a more "national" or even international application to facilitate trade. This wider code need not have necessarily displaced the local codes, for there is no sign that the Code of Hammurabi superceded local traditions, though no doubt it had an influence upon them.

Mendenhall[7] has suggested the specific occasions in history when a need for the general promulgation of a "code" was felt. The motif of propaganda for the regime may have entered in, for certainly Hammurabi did not allow his kindliness and beneficence to go unpraised at the end of his code. However, as Mendenhall admits, this reason was probably secondary. A more important reason for promulgating a code of law was the necessity to stabilize traditions and incorporate changes after an upheaval in the structure of a society or government. Hammurabi thus consolidated a period of expansion, the Hittite laws marked the transition from the Old to the New Empire, and Samuel laid up the book of the kingdom with the Lord.[8] A similar situation must have existed at the time of the re-establishment of Judah when certainly the Jews and probably the

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6 Mendenhall, G.E., "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law," BA, 17 (1954), p.33.

7 Ibid., p.32.

8 1 Sam.10.25.

Persians would have wanted a precise presentation of the laws governing the religious community.[9] This is reflected in the designation of Ezra as "scribe of the law of the God of Heaven,"[10] if this can be taken as historical.

It is now pertinent to discuss the force that a written law carried in the ancient near-east. It is misleading to compare one of these ancient laws with a modern statute of the realm, for the wording of a law is never cited in ancient legal documents. Ancient near-eastern laws were more rules or norms of which the principle was to followed rather than written statutes whose wording had to be literally interpreted. Assuming that the Israelites had a similar easy going attitude towards verbal exactness, it is possible to understand the inclusion in one canon of different laws on the same subject whose wording varied even to the point of contradiction over details. Furthermore, it is possible that these laws may have been preserved in the same document, even though originally they must have come from different sources.[11]

In the sphere of Israelite law itself suggestions have been made as to its origins, forms, and types by various critics. For the present inquiry it is necessary to consider the theories of Jirku, Alt, Begrich, Rendtorff, and Daube.

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9 Due to the mixture of legal and narrative traditions characteristic of the Israelite culture, it is natural that such a presentation would include narratives as well as laws. The inclusion of both "sacred" and "secular" laws is to be expected at the time of the establishment of the theocracy in Jerusalem, even if there ever were a time when they were distinguished.

10 Ezra 7.12.

11 See H, Danby, The Mishnah, Oxford, 1933, p.xxii for contradictions within the Mishnah. This later collection of oral laws may serve as an analogy with the Old Testament.

Jirku[12] considered that it was possible to distinguish between sacred and secular laws in the Old Testament although in their present arrangement they have been mingled due to redactions undertaken during the priestly theocracy at Jerusalem. This position raises perhaps insoluble problems basic to any study of Old Testament laws. In point of fact we know very little about the legal institutions of ancient Israel. It may be possible to distinguish between different types of law, as will be seen below in consideration of Begrich and Rendtorff, but it is impossible to show that each different type of law was exclusively the property of one group of officials. Samuel as well as holding priestly and prophetic functions also judged Israel, apparently in matters of secular law.[13] Yet it seems improbable that priestly officials were always judges; in fact there is reason to believe that legal duties were carried out by special officials.[14] No doubt from period to period in Israelite history the manner of administering law must have varied a great deal, but it must always be kept in mind that in the Old Testament all law is considered as being sacred, that is given by Yahweh. Even in the Code of Hammurabi there is a relationship, however vague, between the god(s) and law, so there is no reason to postulate a period in Israel when part of the

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12 Jirku, Das Weltliche Recht, p.10.

13 1 Sam.7.16,17. See also Jud.4.5 where Deborah is judging Israel under a palm tree which may have been a sanctuary. Cp. G.Ostborn, Torah in the Old Testament, Lund,Ohlssons, 1945, pp.23-29.

14 Is.1.23; 3.2,3. For the question of the minor judges, see M.Noth, "Das Ampt des 'Richters Israels,'" in W.Baumgartner, O.Eissfeldt, K. Elliger, and L.Rost, eds., Feschehrift Alfred Bertholet, Tübingen, Mohr, (1950), pp.404-417.

law was "secular" as opposed to "sacred." In fact, the organisation of the amphictyony being essentially religious, it seems impossible to escape the conclusion that the laws which governed its members must have had a religious grounding as well.

Jirku argued from the differences in the style of the laws in the Old Testament[15] that originally there existed separate legal codes, each in its own style. However in the compilation of the present pentateuch these old codes were used only as sources for laws which the legislator wished to include. Therefore the old codices were shattered and only their fragments remain.

This theory has the merit of being able to explain how laws as separate as Ex.22.15 and Deut.22.23 or Ex.21.18,22 and Deut.25.11f complement each other.[16] To a certain extent Jirku appears to be correct, but as a blanket explanation of the wide differences in legal terminology his theory will not suffice. He argues that the different forms of laws arose because of the disparate nature of authority in early Israel where different sanctuaries evolved different forms of legal terminology.[17] He explains the unified form of Babylonian, Assyrian, and Hittite law on the ground that these countries were centralized monarchies where one form of law could be imposed. But each of these codes shares with the others much the same form of law. Therefore, apart from the possibility that laws

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15 It must be remembered that Jirku is considering only what he calls "secular laws," but what he has to say could be applied equally to other laws.

16 Jirku, Weltliche Recht, p.34; also pp.47 f. for examples.

17 This linking of laws with sanctuaries is out of line with Jirku's own distinction between sacred and secular laws.

in these countries may not have been as centralized as Jirku suggests,[18] there is no reason why three different countries should have accepted the same legal form rather than differ among themselves.

Jirku's differentiation among types of legal sentences deserves more attention than it has received. He distinguished ten different forms. The first is the familiar "If ... then" type. The second is the equally common "Thou shalt." Third is the "He" formula, e.g. "The man that committeth adultery ... shall surely be put to death"(Lev.20.10). Forth is the curse formula of Deut.27 "Cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image." Fifth is the "You shall," a parallel to the "thou shalt" formula. Sixth comes the jussive form where a third person singular or plural forbids or commands something, e.g. Deut.19.15 "One witness shall not rise up against a man ...." Seventh is the participial law where in an "If... then" law, the "if" phrase is replaced by a participle; e.g. Ex.21.17 "He that curseth his father or mother, shall surely be put to death." Eighth is the form "If ... thou shalt", e.g. Deut.22.8 "When thou bildest a house, then thou shalt make a battlement...." The fact that many such laws are found in the pentateuch shows that this was a well-known style, according to Jirku. Ninth is the "If ... you shall" form which corresponds to the "If ... thou shalt" formula mentioned above. Finally is the second type of"If" clause form which begins with"the man who" as in Num.5.6, There are only about ten examples of this last type of law and Jirku is not certain if it can be distinguished from the regular "If" form.

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18 Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law," p.33.

It is possible to reduce these ten forms to eight by a consideration of the Hebrew idea of the individual which minimizes the importance of criteria of number. According to A.R.Johnson[19] the Hebrews thought of the individual as a centre of power, but never in isolation. Other men were divided into two classes, those in his social unit, and those outside. An individual is a part of a household or a nation to the point where the group becomes a psychical whole. Thus there can be an oscillation between the plural and the singular form without any sense of irregularity. This phenomenon is found in the Tell el-Amarna tablets in a note of the city of Irkata. Consequently the variation between "thou" and "you" in legal terminology is immaterial.[20]

To explain the mixture of legal forms and the confusion between the secular and the sacred in the present form of the pentateuch it is necessary to examine critically Alt's theory of the origins of Israelite laws.[21] Alt begins by pointing out the resemblance between the "If ... then" or casuistic laws and the general form of laws in ancient near-eastern law collections. He considers that such laws are distinctively non-Israelite in origin, for apart from the fact that the style is too longwinded to be typical of Hebrew, there

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19 Johnson, A.R., The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, Cardiff, 1942, pp.11-14.

20 With regard to changes in person in the wording of laws, it is not possible to evoke the article of J. Sperber, "Der Personenwechsel in der Bibel," Zeitschrift fur Assyriologie, 1918, pp.23-33. Sperber's arguments are confined to descriptive passages, usually from the prophets. His thesis is that a change in person indicates a change from description to direct speech. Obviously this has no relation to the subject of legal material.

21 Alt, A., "Die Ursprünge des Israelitischen Rechts," in Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel, Munich, Beck, 1953, vol.1, pp. 278-332.

is no sign in these casuistic laws of the strongly felt national self-consciousness of Israel. These laws treat only of the relation between man and man without considering the organic union that characterized Israel as a community. Furthermore, God in these laws is no longer Yahweh, the God of Israel, but rather the pale Elohim similar to "god" in the Code of Hammurabi. The sphere of these casuistic laws was the everyday secular courts which lay in the hands of the free men of a given village or district. These courts were lay courts in the double sense that there was no specially instituted judiciary and that the priesthood of a sanctuary only entered in when it was a question of a case concerning holy things. From these observations Alt concludes that casuistic laws in Israel were taken over from the Canaanites who held this form of law in common with other peoples of the ancient near-east.

On the other hand Alt considers that the laws in the form of commands "thou shalt," apodictic laws, are specifically Israelite in origin. They envisage Israel as a nation whose God is Yahweh. Such laws are not the product of a writer's fantasy, but come rather from the memory of a sacred ceremony that was still current in Israel. Alt considers this to be the covenant ceremony which probably took place at Shechem.

Mendenhall has argued that historical documents such as have been found are evidence against the probability of Alt's thesis about the origin of casuistic law.[22] Mendenhall points out that whereas casuistic laws in the Old Testament are related to northern

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22 Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law."

and eastern law codes, the laws of the Canaanites such as we know them from Ras Shamra are quite different.[23] At Ugarit Babylonian laws were known because of the trade with the east, but it is unlikely that the Israelites could have derived their legal form from this source. Rather it is more probable that laws in the literary legal form Mendenhall discerns in the Code of the Covenant were brought into Palestine by small groups from the north and east who were not urbanized immediately. Mendenhall supports this thesis by pointing out that the Code of the Covenant reflects the customs, morality, and religious obligations of the north Israelite community before the monarchy rather than the commercial and stratified structure of the Canaanite cities.

Mendenhall explains the presence of apodictic laws in the Old Testament from the analogy of Hittite covenants where a mixture of apodictic and casuistic law exists. He argues from this fact that since Israel's relationship with Yahweh was conceived of as a covenant, that therefore it was natural that such a mixture of forms should be found in its religious documents.

If Mendenhall criticized Alt on the grounds that apodictic laws are not specifically and exclusively Israelite, Rapaport has argued that it is difficult to exclude specifically Israelite characteristics from casuistic laws.[24] In Ex.21.2 there is reference in a casuistic

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23 This is a possible weak point in Mendenhall's argument, for Ugarit was only one city state; it is possible that laws varied considerably in the city states that existed in the territory proper of Palestine.

24 Rapaport, I., "The Origins of Hebrew Law," PEQ, 1941, pp.158-167.

law to buying a "Hebrew" slave. Alt dismissed "Hebrew" here as being another word for "slave," but Rapaport points out that in Gen.14.3, 1 Sam.14.11 and Jonah 1.9 "Hebrew" does stand for an Israelite, thus disproving Alt's contention that the word was never used for Israel's national self consciousness. Furthermore, such special treatment for fellow nationals is by no means unknown in other law codes.[25] Again, there is no reason for excising the name "Yahweh" from the casuistic law in Ex.22.10.[26]

A further critique of Alt can be made from Jirku's observation that the frequence of "If ... thou shalt" shows that this was a recognized type of legal formula.[27] Now this is obviously a hybrid stemming from the two originally distinct types of casuistic and apodictic law. If these two types were as distinct in orientation and sphere of influence as Alt believes, it is difficult to see how their forms could have been confused.

The general conclusions that can be drawn about Israel's laws from the above discussion is that although they may have originally drawn their forms from originally distinct types, nonetheless to judge from the form of the Book of the Covenant[28] there was no

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25 Code of Hammurabi, 280-281.

26 Rappaport also cites Ex.22.7,8 but the reading "Yahweh" is not attested in v.7 and in v.8 only by the Samaritan. The objections Rapaport raises are interesting, but of themselves are not enough to disprove Alt's thesis.

27 Jirku, Weltliche Recht, p.41. See pp.74 f. for example.

28 For the early dating of the Book of the Covenant, see H. Cazelles, Etudes sur le Code de l'Alliance, Paris, Letouzy et Ané, 1946, and literature there cited.

distinction made between the various types from an early period on. Therefore casuistic and apodictic laws must have derived their authority from the same source in the religous and social structure of Israel. This would explain why an offence on a purely secular plane should have to be expiated religiously by a sacrifice as well as by restitution to the offended party.[29] It is possible that Mendenhall is correct in suggesting that it was the covenant which was the concept that held together all law in Israel. However, in dealing with Israelite law it seems that whatever types of laws there may have been, it is not possible to divide into water tight compartments either the source of their authority or the courts that administered them. Therefore even granting the existence of "lay Courts" described by Alt, the laws they administered would be considered only a part of the one system of law that governed the religious and social life of the nation.

Those who have followed on from Alt and accepted his primary positions have been faced with two dilemmas; first, if sacred and secular law were originally distinct in Israel, how then did they get mixed in the present form of the pentateuch; and secondly, if changes in form from second to third person or apodictic to casuistic represent radically different types of laws, how is the difference to be conceived? It is easiest to explain these differences by saying that the Israelites did not distinguish between the sacred and the secular and that early in Israel's history, that is from the time that the covenant characterized its religion, the different legal

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29 Lev. 4.27f.; 5.1f; Num.5.5f.

forms were inextricably mixed.

Begrich's interesting article illustrates the difficulties of Alt's position.[30] He discerns correctly that tora was something which was characteristic of the priests alone;[31] but then he defines tora itself as the distinguishing between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the profane.[32] This had to be made known to the laity as can be seen in Haggai's famous question.[33] Such tora was entirely distinct from any secualar law; therefore the later application of tora to cover all types of law must be due to historical accident. Tora was given in the second person; this is in contradistinction to regulations in an impersonal form which were designed for the use of the priests alone.

Rendtorff carried on the thesis of Begrich,[34] but faced with the difficulty that some laws in the impersonal form are apparently meant for the instruction of the laity, he postulated a subdivision of this impersonal style which he called the Ritual style.[35] According to Rendtorff this was a later development.

Begrich is forced to get round his isolation of sacred and secular law by saying they were mixed later at the time of the establishment of Jerusalem as a sacred community. But the question

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30 Begrich, J., "Die Priesterliche Tora," in P. Volz, F. Stamme, and J. Hempel, Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments, Berlin, Töpelmann, 1936, pp.63-88.

31 E.g. Mic.3.11; Jer.18.18; Ezek. 7.26.

32 For a discussion of other solutions, see Ostborn, Tora in the Old Testament.

33 Hag. 2.12.

34 Rendtorff, R., Die Gesetze in der Priesterschrift, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1954.

35 Ibid., p.77.

remains as to how the priests managed to get control of secular law to such an extent that it became identified with their tora. Rather than argue that the priests took over the law because they controlled the government, it seems more probable that they took over the government because all law was considered part of the religion of Israel and the priests were the religious and therefore legal authorities.

Rendtorff has attempted to save Begrich's division of laws into apodictic and impersonal by arguing that impersonal laws addressed to the laity are a later development. However, although it may be admitted that most if not all of the present "Ritual style" laws are relatively new, it seems impossible to assume that there was ever at time when the laity did not need directing and hence when regulations for that purpose did not exist.

Furthermore, it is not possible to follow Rendtorff's argument that Ritual style laws come from a period when ritual was taken with increasing seriousness. In the body of his excellent study he has shown how the different laws have been altered in order to get them into the uniform pattern of the post-exilic centralized cult. A priori, then, it is not possible to assume that the Ritual laws are a later development, whereas the laws of sacrifice represent a rearrangement and readjustment of older laws. In fact just as the laws of sacrifice may have been changed to simplify the differences between the guilt and the sin offering, so the Ritual laws relating to the conduct of the laity may represent a simplification rather than a development.

Hylmö [36] has suggested how laws were arranged for preservation. From the analogy of "balks" of law known in other legal traditions, Hylmö postulates intermediate groupings between the smallest items and the greater law books such as the Book of the Covenant. These balks were generally of short sentences dealing with the same subject matter, such as the stipulations about sexual offences in Lev.18.6-30 and 20.10-16. These balks can usually be recognized by their distinctive styles.

Apart from this method of collection there was also organic development within the sections of laws themselves, such as is described by Daube[37] and Rendtorff.[38]

Daube points out that in the lex Aquila when it was a question of making an addition to a law that already existed in a code, the additional law was not put between two laws already in this code, but was rather tacked onto the end. The reasons for this method as suggested by Daube are the sheer force of inertia against changing a legal document, the lack of a more advanced legal technique required for amalgamating old and new laws, the fact that ancient laws were often written on bronze or stone which obviously could not be altered, the difficulty for the memory if a break in sequence were introduced into laws preserved orally, and the power of conservatism in any tradition.

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36 As described in Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament, vol.1, pp.222-227.

37 Daube, D., Studies in Biblical Law, Cambridge, 1947, pp.74 f.

38 Rendtorff, Die Gesetze in der Priesterschrift.

Freight car junction such as Daube describes, seems to lie behind the corpus of laws in Lev.18. At first glance the arrangement appears confused, but Daube argues that it is really one law with two appendices, vv.10-16 and 17-18. Such additions to a series of laws may not always be later than the present text of the nucleus around which they gathered. On occasion the whole series might be overhauled and promulgated as a new statute.

This process of overhauling has been described by Rendtorff. Lev.1-5 is a series of laws drawn up for the instruction of the laity whereas Lev.6-7 is another series of laws on the same subject drawn up for the use of the priesthood. In chapters 1-5 a process of systematizing is evident in which laws such as that dealing with the meal offering and the guilt offering have been inserted into a more or less uniform framework.[39] This is not a case of codification properly speaking, but rather a standardizing of the ritual for the instruction of the laity. On the other hand, the laws for the priest in Lev.6-7 are not organized according to any plan, but are rather series of individual ordinances which have gradually been grouped together.[40] The systematization of the first group of laws illustrates Daube's observations about how codes might be overhauled and given a general unity, but the method of collecting rulings seen in the

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39 Rendtorff, Gesetze, pp. 5-23.

40 Ibid., pp.23-4.

second group, Lev.6-7, shows that it is not always possible to expect the same sort of process to be employed.[41]

It is now possible to deal with Num.5-6, a grouping of legal material which suddenly intrudes into the description of the camp in Numbers. In short it consists of four laws; purity in the camp, sacrifice for wrongdoing, ordeal of jealousy, and the Nazirite. At the end of Num.6 is a blessing to be used by the priests.

The incongruity of these two chapters with the preceding part of Numbers plus the apparent incongruity of the laws among themselves have led critics generally to throw up their hands in despair at this point. Gray, Holzinger, and Baentsch are all in general agreement that only the first law, that dealing with the camp ordering, has any bearing at all on the subject of the foregoing chapters and therefore may belong to the general plan of P (P^g). The other laws have been put in by a redactor, but when and why is beyond understanding. Only Gray will go so far as to say that perhaps the priestly blessing at the end of chapter 6 might have been put in its present position to provide a lead back into the main subject. It will be argued that starting from different criteria it is possible

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41 Rendtorff's distinction in the way Lev.1-5 and 6-7 have been ordered can be accepted. But it seems doubtful if there were types of laws solely for the priesthood and types solely for the laity; that some passages have one group in mind more than the other is clear, but it is an exageration to postulate two separate types of Gattungen. Furthermore, in the first five chapters of Leviticus it is doubtful if Rendtorff is correct in describing the laws as intended for the laity, since the detailed account of the actions of the priest would not have had that much interest for a lay person. Lev.1-5, then, is primarily for priests; in Num.15 a law corresponding to Lev.4-5 but designed for the laity will be described.

to arrive at a more satisfactory explanation. However it is first necessary to examine in detail the separate laws in these chapters.

Num.5.1-4 deal with the preservation of the camp from impurity. There is a stylistic peculiarity in that verse 3 is in the second person plural whereas the rest of the section is in the third plural. It is possible that this is an intrusion or what is more likely, a reinterpretation. Verse 3 modifies the law in v.2 by extending it to cover both men and women. Therefore even if the law in v.2 originally referred to a war camp,[42] the law in its present context could not, since women were in the camp. But it seems unlikely that v.2 could ever have referred to a war camp for those unlcean by touching a dead man were excluded, something that could not be enforced during a war. Therefore, the Sitz im Leben of this law was in all likelihood a sanctuary where the exclusion of persons unclean from any cause was practicable.[43] Furthermore, as in the rest of this chapter two other laws are included that centre around a sanctuary, it seems probable that in Num.5 there are the remnants of a group of miscellaneous laws used by a priesthood for the instruction of the laity. This group was brought into the book of Numbers by the final author who added v.3 to prepare the way for the punishment of Miriam in chapter 12 and to bring the laws into his own theological system by basing the demand for purity on the dwelling of Yahweh among his people as in Num.35.34.

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42 Kushke, "Lagervorstellung," p.76.

43 The fact that "camp" is used here does not disprove this theory. The land surrounding a sanctuary where pilgrims would camp would be considered sacred and therefore to be kept free of uncleanness. Therefore a regulation to this effect would exist.

The law of restitution in Num.5.5-10 has to be discussed in relation to the laws of the guilt offering in Lev.5, a chapter which certainly presents the appearance of a house divided against itself.[44] The most important points of similarity are: all sin as an offence to Yahweh, the use of the root מעל, the confession of sins,[45] and the ram of the offering.[46] There are differences in phraseology such as expressing "sin against the Lord" and"commit sin," but the most important deviation of Num.5 from Lev.5 is in the meaning of אָשָׁם . In Lev.5 the asham is a type of sacrifice similar to the חַטָּאת or "sin offering."[47] Consequently in Lev.5 asham is translated "guilt offering." However, in Num.5.7,8 asham refers to the restitution given for a wrong done; the sacrifice is the same, a ram, but it is called "the ram of the atoning," a term which does not appear in Lev.5.

It is important to note that in 1 Sam.6.4 f. when the Philistines offer an asham to the ark of the Lord, it takes the form of precious

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44 Apart from the commentaries, see Rendtorff, Gesetze, pp.17-9. The basic problem appears to be how to explain Lev.5.1-6. Baentsch, Leviticus, would eliminate it; but Lev.5.5 is related to Num.5.7; see f.n. 45, 46.

45 Lev.5.5 but not in Lev.5.20-26 which envisages offences similar to the ones discussed in Num.5.

46 Lev.5.15,18, and 25 but not Lev.5.1-6. Consequently Num.5.5-10 stands as a bridge between the two series of laws in Lev.5.

47 For a full discussion of "sin" and "guilt" offerings, see G.B.Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Tesamtent , Oxford, 1925, pp.55-66.

metal, which has more the character of a restitution than a sacrifice since obviously it could not be burned on the altar. It therefore seems likely that Num.5.5-10 stems from a different or earlier tradition that Lev.5, for although it is probable that the term originally applied to restitution should be extended to cover the sacrifice that accompanied it, it seems less likely to argue in the opposite direction that a technical term for a sacrifice became debased.

If the preceding argument is valid, there is no longer any question about whether this section was designed as a supplement to Lev.5. However, there remains the problem of what was the intention of proclaiming such a law and whether it is presently removed from its actual context. It is obvious that it is asumed that the hearer/reader already knows about the goat that is to be offered; it is also possible that the principle of 6/5ths is taken as common knowledge. What is envisaged is the rights and dues of the priest. It has therefore been argued that originally this law must have stood in a context which contained a series of regulations about such indemnities and sacrifices. However, it should be remembered that ancient near-eastern law was not codified in the modern sense of the term; laws were proclaimed to re-emphasize old customs or to introduce changes. Here it obviously a question of settling a dispute between the laity and the priesthood in the case that payment of restitution to the injured party or his heir was not possible. Laws dealing with restitution in general were probably understood; only their modification

needed to be codified. Therefore there is no reason to postulate a context for this law other than the one in which it now is.

The stipulation about the priestly dues is divided into two parts, vv.6-8 dealing with the asham, and vv.9-10 dealing with the wave offering. The mention of the wave offering in this context presents the difficulty that there was no wave offering associated with the guilt offering or any sacrifice similar to it.[48] Consequently the regulation about the wave offering must have been added to this section in the course of its transmission. The question is when? If תְּרוּמָה is taken as a general term for an offering given to the temple,[49] the addition might have taken place at any time. But it is unlikely that all the temple offerings would have been given to the priest who happened to receive them; therefore it is more likely that the heave offering here is the heave offering and thigh in Lev.7.14 and 32. This section, then, was added by the final author of the pentateuch and is another sign of his concern to assimilate all existing legislation to the form he established in the first chapters of Leviticus.

In conclusion, Num.5.5-10 represents an ancient law preserved in a series of miscellaneous rulings. This set of rulings was incorporated into the present pentateuch, but the author seized the opportunity to add to this law in order to reinforce the right of the

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48 The fact that the sacrifice described in Num.5 may not have been, properly speaking, a guilt offering is immaterial here. Only a peace offering provided wave breasts and heave thighs and a peace offering would not have been given as an atonement for sin.

49 Cp. Ex.25.2; 30.13; Neh.10.40

individual priest, perhaps to prevent favoritism of the stronger party's members in the unequal settlement reached between the Zadokites and the other priests.

The chastity ordeal, the last section in this chapter, abounds in doublets and unclarities. Before discussing possible analyses of this section it is first necessary to consider two possibilites; first, whether laws in other ancient near-eastern collections can throw some light on the subject; and secondly, whether all the discernable laws underlying this chapter are of the same type.

Chastity ordeals were not confined to Israel. Sumerian,[50] Babylonian, and Assyrian[51] ordeals are known, but the two most striking parallels are found in the Code of Hammurabi:[52]

#131 "If the husband of a married lady has accused her, but she is not caught lying with another man, she shall take an oath by the life of a god and return to her house."

#132 "If a finger has been pointed at the married lady with regard to another man and she is not caught lying with the other man, she shall leap into the holy river for her husband."

Driver and Miles explain the difference between these two laws according to the situation envisaged. In the first case a woman is accused by her husband without much evidence; here she only has to take an oath. In the second case, however, the circumstantial evidence is much stronger and she has to undergo the river ordeal which was far more extreme. In this connection it is important to

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50 Kramer, S.N., "Ur-Namu Law Code," Orientalia, n.s. 23, 1954, p.48.

51 Driver, G.R., and Miles, J.C., The Assyrian Laws, Oxford, 1935, p.86.

52 Driver and Miles, Babylonian Laws, vol.2, p.53.

note that in Num.5 both an oath and a drinking of holy water are mentioned.[53] As the oath by itself is known in the Old Testament,[54] it is possible a priori that an analysis of Num.5 will reveal two types of law analagous to the Babylonian laws quoted above.[55]

In discussing the material in the present form of the chastity ordeal, Rendtorff considered that it was uniform in style throughout, namely "Ritual style."[56] By this he means that the whole of this section, however different its origins, was meant from the first to be instruction for the laity. However this conclusion can be challenged on two grounds. Rendtorff showed that Lev.6 and 7 were designed for the instruction of the priesthood rather than the laity,[57] for detailed descriptions of priestly actions would be of no interest to non- priests. But in Num.5.17, 18,23,and 26[58] occur just such regulations; the preparation of holy water and the enactment of rites would have no interest for the laity. Furthermore in Lev.6 and 7 there is the recurring phrase "This is the tora of...." In Num.5.29 the same words are found. Consequently in any analysis of the chastity ordeal the priestly regulations must first be separated.

In the analysis of sources in the chastity ordeal there

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53 In a country without a large river it would be natural to expect that drinking holy water would replace being thrown into the holy river. River and drinking ordeals are parallel.

54 Ex.22.8,9.

55 This does not necessarily imply direct influence one way or the other.

56 Rendtorff, Gesetze, p.62.

57 Ibid., p.25.

58 Also probably a large part of vv.19 and 20.

are two divergent methods. The first is that of Stade[59] who began from the two terms applied to the meal offering in v.15 and from there worked out two parallel rites. On the other hand Holzinger,[60] followed by Press[61] and Rendtorff,[62] divided the meal offering from the drinking of holy water and postulated two similar but not parallel ceremonies. This latter solution is to be preferred, for as Stade himself pointed out, the two rites are concerned one with a woman who is probably guilty and the other with a woman whose guilt is not so sure.[63] Therefore a certain difference in the rites is to be expected; the fact that such a distinction is found in the Babylonian laws cited above reinforces this conclusion.[64]

Robertson Smith[65] has suggested that the ultimate origins of the drinking of holy water for an ordeal may go back to the sanctuary at Qadesh or En Mishpat.[66] The name "En Mishpat" means "fountain of judgement" and is associated with "Meribah," "waters of controversy." It could be added to this arguemnt that the hapax

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59 Stade, B., "Die Eiferopferthora," ZAW, 15(1895), pp.166-178.

60 Holzinger, Numeri.

61 Press, R., "Das Ordal im Alten Israel," ZAW, n.f.11 (1933), pp.121-140; 227-255.

62 Rendtorff, Gesetze, p.63.

63 A complete analysis is not possible. But the general lines are probably thus: woman suspected on slight evidence, vv.14, 15a, 21, 25, 28; woman suspected on stronger evidence, 12, 13, 16, 24.

64 W. Robertson Smith, Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, London, Black, 3d ed., 1927, p.180 mentions the Asbamaen springs near Tyrana and the Stygian waters in the Stygian desert as tests of perjury. In the first case it was necessary to actually drink the waters; in the second it was sufficient to swear by them.

65 Ibid., p.181.

66 Gen.14.7.

legomenon of "water of holiness" could be translated "water of Qadesh." But even if this conjecture is true, it does not explain the addition of the dust of the sanctuary or the dissolving of the words of the curse. Here there has been a combination of traditions from several sanctuaries of which Qadesh is the only one now identifiable.

The literary/tradition history of this chapter can be conjectured as follows. Originally there were two short laws on trials of chastity that were in the same collection of laws as the other two laws now in Num.5. One chastity trial law related to a woman suspected without much evidence, the other to a woman against whom some evidence had been produced. The first law entailed simply a meal offering and oath, the second the drinking of holy water. However, there was also a third law relating to the chastity ordeal, namely the instructions for the priest in the preparation of the holy water and the general carrying out of the rite. This priestly regulation was added to the two meant for the laity, but as the rites were not commonly used,[67] the laws were fused together rather than ordered in a row; the resulting confusion in the present text is apparent. It is possible that this confusion took place at the time of the writing down of laws previously oral. There is nothing to indicate the time of this process except that it had little relation with the author of the present form of the pentateuch or his predecessors. The differences in usage and terminology, such as

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67 It is significant that this rite disappeared in Judaism. According to the Mishnah, Ṣotah 9.9, it was abolished by Johanan ben Zaccai in the last third of the first century.

the dry meal offering of barley rather than fine flour which was to be waved, the names given to this offering, and the use of holy water all show that the milieu from which these laws came was different from that which produced the regulations in Lev.1-7.

The history of the law of the Nazirite in Num.6.1-21 is strikingly different. It reads coherently in its present form, for it consists of three sections which follow each other in logical order. The first section, vv.1-8 treats the general conditions of the Nazirite; the second, vv.9-12 the ceremony in case of accidental pollution; and the third, vv.13-21 the rite for the termination of the Naziritship.

The literary structure of this section, however, although ordered, is not uniform throughout. In vv.1-8 after the introduction in vv.1-2, there is a general law about the Nazirite abstaining from wine in v.3 and then there follow a series of small regulations each introduced by a similar formula "All the days...." The unity of this series suggests that here there is an ancient set of rules incorporated into a more recent context.[68] In vv. 9-12 a uniform pattern with an offering like that in Lev.5.7 is evident except for the curious excursus on the guilt offering in v.12.[69] The third part of this section is also uniform throughout and in close agreement

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68 So Rendtorff, Gesetze, p.63; against this Baentsch.

69 Verse 12 lays down that at the end of the period of the vow the Nazirite shallbring a male lamb as a guilt offering or "for guilt." In Lev.5.6 the individual's guilt offering was a female lamb. Verse 12 stands in contrast to vv.13f. which lay down fully the rite for the termination of the Naziriteship. The verse is best explained by accepting the conjecture of Rudolph in the Biblica Hebraica that the words "he shall bring ... sin offering" as an addition to the text.

with Lev.1-7 except that there are traces of older ceremonies, such as the method of the presentation of the Nazirites offering and the burning of his hair.

The general idea of a Nazirite as found in this section is a layman who takes a special vow for a limited period of time, whether as an act of devotion or even as the result of a bet. However, the evidence from pre-exilic times suggests a different sort of Nazirite. Both Samson[70] and Samuel[71] appear to have been life long Nazirites[72]; furthermore, their function was more important than that of an enthusiastic layman.[73] But from these two examples it is impossible to decide whether the Nazirate was always life long of whether there were two types of Nazirite.[74] Nor is it possible to conclude that Nazirites were originally men only. Nonetheless, the impression remains from the little evidence remaining that Nazirites had an important function, for in Amos 2.11 they are put on an equal footing with the prophets.

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70 Jud.13.5; 16.17. Samson is the only person in the Old Testament who is specifically referred to a a Nazirite.

71 1 Sam.1.11. There is no mention of wine prohibition here. Even if Samuel's birth narrative referred originally to Saul, the tradition of Samuel at Shiloh must refer to Samuel alone.

72 It can be argued that Samson was only called a Nazirite later in Israelite tradition due to the accidental resemblance of Num.6 to his vows. C.F.Burney, The Book of Judges, London, Rivington,1920,pp.342-5.

73 The traditions about Samson as a warrior must be treated with caution, for they are in the form of popular legends. It is possible his reputation as a fighter gathered around the sanctuary which honowed him. Note the feat of Shamgar in Jud.3.31 which is similar to Samson's use of a jaw-bone in Jud.15.15.

74 It is not sure if Absalom in 2 Sam.14.26 can be considered a type of Nazirite, for no mention is made of any vow or sacral function in connection with his wearing his hair long.

It is therefore possible that the Nazirites were cultic officials in temples or holy places. This would explain the similarities between the laws in Num.6 and those in Lev.10 and 21 that demand abstinence from wine for the priests and prohibit defiling as a sign of mourning on the part of the high priest. A remnant of this cultic function may exist in the regulation allowing the Nazirite to offer his own hair on the altar.[75] The specifically Israelite orientation of this office is perhaps discernable in the forbidding of all products of the vine, for wine festivals seemed to have been common in Baal and even Yahweh worship.[76] As cultic officials there is no reason why Nazirites must always have been men; they may have been in some respects the equivalent of the Canaanite holy men and women. As to the duration of the Nazirate, it is possible that like the priests as seen in Lev.10.9 Nazirites were always Nazirites but at times were not on duty.

In Ezek.44.20 it is forbidden for a priest to either shave his head or to let his hair grow long. It is possible that this last regulation was an attempt by priestly circles to bring some order into the ranks of cultic officials by depriving persons such as the Nazirites of priestly prerogatives. At any rate, just as the cult prophets may have later become the temple singers, so the Nazirites may have been reduced to the position described in Num.6.

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75 For possible significance, see Robertson Smith, Religion, pp 483-485.

76 In 1 Sam.1.14 Eli thinks Elkanah is drunk.

The literary basis of Num.6.1-21 is that the four laws of vv.4-8 which were probably very ancient, were introduced by a later addition of vv.1-3. The law of cleansing after accidental defilement may have an older basis, but is present terminology is in line with Leviticus. Similarily, apart from the hair offering, the law of the accomplishment of a Nazirite's vow is cast in terminology standard for the latest strata of the pentateuch. Therefore, Num.6.1-21 represents the reworking of an old law by the present author of Numbers in order to stabilize cultic organisation by eliminating a possible rival to the priesthoods.

The priestly blessing in Num.6.22-27 is unexpected in its context. Therefore it has been suggested that originally the blessing stood after Lev.9.22 where Aaron blesses the people.[77] However, if there was little reason for a P source to put the blessing in its present position, there would be even less for a redactor to transfer it there. In the face of a lack of evidence, a pure conjecture has to be made in any attempt to explain this section. If there is any connection between the blessing and the law of the Nazirite, it is apparent that this connection is neither literary nor logical. However, it is possible that it may be historical, that is, that originally the blessing ascribed to the priests was the blessing used by the Nazirites in their cultic functions. This would explain why some psalms which came probably from cultic but not necessarily

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77 So Gray.

priestly milieux, contain numerous parallels to this blessing.[78] The sun metaphor in the blessing would be a further indication of Nazirite connection if a sun cult relationship of the Nazirites can be established through Samson whose name comes from a root meaning "Sun."[79]

If this hypothesis is true, then the position of the blessing becomes understandable. The priestly author who is responsible for the final form of the pentateuch weakened the Nazirate as a religious force by making it temporary and by attributing its characteristic blessing to the sons of Aaron. Because it was impossible to dispose of the Nazirites entirely, their position like that of the Levites was weakened by depriving them of their prerogatives.

It is now possible to take a general view of Num.5 and 6. In Num.5 there are the remains of four short laws which have been developed at an intermediate period of their history before being inserted into their present context. It is probable that originally they were preserved together in an oral form, for they all deal with the same subject, that is uncleanness or sin on the part of a man or a woman. Furthermore, there are catchwords that lead from one section to another, שָׁכַב in vv.2 and 6; "commit a sin" in vv. 6 and 12.

In contrast to this section chapter 6 contains an ordering

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78 Ps.4.7; 31.17; 44.4; 67.2; 80.4,8,20; 89.16; 119.135.

79 See Burney, Judges, pp.391 f. But Burney seems to have carried his arguments too far, for it is possible to resemble the sun god without being him.

of a sacral institution which was welded roughly to chapter 5 by the catchwords "man or woman" (5.6; 6.2; also 5.3?). The two chapters were put together in their present position as a part of the guiding plan of the author of the final form of Numbers. The law about the purity of the camp fitted in with his desire to foreshadow the purity required of the temple. The other three laws attached to it were dragged in in the wake of the first; they were allowed to remain in because force of tradition demanded their inclusion somewhere and there was no immediate reason to separate them from their traditional context even if that were possible. The Nazirate had to be regulated in favour of the priestly notions of the author, and the traditional blessing was added not only because the plan of the camp was a suitable place for it, but also to show that only the priests had the right to use it.

Chapter 3 Numbers 7 - 10.10

These chapters which describe the events immediately preceding the march out from Sinai are arranged according to the chronological scheme of the author or according to the similarities in their subject-matter. The gifts of the princes and Aaron's charge of the lamp are related to the service of the sanctuary and the position of the Levites. The law of the supplementary Passover is included here because of chronological considerations, and finally the Lord's presence over the tabernacle and the making of the silver trumpets prepare theway for the beginning of Israel's wanderings.

Chapter 7 poses two problems; first, how if at all does it fit in with the chronological scheme of the pentateuch; and secondly, why are there two distinct gifts mentioned, the carts and oxen along with the oblation of sacred articles and sacrifices? It is necessary to consider first the gift of the wagons in vv.1-9.

There are two places in the history of Israel where it is said that the ark was transported by wagons, 1 Sam.6 and 2 Sam.6. In both cases the custom may have been non-israelite; the first time it was done by the Philistines; the second by David after he had taken Jerusalem and adopted its Jebusite customs. It is possible that at one time the ark was transported in processions in a wagon and that the author wishes to hide this fact. Therefore he puts the donation of the wagons after the anointing of thesacred implements to show that the wagons were never treated as valuable in themselves; furthermore, they are alloted to the Levites inversely according to

the value of the material transported; neither the ark nor the holy vessels themselves ever touch the wagons. Therefore in vv.1-9 there are the remains of an early sanctuary tradition relating to cultic wagons that the author found offensive. Consequently he minimized the importance of this tradition by separating the carts from the consecration of other cult implements and by obscuring the significance of this gift by combining it with the far longer section of the donation of far richer gifts. In any discussion, then, it is necessary to distinguish between the first gift and the second.

Now it has been argued that this chapter is chronologically out of order. In Ex.40.2 it is explicitly stated that the tabernacle was finished on the first day of the first month; in Num.1.1 the date is the first day of the second month; therefore as Num.7.1 refers to Ex.40.2, it is exactly one month out of sequence. But Num.7 is too closely connected with Num.1-4 to be a displacement, therefore it has been judged a later addition.[1]

But it is not said that the two different gifts were given on the same day. In fact this is impossible; for although Num.7.1 cannot refer to any other date than the first month of the first year, 7.10 and 84 cannot refer to this same date since the action they describe covered a period of twelve days. Num.7.88 seems to have admitted this by saying "after it was anointed." The difficulty seems best explained by assuming a difference of more than a month

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1 Von Rad, G., Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch, BWANT, 4:13, 1934, p.94.

between the two gifts. Verse 1-9 then are to be understood in the pluperfect; "The princes had given wagons, now for the dedication they gave...." The reason for the juxtaposition was the theological bias of the author.

This interpretation is grammatically possible despite the translation "in the day that it was anointed" in v.10, for the expression here can refer to a general period.[2] Furthermore, the ceremony called "dedication," חֲנֻכָּה[3] apparently took place after anointing to judge from 2 Chr.7.9.[4] It is important to note that this word does not occur in relation to the first gift which would have been expected if the two gifts were given simultaneously for the same purpose.

Chapter 7, then, is a result of the theological principles of the author of the final form of the pentateuch. Forced by weight of tradition to include the story of a gift he found distasteful, he diverted attention from it by removing it from the context of the anointing of the sacred vessels and by emphasizing a later, more innocuous gift as being more important.

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2 Admittedly this usage is not common. But see Holzinger, Genesis, p.24 on Gen.2.4; compare also Gen.35.3 where Jacob's distress must have lasted more than one day. This translation in Num.7.10 was first proposed by Stade.

3 "Ḥanukkah" also refers to the gift itself in v.10. This is normal Hebrew usuage, compare "sin" and "sin offering;""guilt" and "guilt offering." Therefore there is no need to postulate a redactor for v.11 as does Holzinger.

4 See also Neh.12.27. The ceremony in 2 Chr. takes place eight days after the anointing in the same month. Here it is a question of the following month, but if the tradition of beginning on the eighth day was envisaged, this would explain the date for the departure from Sinai, for if the dedication began on the eighth day, it would not be finished until the 19th, therefore the departure took place after this, namely on the 20th (Num.10.11).

The lighting of the lamp by Aaron[5] in chapter 8.1-4 may be an attempt to emphasize the post-exilic seven branch candlestick against the previous ten branch model used in Jeruslaem.[6] Certainly in Zech.4.2 the seven branch form seems to have been connected with the hope of restoration. However, as seen in relation to the note on Eleazar in Num.4.16, the duty of lighting the candlestick seems to have been connected with authority in the priesthood. Therefore the point of the inclusion of this section before the installation of the Levites is that Aaron must at all times be shown as the superior in priestly functions. Therefore there is no need to postulate any dislocation of this text.from Lev.9 and 16.

Num.8.5-22 describes the cleansing[7] and installation of the Levites. This can in no way be considered a repetition of Num.3 and 4 for although in the earlier chapters Moses was commanded to set the Levites apart for special service, it is not said that he installed them into that service by a apecial rite. The taking of the census cannot be considered an installation. Therefore this section dealing with the rite of the initiation of the Levites comes naturally within the plan of the author. Attempts have been made, most recently by Von Rad[8] to divide this section into two different

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5 For other texts on the lamp see Ex.25.31,37; 27.21; Lev.24.1-4.

6 Eerdmans, Numbers, p.119.

7 Note here the root √קדש used of the priests in Ex.29.1 is not employed. This is a further sign of the loss of priestly dignity by the Levites.

8 Von Rad, Priesterschrift, pp.95-97.

parallel rites. Now it is apparent that the text as it stands is confused, and different strands can be separated out. But against attempts to find parallel rites it can be argued that here there are two different types of rite mingled together, one rite referring to the ancient tradition of the Levites offered for the first born of Israel, and the other rite referring to the exilic compromise which gave the Levites a place subordinated to that of the Aaronites.

It is first necessary to examine similarities between this section and chapter 29 of Exodus which deals with the consecration of priests.[9] In Exodus also it is a question of the offering of a sacrifice and the washing. However what is striking is the mention in Ex.29.24 of waving a wave offering.[10] There is no question of an accompanying heave offering as in post-exilic practice,[11] although this is added in vv. 26 and 27, consequently it is apparent that the root for"wave" had a significance in the consecration of cultic officials in ancient Israelite rites.

At the same time certain differences can be noted between the installation of priests and that of the Levites. The Levites are cleansed with the "water of sin" a hapax legomenon in the Old Testament, but perhaps referring originally to a rite similar to that

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9 Lev. 8f., being more systematized according to the notions of the author of the final form of the pentateuch, contains fewer ancient remnants.

10 In Ex.29.24 it is grammatically possible to make the priests the object of the verb "wave." This is an unlikely interpretation of Ex.29, but perhaps the unclarity is the cause of the peculiar command in Num.8.11,13,15,21.

11 Lev.7.34. Here the wave and heave offerings are appendages to the peace offering.

described in Num.19. The sacrifice of the Levites is two bullocks, rather than one bullock along with lesser animals for the priests. Other differences between the rites of the Levites and the priests can best be attributed to the work of the framer of the present text.[12] Enough has been said, then, to establish that underneath the present text of Num.8.5-22 there are the remains of an ancient rite for consecrating priests which was re-organized in favour of the degrading of the Levites effected in the post-exilic community.

Much of the text is confused, but vv.19-22 are perfectly clear. They express the view of the final author that the Levites were given as a gift to Aaron to act as servants to the priesthood. Verses 16-18 are also clear; here we have the traces of the early foundation legend of the Levites as the first born which accompanied the Levitical ceremonies in the period that the Levites were Priests. As in Num.3 this legend has been combined with that of the Aaronite gift to obscure its original meaning. Verses 5-15 which describe the rite itself are inextricably confused. As has been seen from the comparison with Ex.29 there are traces of an earlier rite preserved here, but this has been confused by the addition of Aaron's superior part in the rite. It is not possible to reconstruct the rite en toto, but it is likely that the "waving" once done to the sacrifice of the Levites has been applied to the Levites themselves; this would explain the sudden and illogical changes from the Levites to the

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12 For example, the Levites have to wash their clothes because they apparently have no distinctive sacred vestments as the priests.

bullocks to the Levites in vv.11-13.

Therefore in Num.8.5-22 there are not two parallel rites confused one with the other, but rather an original rite conferring priesthood on the Levites which has been interpreted and interpolated by the author of the present form of Numbers. From the obvious confusion that would make the instructions unintelligible, it seems reasonable to deduce that a repetition of the dedication of the Levites was not envisaged as was the rite for the high priest, Ex.29.29f. This is another example of slurring over of Levitical importance in favour of the priests.

It has been argued that since Num.8,23-26 puts the active age for Levites at 25-50, whereas Num.4.3 envisages the ages 30-50, that therefore Num.8.23-26 is a later addition. Now it is incontestable that Num.4.3 must come from a tradition where the minimum age for an active Levite was 30. It is also likely from a comparison with 1 Chr.23.24,27 * that 25 was the minimum age envisaged in post-exilic Judaism, perhaps for the reason that there was a lack of personnel for the temple service. However, although originally the tradition behind Num.4.3 must have set the 30-50 limits, in the text as it stands today this is not precisely what is said. What is said is that the Levites from 30-50 were numbered; it is not laid down that only Levites from 30-50 were allowed to do the service of the tabernacle. Probably the tradition of the Levitical census has ancient roots just as that of the secular census[13]; therefore it is not

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13 See the discussion in chapter 1.

* It is interesting to note that in 1 Chr.23.3 only Levites 30 years and older were actually numbered. This shows dependance of 1 Chronicles on Numbers here.

surprising if the ancient 30-50 rule survived in it. Consequently there is no reason here to postulate Num.8,23-26 as a later modification; the author included the ancient Levitical tradition in Num.4 which is a witness to a practice but not a law itself, whereas in the actual regulations concerning the Levites he added the present law to change the original custom. This fits in with the ancient oriental legal practice of codifying emphasis or change.

The supplementary Passover in Num.9.1-14 has been described as anachronistic and unexpected in its context. It is argued, correctly, that 9.1 gives a date about one month prior to the opening of Num.1. Therefore a displacement of some sort is postulated. However, 9.1-5[14] forms the introduction to 9.6-14; it is the supplementary Passover which is important here, not the institution of the Passover itself which is alluded to only briefly. Therefore the most probable understanding of vv.1-5 is to read them as a pluperfect; the Lord had instituted the Passover; now one month later was the time for it to be celebrated by those who were hindered beforehand. Consequently the time scheme of the author is not violated but maintained. It should be noted that this section dealing with an action tha takes place in the second week of the month is correctly placed after the gifts of the princes which started to take place in the first week.

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14 There is an exegetic problem in relation of Num.9.1-5 which in its present form is somewhat confused; note especially the abrupt sentence after v.1. Von Rad (Priesterschrift, pp.97-99) has argued that this confusion is the sign of the combination of two original versions, one giving the command of Yahweh, the other the carrying out of this command by Moses and the people. However, a command of the Lord to Moses followed by a command of Moses to the people need not necessarily indicate two documents. It is more likely that the confusion here is due to a textual error.

The lack of connection of this section with the rest of the context should not be pressed too far. The author was faced with a series of miscellaneous laws that had to be fitted in somewhere, and chronology alone was a sufficiently logical system for him.

The Passover stipulations in themselves do not diverge from what is given in Ex.12; what the author obviously has in mind is the addition to these stipulations. This addition is important for two reasons. First it shows that the post-exilic Jewish community was aware of the Diaspora and the problems involved in the frequent journeyings of Jewish merchants. Secondly, the fact that a law has to be interpreted casuistically shows that it has already acquired a certain firmness. This casuistic method, grounded in a specific revelation of Yahweh to be sure, characterizes the work of the author of the present form of Numbers,[15] showing how he was already beset with the problem of a hardening and unified legal tradition. This makes even more unlikely the possibility of addition or change once the final form of the pentateuch was generally agreed upon.

The rest of chapter 9, the description of the dwelling of Yahweh over the tabernacle is simply a repetition and elaboration of the description in Ex.40. This was stylistically effective in view of the large amount of material that separates Ex.40 from the actual beginning of the march from Sinai. The elaboration is not "childish"[16]

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15 Cp. Num.15.32; also Lev.24.10f.

16 Baentsch.

but is simply repetition for the sake of emphasis.

The position of the section dealing with the trumpets forms a natural introduction to the march. Trumpets, long tubes with flaring ends, were probably more post-exilic instruments as opposed to the curved horns used earlier.[17] Here there are four general usages for them; assembling the princes and the assembly; giving directions for the marching of the camp; calling for divine help in battle; and marking the principal sacrifices. It is probable that several uses have been run together here, in particular vv.8 and 9 look like an earlier regualtion that the author added to his own stipulations. This lumping of traditions could not have done otherwise than to increase the importance of the trumpets in use in the post-exilic temple. One wonders whether this section may have been compiled purposely to add to the veneration of two particular trumpets in use at the time and which may even have come from the pre-exilic temple and thus have acquired a tradition of Mosaic origin.

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17 Gray.

Chapter 4 Narrative and Organisation - Numbers 10.11-36.13

The resumption of narrative in Num.10.11 entails a consideration of the documentary hypothesis and its alternatives before this section of Numbers can be discussed. Over the past fifty years, let alone the two preceding centuries, so many different theories have been advanced to explain unevenesses in the form of the pentateuch that giving them all a fair consideration simultaneously when examining a passage is as complicated as three dimensional chess. The only consoling factor is that the presumably erroneous assumptions of the earlier critics are as obvious to us now as our own erroneous assumptions will be fifty years hence. To be fair, not all the members of the "literary-critical" school were as unregenerate as is sometimes suggested. The statement "Denn die mündliche Überlieferung, nachdem sie einmal auf Schrift gebracht war, stand doch nicht plötzlich still, sondern entwickelte sich, nunmehr in Wechselwerkung mit der Schrift, noch weiter und nahm auch ganz neue Stoffe von aussen auf, die dann demnachst wiederum literarisch fixiert werden." would not be out of place even in advanced lands north of the Baltic, though in fact it comes from the heros eponymos of the literary-critical school, Julius Wellhausen.[1] The general tendency in this century has been to abandon the more detailed analysis of the text into documents and to take into account other methods of transmission of material. This is necessary, for if it is admitted that P contains much older

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1 Wellhausen, J., Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der Historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments, 3d ed., Berlin, Reimer, 1899, p.14.

material, the question arises of how this material was preserved if it was not in J or E. Perhaps the Code of Holiness existed in written form, but other traditions are too small and disparate to have been written and may well have been preserved separately in oral form until the time of the exile. The discussion at the present time concerns the extent to which the distinction between documents is legitimate and whether these can be considered as "documents" in the traditional sense of the term or if it might not be better to regard them as the deposits of various circles of traditionalists which were fixed in writing about the time of the exile.

It is not possible to give a complete history of pentateuchal criticism here, but it is convenient to discuss the types of approach that are possible in the examination of the narratives of Numbers.

The "classical" solution, of course, is to attribute differences of style and unevenesses of narrative to the combination of originally independent written documents. Such differences and unevenesses could come from the documents themselves or from the redactoral process of their combination. A further possible explanation was the insertion of hitherto oral material into a document sometime during the process of its transmission. Generally the tetragrammaton of JEDP, the four main documents, was accepted, but the number of sub-documents or redactions varied according to the critic's estimation of how "neat" the process must have been. For example, Smend[2]

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2 Smend, R., Die Erzählung des Hexateuch Berlin, Reimer, 1912, pp.4-5.

remarked that although the followers of Wellhausen recognized different strata in J and E, they were unwilling to say definitely which passage belonged to which stratum.. Consequently it was not possible to arrive at the Urgestalt of these sources. In other words Smend preferred a neater solution with all the lines of development clearly defined.

Working within the bounds of the literary-critical school, Volz and Rudolph[3] put forward another solution. Volz described three principles governing his method; first, that small differences and repetitions arise from glosses or the insertions of additions; secondly, that it is possible for a single narrator to include several variants of the same theme in his narrative; thirdly, that more important irregularities come from a re-editing of a work. Thus E is in no sense a document; rather he is the editor who added to the previous work of J.[4]

The critical observations of the literary-critical school remain the foundation of pentateuchal criticism, whether or not the theory of documents is accepted. The method of Smend is too extreme for it results in putting every text on the procrustian bed of a documentary origin. For example in Num.10 his judgement that the repetition of Moses' request to Hobab must be explained as coming from another document different from that containing the first request is

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3 Volz, P., and W.Rudolph, Der Elohist als Erzähler ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik?, BZAW 63, 1933 and Rudolph, Der Elohist von Exodus bis Josua,

4 Volz, op.cit., pp.22-24.

artificial in the extreme. The method of Volz and Rudolph has perhaps more validity; in any case they throw light on some difficult passages.

Von Rad[5] and Noth[6] have attempted to get behind the literary documents composing the pentateuch by examining the influence that led to the writing of a history of Israel. Von Rad pointed out the liturgical character of certain historical summaries such as Deut.26.5 f.; 6.20-24. The work of J was to transform these into a coherent story at the time that they came unstuck from the cultus. Along with these details J spliced in or added the Sinai, patriarchal, and primaeval traditions. Thus although J may have had written documents before him, his work can in no sense be conceived of as a gradual process; rather it was a radical departure.

Noth modified and extended Von Rad's study. Noth argued that in Genesis to Numbers there are five themes around which the traditions grouped themselves. These are: the leading out of Egypt, the leading into Canaan, the promise to the patriarchs, the leading in the wilderness, and the revelation at Sinai. Of these the leading out of Egypt is the most referred to and therefore the most important; the leading into Canaan has far less weight put upon it, and the sojurn in the wilderness is the weakest of all. Noth's main criterion for distinguishing older traditions from newer, probably literary growths, is the extent to which these traditions are firmly anchored

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5 Von Rad, G,, Das Formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch (1938), in Gesammelte Studein zum Alten Testament, Munich, Chr. Kaiser, 1959.

6 Noth, M., Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1948.

to a given place. Each of these themes that gathered up the smaller traditions acquired additional material inbetween the time that it was first established and the time that it was combined with the other themes to establish the main outline of the pentateuchal narrative. Noth suggests that these themes grew independantly of each other,[7] so to prove the antiquity of a given section in the pentateuch, it is necessary to trace it back into the original theme where it was imbedded. A tradition that extends over several of these theme collections much have begun in one, and then later seeped into the others when all the themes were united.

Eissfeldt has written a lengthy examination of the Von Rad-Noth method of approach[8] in which he makes two extremely acute observations. The first is that apart from the question of whether or not the historical creeds or their predecessors are dependent upon the form of the pentateuch, there is no convincing reason why they must be regarded as the root of the pentateuch. Secondly, Eissfeldt notes the difficulty Noth has to explain the process of the joining together of the five major themes. This difficulty can be easily avoided by attributing a continuous narrative of Israel's history to the necessity in cultic centres of reminding the people of the divine guidance that had brought them into their land. In this regard it is also probable that the historical order of events has been in

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7 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.67.

8 Eissfeldt, O., "Die neueste Phase in der Entwicklung der Pentateuchkritik," in Theologische Rundschau, 18 (1950), pp.91-112; 267-287.

general well preserved.

It is certain that Noth's theory of the five main themes is a useful critical tool for the examination of the pentateuch, but one can wonder if these themes ever had a separate existence apart from the unity they now compose.[9] Noth points out that in the rest of the Old Testament, the exodus theme is the theme par excellence for referring to the saving work of God; but does a reference to the leading out of Egypt stand for no more than the series of events which brought Israel to the other side of the Red Sea? It seems more probable that a reference to the exodus would and was meant to conjure up the whole picture of Israel's sacred history starting from Egypt and going through to the conquest of Canaan. Again, Noth is obviously correct when he talks of the spread of a given idea out of its original context; the murmuring of the Israelites is one such example. In Num.11.1-3 the idea of murmuring has been superimposed on the Taberah story.[10] However, it may be questioned whether Noth is correct that the murmuring of Israel was a motif that helped fill out the wilderness theme only at a later stage of its development. It may be possible to find traces of an old Moses saga, it will be argued below, in which a rebellion against his authority actually took place. This rebellion motif probably

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9 Here the Sinai complex must be excepted.

10 Noth considers that the motif of murmuring is most firmly rooted in Num.11.4-36, though even here it is the result of a false etymologie. Great oaks from little acorns grow, but this is asking too much. Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.135.

"infected" other narratives; but it can be anchored more firmly than in a mistaken etymology.

Whereas Von Rad and Noth still move within the bounds of the "classical" solution to the extent that they try to explain the origin of J and E conceived of in traditional terms, Pedersen[11] attempted to make a complete break with the tenants of literary criticism. He argued that it is not possible to judge the history and thought of a given period, even if it were possible to recover the exact documents which it produced. This is because laws might possibly have been superceded by the time that they were written down. Furthermore some laws were probably written which were never enforced - pious hopes or anachronistic reconstructions. Thus J and E as well as having living material also contain speculations and fictions. Much of this non-living material is late, particularly the thought of the reward of obedience to Yahweh, a thought which can only be post-exilic. It is impossible to date documents in the pentateuch; tests such as non-Jerusalem sanctuaries, anthropomorphisms, and vivid narratives all fail. Therefore the documents in the pentateuch are both pre-exilic and post-exilic in that they received their present form and some material in the post-exilic period but that they contain much older material. Therefore it is not possible to arrange them in a chronological order; rather they must be taken together to give a picture of the varied nature of the Israelite cultus.

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11 Pedersen, J., "Die Auffassung vom Alten Testament," ZAW, 1931, n.f. 8., pp.161-181.

Pedersen insists strongly on the false presuppositions which have mislead critics; however it can be doubted if his own presuppositions can lead to all truth. For example, is it axiomatic that the idea of Yahweh rewarding his faithful must be post-exilic? It is difficult to come to grips with Pedersen's theory for he did not argue it out fully but rather stated it as a possible method of approach.

The enfant terrible of Old Testament criticism is undoubtedly that group of critics who using the traditio-historio method, take a special pleasure in dragging the dead bodies of their predecessors around the arena. The starting point is roughly that oral tradition and cult orientation of most parts of the pentateuch account for peculiarities once thought indicative of different documents. Thus doublets, unclarities, and contradictions are the deposit of oral transmission and stylistic changes; for example, various forms of the divine names are not accidents of origin but rather the result of deliberate stylistic or theological motifs.[12] Engnell quotes with approval Nyberg's judgement that the pentateuch is a large composition of tradition stuff from all times, whose form is no doubt late, but whose parts are entirely old, in no part younger than the time of the kings.[13] Unfortunately despite unanimous rejection, not to say

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12 Engnell, I., Gamla Testamentet, Stockholm, (1945), pp.191-9. See also A.S.Kapelrud, "Pentateuch-Problemer," Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift, 56(1955), pp.185-201.

13 Engnell, Testamentet, p.209. The starting point has obviously been the comparison with the transmission of texts in Iranian religion. See H.Ringren and A.V.Ström, Die Religion der Völker, (German translation by I. Ringgren and C.M.Schroeder), Stuttgart, Kröner, (1959), pp.162-188. Such comparisons are not in themselves invalid; however it can be objected that Engnell has interpreted the Old Testament in the light of Iranian religion far too uncritically.

derision of the documentary hypothesis, no adherent of the traditio-historio method has yet produced an extended work on the pentateuch.

In discussing the narrative in Numbers it is well to begin with the obvious, that is in Numbers as in the pentateuch as a whole the narrative holds all the material together. This is most extraordinary, especially when the comparison with the Ras Sharmra[14] and other ancient near-eastern texts is made. It is probable that in order to explain their differences from the inhabitants of Canaan, the Israelites were thrown back on their own history to give a backbone to their faith.[15]

However it must be emphasized that this does not mean that Israel had a religion of history or that there was even a clear notion of "history" in our modern sense of the term.[16] In the present period when the idea of history seems a pleasant release from the difficulties of Idealism, it is almost impossible not to conceive of Israel's religion in terms of a philosophy of history. This in itself is not illigitimate; it may lead us to a better understanding of the Old Testament; but it should in no wise be forgotten that our interpretation would have been strange if not incomprehensible to an author of the Old Testament. Writers in the Old Testament had a fair amount to say about other religions, but never did they reproach

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14 See J. Gray, The Legacy of Canaan, Vetus Testamentum, Supp. V, Leiden, Brill, 1957.

15 Gray, op.cit, p.115 makes the interesting suggestion that the god El in the Ras Shamra pantheon was the deity of a conquering people who overran the worshippers of Baal. El was given nominal place of honour, but all the attention came to be centred on Baal. This illustrates the powers of assimilation of the Baalism with which Israel had to deal.

16 See J. Pedersen, Israel, Oxford, (1926), p.490.

anybody for having adopted a mythical as opposed to a historical view. Furthermore, there is no doubt from Gen.1 and other passages that up to a late period in their development the Israelites had mythological sacred stories; and it is even possible that a figure such as Rahab may have come from a purely Israelite mythology.

This caveat having been established, it can be said that this reliance upon narrative distinguishes and characterizes the first author in the pentateuch, be he J,G, etc. Gunkel[17] was correct in considering J as a collector of material and its servant rather than its master in the sense that J did not alter old traditions. But J is more than a mere collector inasmuch as this theology led him to construct his narrative, for the sense of the story of Israel's wanderings is that God fulfils his promises in history, that events move towards a goal.[18,19]

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17 Gunkel, H., Genesis, in Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, ed. W.Nowack, Göttingen, Vandehoeck und Ruprecht, 4th ed., n.d., p.lxxxv.

18 Jacob, E., La Tradition Historique en Israel, Montpellier, Faculte Protestante, 1946, pp.110-114.

19 This discussion, if correct, establishes J as a document with a definite theological outlook which may well be the work of one man. It does not however bring out the author as an individual. The attempt to do this was made by B.Luther, "Die Persönlichkeit des Jahwisten," in E.Meyer, Die Israeliten and ihrer Nachbarstämme, pp.105-173. Luther's method was to isolate J passages which presumably had been composed by J himself and then to discuss at length J's ideas. However, apart from the difficulty of deciding what J must have composed, the amount of material available does not justify the conclusions Luther drew such as to J's "natural" outlook on history as opposed the the "supernaturalism"of miracles (p.125). In literary criticism of works in modern languages where much more is preserved of an author and where at least some details of his life are known, it is still a perilous task to decide what prompted him to include what passage in his work. How much more then the the speculations about several small passages not even preserved in their original context from the pen of an unknown author whose date and place are matters of the widest critical divergence.

The theological outlook and method of this first document of the pentateuch continued to give the form to succeeding documents, however much their thought climate and purpose may have differed. But is it possible or even legitimate to try to get back to the first narrative and then to describe the successive stages of development?

The historical probabilities are manifold. At one time the ur-narrative must have been composed. This ur-narrative was then transmitted orally or by literary means[20] and underwent changes according to the sanctuary where it was preserved or the period in which it was related. Every suggested sort of modification is possible; combination of narratives, additions to narratives, redactors, editors, fusions of versions of different traditionist circles, etc. Therefore not only J_1, J_2, J_3, E_1, E_2, E_3 etc. are possible, but X. Y. and Z as well.

But what are the chances of investigating this process? Obviously it is not possible to recover everything; it may not be possible to recover as much as earlier critics may have thought. The reasons are clear. If two documents were spun together, how much evidence is there afterwards for their disentanglement, for if passages are rearranged or rewritten for the sake of the united work, nothing short of omniscience can ever disentangle them. Again, a passage once left out is lost forever; but this passage may have been important for understanding the thought of the document in which it occurred. When it is argued that the process of the growth of

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20 For a thorough discussion of oral and written tradition, see J. van der Ploeg, "Le Rôle de la Tradition Orale," RB, 54(1947), pp.5-41.

the pentateuch is far more complicated than a simple union of two documents, then the impossibility of exact analysis is evident. Certain traces of older documents can only be admitted, such as Gen.4.26b, without ever there being the hope of recovering their ancient form.[21]

However, this does not mean that Old Testament criticism is all vanity. It has come to be realized that the history of the development of documents is not the only tool for the history of Israel and its religion. Ancient traditions existed before documents and these have come down to us often surprisingly well preserved,[22] however much their context may be strange to them. At least some main currents in documentary development are evident, even if exact analysis is not always possible. Finally, there is the final form of the pentateuch which has been surprizingly neglected in the history of Israelite religion. The attempt will be made to analyse the narrative of Numbers according to its traditions, documents, and final form.

Num.10.11-28 is the continuation of the camp description in Num.1.1- 10.10. This has always been ascribed to P, but it has been argued that Num.10.11-28 is not a unity within itself and different analyses have been proposed. However, in the light of the argument for the literary unity of the preceding chapters, there is no compelling reason to divide this section into literary strata.

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21 See Bentzen, Introduction, vol.2, p.29.

22 Gunkel, Genesis, lxxxv.

It has been argued that vv.11 and 13 both record orders for the breaking up of the camp and therefore come from different strands, that v.12b is misplaced and probably came after v.28 which seems incomplete, and the vv.17-21 give a different verson from that in Num. 2.17. The opposition between vv.11 and 13 is exaggerated; in the text as it stands v.13 forms a pendant to the general description of the marching out in v.11 and 12. The purpose of v.13 is homiletic, to point out that Israel's guidance is to come from Yahweh alone, but that this guidance comes by means of Moses. The purpose of the pentateuch as a whole being the strengthening of the religious convictions of Judaism, it was necessary to emphasize as much as possible the factor of divine guidance and that its source lay in Moses, i.e. the pentateuch. Baentsch argued correctly that v.12b is not a displaced but an anticipatory statement which is not out of place in the present narrative. The general allotment of duties in vv.17-21 does not differ from the duties of the Levites in Num.3; the case for attributing these verses to another P stratum is that in Num.2.17 all the Levites march in the exact middle of the camp whereas here only the Kohathites are in the centre, the Merarites and the Gershonites being one contingent ahead. But in Num.2 the emphasis is one the arrangement of the secular tribes; the general principle is that the holy things are protected by having them in the middle. In chapter 10 where a description of the march out is given, the general principle with regard to the holy things is expanded so that only the most holy

are in the centre.[23] Finally v.28 is not incomplete; it is a general description which leads naturally onto the adventures that follow.

With vv.29-36 begin again the older sources which were taken up into the work of the final author. This section, or at least a part of it, must have originally stood next or close to Ex.33, for it describes the march from Sinai that was to begin after the theophany to Moses. In Num.10.29-36 there are two parts; one is Moses' request to Hobab; the other is the ark leading the host. For one reason or another Hobab's answer to the second request is not given, but from Jud.4.11 it is likely that at one stage of its transmission the legend showed Hobab as going up with the Israelites. It was concluded from the two methods of leading that here is the combination of two different documents, J and E.[24] Smend[25] even went so far as to attribute the two requests to Hobab as the sign of two strands within J. There is no doubt that different traditions

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23 This is a more reasonable explanation than that of Gray who argued that the tent etc. would be sent ahead so that the holy things would not be unsheltered in the evening. Gray himself notes that they sould still be unsheltered in the morning, and suggests that this fact was overlooked by the author of this passage.

24 That everything that is not J must be E resembles the statement:

> Every little boy or gal
> Born on this earth alive
> Is either a little liberal
> Or else conservative.

This gives ammunition to those who claim that the isolation of sources is not the result of a critical investigation but rather the result of assuming a priori that documents exist to be found. See Volz, Der Elohist, p.16.

25 Smend, Erzählung, p.188.

are represented here, but this is not conclusive proof that two different documents stand behind them. Rudolph argues that two methods of leading could exist in a single narrative;[26] for example in Num.9.17 and 10.2 there are two signals for the departure, yet they are ascribed to the same document.

Num.10.29-32 is a tribal tradition in contrast with vv.33-6 which is a cultic tradition basically. The mention of Hobab and Reuel raises the difficulty of Moses' fathers-in-law, for varying according to the critic, Moses can have up to five fathers-in-law: Reuel,[27] Jethro,[28] the man,[29] the priest of Midian,[30] and Hobab.[31] In this passage the problem is further complicated because Hobab is by implication a Midianite whereas in Jud.4.11 he is represented as a Kenite. Again in v.29 one would expect "his father-in-law" for "Moses'-father-in-law." The explanation given by C.A.Simpson[32] is extremely complicated and leaves itself open to the objection that if the process was so involved, is it possible

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26 Rudolph, Von Exodus bis Josua, p.63.

27 Ex.2.18; Num.10.29; the same name is used for a son of Esau in Gen.36.4,10,13,17 and 1 Chr. 1.35,37.

28 Ex.3.1; 4.18; 18.1,2,5,6,9,10,12. Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p. 201 considers that the name "Jethro" comes from a misreading of Ex.4.18

29 Ex.2.21.

30 Ex.2.16; 3.1; 18.1.

31 Num.10.29; Jud.4.11

32 Simpson, C.A., The Early Traditions of Israel, Oxford, Blackwell, 1948, pp.220-222.

to reconstruct it? Following from Meyer's argument about the original form of Jud.1.16[33] Simpson considers that originally the story concerned the invitation of Moses to the Kenites to accompany the Israelites (J_1). Later J_2 introduced the motif of guiding and changed the eponymous "Cain" to"Hobab the Kenite."[34] A still later editor made Hobab into the father-in-law of Moses to increase his importance, thereby entailing the work of a yet later redactor who harmonized this with the Exodus Midianite father-in-law by making Hobab also a Midianite.

Noth[35] takes a different approach to the problem. He argues that originally Moses' father-in-law was nameless; therefore his figure was not bound up in any very ancient tradition. In Num.10.29 there is not even a late tradition represented, for the passage only serves to join together two themes, revelation at Sinai and meeting with Midian. For this occasion the father-in-law, as theme-binder, was given a name, something lacking in the earlier traditions. Thus, along with the story of the leading by the ark

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33 The argument stands or falls on the observation that "Hobab the Kenite" could not have originally stood in Jud.1.16 as is suggested from Jud.4.11 plus manuscript evidence, because in Jud.1 a tribe is referred to by its eponym and not the gentilic in "i." Therefore "Cain" must have stood in Jud.1.16. But Jud.1 has the character of a disparate collection rather than of a literary unity from which deviations could be treated as abnormal. Furthermore, see Gen.9.25 for Canaan as an eponymous figure.

34 It is questionable if the Israelites made a distinction between an eponymous figure and a historical or legendary character.

35 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, pp.201, 222-4.

the Hobab section here is a device to bind together two themes into the continuous story.

There is little doubt that the original form of this narrative has been changed in the interests of "harmonization," but it is not sure whether these changes were to bring the story into agreement with earlier mentions of the father-in-law. If they were, they were surprisingly badly done; it scarcely solves the problem of two to four fathers-in-law to add yet another, Reuel, to the total. The interest of the changes seems to revolve rather around the Midianites. These were a nomadic people, living generally east of the Jordan, whose raids were a terror to the settled Israelites, as is seen in the Gideon cycle in Judges. The Midianites were distinct from the Amalekites, a similar marauding people whose home was in the desert south of Judah; but in Israelite thinking the Amelekites were grouped with the Midianites.[36] The Kenites were also a nomadic people living in the south of Judah, but they were uniformly regarded as allies of the Israelites and thus were spared by Saul.[37] In no biblical passages are the Kenites mentioned with the Midianites with the possible exception of the passage under discussion.[38] Apart from the father-in-law passages the Midianites were always referred to as hated enemies in the Old Testament, e.g. Is.9.3; Ps.83.10.

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36 Jud. 6.3,33.

37 1 Sam.15.6; see also 1 Sam.27.10; 30.29.

38 For a defence of the hypthesis of the Kenite origins of Yahwism which involves the running together of fathers-in-law and the linking of Midianites and Kenites, see H.H.Rowley, "Moses and the Decalogue," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 34 (1951), pp.81-118, and From Joseph to Joshua, London, British Academy, 1948.

But it seems probable that at one time the Midianites were allied with Israel or with a part of it, though later in the time of the judges this alliance must have been repudiated. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that in later redactorial activity the Midianites would be introduced in a favorable light into a passage where they had not been mentioned before. This is a further objection to Simpson's theory.

It is argued plausibly that in Ex.2.18 Reuel is a later insertion on the basis of Num.10.29. It is also claimed that in the Numbers passage he has no ancient connection with the tradition. Thus he disappears as an entity; he is just a name chosen at random for no clear reason. However, it is to be doubted that Reuel can be disposed of this cheaply, for the question remains unanswered of why a random name should be slotted into a tradition already sufficiently complex.[39] The answer seems to be that Reuel had at one time a tradition or series of traditions centering around him and that this passage is what remains. Whether or not "father-in-law" of Moses is original to this tradition is unsure; the awkwardness of the construction may indicate that the ancient legend recognized him as connected with Moses but did not include Moses in this narrative. When the section was brought into the leading in the wilderness theme the join was not made clearly.

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39 This holds true even if some or all of the other names for Moses' father-in-law are attributed to other documents. If no other names were known, why was Reuel's chosen. If other names were known, there would be no good reason to gratuitously invent one.

The history of vv.29-32, then, may be reconstructed as follows. A tradition of Reuel the Midianite guiding the Israelites under Moses or another leader existed. This tradition was too well known to be eliminated entirely, but national pride could not admit help from a hated Midianite; therefore Hobab, apparently a known Kenite figure, was spliced in. The conclusion of the section may have been amputated for the same reason, or because of the juxtaposition of the ark tradition.

The ark tradition in vv.33-36 contains a description of the march and an ancient cultic song. The description must come from a source other than the author of Num.1.1-10.28, for the ark goes ahead instead of remaining in the centre of the camp. Nevertheless in v.34 the hand of the final author is seen for here it is insisted that the cloud, the sign of the presence of Yahweh, remained over the camp itself.[40]

The description of the ark going three days' journey ahead of the Israelites seems to be the result of a dittography in the text as Gray pointed out.[41] In the rest of the pentateuchal narrative the ark as a war vessel figures only in Num.14.44, though in Josh.3,4, 6,7, and 8 it also plays a large part. It is therefore difficult

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40 Nonetheless the cloud is not necessarily to be separated from the ark, for in 1 Kings 8.7-10 the bringing of the ark into the holy of holies produces the cloud of the theophany.

41 Meyer, Israeliten, p.64, argues that the three days' march was a Kadesh tradition that was related to Sinai. However that this expression can serve as an argument for J in documentary analysis is doubtful, for three days' march was the period sufficient for purification from ritual uncleanness. See 1 Sam.21.5.

It is therefore difficult to say whether the leading by the ark is a sign of a particular document. This may be true, but there is not enough evidence to use this as a criterion.

Noth[42] considers that this absence of a definite tradition about the ark as leader means that this passage with Num.14.44 is a later addition because it was necessary to include the ark. This addition was made at the time that the great themes were welded together into a coherent story. Now even if Noth is correct in this judgement, there is no doubt that the ark lay far back in Israelite traditions, both for leading in war and in cultic ceremonies.[43] It is also certain that when the ark was destroyed with Jerusalem by the Babylonians that Israelite writers did their best to minimize the loss by minimizing the importance of the ark. Therefore it is possible that the explanation of Noth's observations is not the lateness and therefore scarceness of traditions but rather the determination of post-exilic authors to draw attention from the ark. A further explanation may be that in the early narrative it was not thought necessary to mention the ark's importance after describing it once, except in an extraordinary case when it was absent. Therefore it is more likely that the ark played an important part in the earlier documents describing the wanderings of Israel.

The ark song of v.35 appears to be very ancient. It resembles the opening verses of Ps.68 and may go back to primitive

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42 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.224.

43 Cp. Jos.3,4,6,7, and8; 1 Sam.4,5,6,7 for war usage; 2 Sam.6 and Ps.24.7 (?) for cultic.

war and cultic usage.[44] It is interesting to note that Ps.68 is one of the few places outside of the pentateuch where Sinai is mentioned in the Old Testament; therefore any attempt to attach this tradition to a Kadesh cycle seems unconvincing.[45] A further point of interest is that Mount Zion is linked with Sinai, apparently to suggest in Ps.68 that both mountains are of equal importance. This may in some way be the answer to the problem of the absence of Sinai in most of the Old Testament; when David took Jerusalem, the Sinai legends and cult were transferred to Zion.

The link between the ark song in vv.35-6 and the ark tradition of v.33 may not be a relatively late fabrication.[46] No doubt they represent different Gattungen, but it is hard to believe that songs for the ark ever existed without some sort of prose explanation of the ark for the worshippers. Therefore v.35f. may have gone with v.32 traditionally and not be just a literary addition.

The development of vv.29-36 can be retraced as follows. Verses 29-32 were joined together with vv.33f. in a pre-exilic narative. This narrative was sufficiently important that the final author of the pentateuch took it up into his own account, even though certain irregularities followed. Verses 29-32 and 33 f. are different types of tradition; therefore since they are not parallel, they cannot

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44 See A .R.Johnson, Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel, Cardiff, University of Wales, 1955, pp.68-77 for a defence of the unity of this psalm and an attempt to situate it in its cultic background.

45 Ps.68,9. But there is some textual evidence against this reading.

46 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.224; Simpson, Tradition,p.222.

be used as criteria for documentary analysis. Whether they were put together in a pre-literary or a literary stage of the tradition is uncertain, but the latter may be morepossible. At all events, there is no convincing reason for considering them as ad hoc compositions composed to join divergent themes together. The two traditions suffered changes during their transmission; the Midianite story being altered in the light of Midianite hostility, and the ark story having v.34 inserted in line with the theology of the final author of Numbers.

Chapter 11 begins with the curious account of the burning at Taberah. Gressmann[47] dismissed these three verses as being too schematic to have ever been a coherent story; but this is not a satisfactory explanation, for the section fulfils no redactoral purpose. Noth[48] seens to be closer to the truth in suggesting that this section is the remnant of a once complete story. This theory has the merit of being able to explain why such a useless little piece would ever be included.

It is probable that some sort of natural phenomenon lies behind this tradition. Gray suggests lightening, or perhaps some more terrible instrument as in Lev.10.2 or Ex.19.18. However it is interesting to notice that vestiges of volcanic activity in the form of smoking cracks can be uncovered east of the Jordan.[49] Such a

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47 Gressmann, Mose, p.256

48 Noth, 'Überlieferungsgeschichte, pp.135-6.

49 Baly, D., The Geography of the Bible, London, Lutterworth, (1957), p.24.

natural occurance could be the germ from which this story grew.[50]

Whatever natural occurance lay behind this section, there is no doubt that the Israelites regarded the happening with awe and fear. Meyer[51] links this with the burning bush and with the punishment in Num.11.4-36, arguing that here Yahweh manifests himself as a terrible fire demon. This suggestion is indefensible in Num.11.4f. where there is no mention of burning, but in the section here a demonic manifestation seems very likely.

Noth[52] argues that the notion of the burning as a punishment for murmuring is the result of a later rewriting of the section for the purpose of its inclusion into the general theme of wandering in the Wilderness. In this he seems correct here, for the murmuring idea could easily have spilled over from the following story. However, Noth also considers the etymology as false, and suggests that the name is related to the Arabic root ba r(a), "animal dung." If this is so, then the story as an independant entity ceases to exist,

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50 A similar approach might help to solve the problem of Sinai as a volcano. The description in Ex.19 of the mountain shaking is best explained as a volcanic eruption, but there is also a description of a lightening storm, and there is no reason to consider that the two phenomena always accompany each other. The solution seems to be that the power and mystery of lightening and of a volcano were the images chosen to express the power and mystery of the theophany. Therefore, although the witnessing of a volcanic eruption influenced the description in Ex.19, it does not follow that Sinai must have been a volcano any more than that there must have been a continuous thunderstorm around it. For an interesting suggestion about the relation of these phenomena with the origins of Yahwism, see Simpson, Traditions, pp.419-425.

51 Meyer, Israeliten, p.64f.

52 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.137.

and Noth's own theory that originally there was an extensive narrative around the occurence is left without any proof. The burning is the one element here that cannot be disposed of.

Num.11.1-3, then, was an ancient demon tradition such as Jacob's wrestling in Gen.32.24-30 or the attempt to kill Moses in Ex.4.24-6. This tradition was swept up into the general theme of the wandering in the wilderness by putting it in close conjunction with the narrative in Num.11.4f. In its present form the story has been truncated to the point where no journey narrative separates it from the following section. However, the fact that its literary position would put it between Sinai and Kibroth Hattavah does not mean that the geographical position of Taberah can be calculated, since the section has been included for the literary-theological motif of murmuring rather than for geographical considerations. The question of the documentary source, if any, will be discussed below.

The section Num.11.4-36 deals with the lusting after flesh and the institution of the seventy elders. An examination is complicated by the existence of parallel narratives elsewhere in the pentateuch, quails occuring in Ex.16, institution of elders in Ex.18, and seventy elders in Ex.24. Before discussing the question of the relation of the two themes in Num.11, they will be discussed separately for the sake of convenience.

In Ex.16 the quails are obviously a secondary addition, having no real connection with the main narrative. Their inclusion seems to have been prompted by vv.6,7 "At even, then, ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; and in

the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord." The parallelism of morning and evening in this saying suggests it originally may have been a chant of some sort, possibly connected with cultic ceremonies. The theme of flesh in the evening and bread in the morning may have also been included in the chant in its original context; at any rate this parallelism would follow easily; thus once this refrain had been included in the manna narrative, the addition of the quails was demanded. Whether the idea of the quails was derived from Num.11 or not is uncertain; it is possible that a tradition of feeding with quails lies behind both Ex.16 and Num.11.

In Num.11 the emphasis of the story in its present form is on the demand for flesh. This demand is extraordinary in its context, for not only did the Israelites have flocks and herds with them according to the tradition, but also flesh was not a main dish in the ancient near-east, and in fact the delicacies of Egypt mentioned in v.5 are fish and various kinds of vegetables. The explanation seems to be that flesh, being rare, was a delicacy in Israel; therefore the demand made here was not for the means to sustain life as in Ex.16 but rather for a luxury. Seen against this background it is possible to understand the note about manna in vv.7-9; the description is not an archeological detail pedantly slotted in; it was included to show the abundance and desirability of the food available. Thus the demand for meat was gratuitous, bringing down upon the Israelites punishment for idle discontent.

The occasional appearance of flocks of quails blown in

by the wind is a normal phenomenon in the desert south of Judah. Noth[53] suggests that this well known feature was brought into the wilderness wandering theme as an example of the miraculous feeding of the Israelites. Later under the influence of the murmuring motif the story took its present darker form. This suggestion seems confirmed by the fact that in Ex.16 it was possible to include the miraculous feeding with the quails without any overtone of a subsequent punishment.

The fact that the traditions about quails and manna come from natural occurrences does not settle the question of whether in the narratives in Num.11 they are regarded as miracles or not. It is not possible to assert that the manna is regarded as a natural phenomenon; not enough is said about it; however the emphasis on the ingratitude of the Israelites suggests that it was definitely considered as a supernatural gift of Yahweh. With regard to the quails there is no doubt; they were regarded as a miracle.[54] This comes out in Moses' speech in v.21; the people are so numerous

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53 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.130 and section following.

54 The question of what is a miracle and what is not is complicated by the fact that our methods of thought are other than those of the Hebrews. Thus we tend to think of the material world as an ordered cosmos with eternal fixed laws; a miracle then being the upsetting of one or more of these laws. For the Hebrew the universe was an organic whole, so rain, wind, etc. was a deliberate act of Yahweh. Naturally the Hebrews expected some things to happen normally from time to time and regarded exceptions as unexpected; but the hard and fast distinction between a miraculous and a natural occurrence was impossible for their way of thinking. Therefore it is to be questioned whether the distinction between J and E with regard to J's "natural" methods is valid. Critics at the end of the nineteenth century were perhaps too eagre to find in ancient Israel signs of the world outlook which to them seemed the final truth. For an interesting attempt to get out of the "scientific" thought forms and to interpret the Bible in its own way of thinking, see R.Prenter, Dogmatik, transl. C.Boehncke-Sjöberg, Göttingen, Vandehoeck und Ruprecht, 1960.

that only an extraordinary number of quail could have satisfied them. Ps.78.26-7 certainly interpreted the happening as the result of a direct intervention of Yahweh, just as marvellous as bringing a stream out of a rock.

The ending of the story is other than one would expect. In vv.18-20 the meat is promised for the following day and the punishment will be the consequent satiety. But in vv.31-4 the quail come at a time not specified and a sudden plague after they have been gathered in is the punishment. This turn in the story, surprising for both the reader and the Israelites alike, seems to to be result of the inclusion of the folk etymology of Kibbroth-Hattavah in the text.[55] This fragment seems to have been attracted in by the mention of "lusting" in v.5 and its unsuitability to the story that has proceded makes it likely that this addition of the plague is the work of a later editor. Thus it is difficult to accept Noth's position that the murmuring theme is most deeply rooted in this section; for the etiological tradition where he finds the murmuring theme is located is a gratuitous insertion that partially destroys the harmony of the narrative. However this only illustrates the weakness of Noth's attempt to anchor every theme in a given place name. Themes such as the rebellious nature of a people do tend to cystallize around a definite tradition in a given place, but this in no way means that they originate there. There is no reason for denying a priori that there was a folk saga of Israel's deliverance

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55 "Graves of lusting." Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.129 suggests the name originally meant "the graves at the boundaries."

by Moses from Egypt and bringing into Canaan which included a theme of disobedience during the difficult jouney through the desert.

The quail story in Num.11.4f., then, is a developed narrative dealing with Israel's unjustified murmuring and the punishment that followed. Apart from the final few verses there is no reason to challenge the literary unity of the narrative.

The story about the seventy elders hearkens back to an ancient institution whose existence is assumed in Ex.24.[56] In Ex.18 there is an account of the organisation of the judiciary on the advice of Moses' Midianite father-in-law, but here there is no talk of seventy elders, 1 only of rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.[57] It is impossible to deny a connection between the two institution narratives in Ex.18 and Num.11; in the original form of Ex.18 the connection may have even been closer. It is peculiar and unexpected that the judiciary officials in Ex.18 should be called "rulers" שָׂרֵי of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, for apart from the dependant passage in Deut.1.15, elsewhere in the Old Testament sarim of thousands, hundreds, and fifties are military officials.[58] It is true that sarim can also be administrative officers[59] whose function is related to but apparently not identical with that of judges, but never are these officers described in terms

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56 The number seventy occurs with reference to the Israelites going into Egypt, the years of the Exile, etc. This numeral seems to have been a favorite to indicate a large number, but otherwise does not seem to have any significance.

57 In the present order of the text, it is an incongruity in Ex.18 that Moses should teach and administer the law when it had not as yet been given on Sinai. This is a sign of the intrusion of the Sinai complex. Strictly speaking the position of Num.11 is more rational, for by this time the law has been given.

58 1 Sam.22.7 (thousands and hundreds); 1 Sam.17.18 (of a thousand); 2 Kings 1.9-14 (of fifties). There is no mention of captains of tens.

59 E.g. Ex.2.14; Is.32.1; Ezek.22.27; Mic.7.3; Zeph.3.3.

of the number of people under their charge.[60] Therefore it is probable that the narrative in Ex.18 has been changed and that originally it told of the institution of the seventy elders. The reason for this change is the repugnance the Israelites must have felt at a tradition of Midianite influence in Hebrew institutions, particularly one as venerable as that of the seventy elders. This anti-Midianite altering of texts has been seen in the Hobab-Reuel confusion of Num.10. The story of the institution of the seventy elders was therefore retold in Num.11 where the origin is found in a divine command rather than a foreign counsel.

The complaint of Moses in Num.11.11-15[61] bears a curious resemblance to the epilogue to the Code of Hammurabi: "The great gods have called me, and I am indeed a shepherd who brings peace, whose sceptre is just; my pleasant shade is spread over my city, in my bosom I have carried the people of the land of Sumer and Accad, they have become abundantly rich under my guardian spirit, I bear their charge in peace (and) by my profound wisdom I protect them."[62] Naturally there is a difference between Hammurabi's modest claims of success and Moses' tortured admission of inability; but

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60 It is relevant to note that the Accadian cognate word is šarru, "King." This may help explain why in the Old Testament sarim are related in function to judges, but seem to have a wider sort of authority.

61 Rudolph, Elohist von Exodus, p.67 suggests that the text has been dislocated and that v.10b should come after v.13.

62 Translation from Driver and Miles, Babylonian Laws, vol.2, p.97.

Moses' complaint seems to spring from the type of princely boast exemplified in the Code of Hammurabi.[63] The Hebrew version is a deeper interpretation of kingly duties where it is recognized that the ideal is not realizable. This re-interpretation is not at the level of folk-literature; but it is interesting that the figure of Moses has attracted this reflection just as earlier it had attracted the ancient oriental legend of a happy preservation during infancy of a hero figure. It is possible that here there is an indication of a Moses the hero of a folk saga who was seized upon and developed by later more sophisticated thought just as the Greek folk heroes were re-interpreted by later times.

The sharing of the spirit that was on Moses with the seventy elders in vv.24b-25 has usually been interpreted in the light of the phenomenon of prophecy. Thus Holzinger considers the story too prophetic to be early; whereas Noth, in admitting that it contains a non-folkloric element in its reflection over the nature of man,[64] argues that the material conception of a spirit that is not even the Spirit of Yahweh, is evidence of a considerably early date. Baentsch on the other hand, contrasts this narrative with that of Ex.18 where the wisdom of the rulers is stable; consequently in the Numbers version there is a theological reflection that for true leadership it is necessary for Yahweh to give his spirit.

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63 This does not imply that the Code of Hammurabi itself was known in Israel. This type of kingly egocentricity was a well known phenomenon in the ancient near-east and it must have been known in Israel.

64 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, pp.141-2.

However it is just this contrast which has been challenged by Eerdmans.[65] He argues that it is incorrect to treat the prophesying of the elders as an ecstatic phenomenon of temporary duration. It is not necessary to interpret "spirit" רוח in this text in the sense of the Spirit of the Lord which seized persons violently. Rather the meaning is that the elders would have the same mind as Moses and would support him against the rebellious people.[66] This interpretation is supported by passages such as Josh.5.1; Ps.76.13 and Is.19.3 where spirit stands for "determination" or "courage". This interpretation also avoids the difficulty of having to explain why if the spirit in question comes from Yahweh it is not described as the Spirit of Yahweh. Secondly, the verb "to prophesy" does not necessarily denote frenzy, for in 1 Kings 22.18 Micaiah prophesies in the sense of delivering a message (cp.Jer.14.14). There is also no hint of ecstasy when Aaron is appointed to be the prophet of Moses, though here the verb "prohesy" is not used. Finally, the final expression in v.25, ולא יספו should not be translated "they did no more" but rather "they did not add." The meaning here is that when the elders carried out tasks in their function of prophets to help Moses, they did not add to what Moses had commanded them. This suggestion has the merit of making sense out of a passage which otherwise has to be explained by postulating a lost

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65 Eerdmans, Numbers, pp.132-142.

66 Eerdmans himself uses "congeniality" in this context; but this seems to be a mistake in the exact meaning of the English word, for "congeniality" is too weak a meaning for what was required.

clause or two. Furthermore, there is a parallel usage in Deut.5.22 "These are the words of the Lord spake unto all your assembly ... with a great voice; and he added no more." Eerdmans explains the passage in Num.11 in the light of Moses' complaint of the heavy burden laid upon him; in answer to the problem Yahweh gives Moses men of like mind who will help him in his work. That this is the correct explanation is shown in Num.16 where the elders support Moses during the rebellion.

However much Eerdmans appears to be correct with regard to vv.24a-25, his thesis does not explain vv.26-29 where actual ecstatic seizures sufficient to cause general notice must have been meant. However, as Eerdmans himself remarks, the two elders in vv.26-29 were obviously a later addition to bring the general total up to 72, six elders for each tribe. This addition probably originated as an oral supplement to the story of the seventy elders and was added in despite the fact that its understanding of the prophetic nature of the elders varied from that of vv.24b-25. Even if Noth is correct that there was a historical progression from the idea of spirit as an almost material independant entity to the idea of spirit as being dependant upon a gift of Yahweh, it is not possible to argue that 26-29 must be early, for v.29 refers to the spirit as belonging to the Lord. It is impossible to deny some relation between vv.26-29 and prophetic hopes of a general outpouring of the spirit of the Lord in such passages as Ezek.39.29; Joel 3. 1-2; and Zech. 12.10. It is also equally impossible to define exactly

what this relation is. Neither is it possible to date this addition from its connection with the prophets; it seems very likely that it is late, that is from the seventh century onward, but its date cannot be linked to the prophets cited since it is not sure that they were the first to conceive of the hope of the outpouring of spirit on all flesh.

Num.11 as a whole seems to have found its present form in the following way. An author probably sometime in the pre-exilic period[67] had before him the accounts of manna and the institution of the elders more or less as they stand now in Ex.16 and 18. Furthermore he knew of a tradition of feeding with quail in the wilderness and of a demon at Taberah, both of these traditions probably connected with the theme of Israel's wanderings before the entry into Canaan. The problem of this author was to rewrite the account of a Midianite influence in Israel and to give a more suitable reason for the outbreak at Taberah. His solution was to use the theme of the gross ingratitude of Israel which necessitated giving Moses like-minded men to help him. Thus the quail were made into an additional unnecessary demand in the light of the abundance and delicacy of the manna. Similarily the Taberah narrative was spliced on at the beginning, the theme of murmuring being the justification of the punishment. The composition resulting was a logical whole, reflecting the theological outlook of its author. However, the logical connection was distorted slightly by the addition

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67 The fact that the tent of meeting is located outside the camp shows that it is not a question here of the final author of Numbers.

of the two elders in vv.26-9 and of the plague in vv.33-4, both probably later insertions. As far as attributing the section as a whole to a definite document is concerned, it is obvious that it belongs closely with Ex.33.7-11 where the tent is outside the camp and where Yahweh descends in the cloud to speak with Moses.[68] Therefore it is likely that in the pre-exilic period there was a corrective writing designed to supplement or change the narrative of the pentateuch. Whether this writing was extensive enough to form a document on its own or whether it was a parasite growth on the older narrative cannot be concluded since not enough traces of it are left.

It has been noted with regard to Num.11.11f. that Moses shows certain traits that can best be explained by supposing that he was well known to the author and his listeners as a folk hero. With regard to the person of Moses it is helpful to keep in mind Gunkel's distinction between saga and history;[69] saga being interested in the exploits of individuals, history in the experiences of nations. The narrative of the pentateuch as it stands is history in the sense that it tries to deal with the experiences of Israel as a whole. However the material of the narrative often proved intractable, the Jacob stories being the most obvious example for the interest lies in the individual person rather than the nations as a whole.

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68 This is further shown by the fact that when vv.26-9 were added, Ex.33 was in mind, for Joshua in v.28 is the cultic assistant of Moses as in Ex.33.11.

69 Gunkel, Genesis, pp. ix-xii.

It is therefore well to ask whether it is correct to say simply that the figure of Moses gathered material in the course of the develoment of the pentateuch; it is just as likely that there was also a process of pruning away or altering legends about Moses as a person in order to write the history of Israel as a nation. Such a process may have left traces in the chapter just considered; Moses as a folk hero seems to have been originally a leader described semi-humorously as unable to keep order. Thus Aaron or the seventy elders have to be appinted to speak for him to to help him. Consequently the murmuring theme may have some roots in this picture of Moses; and the present form of this chapter may have been influenced by the characteristic weakness of Moses as known in the saga about him.

Moses as a weak hero occurs again in Num.12, but a large number of critical questions have to be dealt with before this theme can be discussed. The basic problem in Num.12 is the apparent diversity of narratives contained in it; for in v.1 it is a question of Moses' Cushite wife, whereas from v.2 onward it is Moses' pre-eminence that is challenged. The approach to this series of complicated problems will be first to consider vv.2-15 and then to consider the overall unity or diversity of the chapter.

The first problem is a number of alleged doublets or unevenesses in vv.4-11. Thus apparently the Lord summons the principle actors twice (vv.4, 5) and similarly He departs twice (vv.9, 10a); the Lord's anger seems to come very late in the story (v.9); and Miriam becomes leprous twice (v.10). However these difficulties

are not as jarring as is sometimes made out. In v.4 the Lord summons all the participants out to the tent of meeting; once arrived Miriam and Aaron are called apart for their rebuke. The cloud is the sign of the Lord's presence; it is not identical with it; therefore there is no reason to say that he comes down twice. Similarly, when the Lord departed the cloud was taken up after him; only then would the leprosy of Miriam become visible. If anger is thought of as a psychological state, then the mention of the anger of the Lord in v.9 does indeed come late. Hoever, the Hebrew could think of anger as something concrete; thus divine punishment is almost the same thing as divine anger; a similar case occurs in Num.11.33 where anger and punishment are closely connected. It is not said that Miriam became leprous twice; she became leprous at the time the cloud departed; it is then said that Aaron saw her leprousy, and this prompts him to ask Moses to pray for forgiveness. Therefore there are no doublets within vv.2-15.

However vv.6-8 are a poem about the superior rank of Moses. This poem fits well in its present context, but the fact that it is a poem plus the reference in v.8 to the old tradition that Moses saw the Lord suggest that the poem goes back to a non-literary cultic Sitz im Leben from which the description of Ex.33.7-10 was also drawn.[70] Noth[71] argues that the description of Moses'

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70 A direct literary dependance of Ex.33 on Num.12 is unlikely since Ex.33.17-23, the seeing of Yahweh, betrays a knowledge of the incident more extensive than is found in the present form of Num.12.

71 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.140.

superiority vis-a-vis other prophets must come from a later period more given to reflection; it cannot be a popular folk tradition. This conclusion rests on a too arbitrary assumption, for it is surely not that intellectual to distinguish between a hero of times past who spoke directly to God and a prophet of the present day who has to rely upon dreams. In general, although vv.6-8 are the final deposit of an ancient tradition, they are too organically connected with the whole narrative to be an insertion. Therefore from vv.2-10 the narrative runs too smoothly to demand division into sources.

Before examining the persons concerned it is necessary to determine the issue at stake from v.2 f. The question of prophecy is secondary here; neither Miriam nor Aaron are called prophets and indeed Aaron, despite Ex.4.16, never qualifies as a prophet. The question is rather Moses' supreme authority; from the terms of the challenge in v.2 Moses is de facto supreme cultic authority, and through the witness of the poem, the punishment of Miriam, and the efficacy of his intercession his position is firmly established. This is clear in v.7 where the meaning is "with my whole house is he trusted."[72]

Miriam is one of the more mysterious figures of the Old Testament, for despite the leading role she plays whenever she does appear, she is relatively seldom mentioned.[73] It is interesting that

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72 Rudolph, Elohist von Exodus, p.72.

73 Ex.15.20,21; Num.12.1 etc.; 20.1; 26.59; Deut.24.9; Mic.6.4; 1 Chr.5.29.

in Ex.15.20 she is described as the sister of Aaron. This implies that at one point in the development of the tradition neither Miriam nor Aaron were considered as being related to Moses. Even in Num.12 it is not specifically stated that the three actors are related, though a connection between Aaron and Miriam is possible. It is not till Num.26.59, a very late tradition, that the family relationships are stated clearly. Therefore it is not a question here of an ancient story of a family quarrel.[74] Who Miriam was in ancient traditions it is not possible to recover; but Noth has made the reasonable suggestion that originally she was a south-Judean prophetess comparable to Deborah.[75]

Aaron is a pale figure in the pentateuch; either he appears as the high priest who has no tradition to himself or else as the opponent of Moses in Ex.32 and Num.12.[76] As is suggested by the feminine singular verb in v.1 it is probable that Aaron was a later addition to the story. Holzinger suggests that in vv.12 and 13 much of what was originally the intercession of Moses was transferred to Aaron at the time of the addition. This is just probable; but Holzinger's further suggestion that Aaron was first pectured as interceding and that only later did he become a co-partner of Miriam is highly unlikely. If Aron was not introduced as high priest, then he must have come in as his other self, the rebel. It is likely

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74 As argued by Baentsch; see also Eerdmans, Numbers, p.143.

75 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.199.

76 There is an interesting suggestion that Aaron is really the personified ark. Meyer, Israeliten, p.93 attributes this to Redslob.

as Gressmann argued,[77] that at one time in the tradition Aaron was also punished; this would explain the change from the first plural to the third singular in vv.11,12. The reason why Aaron is not punished in the present version is not because of the prestige of his priesthood but rather the result of the law in Lev.21.16 f. that no deformed or naturally unclean person could minister a priest. In general Aaron was a secondary figure introduced into the account in Num.12 as a result of the same tension between rival priesthoods that gave rise to the golden calf narrative in Ex.32.[78]

Moses in Num.12 is shown as being meek, as being unparalleled in his relation with God, and as being the mediator between sinners and the wrath of God. This last theme is common in the pentateuch (e.g. Num.11.2; 14.13 f.); it is possible that the intercession for Miriam, then, was a later addition worked by the general osmosis of the idea of Moses as mediator. The poem exalting Moses has already been discussed as an ancient tradition. Its meaning is that whereas the revelation to prophets is psychological, the revelation to Moses is mythological; it is almost justified here to say that Moses stands as a demi-god over against mere men.[79]

However, it is the description of Moses as the meekest of men that is significant for the history of the Moses tradition. Holzinger argued that the description of Moses as a man of quiet piety must spring from a later date. Apart from the question of

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77 Gressmann, Mose, p.265.

78 Gressmann, Mose, pp.269 ff., has argued for a series of interesting conjectures which, however, go too far beyond the bounds of the evidence.

79 Gressmann, op.cit., p.268.

whether quiet piety as found in Abraham must be late,[80] it is not certain here that Moses is meek for theological reasons. The word עָנָו more usually means "poor," "needy," perhaps even "inoffensive" (Is.61.1). Holzinger argues that this verse is a sharp contrast to the usual stormy character of Moses. But Moses, surprisingly enough, is not portrayed as such; in the early narratives he does not lack physical courage - he kills the Egyptian and drives away the shepherds from the well - but in social relations he is timid. He flees at the rebuke of the Israelite, he raises a series of objections to his call (Ex.4.1,10,13), and during the manna incident in Num.11 he proves himself incapable of dealing with the dissatisfaction. Therefore Num.12.3 is scarcely an unjustified statement. But this theme of meekness in Moses is important with regard to his original position in the early traditions of Israel. Noth[81] whittles Moses down to a grave tradition; but here we have evidence that Moses was a folkloric hero with his own flaw just as Samson was a hero with a flaw. Therefore it is possible to postulate the existence of a Moses saga which, as argued above with relation to Num.11, was destroyed in the interest of presenting a history of Israel as a people.

It is now possible to approach the question of whether Num.12 is a literary unity. It is obvious that the narrative has

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80 Abraham is scarcely quiet in Gen.14, but this narrative is an exception in the general picture of the Abraham saga.

81 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, pp.172-191.

undergone changes, such as the addition of Aaron; but it has been seen that there is little evidence for a double strand of narrative within the main body of the text itself. Whether a literary division is possible depends upon the interpretation of v.1. If the Cushite wife has nothing to do with v.2, then perhaps two stories have been woven together.

Such is the view of Rudolph.[82] He argues that there are two stands in the chapter; a simple story rooted at Hazeroth[83] which has as its background the struggle between two groups (vv.1,9,10a (11a) 12-15) and a story relating to Aaron comparable to the golden calf incident in Ex.32 (vv.2-8, 10a ,11). These two stories were originally complete in themselves and were put together by a literay process in the interest of removing some of the guilt from Aaron.

However, it may reasonably be asked whether the theme of Moses' wife is related to the problem of cultic authority in this chapter.[84] It is problematical what a "Cushite" was as a nationality, but two possible explanations fit in well with the problem of authority. If a Cushite was an Ethiopian, that is a negro, then there is probably a connection with Phinehas, an Egyptian name meaning "negro." Here the authority descends to a person of partially non-Israelite origin whose connection with Aaron is very loose and who thus might have originally stood as a son of Moses.[85] On the

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82 Rudolph, Elohist von Exodus, pp.70-74.

83 Gressmann, Mose,p.266, f.n., suggest the name Hazeroth was interpreted as"locking out" and from this goes on to suggest an etiological connection of the story. The main criticism of this theory is that it requires too many complicated emendations of the text.

84 Gray takes the dispute as stemming from the desire to keep the race pure and argues the motif must come from the time of Ezra.

85 For the possible example of the transfer of a son of Moses to Aaron, the difference between Eliezer (Ex.18.4) and Eleasar lies in pointing.

other hand if a Cushite was an Arabian closely related or identical with a Midianite,[86] then the story ties in with the Midianite father-in-law tradition which also raised questions of authority and transmission of powers. Thus in either case the opposition of Miriam may not have arisen from considerations of pure race, but rather from a fear of the establishment of a rival priestly dynasty. This would explain the question of Moses' sole authority; for Miriam (and Aaron?) would claim equal rights with regard to founding the priestly caste. This would also explain why Aaron would be dragged into this section. Therefore Moses' wife was the reason for the challenge to his authority.

Assuming that the argument for the unity of the wife and the pre-eminence themes as above is valid, the development of this chapter seems to have been as follows. Originally there was a story of a dispute between the meek hero Moses and Miriam over the wife Moses had taken to ensure a priestly dynasty descended from himself. A poetic section exalting Moses was either at an oral or written stage added to the dispute. The singular verb in v.1 suggests that this occurred at the oral stage, for a written redaction could easily be changed. But it is a feature of oral material that the first line often indicates the whole instead of a title; therefore the first verb could not be changed because it was the catch line for the beginning of the whole story; the other verbs could be

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86 As in Hab. 3.7.

altered in accord with the sense. Whether the story was included in a document before being taken up by the final author of Numbers is not sure; but the position of the tent of meeting suggests that it may have been included with the stories of Num.11.

The narrative of the spies in Num.13 and 14 has been the occasion of various attempts at documentary analysis. However these attempts fail in that not enough attention was paid to the different types of material which have been gathered into the story as a whole. Thus certain irregularities taken as the evidence of a combination of documents seem to be better explained as the insertion of independant traditions into the pattern of the narrative. It is therefore necessary to begin with an examination of the different Gattungen imbedded in the narrative.

The names of the twelve spies chosen from the twelve tribes have been taken as a sign of P's love of enumeration. However, it is at least possible that the final author had a predecessor since in Deut.1.23 twelve spies are known.[87]

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87 The parallel account of the spies in Deut.1.19-46 is a valuable help in reconstructing the history of this passage, but it must be treated with caution. Deuteronomy did not set out to be an objective historical account derived with precision from ancient documents, but rather an instruction book in homiletic style designed to bring Israel to obedience after the historical disasters that had fallen upon her. It is possible that Deuteronomy knew the original document(s) lying behind this section, but it is not sure that it made exact use of them. A certain liberty of interpretation may have been taken; thus differences such as whether the spies were shown as being chosen at Yahweh's command or at the people's suggestion or whether Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land because of his own sin or that of the people cannot be attributed with certainty to differences in documentary sources. The whole emphasis in the Deuteronomy passage lies on the wilful disobedience of the people; therefore it is likely that certain details would be assimilated to this theme.

Noth[88] has argued convincingly that the order in which the tribes occur is essentially similar to that of Num.26. The present difference between the two sections is due to a textual disorder that displaced vv.10-11 from their original position behind v.8. Such a textual confusion is easily understandable from the fact that a son of Joseph is given in v.7 who would be confused with the tribes of Joseph by an unwary scribe. Noth further explains the order of Gad and Naphtali as a sign of the influence of the tribal list in the song of Jacob.

Noth's dating of the list may be questioned. He aruges that the inclusion of Caleb as head of Judah and the occurance of Vosphi,a possibly persian name,in v.14 show that there are no ancient traditions represented here. However there are two pieces of evidence to show that some of the names, if not the order in which they occur, may be prior to the final author of Numbers. First, in 13.2 the title נָשִׂיא is used of the spies, but does not occur later in the story. According to the final scheme of Numbers a nasi was head of the tribe,which obviously these men are not. Therefore the author may have been forced to include this title as part of the list of names, but the fact that he dropped it in his narrative shows that he was unwilling to use it. Secondly, in 13.16b Hoshea is renamed Joshua. If the list is a late literary composition one would expect that Joshua would have been put in without all that trouble; only the fact that Hoshea was firmly anchored in the list would necessitate the awkward juggling in the

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88 Noth, Zwölf Stämme, pp.19-20.

present text. It is possible that this addition of Joshua was the work of the final author of the pentateuch for Joshua appears irregularly beside Caleb in the rest of the narrative and in Deut.1.38 Joshua is not described as a spy but only the servant of Moses.

Leaving the question of the history of this list open, it is apparent why it was used here. The list of Num.1 was not suited here even if the heads of the tribes themselves were sent to investigate, since it was necessary to include Caleb and Joshua among the spies.

There are three local traditions about Hebron which have entered into the narrative. The first, and apparently the best known, was about the original inhabitants of the city, the sons of Anak. Stories of semi-divine giants seem to have been an important part of early Israelite mythology or folklore, although very few traces remain in the present form of the pentateuch.[89] It is possible from the account in Gen.6.1-4 that all these giants were considered as being descended from the Nephilim, which would explain the reference to Nephilim in Num.13.34. Whatever the scheme of relationship was, it seems certain that it was not clear, for traditions hesitate between showing Arba as father of Anak or as merely the greatest warrior among the Anakim.[90] Indeed it is possible that Arba was never a person

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89 It is possible that traditions about giants continued in oral form despite their elimination from the pentateuch and that they re-emerged later in apocalyptic writings.

90 Josh.15.13; 21.11 against Josh.14.15.

at all in original folk tradition.[91] Given this "giantizing" tendency in Israelite traditions, it is not surprising to find other enemies of Israel described as giants such as the Amorites[92] or Og the king of Bashan[93] The other half of this tradition about the original inhabitants of Hebron is found in Josh.15.14 where Caleb drives out the three giants.[94] The fact that this tradition was split suggests that it has been adapted to the present pattern of the pentateuch where all Israel enters Canaan from the East and not from the South.

The second local Hebron tradition states that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. There are two explanations

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91 Meyer, Israeliten, p.264 argues that "Kiriath Arba," the other name for Hebron means "city of the four," i.e. the four gods. These were Abraham and the three men who appeared to him; these three were no other than the giants, the sons of Anak. This view relies too much on the theory that heroes started as gods are were progressively whittled down to human size. The inclusion of Abraham is unjustified, since the three men appeared to him at the terebrinth of Mamre, not Hebron. It is true this was associated with Hebron or Kiriath Arba, but if Abraham was one of the founders or heroes of Hebron, a closer connection could be expected. Nevertheless it is possible that Meyer is right to the extent that Hebron was the city of the four, only the four were Anak and his three sons.

92 Luther, in Israeliten, p.166 argues it is probable from Amos 2.9 that the sons of Anak are to be identified with the Amorites. This is highly unlikely; that the Amorites are described as giants is merely a result of the tendency in Israel to picture all adversaries as superhuman warriors for the simple reason that the bigger your fallen enemy is, the more glory you derive from having beaten him.

93 Deut.3.11. It can be argued that the reference to a huge bed is due to a textual corruption.

94 In Josh.11.21 it is Joshua who destroys the sons of Anak; this is another example of the encroachment of the figure of Joshua on Caleb who originally stood in the tradition.

given for this surprisingly exact date. One is that it is pure fancy; the other that its exactness argues for its historicity. Partisans of the latter view suggest that Hebron was a Hyskos foundation and thus would be linked with Egypt from an early date or that Hebron was founded by Ḫabiru, for the root of"Hebron"may be the same as that of "Ḫabiru." However it remains to be explained why a tradition about a founding would be preserved or created in connection with one of the chief cities of Egypt. The answer to this seems to be that there was some rivalry between Hebron and Zoan, perhaps in matters of civil jurisdiction, more likely with regard to the priesthood. The tradition that Hebron was older than Zoan, therefore, would help to guarantee the power of Hebronite officials, more especially the priests of the cultic centre which existed there. It is likely that some sort of superiority or advantage is reflected in this tradition, and perhaps even the seven years difference in age is historical. However the fact that the number seven played such a great part in Israelite cultic documents suggests that here the seven years represent a general claim to decisive superiority and do not reflect exact historical dating.

The third Hebron tradition relates to its possession by the Calebites. Originally there must have been a legend of how Caleb spied out his land and won it; in Num.14.24 this idea remains. What other circumstances surrounded this, whether there were other spies who were unfaithful, etc., is no longer determinable.[95] Caleb is often described as a Kenizzite,[96] that is of Edomite

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95 Occasionally this story was given an all-Israel or all-Judah form; e.g. Josh.11.21; Jud.1.10.

96 Num.32.12; Josh.14.6,14; In Josh.15.17; Jud.1.13; 3.9 Caleb is said to be a brother of Kenaz.

origin.[97] Here we have a hint of the varied composition of the tribe of Judah which originally seems to have been a federation of disparate clans rather than a single tribe.[98] The Edomite connections of Caleb would explain why after the Babylonian conquest of 586 Edom was apparently able to gain control of the southern part of Judah.

Another local tradition that has crept into the narrative in Num.13 is the bunch of grapes from the valley of Eshcol in v.23. The region around Hebron is renown for its grapes, and apparently Eshcol claimed to have the best of them all. Thus the tradition of the huge clusters of grapes was a folk saying once popular in this Texas of Palestine. Given the existence of a story about the entry into Palestine, it was only a short step to saying that one of the deciding factors for undertaking the conquest was the magnificence of the grapes from Eshcol. Thus in Num.13 the narrative is enriched by the bundling in of a number of local traditions regarding Hebron and its environs. It is therefore not possible to drive a wedge in between Hebron and Eschol and argue that there are two different documents here, the one where the spies went to Hebron and the other where they went to Eshcol.

The discourse between Moses and Yahweh in Num.14.(10) 11-24 is no doubt a literary composition. However imbedded in its are traditions or ideas which certainly existed before its composition.

The description of Yahweh in v.18 is closely connected

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97 Gen.36.11,15,42.

98 Noth, Zwölf Stämme, pp.91, 107-8.

with that in Ex.34.6-7, although the two passages are not verbally identical. It is not a question here of the relation between different documents but rather of the incorporation into two parts of the pentateuch of what was originally a chant used in the cult.[99] In both passages the chant occurs in relation to a theophany; thus it is probable that it was used at the theophanic stage of a rite, perhaps the carrying of the ark in procession. The actual form is unexpected, for the Lord's mercy is linked to his not forgiving of iniquity. It is possible that these two ideas represented originally two different phases of the rite but were later run together when they were given their literary form. The theophanic nature of this chant links it with v.21 "All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

This saying about the glory of the Lord filling the earth resembles Hab.2.14 and Ps.72.19 and is related to the description in Is.6.3. It is evident here that a well known refrain, perhaps coming from a rite, has been used in various connections. It is noteworthy with regard to the figure of Moses that Ps.72 deals with the administration of justice by Yahweh's intermediary, the king. The theological notion of the glory of the Lord is very complicated and comes from a series of developments.[100] Here the concept is of the Lord's glory as something permanent rather than as an occasional

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99 Mowinkel, S., Le Decalogue, Paris, Alcan, 1927, p.26.

100 See G.von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, transl.D. Stalker, London, SCM, (1953), pp.37-44 for a discussion of the idea of the "glory of the Lord" in relation to Deuteronomy.

manifestation.[101]

The occurrence of v.21 in the same section as v.18,then, can be explained as a natural association of ideas; once a passage from a theophanic ceremony was quoted, it would be natural to include another cultic chant regarding the glory of the Lord. However it is possible that here there is more than the association of ideas; some sort of rite may lie behind vv.18 and 21. That is, it seems likely that they were derived from a ceremony which celebrated the mercy and the justice of Yahweh which would eventually culminate in his glory being shed over the whole earth.[102] The first writer of the traditions of Israel adopted and fitted the words of this rite into the story of the refusal to enter Palestine. The reason that this part of the narrative was chosen was because in Israelite eyes, of all the sins committed in the wilderness, the failure to enter the promised land was by far the greatest. Therefore it was appropriate to emphasize the power of Yahweh to fulfil his aims despite the disobedience of his people. This is confirmed by the fact that the latest author of Numbers saw fit to add another discourse of the Lord

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101 So Ex.40.34; Num.9.15 f.; cp. the analogous idea in Ezek. 43.1-7. Contrast Ex.16.7,10; Lev.9.6,23; Num.16.19; 17.7; 20.6.

102 It has been argued by Baentsch that this section shows "universalism" and must therefore be late. However this assumes that Yahweh was a local deity who gradually grew up into cosmic proportions. But Yahweh was a sky god, a creator god, a position similar to that of El and Baal in the ancient Ugaritic pantheon; therefore the idea of his glory filling the whole earth was not necessarily an innovation; as creator it was inconceivable that his glory could be confined to a limited space. This does not deny that as a result of centuries of experience Israel realized more and more the implications of this idea.

to reinforce the theme in the minds of his hearers. This transformation of a rite into history writing is another example of the originality of J as pointed out by von Rad.[103]

The force of Moses' argument in vv.13-16 rather escapes the modern interpreter, for the appeal to Yahweh's honour seems like a survival of a barbarous age which attributed its own uncouth habits to its divinities. Yet there is a difficult problem underlying this section, for granted that Yahweh is all holy, how can he tolerate the presence of evil unless he is not able to overcome it? The solution is anthropomorphic in that a common conception of the society of that period was used to explain the problem. The fact that this conception of honour no longer plays so great a part in modern western culture prevents us from accepting a solution based upon it; but the problem still remains.

It should be noted that there are two phases to the discussion here. In the first phase Yahweh decides to abandon his original plan of making Israel his people and instead will accomplish his work through Moses' descendants alone. After Moses' plea Yahweh then decides that he will preserve Israel though a certain punishment is necessary. It seems likely that the insertion of a promise to the descendants of Moses is a later refinement. As late as Ezek.20 it appears that there was a tradition according to which Yahweh would abandon Israel completely without any mention of finding a replacement. The insertion of a promise to Moses emphasizes

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103 Von Rad, Das Formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch, pp.63-5.

again that even without Israel Yahweh is capable of fulfilling his plans.

This theme of Yahweh preserving Israel for his honour's sake was fairly ancient in Israel to judge not only from the close parallel in Ex.32.9-14 but also from the references in Deut.9 and 32 and Ezek.20. Excepting the later addition of the offer to Moses, it is probable that this theme also comes from the rite existing behind the sayings concerning the glory, the righteousness, and the mercy of the Lord. Thus in vv.11-21 there are three excerpts from an ancient rite or liturgy.[104] These were added to the narrative of the turning away from southern Palestine in order to bring out what the author felt was the significance of such an act of disobedience.[105]

The story of the defeat at Hormah in 14.40-45 is a unity within itself,[106] but it is necessary to explain its relation if any to the accounts in Ex.17 and Num.21 and also to discuss its geographical position with regard to Kadesh. The mention of the Amalekites and Canaanites together seems abnormal,[107] for the one people was compsed of wild nomads and the other of city dwellers. It has therefore been suggested that here the story has been "contaminated" by the defeat of the Amalekites alone in Ex.17 and of the Canaanites alone in Num.21.1-3. The narrative in Num.21 is particularly significant because the same place name, Hormah, is used. It seems unlikely,

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106 For a discussion of the ark as a clue to the origin of this section, see remarks above with reference to 10.33-36.

107 In Deut.1.44 the blanket term "Amorite" is used.

104 Naturally this rite could be quoted elsewhere, as in Ex.32.

105 The question of whether this section was "prophetic" or not thus becomes irrelevant.

however, that the Hormah tradition was crossbred with that of Ex.17. Hormah lay on the southern border of Judah and the desert,[108] thus it was a place where nomadic Amalekites and settled Canaanites would be equal threats. Consequently the mention of both peoples in the same tradition is not the result of a literary confusion, but the echo of a historical situation.

The geographical position of Hormah was likely north of Kadesh or Paran. Therefore the statement that the Israelites were beaten back to Hormah when they started out from Kadesh(Paran) makes no sense. This led Gressmann[109] to conjecture that there were originally two sagas; one that showed the Israelites penetrating as far as Hormah before being defeated; and a second saga that situated the reversal at Kadesh. Both sagas were constructed to show Israel did not enter Canaan from the south. This conclusion is forced and comes from the assumption that irregularities are the product of parallel narratives rather than from the evidence itself. However there is no doubt that if the Israelites could retreat to Hormah, it must have been in their possession. In several texts it is shown as a conquest or possession of Israel;[110] particularly noteworthy is 1 Sam.30.30 where it figures among the cities friendly to David. Therefore it can be concluded that the account in Num.21 of the

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108 Josh.15.30.

109 Gressmann, Mose, pp.296-7.

110 Josh.12.14; 15.30; 19.4; Jud.1.17.

capture of Hormah was probably an old tradition;[111] the reason why Hormah is mentioned in the present narrative is that for time immemorial it was a city of refuge from enemies both from the desert and the settled land. Possibly it was mentioned in a tradition of a southern entry into Palestine; thus it was included in the present narrative of a reversal in the south to deny this tradition. To this extent Gressmann's suggestion is well founded.

Having considered the nature of the materials that found their way into the narrative, it is now possible to discuss the irregularities in the narrative itself. It has been argued that in Num.13.17b-24 there are a series of doublets which permit an analysis into two documents, J and E. In 17b-20 the instructions of Moses seem very wordy; for example on first sight the spies are told three times to look at the quality of the land (vv.18, 19, and 20). Furthermore, it is argued, vv.22 and 23 are also doublets, for in v.22 the spies go to Hebron and in v.23 they go to Eshcol.

The finding of two documents behind these admitted irregularities, however, is not justified. With regard to the spying out of the land, even if Eerdman's contention that there is a distinction made between arable land in general and gardens in particular[112] is not accepted, the different parts of the command build up a pattern rather than present exact duplicates. That is

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111 It has been suggested that the Hormah of Num.14 is not identical with the Hormah of Num.21; but both sections mention it in connection with the same enemy, the Canaanites, and both have it in the context of an entry intoCanaan, therefore the identity of both Hormahs can be assumed.

112 Eerdmans, Numbers, p.154.

to say, each of the commands about what is to be observed is concerned with a different feature of the landscape; the parallelism to us seems verbose; but in a recited narrative repetition with slight variations adds to the effect. Therefore in vv.17b-20 there is a technique that comes from the art of the story reciter; whether this section comes from the pre-literary stage of the tradition or from oral improvements made after the first writing down cannot be determined. With regard to the two different place names, it is difficult to see why they should be a rock of offence, since Hebron and Eshcol were not that far from each other. However, in the examination above it was shown that different local traditions were attracted into the narrative; thus such uneveness as there is in this regard comes from the fact that these traditions did not always fit smoothly into the story.[113]

However the geographical indications as to point of departure and with regard to the extent of the spying mission are sufficiently at variance with one another to suggest two different hands. In 13.21 it is said the spies went as far north as Rehob and the entering in of Hamath, that is, to what at one time was considered the northern boundary of Israel.[114] In v.22 and 23, however, it is only said that the spies went as far as Hebron and the valley of Eshcol. It therefore seems sure that here two different writers have

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113 The fact that Hebron is not mentioned in Deut.1 is not conclusive evidence that at one time there was a narrative that did not include Hebron. Deuteronomy was not interested in including all available details. Num.32.9 will be discussed below.

114 2 Kings 14.25.

been at work. Whether this implies two different documents in the strict sense of the term will be discussed below. The other discrepancy concerns the place from which the spies were sent out. In 13.3 it is said that they were sent from the wilderness of Paran; in v.26 they return "To the wilderness of Paran to Kadesh."[115] In Deut.1.19 Kadesh-Barnea only is mentioned; therefore Kadesh cannot be an accidental addition to the text in Num.13. But according to the over all plan of Numbers as it now stands, Kadesh was not reached till later, Num.20.1. Eerdmans[116] argues that while the spies were spying out the land the people moved from Paran to Kadesh; but why should Paran appear in v.26 then? It is also argued that Kadesh was a region rather than a place, but this seems uncertain. The conclusion is unavoidable that for one reason or another the final author of the pentateuch wished to detract from the central importance of Kadesh in a number of traditions.

The report of the spies in Num.13.26-33 has been taken as the result of a combination of several sources. The reasons advanced are the presumed contradiction between the reports in vv.27-9 and 31-33 and the sudden intrusion of Caleb in v.30. The sense of the "first report" (vv.27-9) is that the land is good but its inhabitants would be difficult to conquer. The "second report" tells not only of the fierce inhabitants, the Nephilim, but says the

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115 The grammatical construction varies; "to the wilderness of Paran" is rendered by the prefixed preposition; "to Kadesh" by the suffix indicating direction towards.

116 Eerdmans, Numbers, p.156.

land eats up its inhabitants.[117] The narrative here is rough and no doubt different traditions lie behind these descriptions; the first is a general picture; the second stresses the Hebron legend of the Anakim.[118] But these are only the raw materials of the narrative; it is normal that in trying to convince that the argument should be repeated with fresh details. It is pointed out that there is a logical contradiction between saying that the land is fruitful and that it eats up its inhabitants.[119] But this does not prove the existence of two documents; the underlying thread of the story is that the land is good and that the perfidy of the spies consisted in trying to convince the people that it was not. Therefore that they altered their description during an argument is not impossible from the psychological nor the literary point of view.

The suggestion that Caleb's intervention in v.30 comes too early is well grounded. Perhaps v.30 is misplaced; but it does follow logically in its present position; Caleb first says only that the Israelites can overcome the inhabitants of Canaan, but in 14.7 f. in reply to the false report of the spies he also adds that

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117 Attempts have been made to subdivide vv.31-33 on the grounds that if the land was barren, a normal giant would scarcely have enough to eat. This is too ingenious; the description deals with the terrors facing the Israelites, not the giants.

118 It is doubtful if the difference in the description of the sons of Anak as עֲנָקִים or עֲנָק is of great importance; see Josh.15.14.

119 It is not specifically said that the land is barren; it is said that it eats up its inhabitants. But this may imply difficulties other than infertility, for example, giants.

the land is good. It seems best to consider that in the gap between vv.29 and 30 a murmuring of the people would be understood by the hearers of the story.

A further argument that there are are four verbs of complaining in 14.1-2 and that therefore several documents lie behind this over-richness is very weak. Eerdmans pointed out that it was natural that after weeping the people should murmur. Inasmuch as the story was intended for telling or reading before an audience, the piling up of verbs would emphasize the great sin of the people of Israel.

In the section 14.1-10 it is obvious that Moses, Aaron, and Joshua have been inserted into a narrative that originally concerned Caleb alone. Thus when faced with the emergency, Moses and Aaron fall on their faces, leaving the stage free for Joshua and Caleb.[120] The speech in vv.7-9 probably belonged to Caleb alone in the original tradition, but was attributed to Joshua as well during the literary development of the narrative.

As has been shown above, Moses' speech in 14.11-24 contains remnants of ancient traditions,[121] but in its present form it is a literary composition. In vv.26-39 there is another speech of Yahweh which repeats in substance what has already been said. This was added by the final author of the Book of Numbers to clarify the

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120 It is noteworthy that in Deut.1.29 f. it is Moses who makes the speech at this point. This is because the deuteronomic recapitulation was interested in preaching rather than historical accuracy.

121 Caleb is even mentioned without Joshua in v.24.

the situation, to insist upon the period of forty years exile - something uppermost in exilic and post-exilic thinking - , and to round out the story by driving home the moral. This is an example of the method of the final author; basing himself upon the earlier work he reshaped it and added to it when he felt there was a point that needed stressing.

In general, then, there is no need to postulate the combination of parallel documents to account for the present form of the spy narrative. The kernel to this story was undoubtedly a Judahite legend of Caleb's conquest of Hebron. This legend was swept up into the account of Israel's entry into Canaan; other local traditions were included such as the Eshcol grapes; and one of them, that of the victory at Hormah, had to be changed to fit in with the general pattern. At this point Joshua was probably added in as a spy. This was the work of a pre-exilic author whose methods seem to have been literary, for he picked up and used for his own purpose the words of an old liturgy, something less probable in oral formation. Nonetheless the story was designed for oral recitation and thus is characterized by a repetetive style. When the final author of the pentateuch took up this narrative, he reformed it according to his own ideas and for his own time,[122] thus the spying mission reached out over all of Palestine and the rejection and subsequent punishment was strongly underlined by the addition of a long discourse.

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122 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.15 argues that P was so one sidedly favoured that only pieces out of the old tradition remain.

In Numbers 16 and 17 is found a cycle of traditions which in their present form are all related to the supremacy of Aaron. The first and most important of these is the rebellion of Korath, Dathan, and Abiram.[123]

Since Kuenen the general explanation of the rebellion story is that it grew in three separate stages. JE had an account of a civil rebellion on the part of Dathan and Abirim over purely civil matters. P^g had an account of a rebellion of 250 laymen under Korah's leadership against the spiritual privileges of the Levites. Finally P^s changed this story making it a rebellion of 250 Levites against the spiritual privileges of the Aronites. On the other hand Eerdmans[124] argues for the essential unity of the narrative with the exception of 16.7b-11. In general Eerdmans fails to convince; but his explanations have the merit of showing how the story could have been understood as a single narrative by its hearers.

It is obvious that Dathan and Abiram have been combined arbitrarily with Korah; they act in a different area and independently of him throughout the narrative. Therefore they have to be considered separately.

Dathan and Abiram are described as descendants of Reuben. This has given rise to various theories such as that the Reubenites

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123 The mention of On in 16.1 is probably due to a scribal error. See commentaries.

124 Eerdmans, Numbers, p.p. 168 f.

as the "eldest" tribe of Israel tried to claim leadership at one point,[125] or that they were in rivalry with the southern tribes to be the claimants of the Mosaic tradition.[126] However, in the first place the story mentions only two clans, not the whole of Reuben; and secondly, the story as we have it is too fragmentary to give us an exact idea of its origin. No doubt some dispute was pushed back into the classical period of Israelite history under the guise of this story, but there is not enough detail to uncover its original setting. It is possible that somewhere in its origin was a desire to explain the existence of a fissure in the earth near Kadesh or in Rebenite territory proper. However, people being swallowed up into the ground are fairly widespread in folklore.[127]

In general outline Dathan and Abiram with their families refuse civil obedience to Moses, even to the point of not coming when summoned. They accuse Moses of leading the people out of Egypt without bringing them into the promised land. Finally Moses goes to them and after his prophecy of their punishment they are engulfed by the earth.

The difficult point in this story comes in v.15 where Moses prays to the Lord not to accept their offering מִנְחָתָם. Holzinger suggests that originally מִנְחָה stood here, but the sense of "party" that he gives to it seems strained. Eerdmans suggests

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125 Baentsch

126 Simpson, Traditions, p.558.

127 E.g. the fissure that opened up in Rome as a result of the displeasure of the gods.

that here "minha" has the technical sense of "meal offering" as in Lev.2 and was meant as an accompanyment to the incense offering of the 250 men. However incense in Lev.2 was not offered in censers. It seems that here "minha" has the pre-exilic meaning of sacrifice in general.[128] and that Dathan and Abiram offered up a sacrifice as Gideon did. The explanation for this detail which seems unexpected in a civil revolt is to be found in 1 Sam.13 where Saul offers up a sacrifice to obtain the favour of Yahweh before a battle. Saul got himself into difficulties over this, it is true, but it is evident that there was a tradition in Israel that the rightful leader of the people had the right and the duty to offer sacrifice. Therefore the action of Dathan and Abiram was a claim to be the rightful leaders of the people of Israel. As Simpson has pointed out,[129] the original story of Dathan and Abiram must have contained an account of a sacrifice if we are to account for why it was combined with the incense offering of the 250 men and Korah.

It is argued that there is a contradiction between vv.13-14 and v.15; in vv.13-14 Moses is accused of bringing the people out of a fruitful land without leading them into the promised homeland; in v.15 Moses pleads before Yahweh that he has taken nothing from the people. But there is no real contradiction; it would be assumed that if Moses brought the people out in the wilderness and did not lead them into Canaan, then he did it for his own profit. This is why he defends his personal integrity.[130]

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128 See Jud.6.18.

129 Simpson, Traditions, p.238.

130 This resembles Samuel's defence in 1 Sam.12.

It is difficult to find any unevenesses in this story that could give occasion for source analysis. It has been argued that there are certain rough parts; for example that vv. 31b and 32a are doublets, but this is very forced. The explanation here is that in story telling a repetition of an important point adds to the general effect.

In dealing with the rest of the narrative about the rebellion, it has been usual to assume that Korah was connected with the 250 from the beginning. Therefore he at one time leads 250 laymen; later these are turned into Levites. The difficulty then arises of whether or not Korah was in both stories a Levite. However the connection of Korah with the 250 princes of the congregation may not have existed in the original form of the story. The evidence for this is as follows. In v.2 it is not said specifically that the 250 men belonged to Korah alone; as the sentence runs they might have been grouped with Dathan and Abiram as well. In v.6 reference is made to "Korah and his company" in the third person when Moses is addressing them in the second person plural; thus it is likely that "and his company" was an addition both here and in v.5. Finally in v.35 Korah is not shown as perishing with the 250 that offered incense. It is argued that a redactor transferred him elsewhere, but where does not seem clear from the rest of the narrative. Therefore, Korah can be seen to be a later addition to the narrative of the 250 princes; this narrative can now be considered in itself.

The story of the 250 princes was probably originally a

legend to explain the brass covering on the altar of sacrifice[131] in the Jerusalem temple.[132] It is not at all sure, however, that this legend had any direct relation to the priesthood properly speaking, but rather to "civil" jurisdiction. In Ezek.8.11 there is a description of 70 elders who are offering incense in the temple.[133] Here there may be an echo of this later apparently disapproved practice of censing by civil officials. It is important to note that it is specifically stated in Num.16 that the men who offered incense were responsible officials, just as were the elders in Ezekiel's description. Furthermore, when Moses is accused in v.3 of lifting himself up, the hithpael of the root √רום is used; this could refer to non-priestly authority as is shown in the description of Adonijah's attempt to exalt himself in 1 Kings 1.5. In fact in all the other uses of this form of the verb in the Old Testament, it never has the sense of making oneself high priest or a religious official, though this meaning is perhaps not impossible.[134]

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131 Gressmann, Mose, p.252 argued that it was the altar of incense that was covered; the story thus explaining the superceding of censers by the incense altar. This seems unlikely; first because incense altars were nothing new; one was uncovered in the pre-exilic strata of Megiddo. Secondly 250 censers would have supplied far too much metal to cover the small area of an incense altar. The position of Wellhausen that incense did not form a regular part of the pre-exilic cultus is unjustifiable.

132 This brass altar was the principle if not only one in the Solomonic temple; 1 Kings 8.64; 2 Kings 16.10-15.

133 It should be noted, however, that the word for "censer" is not the same.

134 Num. 23.24; 24.7; 1 Kings 1.5; 1 Chr.29.11; Prov.30.32; Ezek.17.14; 29.15; Dan.11.14.

Thus the charge seems to be that Moses "played the prince" and the motive behind the rebellion of the 250 princes is the same as that behind the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram; Moses had power in Israel as supreme ruler, they rebelled against this situation, and since authority in Israel was as much cultic as political, the means of rebellion were cultic as well as political. What occurred was a trial by ordeal which the princes decisively lost. This story was the one used to explain the covering on the altar in Jerusalem.[135]

The question of who was Korah can now be considered. It is no longer necessary to answer the problem of whether a Levite could lead the rebellion against the Levites. The evidence suggests that the family of the Korahites was of southern, even Edomite origin.[136] This does not mean they were members of the laity; from ancient times they had been considered to be Levites. Although the lists of Ex.6 are late, Möhlenbrink has shown that in Num.26.58 there is an ancient list of Levitical families that mentions the Korahites.[137] Furthermore it is obvious that the Korahites must have had some standing among the Levites; Ps. 42,44,45,46,47,48,49,84, 85,87, and 88 are all attributed to the sons of Korah. The fact that the Korahites had a fall from power at some time is shown by the fact that they are never mentioned as being anything more than

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135 The similarity of the destruction plus the use of the same word for "censer" raises the question of the connection of this story with that of Nadab and Abihu in Lev.10. Gressmann, Mose, p,263 even went so far as to say that originally the two legends were identical. It should be noted that the same word for "censer" also occurs in Lev.16.

136 Gen.36.5,14,18; 1 Chr. 1.35. Note that Korah is among Esau's sons born in southern Palestine before his departure into Edom proper.

137 Möhlenbrink, "Levitische Uberlieferungen," p.192.

door porters in Chronicles whereas the sons of Asaph, Hermun, and Jeduthun are separated to be the singers.[138]

Therefore at some time there must have existed a story dealing with the reason for the degradation or disgrace of the Korahites. Perhaps they led the rebellion of the Levites against the post-exilic settlement which excluded them from the full priesthood. At any rate it is now impossible to recover what happened; the fact is clear that the heros eponymous was singled out as an eternal warning to the Levites not to try to attain the priestly rights of the Aaronites and the Zadokites.

The putting together of these disparate elements into our present narrative was made possible by the similarity of the subject matter. Dathan and Abiram, the 250, and Korah were all rebelling against authority; the fact that in the post-exilic period both civil and religious authority came to rest in the hands of the high priest made it easy to combine the three traditions. The reason why these three were run together can be conjectured as follows; from Deut.11.6 we know that the Dathan and Abiram story already existed in the account of the exodus in J; the explanation of the bronze covering on the altar was perhaps a well known legend connected with the rebellion of the 250 so its inclusion would add force to the arguments of the Aaronites; and finally Korah was singled out as a standing example of disobedience to the post-exilic settlement, and the whole of the narrative was aimed at discouraging such disobedience.

From the point of view of making the story suitable for

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138 1 Chr.25.1. The mention of the sons of Asaph is all the more striking since many Psalms are also attributed to Asaph. Thus Korah's absence is significant.

oral recitation, the knitting together of these narratives has been done very skillfully. The thread of the story, broken off after 6-7a is picked up again by a repetition of Moses' command to Korah and the 250 in vv.16-17. The expression "ye take too much upon you" is repeated in v.8 after v.3 which gives a lead into the homiletic section about the place and duties of the Levites. Similarily Moses and Aaron fall on their faces in both 16.22 and 17.9 There seems to be a play on words between vv.8, 16, and 12; the Hebrew is:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל קֹרַח vv. 8, 16

וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לִקְרֹא לְדָתָן וְלַאֲבִירָם v. 12

The pun on "Korah" and likrah would probably have struck the Hebrew ear. This may also explain the scribal error in v.1 where the similar sounding נקח was written to the despair of later interpreters.[139]

In putting his material together, apart from the combination of the narratives, the final author of the pentateuch added two sections of his own. First was the speech of Moses in 16.7b-11 in which the superiority of the Aaronites was underlined. Secondly was the plea of Moses in 16.22 which clearly echoes the theological problems about punishment for sins that were a concern of the post-exilic period.[140]

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139 The mention of the "tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram" in v.24 seems to be a later scribal error or change for "the tabernacle of Yahweh." First משכן is never used elsewhere in the pentateuch for a man's tent. Secondly according to the narrative the poeple were at the tabernacle of the Lord. Thirdly, one tent for three men seems strange.(though manuscripts of the Greek omit Dathan and Abiram).

140 Cp. Jer.31.29; Ezek.18.2.

In Num.17.6-15 is the story of the plague the people brought upon themselves by murmuring over the fate of the rebels. In 16.17 the way has already been prepared for the inclusion of this narrative by the mention of Aaron's censer. However the original story seems to have been simply an account of how a demon was held at bay, comparable with the legend of Taberah in Num.11.1-3. The demon narrative has been baptised, or perhaps one should say circumcised, into the Moses-Aaron cycle; but traces of its origin remain. Here it is noteworthy that Moses and Aaron do not command or act according to a pronouncement of the Lord but simply as cunning magicians who know how to drive away the danger that threatens. At one time the hero of this story may have been the local figure of a given sanctuary;[141] but the narrative was found suitable for attributing to Moses and Aaron. At what point of the development of this rebellion story this new incident was added cannot be said; it is possible that here there is an example of an oral accretion to a written legend.

In Num.17.16-26 the setting apart of the Levites for sacral duties is confirmed by the miraculous flowering of Aaron's rod. Because this story is smooth flowing with no irregularities, it is probable that it was the product of a single writer rather than a gradual process of compiling. The mention of Aaron and the use of the terms עֵדוּת "testimony" and "tent of the testimony" are signs of a post-exilic date,[142] and it seems probable that this

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141 As legends of the heros in Judges tended to be grouped around the sanctuary where the judge was ostensibly buried.

142 In Num.1.50,53 the Levites have charge over "the tabernacle of the testimony."

story is the work of the final author of the pentateuch.

Because of the seemless form of the story, it is impossible to be sure about the origin of the legend it narrates. However it is almost certainly connected with an object that was in the pre-exilic temple.[143] which served as a symbol of authority for the high priest or the priesthood in general. Holzinger points out the importance of the staff to a man[144] and mentions the ornamented staves the Babylonians used for sceptres. Exactly what legend lay behind this object in the Jerusalem temple, whtther rhabdomancy was once part of the cult,[145] or whether the rod once belonged to Moses,[146] it is not possible to say.[147]

In its present context the story does not have any direct connection with the struggle of the Aaronites for supremacy; rather the high priesthood of Aaron is assumed without further discussion. It is the sacral function of all Levites which is dealt with. The

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143 Gressmann, Mose, p.281 argues that v.25f., the putting before the testimony, were a later addition, since Aaron would have needed his rod in the exercise of his duty. However, this is to treat the story as a historical or pseudo-historical account about Aaron in which such practical considerations would have been necessary. But the story was etiological and was only concerned with explaining the importance of the rod.

144 He cites Gen.38.18 where the staff was one of the pledges Judah gave to Tamar.

145 Baentsch.

146 Gressmann, Mose, p.280.

147 A direct connection with Jer.1.11-12 has been suggested. This is just possible, but since a different word for rod is used, the theory remains very tentative.

fact that this story comes soon after the account of the covering of the altar suggests that the final author of the pentateuch had a certain number of miscellaneous traditions about the temple which he worked in as the occasion presented itself. Here he seems to stress that the miraculous rod was only a symbol of the sacral functions which were inextricably bound up with the Levites. Similar to the way in which the post-exilic period sought to cover up the loss of the ark by minimizing its importance, it seems likely here that the author may be trying to show that Aaron's rod was only the sign of the priesthood; its possession was not necessary for the fulfilling of sacral duties. Therefore the loss of this object in the temple did not mean the end of Levitical privileges.

The narrative begins again in Num.20 when a new period opens for Israel according to the plan of the final author, for the chapters 20-36 describes the march on and the preparations for the entry into the promised land. Yet the greater part of this section was originally either irrelevant narrative or no narrative at all; the numerous miscellaneous bits and pieces that found their way into Numbers at this point probably owe their present postion to the fact that they had to be put in somewhere. To a certain extent this part of Numbers is the garbage pail of the pentateuch. However, this does not mean that this section is a chaos; as will be argued, there is a definite principle of arrangement, although one which is not aesthetically pleasing to our tastes. Rather than taking a single theme or type of material and consistently working through it to the end, the author seems to have worked with an

alternating or chain-shot method in order to build up a skeleton onto which his numerous excentric pieces could be hung. this alternating of themes is most striking in the gap between Num.27, the announcement of Moses' impending death, and Deut.34, the actual account of it. Here the narrative is split in order to slot in the rest of Numbers and the whole of Deuteronomy. Similarily, the administrative section dealing with the daughters of Zelophehad is divided between Num.27 and 36; and the command to attack the Midianites in Num.25.18 is not carried out until Num.31. However clumsy this method may seem in comparision with that of a writer like Luke, it at least had the great merit of providing a concrete form into which the rubble of various laws, traditions, etc. could be poured.

In this section Num.20-36 the themes begin to change, for the whole emphasis is placed on the preparation for the entry into the promised land. Significantly, the theme of the rebellion against Moses' leadership disappears after chapter 21, and in chapter 25 begins the new danger of worshipping other gods. From Num.26 on a reorganisation of Israel takes place analogous to that in Num.1-4 as a sign that a new period is about to begin and even the list of wilderness stations in Num.33 is given to show that the wanderings are over, for the chapter ends with instruction of what to do once arrived in the land.

What is significant is that several themes found in the last four chapters of Ezekiel occur also in this section, namely

the boundaries of Israel,[148] the regulation of the offerings,[149] and Levitical possessions.[150] Inasmuch as it is certain that Ezekiel 40-48 is in some sense a plan for the future, the fact that the author of Numbers arranged his material according to a similar pattern suggests that he had the same purpose. When the similarities with Ezekiel already demonstrated with regard to the ordering of the camp are taken into consideration, it appears even more certain that Numbers is a book written in response to the needs of the post-exilic Jewish community.

In Num.20 the Israelites are finally brought to Kadesh[151] in the first month of an unknown year.[152] Here Miriam dies and is buried. Noth[153] argues that this is not an old grave tradition; rather P disposed of Miriam in order to prepare the way for the death of Aaron and Moses. Noth points out the shortness of the report,

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148 Num.34; Ezek.47, 48.

149 Num.28.29; Ezek.45,46.

150 Num.35; Ezek.48.13-14.

151 From Num.13.26 it is clear that in sources (documents) prior to the final author of Numbers the Israelites arrived at Kadesh much earlier in their wanderings. It has been argued that both versions have historical fact behind them since the Israelites came to Kadesh at the beginning of the 40 year period and then returned just before entering into Canaan. However it seems more likely that the obscuring of Kadesh in the present form of the pentateuch is due to the desire to emphasize the importance of Sinai at Kadesh's expense. Thus as much as possible Kadesh was shown only as an intermediate station on the way.

152 It is not sure whether the omission of the year is a scribal accident or a deliberate deletion. Gray argues for the latter suggestion on the grounds that whereas JE let the Israelites append some time at Kadesh, P thought in terms on a short stay. Therefore the redactor omitted the year to avoid the difficulty.

153 Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.200.

but it is just this shortness that is a sign of an ancient tradition here. Miriam is not a commonly occurring figure in the pentateuch; in fact she does not appear in any section generally assigned to P. Thus one would have thought that she could have been ignored in the course of the narrative. The fact, then, that this unimpressive scrap could find a place in the present narrative shows that there was a well known tradition associating Kadesh with Miriam's grave.

The sin of Moses and Aaron described in Num.20.2-13 must be considered in relation to the similar account in Ex.17.1-7. Explaining the Numbers story in terms of a documentary hypothesis is difficult since Ex.17 is itself judged to be composite, but Num.20.2-13 seems to be later. Baentsch argued that originally the story in Num.20 was pure E and then R^P put in E or perhaps it was really pure P and R^P put in the E. Despite these suggestions and despite the obvious fact that some parts of Num.20 can be better explained as deriving from Ex.17 rather than vice versa,[154] the Numbers account as it stands reads as a reasonably unified story without noticeable irregularities. In fact the ironic repetition of "cattle" of the Israelites in vv.4,8, and 11 suggest an over-riding literary purpose.

It is first necessary to compare the account in Num.20 with that in Ex.17. The resemblances are clear; Num.20.5 has verbal echoes of Ex.17.4; Meribah is given in both accounts; and both times Moses uses the rod to find water. On the other hand,

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154 See S.Lehming, "Massa and Meribah," ZAW, n.f.32 (1961), pp.71-77.

the differences are important; the rod in Num.20 is taken from "before the Lord" thus connecting it with the rod in Num.17; Massah is not mentioned in Num.20;[155] מְרִיבָה rather than צוּר is used for "rock;"[156] and the speaking to the rock is not found in Ex.17. The account in Numbers is longer than that in Exodus, yet, as remarked above, in itself it does not give the impression of being a formless conglomerate account. Therefore the best explanation of this section in Numbers is that the final author used the theme of the older story and some of its language to construct an account of his own for his specific purpose.[157]

The final author of Numbers had before him the problem of explaining why Moses and Aaron died before Israel entered into Canaan. The reason could only be sin of some sort. The material which lay at hand was the Exodus account about the struggle at Meribah and a tradition about a spring coming out of a rock at the word of a hero. The author therefore resolved his problem by making Moses' disobedience the discrepancy between speaking to the rock as he should have done and striking it as he actually did.

The only other explanation of why Moses did not enter into the promised land is in Deuteronomy[158] where it is said that Moses was punished for the sins of the people. It is very doubtful if this represents any pre-deuteronomic tradition since Deuteronomy in these

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155 It is possible that Massah is an insertion into Ex.17.

156 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.128, f.n.331 suggests that the "rock" was a geographical feature so well known that it was not necessary to identify it further. He does not, however, deal with the problem of what significance, if any, there is in this change of terminology.

157 Compare the position of Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.15, that the redeactor used Ex.17 to fill out and enrich the P story.

158 Deut.1.37; 3.26; 4.21; cp. Ps.106.32.

passages was preaching against Israel for its sins, and like many preachers it is not sure that the Deuteronomist always kept faithfully to the meaning of his text. However it is clear that there was already a tradition that Moses died outside the boundaries of Israel and also that this was taken as the result of sin, though not Moses' in this case.

Baentsch argued that originally behind the present story in Numbers there was an account in which Moses and Aaron did the rebellion; therefore "ye rebels" in v.10 referred originally to them. Later this was toned down in the interests of piety. Meyer[159] has a better supported theory; beginning with the words of the Blessing of Moses in Deut.33.8 he concludes that Moses must originally have struggled with Yahweh for the possession of the Urim and Tummim at Massah and Meribah.[160] Later this cause for glory was turned into a cause for punishment, hence the death of Moses.

An objection to both these forgoing theories is that if Aaron's sin in making the golden calf were not hid, then a sin of Moses and Aaron would be more apparent than it is in Numbers. Dr. Daube has made an interesting suggestion.[161] He claims that according to ancient law, seeing a piece of land was tantamount to taking possession of it; therefore when Moses sees the promised land in Deut.34.1 f., he is really taking it. Later this was not

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159 Meyer, Israeliten, p.56.

160 But see Lehming, "Massa und Meribah."

161 Daube, Studies in Biblical Law, p.31.

understood, therefore arose the problem of Moses' death and sin.

Whatever may be the ultimate origins of this story, it is possible to see what the author of Numbers had in mind in writing or revising it. He had to account for the th unavoidable historical tradition that Moses did not enter the promised land. Historically the reason for Moses' death in east-Jordan was probably that Moses was a very old man at the time. But in the post-exilic age when there was an acute consciousness that Israel had been exiled because of its sin, the failure of Moses to enter the land could only be attributed to the same cause. This explanation had already been given in Deuteronomy. Therefore the author took the old story of disobedience as he found it in Ex.17, rewrote it in terms of his own frame of reference, and made the sin of Moses and Aaron as venial as possible without destroying the ground for their punishment.

The embassy to Edom in Num.20.14-21 presents difficulties both from the point of its own internal structure and from parallel passages in other parts of the Old Testament. The internal difficulties are seen in the double request to Edom, in the change of the person of the verbs during the narration, and in the disappearance of the messengers after v.14. It is true that the second request in v.19 is phrased in somewhat different language to that used in the first request, vv.15-17, but to ask for a thing twice is an idea not uncommon in many stories and here the second speech is both shorter and makes a further concession as might be expected. The oscillation between the first person singular and plural is also no reason for

postulating two sources here since the oscillation is typical of ancient semitic thought.[162] Finally, the disappearance of the messengers is not unexpected since a messenger was thought of as the extension of the personality of the sender; therefore it was immaterial whether the speeches were attributed to the messengers or to the Israelites themselves.[163]

The parallel passages to be considered are Deut.2.4-8,29 and Jud.11.17. In Deut.2 it is said that the Israelites were commanded to cross the border of the children of Esau; during the march through the Israelites were to pay for food and water and had to respect the territorial rights of the Edomites. No opposition seems to have been expected since the Edomites would be afraid of the Israelites. A similar command is given with regard to the Moabites and v.29 assumes that all went according to schedule in Edom and Moab. In Jud.11.17 it is said that Israel sent messengers to the kings of Edom and Moab asking for permission to pass through their lands but was refused in both cases. Any explanation has to take account of the fact that whereas Numbers and Judges agree that permission was refused, Judges agrees with Deuteronomy that it was a question of Moab as well as of Edom.

Holzinger argued that there were three versions of the story; J, Edom and Moab let Israel through; E, they prevent Israel;

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162 A.R.Johnson cites the example of a change in number in a letter of the city of Irḳata found in the Tell el-Amarna tablets. See The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, pp.14-15.

163 Loc. cit.

and D, they rejoice that Israel is not allowed to hurt them.

Gressmann[164] considered that there was no real contradiction between Numbers and Deuteronomy since Deut.2.1 assumes that Israel first went southward before crossing Edom's border. Thus Israel went round the edge of Edom; through the border it is true, but there is a great difference between going through the middle of a country and merely skirting round its outer boundaries. However Rudolph[165] pointed out that the fact that Deut.2.1 shows Israel journeying by the way of the Red Sea betrays that Deuteronomy knew of the tradition of the circumventing of Edom and Moab. The reasons for substituting this march through the two countries seems to lie in 2.7 and 25, namely that for the Deuteronomist God inevitably took care of all Israel's wants without failure and that he was now going to put the fear of Israel into all the nations. Consequently the traditional refusal of Edom had to be altered. Therefore, behind Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Judges was the common tradition that Israel was forced to detour around Edom during its wanderings.

Noth[166] considers that this story does not come from an old tradition about Israel's wanderings, but rather was a composition written at the time of the working together of the themes of the pentateuch in order to close the awkward gap between Israel in the wilderness and Israel in east-Jordan. Thus the going around is not clearly described; it can only be assumed from the fact that in

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164 Gressmann, Mose, p.303f.

165 Rudolph, Elohist von Exodus, p.88.

166 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.225.

Num.21.21 the Israelites suddenly appear in the area between the Arnon and the Jabbok. However, although it is obvious , as will be seen below, that there were attempts to fill out the tradition of the east-Jordan wanderings with material of a different origin, the tradition itself may possibly be older than the first setting down in writing of the account of Israel's wanderings. It is true that in the present form of Numbers the narrative reads jerkily since Moab is not mentioned before chapter 22, after the conquest of the Amorites. However the witness of Jud.11 is some sign that originally refusals by both Edom and Moab figured in the story. It is therefore necessary to consider whether something in the present form of Numbers caused the break-up of the old narrative pattern; that is, instead of Noth's theory that the Edom tradition was a fragment arbitrarily inserted to fill out a story of Israel in east-Jordan, it is possible that only in a later recension was the old tradition warped. The reason is as follows. It is most significant in Numbers that although in 21.4 the author mentions specifically the going around Edom, nothing is said of Moab until chapter 22. Geographically this does not make sense, for the kingdom of Sihon mentioned in Num.21.21 could only be reached by going round or through Moab. But from the literary point of view it does make sense, for as said in Num.22.2, it was when Balak saw what had happened to the Amorites that he sent for Balaam; this is the opening required to introduce the Balaam story. If the Balaam story had been introduced in its logical place, namely after the rebuff of Edom, it would have lost much of its effect; it would have

been scarcely reason enough for Balak to send for help when all Israel had done was to retreat from the menaces of a small country like Edom. Therefore Moab was displaced from the order in which it was originally placed in order that the Balaam story could be effectively introduced; the original place can be determined from Deut.2 and Jud.11.[167] This displacement was made probably by the final author of Numbers.

The account of the death of Aaron in Num.20.22-9 is a unified composition closely linked to the story of the sin of Moses and Aaron in 20.2-13 and therefore comes from the hand of the final author of the pentateuch. Naturally a definite grave tradition for the founder of the agreed post-exilic priesthood was a necessity for Numbers, but there is also the problem of an Aaronic grave tradition in Deut.10.6. That the note on Moserah is more ancient or more reliable than the story of Hor has been assumed too hastily;[168] the passage in Deuteronomy has to be examined in its context. It is obvious that Deut.10.6-9 is an intrusion into the chapter as a whole. Furthermore the list of stations in vv.6 and 7 is almost identical with part of the great itinerary list of Num.33.30-33; their relation probably being that they both derive from the same source since their differences in the form of the names and in the

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167 This does not prove the historicity of this tradition; but if this explanation is accepted, it at least makes it probable that some event, tribal or otherwise, lies behind the story. Edom existed as a country from the 13th century B.C. according to Nelson Glueck and there is enough water in the wastes east of Edom and Moab to permit travel there (Baly, Geography of the Bible, pp.232-266). The principle objection to Noth's rejection of any historical memory in this account is that a lack of concrete details and place names would not be surprising in an old tradition. This does not prove that there is an old tradition here, but it is at least possible.

168 As Gressmann, Mose, p.343.

order of one pair precludes any direct dependence either way.[169]

In Deut.10 verses 6-9 seem to have been added in for purposes of illustration and enrichment just as additions have been made to the narrative in Num.21. The association of Aaron's grave with Moserah in Deut.10.6 must be secondary for two reasons. First, in such lists of places, names only are given to judge from Num.33; where traditions are added they are usually secondary.[170] Secondly, the association of the choice of the Levites with Jotbathah in Deut.10.7 tallies with no other tradition we know. Therefore both the Aaronic and Levitical additions to this fragment of an old itinerary are probably scribal inventions prompted by the same desire that gave rise to the more complete account here in Num.20.

In Num.20 it is unlikely that Hor is anything more than "mountain," the idealized mountain where it would be suitable to bury a high priest.[171] The purpose of this composition is obviously tp prepare the way for the entry into the promised land by describing the priestly succession. The account has been made parallel with that of the death of Moses as far as possible; the reason for death is that the sin at Meribah was rebellion,[172] the mourning is for 30 days,[173]

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169 See further the discussion of Num.33 below.

170 As in Num.33.38-9 where the account of Aaron's death and burial was inserted from Num.20.

171 It is also possible that the name "Aaron" means "ark," that is that Aaron is really the personified ark.

172 Num.27.14; Deut.32.51.

173 Deut. 34.8.

and as much as possible the ceremony is done before the people although by its nature it lends itself ill to such description. The significance of putting the priestly clothing on Eleazar is clear from the investiture of the high priest in Lev.8; Eleazar is to be high priest in the same sense and with the same powers and function as his father. This contrasts with the investiture of Joshua in Num.27 where it is clear that Joshua is in no sense to be a second Moses with full powers. This coincides with the description in Ezek.44-7 where the secular prince is in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the priesthood.

The actual place where the final author put his composition in Num.20, that is after the embassy to Edom rather than after the sin at Meribah, has led to speculation about insertions and editorial activity. Naturally the death of Aaron would belong closely with the account of his and Moses' disobedience. However, as has been remarked above, the method of the final author for holding his narrative together was to split natural units and insert other material.

In Num.21 several such small pieces of material have been strung together, Hormah, the bronze serpent, fragments from itineraries, and two small poems. The section is then closed by the continuation of the narrative begun in chapter 20, namely the progress through east-Jordan, here the next move being the defeat of Sihon and Og.

In Num.21.1-3 a small acount of a victory at Hormah has been inserted to illustrate the journey through the south. This section raises several problems, namely; Arad elsewhere is not the

same as Hormah,[174] there is already a tradition about Hormah in Num.14.45,[175] the way of the Atharim is unknown,[176] and the story could only imply a southern entry or incursion into Canaan. Noth[177] argues that the reference to "the way of the Atharim" shows that here we are dealing with the remnant of an old tradition. The reference to the king of Arad, according to Noth, found its way in because Arad was close to the track mentioned. This seems the best explanation but in any case it is apparent here that we are dealing with an old southern tradition which has been related to two cities in its transmission and was swept up finally to illustrate the march around Edom.

The story of the bronze serpent in Num.21.4-9 has also been brought into the narrative of the journey around Edom. But because here there is no connection given with a specific place, v.4a was necessary to explain that this incident happened while on the march. The story itself presents no interior difficulties though Gressmann argued that the use of two words for snake, שָׂרָף and נָחָשׁ suggests two sources.[178] The story is connected with the account

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174 Josh.12.14; see G.E.Wright and F.V.Filson, The Westminister Historical Atlas to the Bible, London, SCM, (1953).

175 Cp. Josh.15.30; 19.4; Jud.1.17. Eerdmans, Numbers, p.190 claims that here Hormah means a region and not a place since it can be translated "region" in Num.20.5. This is unlikely since elsewhere in the Old Testament Hormah is a city and when regions are named, it is clear from the name itself; e.g. "Wilderness of Zin."

176 "The way of the spies" is found in some manuscripts, but the harder reading is to be preferred.

177 Noth, Überlierferungsgeschichte, pp.149-150.

178 Gressmann, Mose, p.284. But Num.21.8 is the only place in the Old Testament where שָׂרָף in the sense of "serpent" stands in the absolute and this may be a textual accident.

in 2 Kings 18.4 of how Hezekiah broke up Nehushtan which had become an object of idolatry in the Jerusalem temple. As Rowley[179] has shown that Nehushtan was originally a pagan Jerusalemmite cult object, here is a story that was contructed to justify its use in the Israelite temple.[180]

Here the serpent is a means of healing as often attested in folklore, in this case healing its own bite. It may be that in Jer.19.8; 49.17; and 50.13 the hissing at the plagues may have been an invocation of the healing serpent to keep off infection.[181] However, although this public health function was a part of the serpent tradition, and although it is this that was emphasized in the story as it stands, it is possible that the serpent had a more important meaning in the Jerusalem cultus which would explain why it was included in the Eisodus story.

It is said in vv. 8 and 9 that the serpent was put on a standard, נס. After the battle with the Amalekites the altar built was called "the Lord is my standard" in Ex.17.15, just as in Is.11.10 the root of Jesse is to be a standard to the peoples; both of which suggest the importance of a נס. It is therefore interesting that in Is.5.26 that after he has lifted up a standard for the peoples to come to war, the Lord will hiss to them. It seems possible that

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179 Rowley, H.H., "Zadok and Nehushtan," JBL, 58 (1939), pp.113-141.

180 Gressmann, Mose, p.286, does not take sufficient account of this Jerusalem connection in his postulating that first the story was pure magic and then later a moral note was added.

181 In the Old Testament √שרק is never used for the hissing of a snake, but the onomatopoeic connection is obvious.

behind this image was the memory of the time when the serpent on the standard was to some extent the Jerusalemite equivalent of the ark, that is, the symbol for rallying the people. Consequently it is possible to see why the legend about the serpent was one of the few specifically Canaanite themes that was dragged into the Eisodus account, for it could easily be linked with the conquest.[182]

Whether or not this suggestion about the original nature of the tradition is accepted, it is sure that the final author of Numbers inherited the story from an older source, since he himself would not have written about an object that had been destroyed for two hundred or more years. It may be that the position of the legend is due to its place in an older source, but at all events it was put into its present position along with other materials to illustrate the march around Edom. It is not possible to identify this older source with a document. Usually this section has been attributed to E on two grounds, both of them unsure. First it is said that the bronze serpent story continues the narrative in 20.21. This is not self-evident, for v.4 could be the work of a redactor and even if this connection is admitted, it has been seen that the allocation of 20.14-21 to a document is not sure. Seoondly, verbal characteristics have been cited such as "speak against" with the preposition בְּ as a link with Num. 12. But it has already been argued that Num.12 and 14 or parts thereof cannot be assigned

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182 See O. Eissfeldt, "Lade und Stierbild," ZAW, n.f.17 (1940/41) pp.190-215 for the suggestion that the golden calves of Bethel and Dan were mounted on standards and served a function similar to that of the ark.

with certainty to definite documents, therefore they cannot be used as criteria elsewhere. A further objection must be made against the method of using unimportant expressions of infrequent occurrence as signs of documents. The most probable explanation of the origin of the bronze serpent story is Noth's suggestion[183] that originally it was an independent unity that was attracted into the pentateuch narrative.

In contrast the the serpent story, the section 21.10-20 cannot by any means be considered to form a unity. There are four principle problems which are presented. First, vv.10-11 are identical with Num.33.43-44, but in vv.12-13 the place names are not found in Num.33 and the formula used is slightly different. However, without vv.1-11, vv.12-13 could not be understood, so there cannot be a question of two documentary sources here. Secondly, the two poems given in vv.14b-15 and 17-18a (b?) are in such a confused textual state that their original form and meaning cannot be reconstructed. Thirdly the place names in vv.18b-20[184] are linked together by a formual different from either that of vv.10-11 or of 12-13. In fact all that is said is "from Mattanah Nahaliel," etc. Finally in v.20a$^{\beta}$b the wording is identical with that of Num.23.28 except that Pisgah has been substituted for Peor.

Noth has given an interesting explanation of how this section grew together.[185] He starts from the position that Num.33

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183 Noth, M., "Numeri 21 als Glied der 'Hexateuch' Erzählung," ZAW, n.f. 17 (L940/41), pp.161-189; esp. p.179.

184 Budde suggested that 18b should be read as a part of the well poem,as "from the desert a gift."

185 Noth, "Numeri 21."

is late, representing a period after the combination of P with the other pentateuchal documents. Therefore 21.10-11 which come from Num.33 must be even later and represent an insertion into the already almost complete pentateuch. In vv.12-13, then, the style is shortened a bit because the quote was at an end. The reason for not quoting further from Num.33 after v.11 is that in 33.45 the next station, Dibon-Gad was no help for building up an itinerary. Therefore the next two stations were derived out of the account in Deut.2.[186] The section following, namely vv.14-20, must have been added even later than vv.10-13 since one would expect the embassy to the Amorites in v.21f. to follow immediately. Why the well song was put in seems far from clear, perhaps because it was already associated with the other poem.. Finally, there is no real itinerary in 18b-20 and though v.20 is composite, it does not need to be explained as a combination of documents.

Noth has greatly helped to clear up the problems presented by this section, but it will be argued here that the main obstacle in the way of a satisfactory explanation is the assumption of all critics that this section is primarily interested in the itinerary of the Israelites.

There is no doubt that vv.10,11 are derived from Num.33.43-4, but it should be noted that vv.12 and 13 do not mention specific places but only general areas, the valley of the Zered and the other

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186 Noth, "Numeri 21," p.174 argues that the redactor misinterpreted Num.33 in quoting it for stations on the eastern boundary of Moab, since 33.43-4 deals with the southern boundary.

side of the Arnon. Verse 13 then goes on to speak about the boundary of the Amorites. Therefore the explanation of why the quote from Num.33 was not carried further is that the author's interest here lay not in itineraries but in boundaries. Thus the first poem, now only a list of names, was put into the present form of the section to give some concrete names describing the boundaries, or perhaps possessions, of the Amorite kingdom.[187] The well poem (vv.17-18a) may have come in because it was already connected with the first poem,[188] but the list of places in 18b f. seems to be more of boundaries than stopping stations, especially since it is not said that the Israelites went from one place to the next. Therefore in v.20 the reason why Pisgah[189] is put in is that from the Balaam story it was known as a vantage point, presumably in Moabite territory from which one could see the Israelites in their newly conquered land. Therefore it was assumed that Pisgah was part of the border.[190]

The purpose of this section was to bring the Israelites

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187 It is necessary to make a distinction between what may have been the original meaning and use of a poem and that for which it is used in the context where we find it. Thus, although some of the pieces in this section may be quite old and although possible suggestions for their original meaning may be given, the interest of the section as a whole lies in deliniating the Amorite kingdom that is about to be captured.

188 Here is the only possible sign of an itinerary; but this is only an isolated part of a tradition.

189 In Num.23.28 it is really Peor that is mentioned; but there seem to have been theological objections to the mentioning of the well known sanctuary of Peor. The fact that a mountain far north of the Arnon is on the border despite the claim of 21.24 is not surprising in a very late passage.

190 That the valley in the field of Moab is located on the top of Pisgah is due to the mechanical adding to the ancient form preserved in vv.18b-20a.

up to a position from which the embassy to and then attack against Sihon could be made. However, as memory of a historic claim against Moab the author took the trouble to deliniate Sihon's kingdom by means of miscellaneous pieces that came to hand. Consequently the reason for seeing a gap between vv.13 and the actual embassy in v.21 disappear. With regard to the date of the final form and position of this section it is possible to regard it as contemporaneous with Num.33, and since it will be argued below that it was the final author of Numbers who was responsible for Num.33, it can be concluded that he constructed this section in the course of his work.

The narrative about the victory over the Amorites in Num. 21.21-32 contains three types of material. First is the main narrative, 20-24a,31; secondly is the poem, 27-30; thirdly are a few fragments of miscellaneous and linking material.

The main narrative invites comparison not only with the parallel account in Deut.2.26-37 but also with the Edom embassy in Num.20.14-21.[191] Here it is noteworthy that the Amorite story is told in almost the same language as 20.14-18 and has comparatively little in common with the deuteronomic account.[192] Therefore, as one Numbers account is built on the model of the other, they may have both come from a document preceding the final form of the pentateuch. Jud.11 may preserve traces of such a document; in which

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191 In Jud.11.19-22 the account is essentially the same as in the main narrative of Num.21.

192 In Num.21.21 Israel rather than Moses (cp. 20.14) sends the messengers, but this variation is not important. There is some textual evidence for reading "Moses" here.

case, the fact that here the final author felt free to leave out the account about Moab shows that he handled his material so radically that it is not possible to reconstruct the original form of his source.

With the exception of the last verse, the conquest poem is not difficult to interpret. It is clear that the poem was written in the circle of those who conquered Heshbon.[193] Noth[194] considers that the poem was a simple triumph song, whereas Gressmann[195] argues that it is a song of scorn since the first verse ironically praises the Amorites in order that Israel's triumph may be the more remarkable. Gressmann seems to be correct here, but whatever view one adopts, it is clear that the poem has been well fitted into tis present context.

In the miscellaneous pieces, the mention in 24a of the Arnon to Jabbok area could have been derived from Deut.3.16 in an effort to correlate this account to that of Deuteronomy. In v.25 the mention of "these cities" interrupts the flow of the narrative. Why this should have been included is difficult to say; probably it was a scribal error or gloss. There is no evidence to connect it with any part of Numbers. Finally the mention of Jahaz in vv.24b and 32[196] points back to the historical fact that Jahaz was an important strategic point. The Moabite Stone mentions Jahaz

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193 Meyer, Israeliten,p.530, suggests Sihon was a Moabite king. Against this see Gressmann, Mose, pp.308-9.

194 Noth, "Numeri 21," p.167.

195 Gressmann, Mose, p.307.

196 In v.24 the text reads "strong was the border" but the Greek and the Latin give a better sense in reading Jahaz.

as a point built by the king of Israel and used by him in his wars against Moab.[197] In Num.21 the name may have been put in in order to prepare the way for 32.1 where Jahaz is specifically mentioned.[198]

The last verses of Num.21 narrate the victory over Og, king of Bashan. This is an obvious borrowing from Deut.3.1-3 and like the mention of Jahaz in v.31 may have been intended to prepare for Num.32.

It is now possible to obtain a general view of the chapters 20 and 21. Here the Israelites are brought into east Jordan and the way has been prepared for inserting one of the most striking stories in the Old Testament that illustrates Yahweh's omnipotence and holiness. The background for Num.20-21 is a narrative of travels and rebuffs; whether this existed in one or more documents or not cannot be said. Into this have been added miscellaneous pieces including a quote out of the final author's itinerary in Num.33. How much of this splicing in was the work of the author cannot be determined; but it is certain that what he did not himself do, he approved of or knew how to turn for his own use. Therefore, having cut out the narrative dealing with Moab's refusal to let Israel pass, he writes 22.1 to introduce the Balaam story where it would be most effective.

The Balaam story in Num.22-24 is not the least complicated section in the Old Testament. Other sections which refer to Balaam

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197 As in Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, Princeton, 1955, pp.320-321 (transl. Albright).

198 Noth, "Numeri 21," p.163.

and/or Balak and therefore valuable for establishing the origins of these two figures are: Num.31.8,16; Deut.23.5,6 (cited Neh.13.1,2); Josh.13.22; 24.9,10; Jud.11.25; and Mic.6.5. Balaam's associates are varied; twice he is associated with the Midianites (Num.31; Josh.13); once with Moab and Ammon (Deut.23 with Neh.10),[199] twice with Balak (Josh.24 and Mic.6); and once Balak occurs by himself.(Jud.11). Nowhere is the story of Balaam in Num. 22-4 clearly referred to, although similar motifs crop up. The association with the Midianites is mentioned, but somehow connected with the temptresses of Num.25. In Deut.23 Balaam first cursed the Israelites, but then the Lord turned his curse into a blessing. In Josh.24 on the other hand, although Balaam wanted to curse, he was forced to bless.[200] Mic.6.5 seems to be closer to the Numbers story since it reads "remember what Balak king of Moab consulted[201] and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal."[202] This is not clear, but it is noteworthy that in Num.25 the scene is first set in Shittim, and the whole incident of Num.25 is later associated with Balaam in

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199 Deut.23 presents two problems. First, why was Edom not mentioned with Moab as refusing bread and water to Israel? Secondly, was Ammon associated with Moab in the hiring of Balaam? The verb in v.5b is singular, but in Hebrew the singular verb could refer to two or more subjects taken together. Therefore the sense of the passage as it stands seems to be that both nations hired the sorcerer against Israel.

200 In Josh.24.10 there is a difficulty in that the force of the infinitive absolute is "he blessed you continually" or "repeatedly." This may point to a lost Balaam story or be associated with the right of Israel to visit a shrine associated with Balaam.

201 RV "consulted." But as in Num.24.14 יעץ is more accurately translated as "counsel."

202 RV interprets "Remember from Shittim unto Gilgal."

Num.31.16.[203] Therefore it is possible to agree with Mowinkel that Balaam was a well known figure.[204] Various traditions about him existed, describing him either as the enemy or more or less willing friend of Israel;[205] out of these came the raw material for the present narrative. Balak himself was probably also a well known figure and only gradually did he come to be associated with Balaam.[206]

In Num.22-4 there can be little doubt that the material came out of several sources; however, it is questionable that several documents are represented here. It will be argued that it is not possible to connect parts of this story with the documents thought to lie behind the pentateuch.[207]

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203 Wellhausen, Composition, p.111 suggested that originally Num.25 was part of a Balaam story.

204 Mowinkel, S., "Der Ursprung der Bileamsage," ZAW, n.f.7 (1930), pp.233-271.

205 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, pp.84-5 offers a reconstruction of the line of development. However the difference in viewing Balaam as good or bad is better explained as a regional difference; that is, east-Jordan sanctuaries tended to have favorable traditions about him whereas elsewhere unfavorable traditions sprang up.

206 Mowinkel, op.cit., pp.252-3 for additional arguments.

207 Documentary analyses, often mutually contradictory have been undertaken in the commentaries of Baentsch, Holzinger, and Gray; in the relevant parts of Wellhausen, Composition, Gressmann, Mose; and in articles by Von Gall, Mowinkel, and Eissfeldt. Rudolph argued the essential unity of the narrative, but has been criticised for arbitrary attribution of sentences to redactors. On the other hand, the construction of missing pieces of hypothetical sources is just as arbitrary a procedure.

The problems that have to be dealt with in connection with the unity or disunity of the narrative are the irregularities in 22.2-20, 35-41; Balaam's place of origin; the ass story; the position of Israel; the poems in chapter 23 in comparison with those of chapter 24; the age of 24.20-24; and the purpose of 23.25-30.

The irregularites in chapter 22 require a detailed discussion as to whether they result from the combination of two strands of narrative. It is argued that vv. 2 and 4 give different reasons for the fear of Moab. This is apparent; v.2 states Moab was afraid when he saw what had happened to the Amorites; v.4 says Moab was afraid when he saw the great number of the Israelites. However, from the reference back to the victory over Sihon and Og[208] it is apparent that v.2 like v.1 was inserted by the final author of Numbers in order to fit this section in with his plan. The mention of Balak in v.2, then, is not part of the narrative as it was first written and cannot be adduced as a doublet indicative of J and E.

It is argued that 22.3 is the result of the combination two documents since it repeats that Moab was afraid of Israel. Even if the current translation is accepted, it is a characteristic of stories designed for recitation that often a statement is repeated in other words. However, the verb in 3a would be better translated as "stir up strife,"[209] and thus the whole sentence would read,

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208 Og as an Amorite occurs in Deut.3.8.

209 The form וַיָּקָם is that of an ayin waw verb in the imperfect with waw consecutive. The root [קוּם] means "stir up strife," "quarrel."

"And Moab stirred up much strife before the people, for they were many and thus Moab had a sickening dread of the Children of Israel."

In the problem of who was sent to Balaam a definite diversity is apparent. In v.5 "messengers" is an indefinite term;[210] but in v.4 the elders of Midian and in v.7 the elders of Moab and Midian are mentioned, whereas in v.8 they change into the princes of Moab. Here there is an old tradition underlying the present form of the narrative.[211] However, it provides no clue for documentary criticism since it does not run through the whole story. The fact that it ceases as soon as the "princes of Moab" are mentioned shows that at one time the story dealt with a combination of Moab and Midian; the narrator was forced to keep the old terms at the beginning of his retelling of the story, but changed to "princes of Moab" as soon as he could identify them with the elders; thus princes are the underlings of Balak for the rest of the story.[212]

In v.36 Balak meets Balaam at the City of Moab. This poses the two questions of the border of Moab and the original form of the story. From the fact that after their meeting Balak and Balaam then go into territory north of Arnon, supposedly occupied by Israel from 21.24, it is clear that the reference to the City of Moab as being on the boundary is not a part of this story, but rather an

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210 This is used again in 24.12.

211 Baentsch's suggestion that "elders of Midian" was inserted to pave the way for Num.31 by R^P seems unlikely. Among other things it fails to answer the question of why "elders of Moab" would be added as well.

212 See 22.35,40; 23.6,17.

insertion on the basis of the claim in chapter 21. With regard to the original form of the story, Wellhausen[213] argued that Balak first came in person to get Balaam. Eissfeldt[214] adopts this suggestion, pointing out that often in the Old Testament narratives are arranged in terms of threes; that is, here one would expect Balaam to be asked three times before he decides or received permission to come. This is not impossible, but the story is understandable as it stands, for just as Saul went out to meet Samuel as custom seemed to dictate,[215] it would not be unexpected that Balak would do the same for Balaam.

Verses 36-8 follow logically, but then in vv.39-40 Balak and Balaam come to Kiriath-huzoth where Balak sacrifices oxen and sheep and sends for Balaam. Rudolph[216] argues that here the verb means "slaughter" rather than "sacrifice," but even if this is admitted the passage is not cleared up. Obviously Balak would not be slaughtering for the next day's sacrifices since animals were killed near the altar at the time of the offering. It appears that these verses come from an old version of the story. However, they cannot justify a documentary hypothesis since they do not link up with any other part of Num.22-4. The verses are simply remains

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213 Wellhausen, Composition, p.109f. M. Löhr remarked rather tartly, "Dass Balaq den Bileam in seinem Heimat aufgesucht habe, wie Wellhausen ... gegen Kuenen behauptet, ist verkehrte Exegese, wie solche bei Wellhausen öfter vorkommt." In "Bileam, Num.22,2-24,25," AOF, 4 (1927), pp.85-9.

214 Eissfeldt, O., "Die Komposition der Bileam-Erzählung," ZAW n.f.17 (1939), pp.212-241.

215 1 Sam.13.10.

216 Rudolph, Elohist von Exodus, pp.111-112.

which the narrator felt himself obliged to include in his account.

The final evidence for documents behind this chapter has been suggested in the variations in vocabularly. Here the two words for "curse" and the two divine names are brought forward. However, from 23.7 where both words for "curse" occur in the same line of poetry, it is apparent that one author could use the two terms. Secondly, even Wellhausen[217] admitted the divine names had been mixed up and Baentsch noticed a pattern in the use of Elohim and Yahweh, namely that Yahweh was always used by Balaam when talking to the messengers of Balak. Thus the variation in their occurance cannot be attributed to different documents, but rather to the conscious purpose of the narrator.[218]

The next problem is that of Balaam's country of origin. There have been four possibilities suggested, Edom, Ammon, northern east-Jordan, and Mesopotamia. In favour of an Edomite origin for Balaam Meyer[219] argued that Balaam was identical with Bela son of Beor mentioned in the Edomite king list in Gen.36.32. As Edomites traditionally had a reputation for wisdom and strange arts, it is possible that the figure of Balaam continued to appear in legends. But the fact that the Arnon could scarcely be regarded as the southern

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217 Wellhausen, Composition, p.110.

218 Rudolph adopted this observation. L. von Pakozdy interpreted the whole meaning of the Balaam story in the light of this variation; see "Theologisch Redaktionsarbeit in der Bileam Perikope," in J.Hempel and L.Rost, Von Ugarit nach Qumran, (Eissfeldt Festschrift), BZAW, 77, 1958, pp.161-178.

219 Meyer, Israeliten, pp.376-8.

boundary of Moab caused difficulties, for Balak would not be expected to go to the northern boundary of his kingdom to meet somebody coming from the south. Only if the geographical data in v.36 are taken as the work of a later hand, is this difficulty removed. Furthermore even though the philological identification of Balaam with the Edomite king is possible, there is no other evidence in the Old Testament to support this identification.

Holzinger supported the view that Balaam came from Ammon since in 22.5 there is manuscript evidence for reading "to the land of the children of Ammon,"[220] rather than " to the land of the children of his people." This could be taken along with the suggestion of Noth[221] that perhaps Balaam's full name was originally "Balaam son of Peor," that is, that he was associated with the sanctuary of Peor in east-Jordan. This suggestion seems likely inasmuch as there seems to have been a definite plan to discredit Peor in the Old Testament as will be seen below.

However, there is no doubt that whatever traces of older traditions remain, in the present form of the story Balaam's homeland is by the Euphrates. The mention of "the river" in 22.5 refers to the Euphrates, and in 23.7 the Euphrates region is meant by "the Eastern Mountains."[222] It has been objected that this was a long way for Balaam to come; however from 2 Sam.10.15,16 it is apparent

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220 14 MSS, Samaritan, Syriac, Vulgate.

221 Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte, p.83, f.n.217.

222 So W.F.Albright, "The Oracles of Balaam," JBL, 63(1944), p.211.

that it was possible to get help from that far off. Again, this is a story and must be regarded as such; even if the distance were too great in fact, there is no reason why it should not be easily covered in fiction. Historical criteria cannot be applied to narratives which are obviously not historical.

In conclusion, whether or not Balaam was really described as living in east-Jordan in the early traditions, it is not possible to separate out a document from Num.22-24 on this ground; 22.5 provides the only clue on this point. It was argued that the fact that Balaam journeyed by ass assumed a homeland much nearer to Moab; however, as will be shown, the ass story is an old legend incorporated into the present narrative.

It is obvious that in 22.35 we are at the same point that we were in 22.20. In between comes the ass story. This story is out of joint with the rest of chapter 22 for there is no reason why the Lord should be angry at Balaam's going when he had just given permission to go and the princes of Moab suddenly disappear and only two servants accompany Balaam on his journey.[223] However,

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223 E.F.Sutcliffe, "A Note on Numbers 22," Biblica, 18 (1937), pp.439-442 has attempted to show that this narrative is an integral part of the Balaam story. His contention is that the narrator was a primitive untrained writer who did not explain everything as clearly as one might have liked. Thus here the situation is that the princes of Moab had camped outside the city with their camels. Balaam had to go out by himself at night in order to join them without his fellow citizens finding out; once at the camp he would journey to Moab by camel. Thus while he was on the local on his way out to the junction for the fast south bound express the incident with the angel occurred. However, this attempt to save the unity by giving the narrator a gamma in Hebrew composition is impossible, for as will be argued, the writer was far from incompetent and untrained.

it has been difficult to fit this story into any documentary source on the ground of rational criteria.[224] Rudolph[225] has given the most convincing explanation of this legend. He pointed out that the story has neither a definite introduction, nor a definite end since logically it must have ended with Balaam turning around from his quest. It would appear then to have been an old legend told about Balaam and the thwarting of his demonish activities by Yahweh which could not, of course, be included in any document describing Balaam as Yahweh's obedient servant. This ass legend was picked up by the narrator and included in his work as one more example of the unwithstandable power of Yahweh.[226]

The position of the camp of Israel has been taken as a clue for documentary criticism. Unfortunately it is not possible to deduce any definite evidence from Num.22-24. In 22.5,6 it is not claar whether Israel actually is in Moabite territory or not. In v.6 the verb translated "drive out" could also be understood as "drive away." In 22.41; 23.13,27; and 24.2 Balaam is taken to points in east-Jordan from which he can identify Israel. It is not possible

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224 For example, Gray suggested that the incident be attributed to J on the ground that the only other speaking animal in the Old Testament was the serpent in the Garden of Eden in J.

225 Rudolph, Elohist von Exodus, pp.106-111. Also Löhr, "Bileam," p.88.

226 A similar explanation was given by Kuenen who assigned the whole Balaam story to E with the exception of the ass story which he thought derived from an old legend. Theolggisk Tijdskrift, 1884, p.497 as quoted by Holzinger, Numeri, pp.104-5.

to locate these points, but from 21.24 it is obvious that Balaam and Balak are in land occupied by Israel. This represents a difference between the outlook of the narrator of Num.22-24 and the final author of Numbers; but within Num.22-24 it does not seem possible to separate documents on this ground. Furthermore it should be pointed out that it is not reasonable to expect any geographical indications about the invading Israelites since the whole Balaam story is not about the Eisodus or the taking of land or the conflict with Moab, but rather the power of Yahweh.[227]

The poems in 23.7$_a$-10, 18$_a$-24 and 24.3$_a$-9, 15$_a$-20 which represent the actual prophetic utterances of Balaam have been taken as evidence of the combination of two documents since the two poems in each chapter resemble each other and contrast with the pair in the other chapter.[228] The two poems in chapter 23 are closely linked in with the story since they definitely refer to Balak and his request whereas the two poems in chapter 24 are not so closely bound in and appear to be older.[229] Gray has suggested that perhaps the poems in chapter 24 were independent of the narrative, and Gressmann objected to the usage of the poems for documentary analysis on the ground that they could have been written as independent units.[230]

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227 Mowinkel, "Bileamsage," pp.251-2.

228 Von Gall, A.,"Zusammensetzung und Herkunft der Bileam Perikope," in Festgruss Bernhard Stade, Giessen, J.Ricker'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung (Alfred Töpelmann), 1900, p.16 assumes that there was originally one poem per document; therefore two redactors added the other two poems.

229 As against Holzinger and Wellhausen, Composition, p.110.

230 Gressmann, Mose, p.328, f.n.2.

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Mowinkel has clearly brought out the difference between the poems of 23 and those of 24. In chapter 23 the poems assume in detail the Balaam-Balak story as we have it and would not be understandable without it; they also assume the existence of the poems of chapter 24 and even have verbal echoes of them. On the other hand the poems of chapter 24 seem to belong to the same Gattung as the song of Jacob in Gen.49, that is blessings or curses attributed to a hero of former times. In the two poems of chapter 24 there is no sign of knowledge of the Balaam-Balak story; Balak is not even named. All that is needed for the understanding of these two poems is the background of the national hopes and aspirations of Israel and the knowledge of Balaam as a well known traditional figure.

Eissfeldt[232] has put forward three arguments against this thesis of Mowinkel's. He argues that the two poems in Num.24 are linked since the first assumed the defeat of Moab and the second is an extension of this. But therefore it is possible that both were written interms of the relations with the Moabites as told in the narrative portions of 23.27-24.25. Secondly, the fact that Balaam introduces himself is only part of the style of such prophetic words. Thirdly, Edom is mentioned in the second poem; this does not show that the poems dealt with a wider field than the Balaam story, but is a reference back to the fact that Edom also had been a hindrance in the way. Nonetheless, despite these arguments it is impossible

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231 Mowinkel, "Bileamsage," pp.247-9.

232 Eissfeldt, "Komposition," pp.221-2.

to escape the conclusion that a far closer connection between the poems of Num.24 and the text around them might have been expected if they both came from the same pen. It can therefore be concluded that the two poems of Num.24 were part of the traditional material which the narrator inherited for the writing of his story..

It is generally agreed that 24.20-24, the last part of the fourth Balaam poem is not part and parcel of the poem. The reference to the Kittim in v.24 raised the question of whether by this was meant the Greeks or even the Romans of christian times. However Albright has treated the Balaam poems to an exhaustive analysis and argued convincingly that these verses, 20-24, though fragmentary, are old, going back as far as the 13 th century B.C.[233] Therefore, when the narrator of the Balaam story was assembling his material, he had at hand several short doom oracles which he added to the Balaam oracles.

The dating of the four poems in Num.23 and 24 is far from sure. Albright argues from the orthographic evidence that the poems are not later than the 10th or early 9th century B.C. and that they could date back as far as the 12th or 13th.[234] His general argument is convincing with regard to the antiquity of the two poems in chapter 24; however his reasons for the early dating of the poems in in chapter 23 seem weak. For example, in 23.10 he translates "dust clouds" instead of "fourth part" and then concludes that this reference

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233 Albright, "The Oracles of Balaam."

234 Ibid., p.226.

must have gone back to nomadic times.[235]

Naturally, the dating of any poetic piece in the Old Testament must remain a hazardous and unsure procedure. Mowinkel suggests that the two older poems came from the time before the division of the kingdom.[236] This is a good guess at what must remain forever unknown. What is important to note is that the poems in Num.24 are ancient and do not come from any documentary source.

In the light of this conclusion it is now possible discuss the section 23.27-30 which is obviously the seam joining the poems in chapter 24 with the rest of the Balaam story.[237] Here one finds the same language, situation and type of offering as in 23.1-3 and 14-15, but the fact that Balaam repeats in detail his instructions to Balak is unexpected since in 23.14 Balak already knew enough to act without command. Therefore 23.27-30 has been taken as the slavish repetition of a redactor. However it is important to note that the action takes place on the top of Peor. Peor was apparently an east-Jordan shrine visited by other peoples as well as the Israelites. In Num.25.18 and 31.16 it is associated with the apostasy of Israel, but even more significant is the reference in Josh.22.17 where the worst thing that can be said about the east-Jordanian tribes' attempt to build an altar is that it recalls the iniquity of Peor. In fact Balaam himself may have officiated at Peor if Noth's reconstruction

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235 Albright, "Oracles," p.213.

236 Mowinkel, "Bileamsage," pp.250-1.

237 So Wellhausen, Composition, p.110. Von Gall, "Zusammensetzung," p.14, finds Redactor III here.

of his name is correct. Therefore Peor must have been a very important if not the most important east-Jordan shrine to judge from the attempts to draw attention from it.[238] Against this background the significance of Num.23.25-30 becomes clear; Balak is carefully told to prepare everything according to the usage of the shrine, then Balaam received his inspiration directly without having recourse to cultic means. Obviously this was meant to detract from the reputation of Peor in a story that was dealing with Peor's cultic hero. Therefore the change in the method of Balaam's inspiration does not arise from the combination of documents from two different periods but from a theologically motivated desire to cast a slur. Similarily the apparently long-windedness of 23.25-30 is only part of the plan to take away from the importance of the cult of Peor.

It is now necessary to consider what the whole purpose of the narrator of Num.22-24 was. It was recognized by Baentsch and Holzinger that the story in its present form is well knitted together. Its author was competent and well able to use older material for his own purpose even though the form of this material was often ancient and therefore intractable. The author used his material, whether written or oral, to express in a narrative the impossibility to change or withstand the will of God by human magic.

The ass story is told in a highly ironic way. All through the narrative the fact that an animal is wiser than the sage amuses the reader, and this irony reaches its height when in v.29 Balaam

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238 Note that in Num.21.20 in the quote from 23.28 "Peor" is changed to "Pisgah."

wishes he had a sword in his hand to kill the ass at a time when he is dangerously near being killed by a sword himself. The effect of this irony is to emphasize the blindness and inability to understand of those who try to go against the will of the Lord. In this case it is Balaam, but Balak also suffers the same fate.

The two poems in chapter 23 are the work of the narrator himself. Like the early pair in chapter 24 they are a blessing of Israel,[239] but this is only half their meaning. In the first poem it is pointed out simply that since God will not curse Israel, it is impossible for man to do this. In the second poem Balak is rebuked because he has tried to alter the intention of God by repeating his request.

However, it is in the whole relationship between Balaam and Balak that the futility and blindness of Balak is brought out. Throughout chapter 22 he continually attributes Balaam's answers to a ruse to raise his stipendium; the difference between the two men is clear in vv.37 and 38 where Balak protests that Balaam need not have doubted about the size of his reward, to which Balaam replies that even though he has come, he can only speak the word of the Lord. In chapter 23 Balak after the first failure commands Balaam to do better the next time in v.13. After the second failure he takes over part of the language of Balaam and says in v.27, that perhaps if they try again then they might be able to get around God.

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239 It has been objected that the first poem, vv.7-10, is not really a blessing but merely the description of the ideal state of Israel. However, such a description pronounced at such an occasion could not be considered otherwise as a blessing, just as the description of Micaiah in 1 Kings 22.17 was considered a curse.

Finally in 24.11 Balak in his anger mentions Yahweh's name for the first time; but even here his incomprehension is evident from the fact that he begins "I thought to promote thee unto great honour." Thus although Balaam warns him , throughout the narrative Balak fails to understand; and the position of the final poem telling of the overthrow of Moab and other nations seems to be dictated by the intention of showing the punishment which Balak brings upon his own country in stubbornly trying to curse Israel.

Therefore the Balaam story is not essentially a story whose purpose is to narrate happenings at the time of the Eisodus, nor is it a legend to explain the enmity that existed between Moab and Israel; it is essentially a religious document in some way comparable to the Book of Job.

Pakozdy has interpreted the theme of the final form of Num.22-4 in a somewhat different way.[240] He begins by pointing out correctly that "Elohim" does not always mean "God," but can refer to supernatural or spiritual beings of many sorts, such as the ghost of Samuel in 1 Sam.28.13. Thus a man of Elohim is not necessarily a model of piety suitable for the principalship of a theological college but rather a more colorful John Wellington Wells figure with a tame Elohim behind him to inspire him with blessings and curses. Therefore in the story about Balaam "Elohim" refers to Balaam's private spirit, whereas other divine names or figures are

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240 Pakozdy, "Bileam Perikope," pp.161-176.

connected with the true God of Israel.[241] Balaam's Elohim is a puny creature who even has to ask who the men are who have come to Balaam in 22.9. The point of the story is the inability of this second rate spook to match himself with Yahweh and to curse the people whom Yahweh has chosen for himself.

This theory is very interesting and has the merit of explaining some difficulties. For example the ass story takes on a more reasonable form. In 22.20 the Elohim gives Balaam permission to go and reminds him to speak only what he, the Elohim, says. In v.21, then, the anger of Yahweh is obviously well grounded, and finally in v.35 Balaam only gets permission from Yahweh on condition that he promises to speak only what Yahweh says to him and to ignore his private spook.

However Pakozdy's theory is not entirely convincing. The fact that Elohim asks a question in 22.9 does not imply that he did not know the answer; for example in Gen.4.9 Yahweh asks Cain where his brother is although it is clear that he already knows about the murder. Furthermore, the Box and Cox inspiration of Balaam is never clearly brought out in the course of the story; as Pakozdy himself says, the main theme is the impossibility of influencing God by magic; but this theme has little room for a conflict with a second rate demon.

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241 For his theory Pakozdy is forced to make one textual emendation, namely 22.22 Elohim to Yahweh, and two other emendations, 22.18 and 23.4, are desirable if not necessary for his argument. "Bileam Perikope," p.168.

The final problem to explain with regard to the Balaam story is how it got into its present position and how it took its form. Like Job the Balaam story has much ancient material gathered to treat a religious theme. Naturally the problem in Job is far more complicated than with Balaam, but the Balaam saga rests a theological writing and in fact its insistence on the all-powerfulness and all-holiness of the Lord is the point of departure for Job. Very little of such theological considerations ties in with the theme of the rest of Numbers; the present position of the narrative seems to come from the fact that at approximately the same position in the Eisodus story a Balaam story was told, whose remnants are perhaps found in Num.25.

Therefore, in the absence of themes common to the rest of Numbers, it is possible that the Balaam story in its present form was a writing completely separate from the pentateuch which picked up a traditional figure such as Job or Daniel, and wrote a story about him to illustrate a religious motif. Later this story was incorporated into the pentateuch by its final author. The reasons why this was done are obvious; the story is sufficiently short to be included in a book and its message must have appealed to the post-exilic community who had their troubles with foreign nations and doubts about the power of God. If this theory about the origin of the present form of the Balaam story is accepted, then it will be possible to understand how Numbers included such a unique sort of story which has baffled the critics' attempts to come to any generally accepted explanation of its relation with the rest of the pentateuch.

Num.25 presents more material for raising problems than for providing solutions. The main problems are the position of Israel, the unity of vv.1-5, the Midianite woman, the office of Phineas, and the origin of the command to vex the Midianites.

In 25.1 it is said that Israel abode in Shittim. Shittim is mentioned in Num.33.49; Josh.2.1; 3.1; Mic.6.5; and Joel 4.18. The possibility of a connection of Shittim with an old story about Balaam is shown by Mic.6.5, plus the fact that in v.3 Israel is connected with the cult of Baal Peor.[242] Furthermore Shittim seems to have been close to or identical with Jeshimon in Num.33.49, since not only are they mentioned together, but in 23.38 it is said that Peor looks down upon Jeshimon.[243] Therefore Shittim was an ancient cultic centre in east-Jordan of which this story remains an echo. Whether or not it was once part of an itinerary of a document preceding the final form of the pentateuch as Gray suggests is not sure. If it was, it was chosen primarily because as a well known cult site in east-Jordan it would have been selected on religious grounds as the starting point for the conquest of the land promised by Israel's God.

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242 Gressmann, Mose, p.334, f.n.3 suggests that Moses was buried in Baal Peor and therefore this story was transferred to Shittim. However, apart from the purely hypothetical nature of Gressmann's location of Moses' grave, it is probable that Shittim "acacia trees" denoted a sacred grove near or attached to the sanctuary of Peor.

243 "Jeshimon" means wilderness; if Shittim was in a desert region the miraculous stream of water in Joel 4.18 would make more sense. This is another proof of the close association or identification of the two places.

The attempts to divide up verses 1-5 are not justified. The question of whether the intercourse with the Moabite women was the sequel or cause of the idolatry in vv.1-2[244] misses the point that here it is a case of sacral prostitution which was a part of the cult. Similarily Baal Peor[245] in v.3 is not evidence of a different document since intercourse with the women would be thought of as union with the deity worshipped at the sanctuary.[246] Finally, it is not possible to argue a difference between the command of the Lord in v.4 and the command of Moses to the judges in v.5 since it is not at all clear what mode of execution was actually meant in v.4. "Before the sun" may not mean simply "in the open" but may imply execution on the sacred side of the sanctuary, thus desecrating it. At all events, v.5 points back to a date before the kingship in its mention of judges as active warrior-type officials.[247] This section

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244 So Gray.

245 Gressmann Moses pp.208-9 argued that once the golden calf story stood here. He bases this on the pun between פָּרַע "let loose" and פְּעוֹר "Peor" plus the similarity in which the Levites in Ex.32 and Phineas earned their priesthood.

246 It is misleading to try to separate the Moabites from this account on the grounds that here it is a question of Baal Peor whereas the Moabite god was Chemosh. There is no reason to assume that the Moabites would not make pilgrimmages to shrines of other gods; and in this connection it should be noted that on the Moabite stone Chemosh is identified with another god, namely Astarte; therefore Moabite monotheism or henotheism cannot be presupposed.

247 Noth, "Das Amt des 'Richters Israels'" argues that the warrior heroes in Judges were identified with the minor judges, actual legal officials, through the fact that Jepthah's name occurred in the list of Jud.12.7-15. Therefore the mention of warrior-hero judges here must either presuppose such an identification or be evidence against Noth's theory.

in vv.1-5, then, is a fragmentary reminiscence of a happening at an ancient cultic entre in east-Jordan which was visited by various peoples. This would explain why the section could be combined with the following narrative in vv.6 f. since it is likely that the Midianites also visited the same shrine.

The section Num.25.6-18 is usually taken for post-exilic and therefore assigned to P.[248] However this solution is an over-simplification based on the fact that Phineas is mentioned. On the other hand, there is no doubt that there is a definite break with vv.1-5. Eerdmans[249] has argued that the executions in v.5 did not suffice to turn away the wrath of Yahweh, therefore Phineas' deed was necessary. He supports this by pointing out that the plague mentioned in v.8 has been presupposed in v.4. But this does not explain the sudden change to a Midianite woman from the Moabite women; and in general it would be expected that the carrying out of the Lord's command in v.4 would be sufficient to atone for the sin of the people.

There is evidence to suggest both the fragmentary nature of the story and its pre-exilic, perhaps even pre-monarchy date. First, the brethern of the Israelite man are mentioned in v.6 but not later on. Therefore some incident has fallen out here at the end of the story. Secondly, in v.6 the Israelite brings not "a"

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248 Baentsch, Holzinger, Gray.

249 Eerdmans, Numbers, p.203.

but "the" Midianite woman in the sight of all. Either a previous reference to a Midianite woman has been left out or else a special high priestess is meant here.[250] The cultic association is suggested also by the fact that the Israelites are weeping beside the tent of meeting. In its present context the weeping is meant to refer to the sins of vv.1-5; originally of course, these verses were not connected with vv.6 f. Neither can the weeping be for the man's act, since they were apparently weeping as he was bringing the woman. Therefore it is possible that this was some type of cultic weeping associated with a fertility cultus.[251] This possibility is made even more likely by v.8 where the man and woman go into a "qubba" where they are killed by Phineas.[252] This word does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament, but is explained by the South Arabian word "qubba" used for a leather tent carried by nomads as a sanctuary. Thus the man and woman were in a sacred area, presumably acting in accordance with a ritual.[253] If it is accepted that the story is truncated, it is clear why it was done; later ages found the cultus too abhorrent even to describe; thus they abbreviated the story.

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250 For example, in Ex.2.11-12, the Egyptian is first referred to as "a man of the Egyptians" and then as "the Egyptian."

251 Compare the weeping for Tammuz in Ezek.8.14 and for Jepthah's daughter in Jud.11.37-8.

252 It is more intelligible to read "qubba" for "belly" in the second part of v.8, but not necessary for this argument.

253 Compare the feast of booths in Israel. Here the word "qubba" probably comes from the nomadic peoples who visited the east-Jordan sanctuary. For the question of tents and booths, see A.Alt, "Zelte und Hütten."

It is not possible to assume here without further consideration that Phineas is a post-exilic figure. In fact, there is evidence that he at one time was an Israelite hero with his own traditions. This is indisputably shown by the fact that in Josh.24.33 Eleazar is buried in the hill of Phineas. Obviously the hill would have been named after Eleazar if Phineas had been a late figure created to fill out the Aaron-Eleazar family. Apart from the other occurrences of the name Phineas such as Jud.20.28 or 1 Sam.2.34, it is noteworthy that Phineas leads the committee of inquiry into irregular cult practices in east-Jordan in Josh.22.13. Here Phineas in vv.12-13 has his priesthood as an award for his faithfulness, much in the same way as the Levites are rewarded in Ex.32. This is strange, for it would be expected that as son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron he would inherit the office as a matter of course. Therefore this is a definite sign that the legend underlying this passage is not a creation of the post-exilic period for which the priesthood of Aaron and his descendants was normative. Rather it appears that Phineas was the eponymous hero of a priesthood which was spliced into other priesthoods by making its founder a descendant of Aaron.

Therefore the section Num.25.6-15 is a tradition about worship in an east-Jordan sanctuary. Such worship had come to be regarded as undesirable not only from religious reasons, but also perhaps from political, since it is clear from the Gideon saga[254] that east-Jordan Israelites had found some sort of modus vivendi

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254 Jud.8.4-9.

with the Midianites. Phineas, a hero of a west-Jordan shrine, was therefore credited with desecration if not destruction of the sanctuary where the Midianites came. To this legend, preserved as s sign of rivalry between the two shrines, the story of vv.1-5 was later added because it also dealt with the punishment of worship at the shrine of Baal Peor, close to if not identical with that of the Midianites. A further reason for the combination will be discussed below. When and why some parts of the two stories fell out cannot be determined; but all that can with certainty be assigned to the post-exilic period are the references to Aaron and Eleazar and perhaps to Moses. Whether or not these stories ever formed part of a document before the final pentateuch cannot be said; but originally they were sanctuary legends and formed no part of an Eisodus tradition.

Verses 16-18 were taken by Gray as the note of a priestly editor to prepare the way for Num.31. A connection is not to be denied; but it is very unsure to attribute 16-18 to someone who had chapter 31 in mind since the verb for "vex" in v.16 is different from the verb "avenge" in Num.31.2. Neither is it likely that v.18 is just a copy taken from 1-15 since Peor rather than Baal Peor is mentioned and Cozbi's geneology and her Israelite partner are not named. Num.25.16-8 are to be compared with Ex.17.16, the folk saying about the traditional hatred between Israel and Amalek. A similar saying dealing with hatred against Midian seems to underly vv.16-18, since the command does not refer to particular occasion but seems rather to be a principle of diplomacy. Therefore, vv.16-18 may have at one time existed separately and the fact that they combined Peor with Cozbi led to the combination of the two narratives in vv.1-5 and 6-15.

The second census in Num.26.1-51 has to be compared with the first census in Num.1. Mention has already been made of the article[255] of G.E.Mendenhall[256] dealing with the antiquity of such lists. It was argued that his attempt to conserve the numbers as an integral part of an ancient tradition can be accepted only for the Num.26 census, since in Num.1 there is only a bare list of tribes with a number given, whereas in Num.26 different clans occur. Therefore the list in Num.1 was composed in imitation of that in Num.26. Noth argues[257] that the list of tribes standard for Num.1-10 is independant of that in Num.26 on the ground that in Num.1 the order is Ephraim-Manasseh whereas in Num.26 it is Manasseh-Ephraim. There is no doubt that Noth is correct that the list of the princes of the tribes in Num.1 was the standard order for the following chapters; however it is to be doubted that the position of Ephraim and Manasseh provides a conclusive piece of evidence for distinguishing between two otherwise identical lists, especially when Noth himself admits that the position of another tribe in the prince lists of Num.1, namely Gad, has been changed.[258]

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255 See chapter 1.

256 Mendenhall, G.E., "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26."

257 Noth, Zwölf Stämme, p.23. Noth's argument is that there are two types of tribe list in the Old Testament; those where Levi's name appears with the other tribes and those where it does not. The first type of list is older than the second; therefore Gen.49 is older than both Num.1 and 26. The tradition of the reversal of the position of Manasseh-Ephraim is relatively late in the period of the judges; therefore Num.26 where Manasseh occurs first is older than Num.1

258 Ibid., p.17.

The further problem of the relationship of Num.26 with the list of Jacob's descendants who went down into Egypt in Gen.46 has been answered by Noth. On the ground that the order of the tribes in Num.26 is not the usual order whereas in Gen.46 the arrangement is more expected and that Gen.46 omits names found in Num.26, Noth[259] concludes that Gen.46 is dependent on the Numbers passage.

The antiquity of Num.26 as a document from the time of the judges having been established by Noth's arguments, it is necessary to recognize the additions that have occured. The reference to the fate of the sons of Judah in v.19 and the mention of the daughter of Asher in v.46 are obvious additions. However there are two additions which were made with the present form of Numbers in mind, namely the mention of the revolt of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in vv.9-11 and the daughters of Zelophehad in v.33.

The census list's present position is comparable with that of the list in Num.1, that is a new era in the history of Israel is beginning.[260] Originally this list must have served for organisation in the time of war; in its present position it fulfils a different function. In part it must have provided some sort of basis for the tracing of Israelite families, a Jerusalemite Somerset House. The list in Num.1 occupies a similar position, but obviously could not be used for geneologies since it contains no geneological data. Therefore just as Nehemiah was driven to consulting the geneological list for administrative reasons, i.e. the problem of what to do with

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259 Noth, Zwölf Stämme, pp.122-3.

260 In chapter 1 Mendenhall's suggestion for reducing the numbers to reasonable figures has already been discussed.

the half empty city of Jerusalem,[261] so the census lists stand in Num.1 and 26 as the preparations that a leader would take for the long journey through the wilderness and then prior to the entry into Palestine. This is confirmed by the fact that in the following chapters the main interest lies in the dividing up of the promised land. Therefore here as in Num.1 the list has the literary function of giving meaning to the chapters that follow.

Num.26.52-6 gives instructions as to how the land is to be divided up. There is an obvious tension between vv.53-4 and 55-6 for it is first said that the land shall be divided according to the number of people and then said that it shall be divided by lot. This was due to the fact that the final author, while carrying through his own description of the division and following on normally from the census he had just included in his narrative, was nonetheless bound by the traditions preceding him. Thus in Ezek.45.1 the land is to be divided by lot[262] even as in Josh.15.1 etc. most of the land is apportioned out the same way.[263] Thus the two methods were lumped into one section; the contradiction was not important since the law would not have any practical application.

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261 Neh.7. It is to be noted that in Ezra 2 and Neh.7 only priests are expelled from the priesthood because of no geneological record; no Israelite is expelled from the community for the same reason.

262 The expression "divide by lot" differs in Ezekiel from that used in Numbers and Joshua.

263 The exception is the land already promised, to Caleb or to the east-Jordan tribes.

The main interest of vv.52-6 lies in the fact that it is Moses who decides on the principle of the allotment, rather than Joshua who was to deal with the carrying out the task in Josh.13 f. There is a similar phenomenon in the difference between Chronicles and 2 Samuel for in Chronicles although David does not build the temple, he gives the exact plans to Solomon and makes the preliminary arrangements.[264] This naturally increases David's importance vis-à-vis Solomon. Thus the fact that Moses and not Joshua decides on how the land is to be divided takes such an important decision in the life of the people back to their founder. The intention here seems to be not so much to add to Moses'as to detract from Joshua's importance; further evidence for this trend will be advanced in the consideration of Num.27.15-23.

Just as the Levites were numbered at the same time as the rest of the Israelites but were kept separate in Num.3, so it is not surprising to find another Levitical census here in Num.26. In vv.57-62 this census is not mentioned until after the land division instructions in order to maintain this distinction between sacred and secular tribes. As in the census of the other tribes in Num.26 there is an old tradition about the Levites preserved in this section, namely v.58. Here instead of the standard geneology of the post-exilic period, five sons of Levi are given who elsewhere are grandsons or in the case of Korah, great-grandson of Levi.[265] It is possible

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264 I Chr. 28-9.

265 Mohlenbrink, "Levitische Überlieferungen," pp.193 f.

here that v.58 was originally preserved along with the other ancient material included in Num.26. The material relating to the secular tribes could be used by the final author of Numbers, but the Levitical tradition was an embarrassment to his own convictions on the sujbect; therefore he included this old tradition safely sandwiched in between the standard account.

The stipulation in v.62 that only those one month old and upward are to be counted is in agreement with Num.3.1 and related to the idea of the redemption of Israelite children from one month old and upward. But the statement in v.62 that the Levites were to have no inheritance in Israel is an echo from the Deuteronomic work.[266]

In general, then, Num.26 has a core of old traditions, perhaps going back as far as the time of the judges, which provided much of the material for the framework constructed by the final author of Numbers. in chapters 1-10. In Num.26 the old material has been provided with an introduction in vv.1-4 similar in wording to that in Num.1. Additions have been made to the old material to connect it up with the rest of the final author's account, a section about the division of the land has been put in, and the tribe of Levi has been cut off from the rest of the people. Finally in vv.63-5 the fulfilment of the punishment for the rebellion is recorded. It is noteworthy here that the theme of the division of the land is

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266 So Deut.10.9; 12.12; 14.27,29; 18.1,2; Josh.13,14,33; 18.7. In contrast, in Ezek.44.28 only the Zadokite priests are mentioned as being without an inheritance.

introduced for practically the first time,[267] but now becomes a leading question in the chapters to follow. This resembles Ezekiel where from chapter 45 on the division of the land is also a question; furthermore this resemblance is a further sign that behind Numbers there is a definite plan of composition.

Num.27 contains the judgement over the daughters of Zelophehad and the announcement of the coming death of Moses along with the installation of Joshua as successor. It is obvious why a question about the law of inheritance should be brought in in close connection with the preceding chapter's concern for the division of the land; but the reason for the Joshua section's inclusion will only become apparent after its meaning has been discussed.

The tradition about the daughters of Zelophehad occurs elsewhere in Num.36 where a supplementary judgment is handed down and in Josh.17.3-4 where the section is so close to the wording of Num.27 and makes such a break in the text that it is best understood as an insertion on the basis of Numbers. If this judgement actually came from a living legal problem occurring at some time in the life of Israel, it would be interesting inasmuch as it represents not law itself but casuistry, that is the interpretation or modification of laws that cannot be changed outright. However there is no evidence in the Old Testament that daughters were prohibited from inheriting where there were no sons in a family. The two passages adduced to

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267 Except for the incidental reference in Num.16.14 and the restatement of the traditional Levite land law in Num.18, the word נַחֲלָה "inheritance" does not occur in Numbers before chapter 26. After chapter 26 it occurs 22 times.

prove the contrary are inadequate. Deut.21.15 deals with the right of the eldest son whether he is born of a favorite wife or not; daughters are not mentioned. The other law adduced, Deut.25.5-10, deals with Levirite marriage. Here again daughters are not mentioned; it is argued that this custom would obviate the necessity of daughters inheriting. This argument is invalid since the law itself forsees the possibility that the brother-in-law might not marry the woman or even a Levirate marriage might not produce a male heir; in either case the problem would remain.

The problem of the origin of the daughters of Zelophehad cannot be answered before vv.8-11 are explained. Here is obviously a law of inheritance that does not belong in its context for it envisages possibilities not found in the introductory narrative. It is an example of the "If ... ye" type of law[268] and was at one time part of a living legal tradition. Because its first stipulation concerned the inheritance right of daughters it was drawn into its present position.

Therefore the story of the daughters of Zelophehad is not a piece of casuistry aimed at changing an old law since the principle it illustrates could have been asserted simply by repeating the law of vv.8-11. It is not possible to know if behind this story there is some historic dispute about five towns or clans in east-Jordan ; but in its present form it seems to have been composed as part of a

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268 See the discussion in chapter 2.

whole literary work since v.3 presupposes the revolt of Num.16.[269] This story then, is the work of the final author of Numbers; its function is once again to show Moses' care in regulating the division of the promised land and thereby to detract from Joshua's part in this. The fact that there is a supplement to the story in Num.36 does not prove a diversity of sources or later redactorial activity, but is rather another example of the author's casemate principle for holding his narrative together.

Num.27.12-23, the succession of Joshua, is essentially interested in organisation; of this section only vv.12-14 are concerned with the death of Moses. The death of Moses, or rather its annovncement, is told in the same style as the death of Aaron in Num.20; the difficulty is that there is a similar if somewhat longer account in Deut.32.48-52 which does not mention Joshua. Which account is dependent on the other is a matter of dispute,[270] but it is doubtful whether Num.27 was really interested in the death of Moses as such. The fact that most of the passage deals with the setting of Joshua in office shows where the main interest lies. Traditionally Joshua could not take over the leadership except at the death of Moses; therefore the author here was forced into a premature hint of the death of Moses in order to deal with Joshua.

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269 That Dathan and Abiram are not mentioned does not show that an earlier version of Num.16 was referred to here. The whole revolt went under Korah's name since he is the first person named in 16.1.

270 Baentsch argues for the dependance of Num.27 on Deut.32 on the grounds that the combination of JED with P raised the problem of how to introduce Joshua before Deuteronomy. Therefore the redactor inserted a shortened version of Deut.32 here. Noth, Studien, p.191 argues for the dependance of Deut.32 on the ground that its differences with Num.27 are all divergences from the related account of Aaron's death in Num.20.

It is noteworthy that in v.21 Joshua's function is defined as leading the people out and in. This is purely military in character[271] and to make sure there is no misunderstanding it is explicitly stated that Joshua is to inquire by Eleazar to discover the judgement of the Lord. This contrasts with Joshua's position in Deuteronomy; in Deut.3.28 Joshua is to cause Israel to inherit the land;[272] in Deut.31.1-8 there is no suggestion that Joshua's position is to be inferior to that of anybody else; and in Deut.31.14 Joshua even goes with Moses into the tent of meeting for the investiture. For Deuteronomy, then, Joshua is leader in the same sense as Moses in contrast to Num.27 where he is commander in chief and minister of defence in a government presided over by Eleazar.

From this difference in the office of Joshua, Noth drew an important conclusion relating to the P document. Proceding from the fact that neither in Num.27 nor in Deut.32 is Joshua commanded to go in and to take the promised land, Noth[273] concluded that P had no interest for the conquest narrative as such. This argument is very weak; for what was Joshua to do with the army once he was in command - march it up to the top of the hill and march it down again like the noble Duke of York? Certainly a military charge would imply a conquest.[274] However Noth has made an extremely

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271 Cp. 1 Sam.18.16; 2 Sam.5.2.

272 Joshua here is to be "strengthened." In Is.22.21 the verb "to strenthen" is used in connection with the setting of Eliakim in the place of Shebna.

273 Noth, Studien, p191.

274 Against this position of Noth, see K.Elliger, "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Erzählung," ZTK, 49(1952), pp.134 f.

valuable observation about the status of Joshua and the fact that he is not even credited with bringing the people of Israel into their land is another sign of the final author's intention to prune away the authority of Joshua. This pruning down seems to have been done for the benefit of Eleazar; in v.19 Joshua is to be set before Eleazar and in v.21 he is to consult Eleazar in religious matters. This is part of the post-exilic attempt to exalt the power of the priesthood at the expense of that of the civil jurisdiction; possibly because after Zerubabbel's rebellion there was no Jewish civil jurisdiction left. The figure of Moses was too hard and fast in the tradition to be replaced by that of Aaron, although Aaron was turned into the elder brother; however with the relation Joshua-Eleazar there was no fixed tradition, and thus the account in Num.27 could be constructed.

After the laws in Num.28-30, the narrative resumes with the account of the raid against the Midianites in Num.31. There are five sections in the chapter; the command to go out (vv.1-12); the return and Moses' command (vv.13-20); the command of Eleazar (vv.21-24); the distribution of the booty (vv.25-47); and the counting of the men and consequent gift to the tent of meeting (vv.48-52).

The command to go out against the Midianites obviously is connected with the command in Num.25.16-18, but in contrast to the accounts in chapter 25, the narrative here is colorless; its sole purpose is to illustrate the laws which have been grouped around it, and its origin does not go back further than this grouping. The fact that Phineas and not Joshua is the leader shows its dependence on the account in Num.25.

The reference to the death of Moses in 31.2 raises the question of whether this section originally came immediately after Num.27.[275] It is likely both passage came from the same writer, namely the final author of Numbers. However, as has been seen elsewhere, his method of arrangement was to alternate his material; therefore it was probably part of his plan to include chapters 28-30 by inserting them between the announcement of Moses' death and his last act.

The names of the five kings of Midian in v.8 may be a list going back to the times of the Midianite menace. The list also occurs in Josh.13.21 and may be compared with the names of Midianite leaders in Jud.7.25 and 8.5. The titles vary in these lists, suggesting that the names only were transmitted; here and Jud.8 the Midianite leaders are kings; in Josh.13 they are both "chiefs" נְשִׂיאֵי and "princes," נְסִיכֵי , and in Jud.7 they are "princes" שָׂרֵי . In Num.25.15 the temptress Cozbi is said to be the daughter of one of the kings mentioned here, Zur, but this association seems to have been literary only, since in 25.18 Zur is not mentioned by name, Cozbi being the daughter of a "prince of Midian." This connection of the 5 king list with the Baal Peor incident is another sign of the determination of the final author to weld his narrative together.

It has been argued that the killing of Balaam in v.8 is secondary here and comes from a later period. There is no doubt that the report is secondary in its present context; but in discussing the whole Balaam complex, a tradition of Balaam as an enemy was

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275 Noth, Studien, p.200.

found as far back as the deuteronomic writings and may be earlier. Therefore, this account of his death may have been a fragment like the 5 king list and was brought in with the list to fill out the otherwise dull narrative of Num.31.

In the description of the preparations there are two stipulations which help to show that the section is the work of the final author of Numbers. In v.6 it is said that the army took the "holy vessels" with it on its campaign. The fact that the ark is not specifically mentioned where it might be expected[276] must come from the post-exilic desire to scale down the importance of the ark. Secondly, the specific mention of the trumpets refers back to Num.10, thus functioning as another illustration of the programme that the final author described in his account of the ordering of Israel in the first chapters of Numbers.

In vv.13-20 the return of the Israelites and anger of Moses are described. It is significant that the Midianite women are associated with the offence at Baal Peor, although in Num.25.1-5 the Moabite women only are mentioned. Therefore the author of this reference must not only have known Num.25 in its present form, but also have understood the chapter as a unity.

The command of Eleazar in vv.21-4 is interesting inasmuch as it is an unexpected break in the story and refers back to the custom of the "water of separation" as described in Num.19. In Num.19 itself, the fact that Eleazar and not just any priest is charged with the manipulation of the rite points to an independent

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276 E.g. Num.14.44.

tradition justifying the privileges of priests tracing their ancestry back to Eleazar.[277] Consequently, it is possible to understand why this law should be referred to in a passage dealing with Phineas. Some sort of rivalry between Eleazar and Phineas priesthoods existed, but had been settled by making Phineas the son of Eleazar.[278] The best place to assert this superiority of age was to show it in action even while Phineas was completing the deed by which he achieved his priesthood. This must have been the final author's intention in making this brief insertion.

The distribution of the booty in vv.25-47 has been compared to the law traced back to David in 1 Sam.30.1-25. There are resemblances between the 1 Samuel passage and the distribution in Num.31, but the differences are significant. In I Samuel the people among whom the spoil was to be divided were all warriors, the distinction was between those who fought and those who guarded the camp. In Numbers the two groups are warriors on one hand, and all the rest of the people on the other. Secondly, in 1 Samuel the division gives an equal part to every person; here the division is uneven, twelve thousand men getting as much among them as all the rest of the people. Therefore this passage does not represent a simple transposition of a Davidic legend to Moses.

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277 The usual explanation given for Eleazar's action in Num.19 is that it was not possible for the high priest to let himself become ritually unclean. However, this does not explain why it was to be Eleazar and not just any priest who performed this rite.

278 The fact that nothing is said of Ithamar in any discussion of the succession Eleazar-Phineas shows how rival priesthoods were ignored.

However, it is apparent that the real emphasis in the division of the booty lies not on what the warriors or people get, but rather what the priests and Levites receive as their share. To drive home the point, much space is taken up by describing in detail how each group paid its income tax down to the last maiden.[279] In Num.18 it is laid down that out of their heave offering[280] the Levites shall give 10% to the priests. Here the division of the spoil was used to illustrate the 10:1 ratio in action; the fact that this was an unusual occasion would explain why the priests got their share through direct taxation of the people rather than the indirect taxation of the Levites;[281] what was important was the proportions to be observed.

In vv.48-54 the men are numbered and none found missing. The main interest here is not on the military satisfaction that must have been felt but on the gift that is given to the sanctuary. This recalls Ex.30.15 where after a census a gift has be be given to make atonement for the souls of the people. It is important to note that the same expression for the giving is used in Num.31.50. There is an obvious difference between the Exodus law and the Numbers narrative in that Numbers does not mention any definite amount

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279 As was observed by Gray, the fact that there are no camels mentioned in the spoil is surprising from what is known elsewhere of the Midianites (e.g.Jud.6.5); thus this is a sign of the artificiality of the whole story.

280 The word תְּרוּמָה used in vv.29, 41, and 52 is used for the tribute to be paid in Num.18.24,26 and is even used for the material brought for the building of the temple in Ezra 8.25.

281 In point of fact according to the final result of Lev.18 the priests get 1/100th of the heave offering and the Levites 9/100ths.

though it appears from the account that much more than one half shekel per head was subscribed. This is to be explained by the fact that Numbers was more interested in homiletics than law, since in the post-exilic period there was very little chance of having plunder to deal with. The emphasis here is on the giving of sudden and unexpected riches to the sanctuary; the census law in Exodus was only the excuse for this lesson here. At the time that the final draft of Numbers was being written, the temple of Jerusalem was probably in need of gifts, therefore this story was included.[282]

In discussing Num.31 as a whole, Baentsch denied that it could be attributed to P on the grounds that it presupposed Num.27 in its present position as well as Num.18 and 19. There is no doubt that Baentsch is correct inasmuch as he defined P as an originally independant document. Thus Num.31 is usually considered to be a sort of editorial fungus. However it is better explained as the arrangement if not the composition of the final author of Numbers who formed it with specific practical problems in mind. It is interesting how little of the chapter is actually narrative; rather it is the confirmation of laws seen elsewhere in Numbers and the Old Testament: the avoidance of heathen influences, the supremacy of Eleazar, the role of Phineas, the relation of the Levites' portion to that of the priests, and finally at the end a homily pointing out the virtues of giving more than that exactly required by the law.

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282 Note Ezra 8.25.

Num.32 is composite in origin, but attempts to separate out documents do not convince. Baentsch found three documents; P: Reuben and Gad ask for land west of the Jordan but offer to help in the conquest; E: as P but Gad and Reuben and more emphasis is is placed on the building of the cities; J: Gad and Reuben ask not to be led over Jordan with subsequent rebuke from Moses. However stylistic criteria used are weak; for example, the order Reuben-Gad occurs only once; therefore Baentsch is reduced to postulating an editorial change in order to find material for his P source. Noth's suggestion[283] is the most satisfactory if documentary criticism is to be made. In vv.39-42 there is an uneveness in that in v.40 Moses gives Machir land whereas in vv.39,41,42 Machir seizes the land on his own initiative. As v.39 refers to the original inhabitants as Amorites, it and vv.41 and 42 can be assigned to E and therefore v.40 is presumably J. Similarily at the beginning in vv.2ab$^{\alpha}$,5 Moses is said to be dividing the land; therefore this is the same stratum as v.40. On the other hand vv.1 and 16a refer to a conquest rather than a division, and therefore can be linked with vv.39,41, and 42. Further than this Noth is not willing to go; all the rest of the chapter is secondary growth according to him. To be fair to Noth, he advances his theory without dogmatism; but it is far from satisfactory. In vv.39-42 there are two different types of material; vv.39, 41,42 being fragmentary traditions such as are found in Jud.1, whereas v.40 is a more general statement in line with the whole

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283 Noth, Studien, pp.196-7.

emphasis of this chapter.[284] Furthermore these traditions deal with Machir only; it is difficult to connect them with the early part of the chapter which deals with Gad and Reuben only. An examination of the various parts of the chapter supports Gray's suggestion that it was composed freely from various materials.

The lists of place names in v.3 and vv.34-8 are essentially the same.[285] Four new names are added and two names, Ataroth and Sibmah are displaced in the second list, but the close relationship of the lists is nonetheless clear. In Josh. 13 Reuben's possession is described in terms of towns, but Gad's more in terms of boundaries.[286] The fact that both lists are of towns in Num.31 may indicate that here the lists have been standardized and are therefore dependant on Josh.13. In support of this, the list in vv.34-8 looks as if it were the list of v.3 artificially divided down the middle with half going to each tribe, for Reuben is curiously described as being surrounded on three sides by the possessions of Gad. There are also resemblances with place lists in Is.15 and 16 and Jer.48 where many of the same towns occur but where all are attributed to Moab. It is possible that the lists of Num.32 may be derived in all or part from such a Moabite list rather than Josh.13. In either case, the artificial nature of the lists in Num.32 shows that they are already

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284 It is fair here to invoke Noth's own statement where he protests against documentary analysis based on isolated unevenesses, "Numeri 21," p.164.

285 This list has no connection with vv.39 f.

286 Noth, Studien, p.198, f.n.4 argues for the peculiar form of Josh.13 as the result of a textual loss.

one step from historical reality and that they were inserted and used as part of the literary plan of the chapter.

The rebuke of Moses in vv.6-15 is interesting inasmuch as it refers to the spying out of the land from the south, but does not wholly come from any one account at present found in the pentateuch. The starting point of Kadesh-Barnea, the exploration up to the valley of Eshcol, and the beginning of the oath of the Lord all recall Deut.1.[287] On the other hand, the punishment of those 20 years old and up and the mention of Caleb and Joshua recall Num.14.[288] Noth[289] has also suggested a connection with Josh.14.6-15, but apart from the mention of Kadesh-Barnea, the resemblance does not seem to be very strong.[290] The origins of Num.32.6-15 seem deuteronomic, then, but when the passage was inserted into this chapter, additions were made in vv.11 and 12 in order to bring it into line with the narrative of Num.13-14.

The promise of Gad and Reuben, the command of Moses to them which repeats the promise, and then the command of Moses to Eleazar and Joshua which repeats the conditions once more is all very tedious to the modern reader, however significant this reiteration may have been at the time that it was written. It is hard to discern a single source here, except that from the mention of Eleazar

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287 Num.32.8,9,11; cp.Deut.1.19,24,35.

288 Num.32.11,12; cp. Num.14.29,30.

289 Noth, Studien, p.199.

290 In Josh.14 v.7 has a different word for "spy out", v.8 a different word for "weaken," and Caleb appears alone, though this last may be due to the demands of the narrative.

and Joshua in v.28f. it is apparent that the final author of Numbers added the last section.

In the whole of this section up to v.32, there has been nothing said of the half tribe of Manasseh, but then suddenly it is mentioned in v.33 in the division of the former kingdoms of Sihon and Og. It has been argued that the mention of these two kingdoms is deuteronomic, but their inclusion here could equally be on the basis of Num.21. At all events, v.33 interrupts the flow of the chapter, since v.34 f. deals with the territory of Reuben and Gad. It is true that in vv.39f. the territory of east Manasseh is dealt with, but here there is no connection with the place list of vv.3 and 34-8; all that is produced is two fragmentary traditions about Jair and Nobah. Jair occurs in a list of the minor judges in Jud.10.3-5 where it is not even certain that he is a Manassite;[291] Nobah occurs elsewhere only in Jud.8.11 as a place name.[292] Therefore in Num.32 the half tribe of Manasseh is very much of an after thought. In the four and a half verses out of 42 that deal with this tribe, there are two fragments, perhaps from the Book of Judges, and three bald statements that the tribe took east-Jordan land or had it given to them.

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291 The name Jair or noun Jairite occurs Deut.3.14; Josh.13.30; 2 Sam.20.26; 1 Kings 4.13; 1 Chr.2.22,3. The Jud.10 passage seems to be the oldest mention in the Old Testament since Jair is not identified as a son of Machir or Manasseh and since his name occurs in the list of minor judges which comes from pre-monarchical times.

292 It is interesting that Nobah is mentioned with Jogbehah in Jud.8. In Num.32.35 Jogbehah may be an addition since it is not preceded by the particle אֵת normal in the list. This supports the possibility that Num.32 has been enriched by borrowing out of Judges.

The usual explanations of the chapter as a whole are therefore not satisfactory. If, as is likely but not provable,[293] documentary sources underly parts of the narrative, these sources are too confused to be separated; and this fact shows that there was more in mind in the construction of the chapter than combining and reconciling two or more versions of the same happening. Similarily, the theory of Noth that the chapter just grew is unsatisfactory inasmuch as it fails to explain why so much misplaced literary energy was set off.

Historically, Reuben and Gad as long as they lasted were east-Jordan members of Israel. Therefore there must always have been some sort of story to explain this and to get them under the umbrella of the Exodus tradition. The reason given was that Reuben and Gad were a pastoral people and therefore remained in the pasture lands east of the Jordan.[294] Machir, on the other hand, was originally a west-Jordan people that obtained possessions eastward between the[295]

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293 For example, the change of order in the names of Reuben and Gad may come from the combination of two or more documents, but not enough is left over to separate out the originals. Similarily, there is considerable variation in the wording of vv.16, 24, 26 as what is being built and for whom; but it is impossible to determine whether these terms are drawn each out of a different source or are themselves composite. In any case, they cannot necessarily be associated with any part of the narrative; the whole is a literary omlet from which the original eggs cannot be unscrambled.

294 Historically, of course, the large number of cattle was the result rather than the cause of residence in pasture lands.

295 Jud. 5.14.

time of Deborah and the founding of the monarchy. Consequently there is a certain disjointedness in east-Jordan traditions caused by the insertion of Machir, especially since Bashan and north Gilead were not pastoral lands, and therefore the people living there could not be fitted into the pastoral necessity excuse which explained the conduct of Reuben and Gad. This accounts for the awkwardness of the introduction of half Manasseh here as elsewhere in the Old Testament.

It now remains to explain the excessive length and pedantry of Num.32. It must be seen in relation to Num.13 and 14, a section that is also spun out to great length for both sections have a common theme, the fact that tribes did not choose to enter the promised land. Such a failure must have looked evil enough at any time in Israel's history, but particularly so at the period of the return from the Exile; thus the emphasis on the all importance of the land west of the Jordan in both Num.13-14 and 32. The difference between the two sections is that in Num.13-14 the old rebellion at the southern entry was seen as another form of the unwillingness of Jews to re-enter Palestine in the post-exilic second Exodus; the permission for Reuben, Gad and Machir to opt out of their rights but not their obligations represented the compromise reached with those who would not or could not leave the Dispora. This compromise entailed support of Palestine in the case that an individual would not return. Therefore it is possible to understand why the agreement with Gad and Reuben is repeated no less than three times for there was a practical lesson to be driven home. Consequently Num.32

springs from a definite Sitz im Leben and not from a simple desire to combine different documents or from the pedantic long windedness of an editor who:

"Too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing while they thought of dining."

The list of camping places of the Israelites in Num.33.1-49 seems to assume generally the pentateuch in its present form; however there are additions and omissions which have to be explained.

The Numbers itinerary omits or changes the following places in the pentateuch narrative: in v.7 there is the wilderness of Etham rather than the wilderness of Shur in Ex.15.22; Numbers 33 does not mention:the camp before the Mount of God (Ex.18.5); the Wilderness of Paran (Num.10.12); Taberah (Num.11.3); the Wilderness of Paran (Num.12.16); Kadesh (Num.13.26); Hormah (either as in Num.14.45 or 21.3); and a series of names in Num.21.12f. On the otherhand, Num.33 refers to the Red Sea(v.10)[296] which is not specifically referred to as a camping place in Exodus; and to a series of names (vv.12-13; 19-35; 41-2) which for the most part do not occur elsewhere but which may belong together along with the two names in vv.44-5. The problem is further complicated by the fact that the names in vv.30-33 occur also in Deut.10.6,7 and the two names in vv.41 and 42 occur in Num.21.10,11.

It is first necessary to understand the nature of the list of places found in Num.33 but not elsewhere. Noth has argued

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296 The usual translation for יַם־סוּף. Whether or not this means the Red Sea, it certainly refers to the body of water where the Egyptians were destroyed. Cp.Ex.13.18.

convincingly that this was not a list made up at random as has been assumed by Holzinger among others, but rather was a traditional itinerary of the stations between Israel and Mount Sinai.[297] He points out that part of this list of names is of places in the Arabah which can be identified. As the list is geographically exact here, there is no reason why the other part of this list should not also geographically coherent, although it is not possible to prove or to disprove this. As the end goal of the list was Sinai, it is possible to conclude the list was at one time in use by pilgrims.[298]

However objections can be made to two minor parts of Noth's theory. The first is with regard to Deut.10.6,7. Noth considers that the identity of names in Deut.6,7 and Num.30-33 comes from a dependence of Numbers on Deuteronomy at this point.[299] But as has been argued with regard to the Aaron burial tradition, the list of places in Deut.10 is an interruption into the context; therefore the dependence is more likely to be the other way round. This does not mean that Deut.10 knew Num.33 in its present form; but rather that the pilgrimage-station list as Noth has described it lay behind both sections. The second objection is against Noth's argument that Num.21.10-11 is dependent on Num.33. Once given that it was possible to quote from the pilgrimage list to enrich a narrative, it is easy to see how in Num.21 a similar

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297 Noth, M., "Der Wallfahrtsweg zum Sinai (4 Mose 33)," Palästinjahrbuch, 36 (1940), pp.5-28.

298 Noth in admitting the impossibility of certain conclusions, places Sinai in North Arabia rather than in the Sinai Peninsula.

299 Noth, op.cit., p.20, f.n.1.

borrowing could take place. The fact that the places in Num.21.12f. are not mentioned in Num.33 does not prove that Num.21 was added to the pentateuch after Num.33, for it is apparent that Num.33 felt free to omit stations described elsewhere, and as discussed with relation to Num.21, it is not sure that all the place names mentioned there were meant to be taken as part of an itinerary.

It is apparent that in Num.33.1-49 an old pilgrimage list has been taken to form the torso of the list of stations in Israel's journey. The beginning has been put in according to the account in Exodus just as the end has been brought into line with the final narrative in Numbers. The dependence on the final form of Numbers is shown by the inclusion of Aaron's death as described in Num.20 and by the almost exact reproduction of the opening verse of Num.21. However, in writing this list the author apparently had in mind the 40 years' wandering in the wilderness; therefore there are 40 stations from the leaving of Egypt until the coming to the banks of the Jordan. This would explain why the pilgrimage list was adopted in order to fill in the required number of names and also why several unimportant names were dropped, since they would have given more than the desired number. There is therefore no reason why this list in Num.33 cannot be attributed to the final author of Numbers; this would solve the dilemma felt by Baentsch who remarked that in style this section was like other P passages, but it could not be P in the sense of an independent document since it presupposed the pentateuch in its present form.

In Num.33.50-56 the homiletic interests of the final author are again seen. There is a repetition of the warnings so well known in the Deuteronomic writings[300] along with a command in v.54 about dividing the land that refers back to Num.26.53-5. There are two reasons for placing this warning here. The first is that Israel is about to enter the promised land, so Moses gives his last command about faithfulness. Secondly, the command to drive out the inhabitants comes opportunely before the next chapter, for in Num.34 the boundaries of Israel are given without mention of Philistines or any other people. Once again the ominous threat in 33.56 is part of the final author's intention of warning Israel to observe the commands of the Lord after the second Exodus.

Num.34.1-15 describes the boundaries of the new land, and therefore must be considered with the descriptions in Josh.15 f. and Ezek. 47.15-20; 48.1 in mind.

The actual geographical location of the north boundary is far from sure. There are three suggestions; a far northern location which would include the other side of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon within the boundaries of Israel; a line further south running along the Leontes which would at least have been a reasonable description of Israel at one time in its history; and finally a line in east-Jordan running westwards towards the source of the Jordan.

It lies without the scope of this discussion to enter into the archeological and geographical debate. However, each theory

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300 Cp. Deut.7.2; 12.3; Josh.23.13; Jud.2.3.

has implicationsfor any attempt to explain the present structure of this chapter. The first suggestion of a far northern boundary would have to be explained as a literary forgery; however this theory does not have much support in recent discussions. Elliger[301] supports the second theory, arguing that the north boundary comes from a document of the time of David which describes the boundaries of the Aramaen territories conquered by David.[302] Noth,[303] on the other hand, argues that just as the southern boundary in Num.34 reproduces the southern boundary of the tribe of Judah as set out in Josh.15, so the northern boundary in Num.34 corresponds to the northern boundary of the tribe of Dan which at one time was described in the same context as the boundaries of the other tribes. Unfortunately when those boundary lists were incorporated into the book of Joshua, Dan was dropped out because its northerly position would have been incongruous with the original plan of the settling of Palestine. The list in Ezekiel is essentially from the same source, since originally the list must have been composed of names without text. But in Ezekiel the list has been interpolated with official Assyrian province names which is another indication that it was associated with the region east of Jordan.[304]

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301 Elliger, K.,"Die Nordgrenze des Reiches Davids," Palästinjahrbuch, 1936 (32), pp.34-73.

302 Ibid., p.73. Elliger argues that not only the west and north, but also the south and east boundaries of this area are included here.

303 Noth, M.,"Studien zu den historisch-geographischen Dokumenten des Josuabuches," ZDPV, 58 (1935), pp.185-255; and "Das Reich von Hamath als Grenznachbar des Reiches Israel," Palästinjahrbuch, 33 (1937), pp.36-51.

304 Noth, "Dokumenten," p.241.

If Elliger is correct, then the description of the north boundary in Num.34 has a different origin from the description of the southern. To this extent, Noth's theory seems more likely from a literary point of view alone. But issue must be taken with Noth's assumption that Num.32 and 34 originally belonged together in a literary context.[305] Even if the northern boundary originally had an east-Jordan origin, in its present context it is meant to refer to the west-Jordan north boundary. Furthermore the interest of of Num.34 is on all Israel. Therefore if the north boundary in Num.34 and the east-Jordan traditions of Num.32 are at present close to each other, this is a pure coincidence on the literary plane.

The purpose of the present position of the description in Num.34 is clear.[306] It is obviously meant as a preparation for the Book of Joshua, here again with the purpose of detracting from the stature of Joshua, for according to the scheme as it now stands, it is through Moses that the command regarding the land comes; Joshua does no more than follow Moses' master plan in the allotment of the land to the individual tribes. This is another sign of the bias of the final author as was noted in the discussion of Num.27.

The list of the tribal chiefs in vv.16-29 is not ancient since Parnach in v.25 is probably a Persian name. The order of the tribes seems to be geographically determined, the names occurring in more or less south-north order. It is important to note how the

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305 Noth, "Dokumenten," p.231, f.n.2.

306 The question of whether this list ever stood before the individual tribal lists as found in Joshua is immaterial here.

scheme in the first part of Numbers, the preparation for the wilderness wanderings, is reproduced in the second half of Numbers the preparation for the entry into the promised land. The census in Num.26 is parallel to the census in Num.1; now here the list of tribal chiefs is parallel to that of Num.1, with the difference that the two and a half east-Jordan tribes are naturally not mentioned. From this parallel structure it is possible to argue that the final form of Numbers was something thought out and imposed on the material to hand rather than that additions and insertions bloated out an old narrative for several hundred years until its present size was reached.

The laws regarding the cities of the Levites and the cities of refuge in Num.35 naturally raise the problem of their relation with other parts of the Old Testament where the same subjects are treated. It is foreign to the purpose of this study to treat the subject in full detail with reference to archeological and geographical evidence; the problem will be dealt with only so far as the composition of Num.35 is concerned.

From Lev.25.32-4 it is possible to conclude that within the history of Israel there existed such things as Levitical cities for this regulation regarding Levitical property comes only as a rider in a general discussion of property rights, and therefore is unlikely to be a fabrication in favour of a Levitical myth. However, it is not said here what a Levitical city was, though it is apparent that other Israelites as well as Levites lived in such a place.[307]

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307 It is possible that the stipulation prohibiting the sale of the pasture land was designed to prevent the Levites from being bought out altogether; for as long as the Levites had land around a city which they could not sell, they would not be tempted to leave that city.

However it is the actual list of such Levitical cities found in Josh.21.9-40 and 1 Chr.6.54-81 which is the main piece of evidence.[308] There are three principle explanations for the origin of this list. Alt and Noth argue for the time of the organisation of Israel under Josiah. Albright on the other hand suggests the time of David. Mazar,[309] relying on the arguments of Albright, has argued for the origin in the time of the reorganisation of the kingdom under Solomon. This theory has the merit of explaining why Levites would be assigned to certain cities, for from the parallel of Egyptian confiscation of Canaanite cities to form a series of royal bastions in the land, Mazar argues that the Levites were stationed in the unsure parts of the new kingdom because of their loyalty to the House of David.[310] But, the position of the third view about the city list is stronger than might be expected. This is the view of Holzinger and Baentsch who followed on from

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308 See W.F.Albright, Archeology and the Religion of Israel, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1953, pp.121-5; A.Alt, Kleine Schriften, II, pp.294 f.; 306 f.; M.Noth, Das Buch Josua, Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Tübingen, Mohr, 1953 (2d ed.), pp.131 f.

309 Mazar, B., "The Cities of Priests and Levites," Congress Volume, Oxford 1959, Vetus Testamentum Supp. VII, Leiden, Brill, 1960, pp.193-205. At the reading of Dr. Mazar's paper Professor Albright announced that he was in full agreement with it.

310 A general criticism of Mazar is that he relies too much on evidence from Chronicles. It is true that much of value is preserved here, but Mazar's article would be more convincing if he could give some reasons for his unconditioned reliance on every text he cites to support his argument.

Wellhausen and pronounced the list of cities as an invention. The evidence brought forward for this view by Baentsch is that the arrangement of the cities and the pasture lands in the form of a perfect square, though perhaps possible in deserted steppe land, would have been impossible in the hilly and already settled country of Canaan. Then, the number 48, four cities per tribe, is suspicious in itself of systematization; but even more so when from the list in Josh.21 it is clear that this is how the cities are divided with two exceptions.[311] It can be argued that the arrangment on the square is merely the systematisation of an old tradition; but then it is also likely that the number and distribution of the cities has been imposed as well.[312] At all events it is important to note once again the influence of the last chapters of Ezekiel shown in the emergence of the square in planning for the future.

The question to be decided with regard to the final form of Num.35 is whether it is dependent on Josh.21 as Noth argues.[313] This question of dependence cannot be decided from any of the theories about Levitical cities just discussed. If the list was a pure fabrication and the number 48 a result of sacred arithmetic

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311 Nine cities out of Judah and Simeon combined Josh.21.9-16 and to reduce the number to 48 only three cities out of Naphtali Josh.21.32. This stands in contrast to the stipulation in Num.35.8 that the cities shall be drawn from the tribes according to their number.

312 If this explanation is accepted it would cause more difficulties for Mazar's theory which is based on the distribution of the Levitical cities. For the adaption of a list for a numerical theory, compare the analogous situation in Num.33.

313 Noth, Josua, p.127.

it is possible that the number 48 first appeared in Num.35 and that Josh.21 was constructed after it. If the list was ancient but put on the procrustean bed of a pre-conceived number of 48 Levitical cities, the same possibility above exists. Finally, if there were originally 48 Levitical cities just as there were six cities of refuge, then the number would have been generally known and there is no reason why Num.35 would have had to derive it from Josh.21. The relationship of Num.35 and Josh.21, then, has to be determined from the law of refuge and cities of refuge.

The law of refuge and cities of refuge in Num.35.9-34 is also paralleled in other parts of the Old Testament. In Ex.21.12-14 the difference between murder and accidental killing is established with refuge at an altar as the means of escape for the innocent.[314] In Ex.21.13 specific sanctuaries seem to be envisaged, and from these developed the Deuteronomic cities of refuge once the cult in these cities had been abolished.[315]

Deut.4.41-43 may be a late insertion into its context. It is certainly very close to Deut.19.1-13, for v.42 is very like Deut.19.4 in wording. There is no connection here with Num.35. Deut.19.1-13 itself has very little resemblance verbally to Num.35, the laws being formulated in a different way and even the word for expressing the unintentional nature of the killing is different.[316] In one respect Deut.19 may represent a later period than the law in Num.35. In Num.35.17 and 18 a distinction is made between weapons

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314 See 1 Kings 2.28.

315 This does not mean that the list of the cities of refuge in Josh.20 is necessarily deuteronomic in origin. A city could have been known as a city of refuge even when refuge was actually given at the altar.

316 Deut.19.4 בִּבְלִי דַעַת ; Num.35.11,15 בִּשְׁגָגָה.

of wood and stone and tools of wood and stone; a man could not claim that he was cleaning his slingshot and it went off by accident for killing with a weapon was always murder. But in v.16 there is no distinction made between iron tools and iron weapons; therefore this may come from a period when iron was not a common metal for domestic tools. On the other hand, in Deut.19.5 the case of a loose iron axe head is taken into account.

Josh.20 is the only passage dealing with the right of refuge that is literally connected with Num.35. It is first necessary to separate out vv.7-9ab$^{\alpha}$, the name list of the cities of refuge, which is the kernel of this chapter but far older than it.[317] Therefore the number of six cities of refuge may have been derived from this old list rather than from Josh.20 in its present form.

Apart from this old list, the rest of Josh.20 has verbal resemblances with both Deut.19 and Num.35. In common with Deut.19 is the expression for "unintentionally" in v.3 and the law in v.4 that the man is to be tried by the "elders" rather than the"congregation." But in common with Num.35 Josh.20 in v.2 has the same term for "cities of refuge," in v.3 the same word for "unintentional," and in v.6 the same law that the refugee shall remain in the sanctuary until the death of the high priest. Therefore the simplest explanation

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317 Noth, Josua, pp.123-4. Noth points out that the term for "cities of refuge" in Josh.20.9 is not used in the rest of Josh.20 or Num.35.11 or elsewhere in the Old Testament. He concludes then that this must be an older term that fell out of usage.

is that Josh.20 is later than both Num.35 and Deut.19 and represents an attempt to combine them. Otherwise it is difficult to account for the existence of a passage that has the characteristics of two other passages which are themselves totally unrelated.

A further argument for the dependance of Josh.20 on Num.35 can be drawn from the wording of the two passages. It is significant that in Josh.20 one does not find the clumsy wordiness of Num.35 ; neither does one find the traces of a terminological distinction between a killer and a murderer that are apparent in Num.35. Therefore there is no reason to believe that Num.35 is dependent on Josh.20; rather the dependence is the other way round.[318]

In his consideration of Num.35 in itself, Noth argued[319] that without Josh.20-21 it would hang in the air, that there was no law of refuge outside of Deuteronomy. But there are traces of an older law independent of Deut.19 that underlies this chapter. In Num.35.16-24 and 30-32 it is important to note that the word רֹצֵחַ is used in the technical sense of "murderer," though this usage is not standard for the chapter as a whole.[320] The significance of the failure in Num.35 to distinguish in v.16 between

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318 The composition of Joshua lies outside the subject here, but it is worth noting that a strong case could be made for the dependance of some of the later chapters of Joshua on Numbers in its present form. For example, apart from the arguments above relating to Josh.20-21, it is significant that in Josh.22.8 the law of plunder in Num.31.27 is assumed; in Josh.22.13 it is Phineas who is active in investigating east-Jordan unorthodoxy just as in Num.25 and 31; and finally in Josh.23.6 reference is made to the book of the law of Moses which might refer to the pentateuch in its present form. That the final recension of Joshua is younger than that of the pentateuch may be reflected by the fact the the Samaritans would not accept Joshua although there does not seem to be much in the book that would offend their sensibilities.

319 Noth, Studien, p.196.

320 E.g. vv.11,25,26,27,28.

weapons and tools of iron has already been noted. Finally, in v.32, part of this different complex, the killer who is given sanctuary is to wait until the death of "the priest." This is in contrast with "high Priest" in vv.25 and 28. which must refer to the centralized Jerusalem cult. Therefore, it is likely that originally the law that distinguished verbally betwen the innocent and guilty slayer provided that the innocent man should remain at the sanctuary until the death of the priest who officiated there. Later this law was taken over, perhaps by the final author of Numbers, and in the course of rewriting the reference to the sanctuary priest was prefaced by vv. 25 and 28 to remove the offence that was felt, and the delicate distinction between an innocent killer and a רֹצֵחַ was slurred over.

The purpose of Num.35 in its present context can be understood from Ezek.48 where an organisation of the land is projected, especially that of the priests and Levites.[321] Here in Numbers, then, it is natural that after dealing with the secular tribes in chapter 34 that the author should include a section on the rights of Levi.[322] The cities of refuge had to be mentioned because traditionally they were numbered with the Levitical cities; but then the law of refuge would also be dragged into the context. Yet the ever-present model of the last part of Ezekiel with its emphasis on the holiness

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321 Significantly in Num.35 the cities are arranged as squares as is Jerusalem in Ezek.48.15f.

322 There is no contradiction to the law that the Levites were to have no inheritance in the land. It is explicitly stated that they have pasture land only, and this in a restricted amount. No farm land is given them.

of the new land continues to set the tone of the whole chapter, for as Ezekiel 48.35 ends by naming the city "the Lord is there," so Num.35 ends with the promise that the Lord will dwell in the land.

Num.36 seems to come as a sort of anticlimax to the rest of Numbers, and it is not at all surprising that Gray considered it was added at the time that the pentateuch was divided into five books. This chapter refers back to Num.27.1-11 but it has been argued that there are significant differences in vocabulary and in the order of the daughters' names which prove that Num.36 is an addition from a later hand.

However, as was seen in Num.27, an old law has been brought in to illustrate and fill out the section. This is also possible in Num.36. In 36.2 there is a sudden change of form and v.3 has a different word for tribe, שֵׁבֶט, as well as the usual מַטֶּה. That these peculiarities are due to the assimilation of an originally independant law is shown by the reference to the year of Jubilees in v.4. From the regulation regarding the year of Jubilee in Lev.25 it is impossible to explain why the land should be permanently lost at this time. But if Num.36 were a late addition, it is unlikely that the person adding it would have ignored the laws of Lev.25 for Leviticus with the Code of Holiness must have been bound up in the pentateuch by such a late date. Therefore a legal tradition independent of Leviticus underlies this passage.

Other differences in style between Num.36 and 27 can be accounted for on textual grounds. Perhaps because it is at the end

of a book where a scribe would be tempted to cramp because his roll was not quite long enough, perhaps from a faulty copy early in its history, there is no doubt that the text has suffered losses. Eleazar is not mentioned in v.1,[323] neither is the consultation before the Lord which must have preceded v.5 at one time. Therefore the fact that two names in v.11 come in an unexpected order is not surprising. Thus it can be concluded that Num.36 is essentially from the same hand as Num.27.1-11, that is, from the final author of Numbers.

Yet once the authorship is established, it must be explained why chapter 36 was put in its present position. Stylistically, the staggering of related passages throughout the latter part of Numbers has already been remarked. However, the placing of the passage here has a specific purpose, for after describing the division of the land, it was suitable to end with a law that forbad any alienation of land from a tribe because the order given was the will of the Lord and therefore immutable. And the final proof that this chapter was part of Numbers as a book comes with v.13 which provides the transfer to Deuteronomy.

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323 Greek and Syriac add "and before Eleazar the priest" here.

Chapter 5 Six Legal Chapters

In Numbers there are eight chapters which are purely legal in content and do not fit in automatically with the material around them. Chapters 5 and 6 have already been discussed; chapters 15, 18, 19, 28, 29, and 30 remain. Of these 15, 28, 29, and 30 can be grouped together since they deal with sacrifice regulations from the layman's point of view; chapters 18 and 19 are more concerned with priestly prerogatives.

Num.15 is a block of legal material which unexpectedly disrupts the flow of the narrative. The reason for its present position cannot be discovered until a discussion of the individual laws has been carried out. These individual laws deal with five issues; first, the amount of the accompanying offering of a sacrifice, vv.1-16; secondly, the offering of firstlings of dough or coarse meal, vv.17-21; thirdly, the offerings for sin, vv.22-31; fourthly, the case of a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath, vv.32-36; and finally, tassels on clothes, vv.37-41.

The law of the accompanying offering for a sacrifice consists of the statute proper with a note appended about the status of the non-Israelite. The law itself exhibits a large number of irregularities; the person of the verbs changes from the second plural to the third singular to the second singular to the third singular to the second singular to the third singular to the second plural.[1] The words used for "lamb" and "bullock" vary.[2] There is

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1 Vv.2b-3; 4, 5-8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

2 Vv.5, 9; contrast v.11 where even the order of naming is reversed.

a difference in the introductions of the three sections; in vv.4-5 it is not stated until the end that the proportions given are for a lamb; in v.6 it is curtly stated at the beginning that it is a question of a goat; but in v.8 there is a comparatively detailed description of what the bullock might be offered for. Furthermore, on the whole the language of this section is often complex and verbose. Yet throughout the laws runs a logical scheme of grading the accompanying sacrifice according to the size of the animal offered. Therefore, whatever the origins of this section may be, in its present form it has been given an exact shape by a single author.

Here this single author appears to be the final author of Numbers, for the quantities mentioned here are also found in Num.28 and 29.[3] The interest is the same as that shown in Ezek.46, but in contrast to Ezekiel the materials in Numbers are not in such large quantities, are more graduated according to the size of the animal, include a drink offering, and do not allow for optional quantities.[4] The greater precision and more realistic quantities show that here Ezekiel's plans have been revised.

In relation to the sacrificial laws in Lev.1-4 there are two variations in these laws of Num.15 which have been put forward as evidence of a different origin. The first is the drink offering which is not mentioned in Lev.1-4 and has therefore been considered

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3 Also in part in Ex.29.40.

4 Other passages where the amount of an offering is regulated are: Lev.5.11; 6.13; 23.17f.; 24.5; Num.5.15. In Deut.16.10,17 the amount of the sacrifice is optional.

an addition.[5] But there was no reason to mention it in Lev.1,3, and 4 because only the rites dealing with the sacrificial animal were described and it formed no integral part of the meal offering as described in Lev.2. Nor would it occur in the table of priestly commissions in Lev.6-7 since the drink offering was entirely poured away.[6] The other difference between Num.15 and the laws in Leviticus is that there is no mention of salt or frankincense in Num.15 as in Lev.2. This is to be explained either because in Num.15 there is no question of an independent meal offering as seems to be envisaged in Lev.2 or else because the quantities of salt and frankincense that were added were too insignificant to be measured exactly. The principle difference between Num.15 and Lev.1-7 is found in the public for which the stipulations were intended. In Lev.1-7 instruction is meant for the priests for the exact manipulations would not interest the laity. On the other hand Num.15 is designed to instruct the laity for it gives practical rules about the quantity of accompanying offerings for the sacrifices of an animal on any occasion. This explains why after the legal stipulations, a note about the stranger is added, since non-Israelites among the people would also have to be instructed.[7]

It is not sure whether the offering described in Num.15.17-21 is of coarse meal or of dough,[8] for the exact meaning of עֲרִסֹתֵיכֶם

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5 Holzinger considered this was a pagan addtion to sacrificial rites. Evidence that drink offerings were not an introduction of the post-exilic period is found in Jud.9.13; 1 Sam.1.24; 10.3; Hos.9.4.

6 Num.28.7

7 Cp. Num.9.14; see also Num.15. 29,30.

8 See Baentsch for evidence for both interpretations.

is not known. However, what is clear is that this is a תְּרוּמָה that is an offering of first fruits which was not offered up on the altar, a tax more than a sacrifice.[9] It is not sure whether this offering was intended to be given annually or as part of every baking. There is no early mention of this type of gift; Ezek.44.30 and Neh.10.38 are the only other passages where it is mentioned, and it is specifically stated in both passages that the gift is for the priests and not for the Levites. Therefore the inclusion of this law here is another example of the attempt of the final author of Numbers to put into effect the specific regulations laid down in Ezek.40-48. The law here is obviously intended for the instruction of the laity; in order to make the custom meaningful this gift has been rooted in the Eisodus tradition, just as earlier in the development of Israel's religion the Passover was rooted in the Exodus tradition.

The sacrifice for sin as described in vv.22-31 has to be compared with the law of the sin offering in Lev.4. There are four places where the two sets of laws differ. First, in the introduction Num.15.22 envisages sins of omission, Lev.4.2 sins of commission. Secondly, in Num.15 only two possibilities are discussed, sins of the whole congregation and of the individual; in Lev.4 sins of the high priest and the prince are also taken into consideration. Thirdly, in Num.15 no ritual is described. Finally, there is a

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9 Lev.2.12 contrasts this offering with the בִּכּוּרִים in v.14. In Lev.2.11 it is said that no meal offering made with leaven could be offered on the altar, this being the essential difference between the two types of firstlings. However in Lev.23.17,20 mention is made of בִּכּוּרִים baked with leaven; therefore the distinction between the two types of firstlings offered probably comes from the post-exilic period.

difference in the sacrifice decreed for the congregation; in Num.15.24 they give a bullock as a burnt offering and a goat for a sin offering; in Lev.4.14 the offering is simply one bullock for a sin offering. However this last distinction is not so decisive as it first appears. Grammatically it is not always possible to decide whether the Hebrew לְחַטָּאת means "as a sin offering," or "for sin." Furthermore, in Lev.4 it is apparent that the class of sin offering has only been brought in later and not altogether systematically into the rites described. Thus in Lev.4.23 and 28 the offering of the prince and the ordinary man is not explicitly described as a sin offering. Therefore the fact that in Num.15 the offering of the congregation is described as a עֹלָה, an offering closely related to the sin offering, is not surprising. The distinction between the two types was important only for the priests who had to perform the rite; for the average man they must have both seemed to be the same since he got nothing back from either of them. The addition of the goat for a sin offering in v.24 does not fit in well with the sentence; it is probably a scribal addition on the basis of Num.28.15. This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that the wording in Num.15 and 28 is identical.

The law in Num.15 in contrast to that of Lev.4 appears to be designed for the instruction of the people. Thus there is no description of the priestly ritual since this would have no interest for the non-priest. Similarily, the two cases that would not concern the average man, the sin of the high priest and the sin

of the prince omitted. Rendtorff[10] has argued on the basis of the greater complexity of Lev.4 that it is dependant on Num.15. However, this conclusion is not so sure in the light of the different public that each section was designed for. It is more probable to argue that both sections go back to a common origin. Proof of this is given by the difference in introductions. In Num.15.22 the introduction is negatively phrased, only oversights were to be pardoned. But from the wording of v.24 "If it be done..." it is clear that originally a sin of commission was envisaged by the law.[11] Therefore in this respect Lev.4 has preserved the original wording of the form from which both it and Num.15.22-8 came.

Num.15.22-31 has been linked up with the other laws in this chapter. This is shown by the mention of the stranger in v.26 and by the ordinance about meal and drink offerings in v.24, both matters of concern in 15.1-16.

The decision regarding the Sabbath-breaker in vv.32-6 is obviously different in origin from the rest of the laws in Num.15 for its introduction assumes that Israel is at a point where the wilderness period is already past, whereas the other laws assume that the occupation of Palestine is yet to come. This law is not a parallel to Ex.31.15 where it is said the Sabbath-breaker shall die, for the Sabbath prohibition is already supposed inasmuch as the man gathering wood was taken into custody. Therefore vv.32-6

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10 Rendtorff, Gesetze, p.15.

11 This change in Num.15 was probable made to bring the section into line with vv.30-31, a homiletic warning against willful doing of unlawful actions.

are not so much law as interpretation of the law, applying a regulation to a specific concrete instance. A parallel is found in Lev.24.10-16 where a person who is not an Israelite blasphemes the Lord. As it is not sure whether a non-Israelite is subject to the blasphemy law, he is put into prison to await a decision. The result is that is he sentenced to death and the principle is established that the stranger as well as the homeborn is subject to the law. Thus in Num.15 the problem is not whether Sabbath-breaking is a capital offence, nor what sort of execution shall be carried out, but rather whether lighting a fire on the Sabbath can properly be called work. The decision that the man is to be executed shows that fire-lighting is in effect work. There is a parallel to this decision in Ex.35.3 where it is explicitly stated that no fire shall be kindled on the Sabbath. The section vv.32-36 may at one time have been independent to judge from its own introduction; it comes at a later stage in the legal tradition since it assumes a law as binding; only the interpretation remains to be decided. However it is misleading to call this the beginnings of rabbinism; for appeal is not made to other parts of a written law or to the teachings of authority; rather the decision comes from a commandment of the Lord.

The law of tassels on garments in vv.37-41 consists of two distinct parts along with the usual introduction of v.37. In v.38 the custom is commanded in the third person plural, but in v.39 f. the explanation is given in the second person plural.

The custom laid down in v.38 is older than the interpretation

given. Usually it is linked with Deut.22.12, the command to make fringes on garments, but it is noteworthy that the only word in common between the two sections is גדלים "corners." Therefore however much they may have been taken together in later interpretation, there is no reason to suppose a common origin. Where Num.15.38 finds a close parallel is in the clothing of the high priest as described in Ex.28 and 39. There are four close verbal resemblances. First the ציץ "plate" of the high priest[12] is almost the same word as the ציצית "tassels" that the Israelites were to make for themselves. Secondly both sections mention a "cord of Blue."[13] Thirdly the word for garments is the same.[14] Fourthly the ציץ of the high priest had on it "holy to the Lord"[15] which would explain why the motif of holiness is introduced into the explanation in Num.15.40.[16] Therefore it can be concluded that originally both customs had a common origin, but in the course of time a differentiation was made between the clothing of the high priest and that of the ordinary Israelite. The explanation as found in Num.15 seeks to give a specifically Yahwistic and moral interpretation to this old custom. It is thereby possible to see how this fits in with the

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12 Ex.28.36; 39.30; Lev.8.9.

13 Ex.28.37; 39.31; also 28.28; 39.21.

14 Ex.28.2. Contrast Deut.22.12 where a different word כסות is used.

15 Ex.28.36; 39.30

16 It has been suggested on the ground of the likeness of vv.39-41 with parts of Leviticus that originally this section was part of the Code of Holiness.

didactic tone of the rest of Num.15. But more important in v.39 occurs the curious phrase "that ye spy not about after your own heart," rendered in the RV by "that ye go not about after your own heart." The verb here is the same as used in Num.13 and 14 to describe the spying mission.[17] This verbal connection is not accidental; it is part of the homiletic emphasis of Num.15 to allude to a central act of disobedience in prescribing a custom that was to aid obedience.

The growth of Num.15 seems to be as follows. The law of the accompanying offering is an old law which has been brought up to date for the post-exilic period. It is possible that the law of the sin offering may have been associated with it before their inclusion in Num.15. Verses 17-21 are a post-exilic addition and seem to have been put in between the laws of accompanying offering and sin offering. This would explain why v.22 begins so abruptly. The Sabbath pericope was added as an illustration of the principle of vv.30-31, and finally the regulation about fringes on the garments has been included as another warning against disobedience once Canaan has been entered.

It is now possible to see the purpose of Num.15 in its present position. All its laws were designed for the laity; therefore it was desirable if not necessary to include it in a context where it would follow naturally, just as the Decalogue and the Book of

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17 Num.13.2,16,17,21,25,32; 14.7,34,36,38.

the Covenant are included in a narrative part of Exodus. The position chosen for Num.15 answered well to the demands of the final author, for after the great disobedience of Num.13 and 14, the central point in the story of the wanderings after Sinai, it was natural to include a series of laws to be obeyed and warnings about disobedience.

Num.28 and 29, the laws for the sacrifices for the set feasts, are like Num.15 intended for the people. This is the best explanation of the fact that no ritual instructions are given.[18] The repetition, then, such as is found in Num.29 is not because of pedantry, but in order that the appropriate section could be read on the appropriate day without complicated back references. A detailed working out would be the only practical way of making the laity understand what sacrifice was required when.[19]

In Ezek.45.18- 46.15 the same sort of interest in ordering the feasts of the land is shown. But there are two important differences between Ezekiel and Numbers at this point. First, as seen in Num.15, Num.28 and 29 are more systematic than Ezekiel. Secondly, Ezekiel does not mention the feasts of the seventh month as found in Num.29. This is probably becasue the Day of Atonement as found in Lev.16 was only taken up into the Jerusalem temple cult after the Exile and because the other feasts of the seventh month were

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18 The regulation about the pouring out of the drink offering in 28.7 was intended to show the laity that they did not have the right to drink it as part of the ritual.

19 The futility of bare formulae is illustrated by the general inability of an anglican layman to work out the date of Easter on the basis of the formulae provided at the beginning of the Book of Common Prayer.

connected with the New Year's rites that were not approved of in Ezekiel.[20]

The festivals mentioned in Num.28,29 are those set out in Lev.23. There is a contradiction between the Numbers and Leviticus passages inasmuch as the quantities of sacrifices for the two harvest festivals in Lev.23.12-14 and 18-21 do not tally exactly with those set out in Numbers. However the quantities set out in Lev.23 appear to be additions from another code since other feasts mentioned in Lev.23 are not accompanied by details of the amount of offerings. Therefore both Lev.23 and Num.28,29 reflect the calendar of the post-exilic period, Lev.23 setting down the feasts and Num.28,29 prescribing the offering that was to be given on each occasion.

Num.28,29 is a unity throughout stylistically and since it presupposes the accompanying sacrifice regulations of Num.15, it can be conluded that it came from the same author as Num.15, that is, from the final author of Numbers. The position of chapters 28 and 29 in Numbers is roughly analogous to the position of the parallel section of Ezekiel which occurs before the laws of the division of the land. Here in Numbers the sacrifice ordinance is put with the final preparations before the entry into Palestine, immediately after Num.26 which marks the beginning of the re-organisation of Israel for the entry and Num.27 which foretells the end of the leadership of Moses.

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20 E.g. the weeping for Tammuz, Ezek.8.14 and the care taken to limit the prince's right of access to the temple in Ezek.43.7-9, both of which may point to a royal New Year's festival.

Num.30 is a systematic treatment of the responsibility of a woman for her vows. All possible cases are dealt with, whether a single, married, widowed or divorced woman has made the vow; and in the case of a married woman whether she made the vow before or after she was married. This law has found its present position probably because it had to be included somewhere. There is some connection between it and the laws in chapters 28 and 29 since a vow might often be for a private sacrifice. What is perhaps noteworthy is the interest of the final author of Numbers for the rights of woman, seen here and in Num.27 and 36.

The laws of Num. 18 and 19 contrast with those that have been discussed up to now in that they are more concerned with the dues and privileges of the Levites and priests than with the obligations of the people. Num.18 sets out these dues and privileges of the Levites and priests in accordance with the final scheme of the pentateuch. There are four sections; vv.1-7, the relation of priests to Levites; vv.8-20 the portion of the priests; vv.21-24, the portion of the Levites; and vv.25-32, the dues to be paid by the Levites to the priests.

In vv.1-7 the division of labour between the Levites and priests is as that set out in Num.3 and 4. The Levites are to do the manual work associated with the sanctuary but do not have the right to approach the most holy vessels and parts of the temple. This is in line with the reform set out in Ezek.44.9f., but Ezekiel's remark that the Levites are demoted because of unfaithfulness is not included. Rather the compromise solution as found in Num.3.9 and

8.19 is the reason stated. According to this solution, the Levites were a gift to Aaron and his sons; thus the Levites received a secondary status without dishonour.

The dues of the priests as set out in vv.8-20 assume the sacrificial ordinances of Lev.1-7.[21] There are two classes of offering that the priests receive, one that can only be eaten by the priests themselves, the other which can be eaten by their families as well. In Lev.6.11,22; 7.6 the meal, sin, and guilt offerings are to be eaten by the priests alone as in Num.18.9. As it is not said that the other sacrifices mentioned in Leviticus are for the priests alone, apparently they are for their families as well.

Along with the dues of the priests is included the law of redemption of the first born of men and unclean animals, vv.14-18. This stipulation of the money redemption of the first born represents either a loosening of the idea of the sacrificial holiness of the first born or else the increasing difficulties of coming to a central shrine to sacrifice on such occasions. In contrast to the law here, in Ex.13.13 and 34.20, redemption is only possible by the sacrifice of a clean animal. Money redemption as found here is illustrated also in Num.3.44-51, another sign of the unity that runs through the laws in Numbers.

In 18.21-24 the Levites are given the tithe of the Israelites

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21 This dependance on Lev.1-7 would explain a difficulty felt by some critics as to why there are two types of firstling offering mentioned in Num.18.12,13. In Lev.2 such a distinction between the two types is made on the basis of whether they were offered on the altar or not. See further f.n.9.

as their due. Originally the tithe was specifically an offering that was part of a cultic celebration,[22] but already by Deut.14.24-7 provision was made because of the distance of the cultic centre that the material could be sold and then material for the celebration bought at the sanctuary itself. In Deut.26.12 the tithe is simply a three-yearly charitable offering set apart for the under-privileged, the Levite, the fatherless, the stranger, and the widow. Finally by the time of Nehemiah the tithe had become simply a tax;[23] for example in Neh.10.38 the post-exilic system of taxes is described in action where the Levites gather in the tithes under the general supervision of the priests.[24]

Out of the endowment of the tithe, the Levites are commanded in vv.25-32 to pay a tithe themselves to the priests. This was apparently designed as a means of providing for the priests out of the general income tax so that they would not be entirely dependant upon the sacrifices brought to the temple of Jerusalem. But this levy was given a theological reason; inasmuch as the Levites had the tithe as their portion of the inheritance of the Children of Israel, it was only just and fair that they should themselves pay a tithe.

In its context chapter 18 is well placed after the account of the rebellion of Korah against the priestly authority. As seen with regard to Num.15 after a crucial part of the wandering story

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22 Deut. 12.6,11,17; 14.23; Am.4.4. Also Gen.14.20?

23 Neh.12.44; 13.5,12. The extension of the tithe to animals in Lev.27.30-33 seems to have no basis in historical reality according to Holzinger.

24 But for an exilic dating of this chapter, see A.C.Welch, Post Exilic Judaism, Edinburgh, Blackwood, 1935, pp.69 f.

the final author seized upon the opportunity to point the moral to the people. Here the instruction applies not only to the people, but to priests and Levites as well. But presumably the chapter was included in its present context to teach the people the difference between priests and Levites and what they had to pay to each class of officials. And the popularizing of the post-exilic settlement could not help but establish it.

The rite of the red heifer in Num.19 is an old custom which originally must have taken place without any reference to any sanctuary whatever, but in its present form it has been worked over in accordance with the laws in Lev.4. The chapter falls into two parts, vv.1-10 the preparation of the ash, and vv.11 f., its use. In the second half vv.11-13 lay down the general principle, and then vv.14 f. give specific uses.

In the preparation the mention of Eleazar is unexpected. It is argued that he is mentioned here instead of Aaron because the high priest was not to make himself unclean. However there is no reason why a high official rather than just any priest should perform this act. Therefore it seems probable that here is an old tradition coming from priestly circles of which Eleazar was the heros eponymos. The editing of this section in terms of Lev.4 can be seen in vv.4 and 5. In v.4 the priest is to sprinkle the blood seven times before the tent of meeting; the language here as well as the action is reminiscent of Lev.4.6. But why the sanctuary should suddenly be brought into a rite that took place in the open field is not explained. Similarily in v.9 it is commanded that the

ashes shall be taken outside the camp, as in Lev.4.12. But whereas in Lev.4 the point of departure is the altar and therefore the command to take the remains outside the camp is expected, the command in Num.19 is superfluous since the heifer is already outside the camp. The connection between Lev.4 and Num.19 was probably prompted by Num.19.9 "it is a sin offering."[25]

The carrying out of the cleansing in vv.11f. does not call for much comment except that there is a sign that the section is not entirely a unity, for in v.13 the unclean person pours water over himself; in v.19 another person sprinkles the water on him.

The complicated ritual contrasts strongly with that prescribed in Lev.22.4-7 for the purification of a priest where a simple washing of person and clothes is all that required. One would expect that the rite for a laic would be as simple or simpler. Therefore this law must come out of a tradition other than that of Lev.22. The figure of Eleazar seems to explain why this law was included in Numbers; in some way it must have added to his authority. This, then, accounts for why the law found its present position after chapter 18 that dealt with the rights of the priests and Levites.

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25 Perhaps originally the phrase meant "it is sin," thus explaining why it would make the handlers unclean. However, for the final author of Numbers it would have been natural to understand this phrase in the sense of Lev.4, i.e. as a technical term for a specific sacrifice. Hence the rewriting in terms of Lev.4.

Conclusion

It can therefore be concluded that there is such a thing as a Book of Numbers, part of a series, admittedly, but complete within its own bounds. Its theme is the journey from Sinai to the promised land. The important points are the organisation for the journey, the crisis of disobedience in chapters 13 and 14, the final arrival at the border in chapter 25, and the resulting organisation in preparation for the entry. The book is a whole; the laws are not something that was added later but rather form an integral part of the narrative. This does not mean that they were necessarily brand new, or that occasionally, such as chapter 30, they did not always fit tightly where they were plugged in. The final author had both old and new material before him;[1] his originality consists in how he used and interpreted it.

The reason and time of writing can be gathered from the themes that have been discussed. The reason for the writing was to codify the post-exilic settlement that had been worked out between the Jews in Babylon and those remaining in Israel. These negotiations must have gone on from about 538, the time of the first return, up to the end of the fifth century B.C. The process of this unification of traditions can be seen in Numbers where the influences of both Ezekiel, the book of the exiles, and Deuteronomy, the book of those in Israel are apparent. The arrival of Ezra is

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1 E.g. Kapelrud, "Pentateuch-Problemer," p.198.

probably an echo if not a record of the bringing of the completed pentateuch to Jerusalem. Presumably this law had been written in Babylon under the pressure of the Persian authorities who wanted some sort of definitive statement about what they had to deal with in Jerusalem. It is probable from the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine[2] that this law was generally regarded as the constitution of the Israelite community. The official nature of the law makes it highly unlikely that its text would have been added to and changed through the course of the centuries. Even if the various schools of thought amongst the Jews had agreed, it is unlikely that the Persian authorities would have as well.[3]

The fact that the Samaritans held themselves separate despite their acceptance of the final work is an indication of its partial failure. But in general, the work of unifying Jewry that the pentateuch was set out to do succeeded as can be seen from the phenomenon that the Jews remained united in spirit whether they lived in Palestine, Babylon, Egypt, or anywhere else in the world of their time.

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2 See A.Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C., Oxford, especially no. 21, the "Passover papyrus."

3 It has been argued that because the Chronicler recognized laws not found in the present pentateuch that therefore the pentateuch was not canonical or completed for several centuries after 400B.C. See Von Rad, Das Geschichtsbild des Chronistischen Werkes, p.63. However it is doubtful is the pentateuch was ever thought of as more than the agreed standard of law. It is unlikely that it was ever considered to be the complete legal code; otherwise it is difficult to see how the laws that are found in the Mishnah could have developed.

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Abbreviations

RV	Revised Version of the Bible

Periodicals

AFO	Archiv für Orientforschung
BA	The Biblical Archeologist
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
NKZ	Neue Kirchliche Zeitung
NTT	Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift
OLZ	Orientalistische Literaturzeitung
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
RB	Revue Biblique
ThR	Theologische Rundschau
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

Series

BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testaments
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Erratum

In the pagination numbers 44 and 45 have been omitted. Therefore page 46 is numbered 44/45/46 to preserve the series.

The Purpose of the Book of Numbers in Relation to the Rest of the Pentateuch and Post-Exilic Judaism

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

The thesis argued here is that Numbers as part of the pentateuch is a book with a definite form and purpose that was written in response to the needs of the post-exilic Jewish community in Palestine and in the Diaspora. Numbers along with the other books of the pentateuch was no doubt the product of a long process of compromise amongst different groups in Judaism, but the actual writing down as canonical book can be best explained as the result of one writer or school of writers working at a given time. Therefore it will be argued that there is no reason for distinguishing P^g, P^s, P^x etc. Furthermore the P stratum in Numbers never existed by itself; it is at the same time the final interpretation and the final form of Numbers.

In Numbers itself the compromise between the exiles in Babylon and those remaining in Palestine is shown by the extent to which Numbers has taken ideas and themes from Ezek. 40-48, the book of the exiles, and from Deuteronomy, the law code and sacred book of those left in Palestine. But in adopting these ideas and themes from the two books, the final author of Numbers has not simply copied, but has adapted them to fit the forms of the compromise that had been worked out.

The main problems of this period were: the form of the temple and the nature of the presence of the Lord; the tensions among the rival priesthoods; the standardization of the various laws that had come from different sources and here particularly

with regard to the laws of sacrifice; and above all, the nature of God's dealings with Israel as found in the history of the nation, how God leads, punishes, and, most important, remains ever sure in his promises and forgiveness.

With the exception of chapters 15, 18, 19, 28, 29, and 30 that are more conveniently considered by themselves, the method has been to treat each section as it occurs in Numbers.

The census in Num.1 marks the beginning of a new period after the giving of the law at Sinai. A comparison with the census in Num.26 shows that these two censuses are the hinges on which the whole of Numbers turns; the first is the organisation for the wandering in the wilderness; the second the preparation for the entry into the promised land. As far as the origin of the census lists is concerned, it is argued that although the list in Num.26 probably goes back to the time of the judges, the one in Num.1 is only an imitation of this older list.

In Num.2 the camp is ordered. This is paralleled by the allotment of land to the west-Jordan tribes in Num.34. Here it is interesting to note that the square pattern of arrangement recalls the system in Ezek.40-48, showing how much the Ezekiel reform programme was in mind. On the other hand, Num.34 is related to Josh.15 f., the account of the division of the land as found in the deuteronomic history work.

In Num. 3 and 4 the position of the Levites is set out. In chapter 3 the remnants of various Levitical foundation legends are found. The normative one for the post-exilic period was that

the Levites were given to the sons of Aaron as a gift. This is therefore a compromise between the pro-Levite traditions of the winning of the priesthood by the Levites and the anti-Levite Ezekiel tradition of their degradation for disobedience. Num.4 is not a mechanical repetition of Num.3 but is primarily concerned with defining the position of what had come to be the most important Levitical family, the Kohathites. Exact instructions for the Kohathites are given to prevent them from overstepping the bounds set between the priests and the Levites, probably because there was every danger that the Kohathites would do this. A certain remnant of old traditions relating to the tent of meeting may lie behind the details given in Num.4.

In Num.5 is a set of laws that was dragged into the present context when the first law of the series, that relating to the purity of the camp, was brought in to illustrate the whole camp description. Num.6 is a law for getting the Nazirites under control. In the pre-exilic period the Nazirites seemed to have been a powerful group of permanent cultic officials. Here they are reduced to the status of voluntary temporary amateurs.

The rest of the camp description in Num.7-10.10 deals with various traditions. Num.7 covers over the old tradition of sacred wagons for carrying the holy objects by snowing it under with an elaborate description of a theoretically more important gift. Num.8 is an old rite of consecration which has been adapted to show the superiority of the Aaronites vis-à-vis the Levites.

Num.9 fills a need of the community of the Diaspora by allowing a later celebration of the Passover in the case of delay due to a journey. Num.9.15-10.10 then once again emphasizes the divine ordering of the camp as an example of Yahweh's care for his people.

The narrative from 10.11 to 21.35 presents the problem of how to trace the origin of the older material that has been used. The solution in general is that apart from borrowings out of Deuteronomy, older documentary sources are perhaps present, but though it is possible to recognize traces of their differences, it is not possible to separate them exactly. Furthermore, irregularities adduced as signs of documentary differences are often better explained as unevenesses produced by the inclusion of individual traditions or sayings into a narrative.

In 10.29-36 there are two different traditions of the leading of Israel, vv.29-32 mentioning Hobab the son of Reuel and vv.33-36 the ark of the Lord. But these two traditions come from different types of material; therefore their attribution to two different documents is not axiomatic. The Hobab section referred originally to leading by Reuel, the Midianite, but was changed later to Hobab when the Midianites became the enemies of Israel. The ark song in vv.35-6 comes not from saga like the Reuel story, but from cultic usage.

Num.11 is the rewriting of two stories found in Exodus, namely the giving of food in the wilderness and the appointment of the elders. The elders are the institution of the Lord in Num.11

rather than of the Midianite father-in-law as in Ex.18. The feeding in the wilderness has been changed from the simple fulfilling of the legitimate demands of the Israelites to a wilful desire on their part for unwonted luxuries which naturally brings punishment.

In Num.11 and in Num.12 are found traces of Moses as a hero of folk tradition whose weakness is that he cannot control his people. This shows that the figure of Moses was well as gathering material in its development, has also lost older stories which showed Moses in a less exalted light.

The main point of the wandering narrative is reached in Num.13 and 14 when the Israelites refuse to enter the promised land. The length devoted to this act of disobedience shows the importance that the final author attached to the deed. This seems to reflect the post-exilic problem of exiles who were unwilling to go back to Palestine even though the permission to return was given. The author therefore emphasized in the story here that God has the power to bring them into the land and that his anger would be aroused if they did not go.

In Num.16 and 17 older traditions about rebellions have been gathered together and adapted for illustrating the supreme role of the Aaronite priesthood. These stories lead then into the legal chapters 18 and 19 that deal with questions of priestly privilege and the position of the Levites with regard to the priests.

In Num.20-21 the Israelites reach east-Jordan after forty years' wandering which is passed over in silence. Here the curious

literary principle providing for the construction of the rest of Numbers is apparent, namely that the themes are staggered rather than being treated systematically each in its place. This builds a casemate framework into which much miscellaneous rubble can be poured. Thus, for example, in chapter 20 the sin of Moses and Aaron and the condequent death of Aaron are separated by the account of the embassy to Edom which in turn provides a lead into the further adventures of Israel in chapter 21.

The sin of Moses and Aaron in 20.1-13 is a re-writing of the pre-exilic tradition of the giving of water from the rock as is found in Ex.17. The reason for attributing a sin to Moses and Aaron is that in the story as it lay before the final author they were both buried outside of Israel; therefore they must have sinned to have deserved such a fate. Consequently he composed this story, but made their misdoing as venial as possible, namely striking the rock instead of speaking to it.

The embassy to Edom is remarkable in that nothing is said of a similar request to Moab, although other traditions elsewhere in the Old Testament seem to reflect such a story. Therefore Moab has been omitted here. The reason is to prepare the way for the inclusion of the Balaam-Balak story. If the Balaam story had been placed in its geographical place, there would have been no cause for the alarm of Balak since Israel had not even the power to deal with a small country like Edom. However, after the victory over Sihon and Og in Num.21, the fear of Balak would be sufficiently motivated.

Num.21 has a series of small traditions that were put together to illustrate the march through east-Jordan. Hormah had already been mentioned in Num.14.45 and was apparently a traditionally Israelite city. The bronze serpent reflects the Jerusalem cult tradtion. The small poems and fragments of names lists, whatever their origin may have been, seem to have been included to describe the borders of the kingdom of the Amorites which was gained by the victory over Sihon and Og.

The Balaam narrative in Num.22-4, although containing remnants of old traditions, is a unity within itself. It is argued that Num.22-4 was originally a story that was developed from an incident in the Eisodus tradition but was no part of that tradition itself. The story was first seized upon and inserted into Numbers by the final author as another sermon about the power of Yahweh. Therefore the question of pentateuchal documents is irrelevant here.

Num.25 is a combination of traditions about the sin of Israel in worshipping at a shrine frequented by other east-Jordan peoples. What is particularly interesting here is the probability that this was an old form of the Balaam story and that Phinehas wins his priesthood here as a reward for stamping out heresy even as the Levites are rewarded after the golden calf incident. The stories preserved here probably came from a west-Jordan shrine of which Phineas was the traditional founder of the priesthood that carried on a perpetual rivalry with the east-Jordan shrine of Peor.

The turning point comes with Num.26 when the people are

prepared for the actual entry into Palestine. The succession of Moses is established in Num.27, but the inferior place of Joshua is made clear. Questions of the inheritance of the land are treated beginning from the pleas of the daughters of Zelophehad in Num.27. The superiority of the priesthood is again emphasized in Num.31 where the claims of both Phineas and Eleazar are set down. Num.32 presents a parallel to the disobedience in Num. 13 and 14 but here the compromise is reached that the east-Jordan tribes are free to renounce their inheritance providing they help the others in the conquest. This again seems to reflect the post-exilic compromise between those who returned and those who remained in the Diaspora. Num.33 shows the wanderings are at an end and gives a final warning against the new danger, the contamination of the local palestinian cults. Num.34 finally divides the land, Num.35 makes provision for the Levites, dragging an old law of sanctuary into the context with it. This chapter is the construction of the final author of Numbers, and not, as Noth auggests, dependant on Josh.20-21. Finally the final author finishes Numbers by bringing forward once again the case of the daughters of Zelophehad and giving a judgement which makes the transfer of land from one tribe to another impossible. This emphasizes the author's conviction of the sacredness of the order which Yahweh has decreed for his people.

The legal chapters, 15, 18, 19, 28, 29, and 30 have all been inserted into their contexts with a definite purpose in view. Num.15 is instruction for the laity in the matter of sacrifices and religious customs that is put in after the disobedience in

in chapters 13 and 14 to emphasize what obedience should consist of. Num.18 is concerned with the position and dues of the priests and Levites set down in concordance with the post-exilic settlement and Num.19 is an old tradition put in to bolster the authority of those priests descended from Eleazar. Num. 28 and 29 are, like Num.15, compositions by the final author for the instruction of the laity. They provide a table of offerings for the public feasts of Israel. Finally chapter 30 has probably been added through association with the public feasts in order to regulate the vexed question of the validity of the vows of a woman made about sacrifices.

Once then that these main currents and interests in Numbers are seen, the overall plan is clear. The book is best explained then as part of the work of a single author or school who codified in a canon the basis of Judaism as a religion reaching beyond the bounds of Israel the country.