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# A Pentateuchal Redaction in the Book of Numbers?

The Late Priestly Layers of Num 25–36

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## 1 Introduction

The question of where the final formative redaction of the Pentateuch can be detected is not yet answered. According to the concept of the classical source theory, scholars thought that the Pentateuchal redaction could be found where the priestly source was connected with the non-priestly sources (R<sup>PJE</sup>). The fact, however, that more and more passages recently have had to be classified as post-redactional,<sup>1</sup> shows that this combination cannot have represented the final redaction, if the priestly material ever existed as a separate source at all. This question about a Pentateuchal redaction can be asked in a much more qualified way, since it has become apparent that a Hexateuchal redaction took place<sup>2</sup> before the decision was made to finish Israel's founding document with Moses'

<sup>1</sup> See for example R. Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Numeribuches im Kontext von Hexateuch und Pentateuch*, BZAR 3, 2003, 632–638. According to his view, the three extensive »Theocratic Editions« that he discerns within the book of Numbers belong to a phase of formation that followed the Pentateuchal redaction.

<sup>2</sup> That the books Gen–Jos have undergone an intermediary Hexateuchal redaction, before the Pentateuch was finished, seems to have become a consensus in the research, even though scholars still differ on the dating of this redaction during its formation process; see E. Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, BZAW 189, 1990, 363–365; *idem*, *Der kompositionelle Knoten am Übergang von Josua zu Richter: Ein Entflechtungsvorschlag*, in: *Idem*, *Textgestalt und Komposition: Exegetische Beiträge zu Tora und Vordere Propheten*, FAT 69, 2010, 249–280, esp. 262–274; E. Otto, *Pentateuch*, RGG<sup>2</sup> VI, 2003, 1080–1102, esp. 1099–1102; T. C. Römer / M. Z. Brettler, *Deuteronomy 34 and the Case of the Persian Hexateuch*, JBL 119 (2000), 401–419, esp. 409–416; T. C. Römer, *Hauptprobleme der gegenwärtigen Pentateuchforschung*, ThZ 60 (2004), 289–207, esp. 298–299. Since the Hexateuchal redaction shows the intention to give more justice to the northern tribes, it probably happened in the period after Nehemiah's reign, when the high priest Joiada, whose son married a daughter of Sanballat, pursued a more tolerant policy with regards to the Samaritans; this made the foundation of the Gerizim sanctuary possible (around 425 BCE).

death (Deut 34). Since the Hexateuchal redaction aimed to include the book of Joshua in Israel's foundational history (cf. Jos 24), the Pentateuchal redaction, which opposed this aim, must have been involved with the decision to exclude the book of Joshua from the charter.

If we look for a passage that may fit a Pentateuchal redaction defined in this way, the last chapters of the book of Numbers should come under consideration. It is almost universally acknowledged that Num 26–36 or 25–36 are among the latest texts of the Pentateuch. Only in Num 25,1–5 and some verses of chapter 32 do some scholars find older non-priestly traditions.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it is only in Num 27,12–23 that some scholars still see traces of the original priestly source (P).<sup>4</sup> Among the recent commentaries on the book of Numbers, Horst Seebass assigned most of Num 25–36 to a »Numerikomposition«, which he dated to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>5</sup> while Ludwig Schmidt ascribed many of these chapters to the Pentateuchal redaction at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (for example 33–35) but classified a few sizable passages, for example 25,6–18 and chapter 31, as post-redactional.<sup>6</sup> According to Ulrich Fistill, all of Num 21,21–36,13 was formed by a

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3 For example, L. Schmidt, *Das 4. Buch Mose: Numeri, Kapitel 10,11–36,13*, ATD 7,2, 2004, 146–147, regarded as part of the *Grundbestand* (from the Yahwist) in Num 25 only v. 1a.3.5, which were amplified by a later author through v. 1b.2.4 using the thoughts expressed in Ex 34,14–16. C. Nihan, *The Priestly Covenant, Its Reinterpretation, and the Composition of »P«*, in: S. Shectman / J. S. Baden (eds.), *The Strata of the Priestly Writings*, ATHANT 95, 2009, 86–134, esp. 118–120, shares a similar view. In Num 32, H. Seebass, *Numeri: 3. Teilband: Numeri 22,2–36,13*, BK IV/3, 2007, 327–335, assigned v. 1.2\*.4aβ–6.16–17a.19b–20a.22b.24–25.34–36a.37–38 to the *Grundbestand*, while L. Schmidt, *Die Ansiedlung von Ruben und Gad im Ostjordanland in Numeri 32,1–38*, ZAW 114 (2002), 497–510, esp. 500–506; *idem*, *Numeri* (note 3), 191–195, reduced it to verses 1.2\*.4aβb.5a\*.6.16–17a.20aα.24.33aα\*.34–36a\*.37–38\*.

4 Thus, Seebass, *Numeri* (note 3), 221–223 for Num 27,12–13.14\*.15–16.18–23; cf. Schmidt, *Numeri* (note 3), 166–168; U. Fistill, *Israel und das Ostjordanland: Untersuchungen zur Komposition von Num 21,21–36,13 im Hinblick auf die Entstehung des Buches Numeri*, ÖBS 30, 2007, 108–109; and E. Noort, *Bis zur Grenze des Landes? Num 27,12–23 und das Ende der Priesterschrift*, in: T. Römer (ed.), *The Books Leviticus and Numbers*, BETHL 215, 2008, 99–119, esp. 107–119. Any decision, however, whether Deut 32,48–52 depends on Num 27,12–23 or vice versa (so C. Frevel, *Mit Blick auf das Land die Schöpfung erinnern: Zum Ende der Priestergrundschrift*, HBS 23, 2000, 271–308), remains ambiguous.

5 See H. Seebass, *Das Buch Numeri in der heutigen Pentateuchdiskussion*, in: T. Römer (ed.), *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers*, BETHL 215, 2008, 233–260, esp. 238–239. Apart from some older passages in Num 25,1–4; 27,12–13\*; 32\* and some even later additions (Num 25,16–18; 31), Seebass assigns all the remaining texts to the »Numerikomposition«.

6 See Schmidt, *Numeri* (note 3), 9–10.148.186.202–216.

post-priestly redactor, who used various older materials.<sup>7</sup> Having been classified as being late or very late,<sup>8</sup> the last chapters of Numbers deal with – among other matters – the conquest and the distribution of the land (especially in 32–34), themes shared with the book of Joshua. Thus, they are excellent candidates for being assigned to the Pentateuchal redaction. At first sight, however, the chapters give a confusing impression, dealing with such different issues as the sacrifices of the daily, weekly and annual feasts (28,1–30,1), the validity of vows (30,2–17), the stations of the wandering (33,1–49), the borders of the land (34,1–12), the installation of Levitical and asylum towns (35), and inheritance rules for women (27,1–11; 36,1–12). Thus, it must be clarified whether these chapters are a compositional, literary, and material unit, or not.

## 2 The definition of the unit

Often the chapters Num 26–36 are taken together, because the second census of Num 26 seems to constitute a compositional parallel to the opening census in Num 1.<sup>9</sup> In this view, the report of how Moabite women seduced the Israelites into venerating Baal-Peor (25,1–5) and the case of intercourse between a noble Israelite man from the tribe of Simeon and a Midianite royal daughter (25,6; cf. 31,8), who were killed by the priest Phinehas (25,6–15), seem to be isolated between the end of the Balaam story (22–24) and the beginning of the second census (26). But this impression is not correct. First, it has become more and more apparent that the short scene about the apostasy with Baal-Peor is not part of an older source, but a rather late and complex non-priestly tradition, which was used by the priestly

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<sup>7</sup> See Fistill, Israel (note 4), 147–156. Fistill speaks of a »*Numeri-Redaktion*«. His idea, however, that already the Sihon and the Balaam Story were inserted by this redaction seems to be questionable; see below.

<sup>8</sup> Nihan's conclusion that the text of Num 28–29 clearly presupposes the festival calendar of Lev 23 (see C. Nihan, Israel's Festival Calendars in Leviticus 23, Numbers 28–29 and the Formation of the »Priestly Literature«, in: T. Römer [ed.], *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers*, BEThL 215, 2008, 227–231), strongly supports such late dating and questions Otto's thesis (see Otto, Pentateuch [note 2], 1100) that the Holiness Code should be regarded as the work of the Pentateuchal redactor.

<sup>9</sup> See the seminal work of D. T. Olson, *The Death of the Old and the Birth of the New: The Framework of the Book of Numbers in the Pentateuch*, BJS 71, 1985, which influenced many others, for example, J. Milgrom, *Numbers*, JPS Torah Commentary, 1990, 211–229. Although this author pointed out that Num 25 »stands in sharp contrast« to the last chapter of the Balaam story (*ibid.*, 211), he started a new unit with chapter 26 (26,1–36,13) under the heading »The generation of the conquest« (*ibid.*, 219).

redactor together with the Phinehas episode for constructing a decisive crisis of apostasy and mixed-marriages just before the conquest of the land.<sup>10</sup> Second, it can be shown that this crisis is thought to have determined the entire following process: the divine plague, which followed this apostasy, killed 24,000 people and made a new census necessary for a fair distribution of the land (26,52–56).<sup>11</sup> The result, that the Simeonites lost about two thirds of their population,<sup>12</sup> demonstrates that the divine wrath especially impacted the tribe of the evildoer.<sup>13</sup> The war of revenge against the Midianites in chapter 31 is explicitly motivated by their devious attack on Israel's integrity, instigated by Balaam (31,16), and had already ordered by God at the end of the crisis (25,16–18). This provides the intervening chapters 26–30 with a strong compositional link. The order to kill the women of marriageable age captured from the Midianites (31,13–20) is explained by the

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**10** See Nihan, *Covenant* (note 3), 117–119; similarly Schmidt, *Numeri* (note 3), 146–148; J. Thon, *Pinhas ben Eleazar – der levitische Priester am Ende der Tora: Traditions- und literaturgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter Einbeziehung historisch-geographischer Fragen*, ABG 20, 2006, 36–64; and Fistill, *Israel* (note 4), 84–101. The main observations of this view are the following: The Baal-Peor scene in Num 25,1–5 is without any conclusion, and the following Phinehas episode (v. 6–13) is without any introduction. The divine wrath mentioned in v. 3 is presupposed in the lamentation scene of v. 6 and in the description of how Phinehas was able to stop the plague (v. 8–9). Moreover, the priestly verses 16–18, which constitute the compositional level, clearly refer back to both, the Peor incident (v. 1–5) and the case of mixed marriage (v. 6–15).

**11** Cf. the transitional temporal clause (»It happened after the plague that...«) in Num 25,19, which obviously is written in order to connect both chapters but does not constitute – according to the Masoretes – a complete verse; it ends only with an *atnach*, not with a *soph passuq*. The LXX clearly connects the phrase with the census in Num 26, while the Hebrew text starts chapter 26 with a new paragraph (*petucha*). The strange punctuation of the Hebrew text probably has to do with the close relationship between the introductory parts of the two censuses in Num 1,1–3 and 26,1–4, which the Masoretes probably intended to emphasize. Therefore, they set the transitional phrase, which disturbs this relationship, slightly apart.

**12** Cf. the considerable number 59,300 in Num 1,23 in relation to the number of counted persons, 22,200, in 26,14.

**13** The second census in Num 26 reveals a number of losses (for example, for the tribes of Ephraim and Naphtali a loss of 8,000 people each), but no other tribe suffers such a high loss of 37,100 people as Simeon. Thus a large portion of those 24,000 people, who were killed during the plague in Shittim (Num 25,9), must have been Simeonites, although the second census seems to take account also of the losses from previous plagues (Num 16–17: 14,700 people and more; see 17,14). According to the second census, the size of the »second generation« was only a little bit smaller (601,730 people; cf. 26,51) than the first one (603,550; cf. 1,46), because a number of tribes increased considerably at the same time (e.g. Manasseh added 20,500 people); altogether, there is a shift in favor of the northern tribes (from 67 to 72 percent), which may be a concession to the reality perhaps even of the post-exilic times, when the Samaritans may have surpassed the Judeans.

experience of seduction into apostasy that took place in Num 25.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, important features of conquering the land are signified by this experience, such as the renaming of the location to Baal-Me'on in Transjordan (32,38) or the order to drive out the inhabitants of Cisjordan completely and to destroy all their cult statues and sanctuaries (33,52). Any gentle treatment of the former population would risk new devious attacks against Israel, such as that experienced at Peor,<sup>15</sup> and could lead to the loss of the country (33,55–56). Therefore, the policy of eliminating all of the land's former inhabitants, an approach that is characteristic of Num 26–36, is explicitly grounded in the crisis introduced in chapter 25.

### 3 The structure of the composition

Although Num 25–36 shows a high degree of complexity, a structure can be discerned. All chapters are linked by a network of cross-references and of identical or similar phrases. Apart from the depiction of the crisis in Num 25, the census of Num 26 lays the foundations for all that follows. It is only, because all adult men are counted that the concept of a just distribution of the land according to the size of the tribes could be developed (26,52–56), ordered with respect to the land of Canaan (33,50–54) and carried out by the land commission in the future (34,13–29). The special case of how a clan could inherit its shares of land if no male descendents are available is treated in Num 27,1–11 and Num 36,1–12 with regard to the daughters of Zelophehad, who were already introduced in 26,33. Thus, this juridical case constitutes a large frame around almost the entire composition. The report of Joshua's installment in Num 27,12–23 seems to be somewhat isolated. It is, however, necessary at this early place because Joshua is already ordered in Num 32,28–32 to ensure the military cooperation of the Transjordanian tribes, and he is also needed for the commission responsible for the allotment of land (34,16–29).<sup>16</sup> The report intended to show that Joshua was not only installed

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<sup>14</sup> See the detailed analysis of this sacral war of revenge by R. Schmitt, *Der »Heilige Krieg« im Pentateuch und im Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk: Studien zur Forschungs- und Rezeptions- und Religionsgeschichte von Krieg und Bann im Alten Testament*, AOAT 381, 2011, 151–157; Schmitt rightly points out (152–153) that the chapter re-interprets the rules of the Deuteronomic war law (Deut 20,13–14) in the light of Deut 13,7–12, where the case of an obvious seduction into apostasy by women is regulated.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the use of the same verb *šārar* in Num 33,55 and 25,17–18.

<sup>16</sup> Thus, the author of Num 26–36 was not able to wait for the narrative of Joshua's installment, which originally had not been recounted before Deut 31,6–8.14–15.23.

in the presence of the high priest Eleazar but also subordinated to him (27,21).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the passage is linked with the report on the war against the Midianites by references to Moses' impending death (27,12–13; 31,2). Arranging for a successor and taking revenge on the Midianites are presented as the two missions that Moses definitely had to accomplish before he would die. Thus, Num 27,12–23 and Num 31 constitute a smaller frame for the block of cultic regulations in 28,1–30,17.

The calendar of sacrifices in Num 28,1–30,1 and the regulations about the validity of vows (30,2–17) seem to diverge totally from the course of events. They are, however, connected with the land topic insofar as they deal with material donations to YHWH, which were derived from working the soil. Moreover, the cultic regulations were literarily linked with their context. The introductory phrases of 28,1–2 have their parallels in 34,1–2, those of 30,2 in 36,6. The rare verb *nû' hif.* »to forbid a person«,<sup>18</sup> which is strongly anchored in the vow regulations (30,6.9.12), is deliberately taken up in the political context of Num 32,7.9.<sup>19</sup> Thus, it seems to be apparent that the detailed cultic regulations of Num 28–30, although they depend on *Vorlagen*, are deliberately inserted by the redactor of the composite whole. Moreover, he seemingly intended to create an inner frame around the war and conquest reports of Num 31–34 with the help of the regulations about the Levitical and asylum towns in Num 35, which also have a strong cultic component. The report of the war against the Midianites in Num 31 is connected with Num 28–30 insofar as it also implies detailed regulations on cultic taxes, in this case those that are to be paid from the booty (31,25–54).

The inner center of the composition is represented by the report and data that have to do with the conquest and distribution of the land in Num 32–34. They are divided into two parts, Num 32 and 33–34. First, Num 32 contains the report on the allocation of Transjordan to the Reubenites, Gadites (and half the tribe of Manasseh) under the condition that they would participate in the military conquest of the land of Canaan, i.e. Cisjordan (32,28–32). Second, there are the orders for conquering Canaan (33,50–56), whose borders are exactly described (34,1–12) and whose distribution is well prepared by the installment of a special commis-

<sup>17</sup> The verse is not a later intrusion (so Schmidt, *Numeri* [note 3], 167–171), but the focus of the report; see Achenbach, *Vollendung* (note 1), 559–560. In all places within Num 26–36, where Joshua is mentioned after his installment, he is preceded by Eleazar (32,12.28; 34,17).

<sup>18</sup> Apart from Num 26–36 the verb appears only in Ps 33,10 and perhaps in Ps 141,5.

<sup>19</sup> The phrase *nû' hif.* (hif. or qal.) *'æt leb* »to keep the heart from« is strange and occurs only in Num 32,7.9. In the parallel context of Deut 1,28 the phrase *māsas* (hif.) *'æt l'bab* »to cause the heart to melt« is used (cf. 20,8; Jos 2,11; 5,1; 7,5).

sion including Eleazar, Joshua and 10 tribal leaders (34,13–29).<sup>20</sup> Between the two parts the redactor placed a long list of the stations of Israel's wanderings starting from the exodus from Egypt (v. 3–4) and leading to the »lowlands of Moab by the Jordan near Jericho« and Abel-Shittim (v. 48–49), that is, those places where the Israelites encamped during the events of Num 25–36 (cf. 25,1; 26,3.63). Through this flashback the redactor probably intended to show that only the conquest of Canaan followed the *providentia dei* during the wanderings and therefore definitely belongs to Israel's salvation history, while the settlement in Transjordan was founded only as a human initiative for purely economical reasons. Thus, the sequence of Num 32–34 intended to provide the Pentateuch with a new definition of the promised land; diverging from the perspective of Deut and Jos, it included only Cisjordan and northern parts of Transjordan, but excluded the middle and southern Transjordanian regions.

After these central statements about the conquest and the distribution of the land, Num 35–36 completes the composition with some additional regulations. According to Num 35,1–8 the land should be furnished with 48 Levitical towns. Since the Levites are traditionally excluded from land inheritance (26,62) and therefore counted separately (26,57–62), they should be supplied with these cities donated by the tribes according to the size of their inheritance. The installation of 6 asylum cities, which is regulated in Num 35,9–34, is intended to protect the land's purity by reducing bloodshed to a minimum. The last verse of chapter 35 constitutes a solemn conclusion to the composition, stating that a defilement of the land should be prevented because of YHWH's presence in the land.<sup>21</sup> But in similar fashion to the double conclusion to the book of Leviticus (in Lev 26 and 27), Num 36,1–12 added a concluding regulation with regard to the case of Zelophehad's daughters. It clarifies that also in those cases, where females inherited shares of the land, these shares must remain in the paternal tribe.<sup>22</sup> The colophon in Num 36,13, which follows the grammatical structure of Lev 27,34, not only concludes Num 25–36 but also completes the entire book of Numbers.

<sup>20</sup> The focus on »the land of Canaan« is emphasized by the framing use of the phrase in Num 33,51 and 34,29.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Ex 25,8; 29,45.46; Lev 26,11.12.

<sup>22</sup> I. Kislef, Numbers 36:1–12: Innovation and Interpretation, ZAW 122 (2010), 249–259, esp. 253–258, has correctly shown that Num 36,1–12 deliberately moves the inheritance case of Num 27,1–11 from the clan to the tribe level. This observation, however, corresponds to the overall notion in the chapters that the shares of land were distributed to the tribes (34,13.16–18 in accordance with Jos 19) and is not an argument for the secondary character of the text. The clans are, of course, affected by this kind of distribution. Therefore, the author of Num 25–36 deliberately used a clan list in Num 26 in order to pave the way for the double perspective shown in Num 27 and 36.

## 4 Literary unity and ascription

In my view, the subunits of Num 25–36 are so closely linked by identical or similar words or phrases, in language characterized by a mix of priestly and Deuteronomistic elements, that all these chapters should be regarded as a literary unity.<sup>23</sup> Admittedly, there are material inconsistencies in the text: for example, the contrast between the Moabite and Midianite women in Num 25; the problem that the people counted in Num 26 as the »second generation« (26,64–65) are nevertheless characterized as those who had departed from Egypt (26,4); or the sudden reference to the half tribe of Manasseh in 32,33, even though the narrative had so far mentioned only the Reubenites and the Gadites.<sup>24</sup> But all such inconsistencies can be explained by the supposition that the author of Num 25–36 used several *Vorlagen* for his composite text: for example, a non-priestly tradition about Baal-Peor (25,1–5); an older clan list in 26,4b–50\*,<sup>25</sup> which he converted into a census; and a narrative about the settlements of the Reubenites and Gadites in Transjordan (32,1–5\*.33–38\*).<sup>26</sup> This tradition-historical solution has the advantage that one need not attempt textual reconstruction of these *Vorlagen*, an effort

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**23** Achenbach, *Vollendung* (note 1), 557–628, distributes Num 25–36 almost entirely among three Theocratic Editions (ThB I-III; see also the charts, 637–638), which he primarily distinguishes along thematic lines. Stylistically, however, only the legislation on vows in Num 30,2–17, which Achenbach assigned to the latest Theocratic Edition (ThB III), is clearly presupposed and integrated by Num 32, which Achenbach had almost entirely ascribed to the earliest one (ThB I); see the strange use of the verb *nū* ' »to forbid a person« in 32,7,9, which is primarily anchored in 30,6(2×).9.12, and the use of the phrase »all what has come out from one's mouth, one should do«, which makes good sense in 30,3, in the more generalized political context of 32,24. Thus, a division of the chapters on literary grounds does not seem to be tenable. Often Num 36,1–12 is regarded as a later addition, because it varies a little in style and content from 27,1–11 (thus, again, Kislev, *Innovation* [note 22], 249–252). If one, however, takes the compositional function of the passage in consideration together with its purpose to imitate the double conclusion to the book of Leviticus, the traditional view becomes highly questionable. Of course, the origin of the passage is late, but not later than that of the entire composition.

**24** Nevertheless, the half tribe of Manasseh is presupposed in Num 34,14–15; thus, its inclusion in 32,33 seems to come from the redactor of these chapters.

**25** See already the suggestions of M. Noth, *Das vierte Buch Mose: Numeri*, ATD 7, 1966, 176–178, and Schmidt, *Numeri* (note 3), 155–156.

**26** Another *Vorlage* may have included the priestly Phinehas tradition (Num 25,6–13), the calendar of sacrifices (28,3aß–29,38), the regulations with regard to the validity of vows (30,2b–17), and parts of the list of the stations during the wandering in Num 33. In Num 34,1–12 the redactor used an existing list (cf. Ez 47–49; Jos 15,1–4 for the southern border) but aligned it stylistically to fit with his purpose.



that has not led to convincing results in the past. In my view, there might be only a few later literary additions.<sup>27</sup>

The author of Num 25–36 often takes up phrases and motifs from the previous parts of the book.<sup>28</sup> There is, however, a set of phrases and motifs that are typical only for these chapters. Here are some examples. Typical for the author is the strange *constructus*-combination of the terms *naḥ<sup>a</sup>lāh* and <sup>a</sup>*ḥuzzāh*, which appears in this sequence or *vice versa* only in this segment of the Hebrew Bible (35,2 or 27,7; 32,32). It can only be explained as a deliberate mixture of Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic and priestly language! The phrase *ḥuqqat mišpāt* is likewise unique to this author (27,11; 35,29). Also the use of the late title *rāʾšê (hā) ʾābôt* is restricted in Numbers to 31,26; 32,28, and 36,1. In the rest of the Pentateuch it appears only in Ex 6,25,<sup>29</sup> within a genealogy of the Aaronides, which was probably inserted by the same author (6,13–30).<sup>30</sup> A new concept presented by the author, which clearly goes beyond the idea of a tithe for the Levites developed in Num 18,21–24, is the establishment of Levitical towns adjoined by common land, with which the Levites would be able to support themselves.<sup>31</sup>

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**27** A possible gloss seems to be the reference to the water of purification (Num 19) dealt with previously in 31,23aβ. Although the purification of the booty in Num 31,23–24 roughly follows the ritual described in Num 19,19–22, the reference interferes with the syntax and may be a secondary clarification. Also the list of Manassite conquests in 32,39–43 may be a secondary amplification influenced by Deut 3,14–15 and Jud 8,11 and 10,3–4.

**28** Cf., for example, the similarity of the introductory sections of the censuses in Num 1,1–3 and 26,1–4. Another case is the motif of a severe plague (*maggepāh*) in Num 14,37; 17,13–15 and 25,8–9,18–19; 31,16, partly expressed by similar phrases (cf. 25,8b–9 with 17,12–14). The examples could be multiplied.

**29** The phrase is used in the book of Joshua in only those passages (Jos 14,1; 19,51; 21,1[2 ×]) that are post-canonical alignments to Num 25–36 (see R. Albertz, *The Canonical Alignment of the Book of Joshua*, in: O. Lipschits / G. N. Knoppers / *idem* (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, 2007, 287–303, esp. 293–299). It appears very often in the books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah.

**30** See the close parallels to this genealogy in Num 26,58–61.

**31** The regulations of Jos 20 and 21 clearly depend on Num 35; see Albertz, *Alignment* (note 29), 296–298. L. Schmidt, *Leviten- und Asylstädte in Num. XXXV und Jos. XX; XXI 1–42, VT 52* (2002), 103–121, esp. 105–108; *idem*, *Numeri* (note 3), 216–218, tries to reconstruct an earlier stage of Jos 20, from which Num 35,8–29 would have been influenced. Since the opening in Jos 20,1–2, however, clearly refers back to Num 35,9–15 (cf. the technical term *ʾarê miqlāt*, which is only used there [Num 35,11.13–14.25–28.32] and not in Deut 19), the feasibility of this attempt, remains questionable, even if one felt entitled to exclude all the other references to Num 35 as later alignments. That Jos 21 expands on Num 35,1–8 is widely accepted; see Schmidt, *Asylstädte* (note 31), 113–121; *idem*, *Numeri* (note 3), 218.

The strongest argument that the author and redactor of Num 25–36 cannot be identical with the priestly scribe, who composed many events in the book of Numbers up to 22,1, is the fact that the itinerary note used there (»they encamped in the lowlands of Moab on the farther side [*me'ebær l'yarden y'rehō*] of the Jordan from Jericho«) is not taken up in Num 25–36. Instead, it is replaced by the phrase »in the lowlands of Moab (*'al [hay]yarden y'rehō*) by the Jordan near Jericho«, which is repeated throughout the entire composition eight times (26,3.63; 31,12; 33,48.49.50; 35,1; 36,13). There is no clear reason for this replacement of the preposition; it is a different use of language.<sup>32</sup>

For literary historical assignment of this composition it is of major importance that the »elders of Midian« are mentioned next to the Moabites or their elders in Num 22,4.7, although they do not play any role in the Balaam story. Probably the Midianites are inserted here by the redactor of Num 25–36 in order to prepare for the hostility of the Midianites and their attack together with the Moabite women against Israel in Num 25. Also the note about the killing of Balaam during the war of revenge against the Midianites in Num 31,8 and the later explanation that it was he who had instigated Midianite or Moabite women to seduce Israel into apostasy and mixed marriages, and thus provoked the divine plague (v. 16), presupposes a knowledge of the Balaam story.<sup>33</sup> Since the redactor of Num 25–36 turned the blessings of the Balaam story into the opposite, it is highly improbable that he should have incorporated the story into the book of Numbers.<sup>34</sup> On the contrary, he probably found the Balaam story already in the book and was forced to do a great deal of redactional work in order to turn its salvific end into the crisis that he needed for a new starting point.

According to my redaction-critical analysis of Num 20–24, it was the Hexateuchal redactor who inserted the Sihon narrative including the Og tradition together with the Balaam story (22,2–24,19.25\*) into the emerging book of

<sup>32</sup> One could perhaps suggest that the author of Num 22,1 formulated his text from a Cisjordanian point of view, while the redactor of 25–36 intended to maintain a Transjordanian perspective, but as 32,19 shows the latter seems to share both views (»beyond the Jordan there« = Cisjordan; »beyond the Jordan to the east« = Transjordan; cf. 34,15).

<sup>33</sup> The fact that Num 33,37 locates Mount Hor at the border of Edom seems to presuppose the corresponding relocation of the mount, introduced by the Hexateuchal redactor in Num 20,23b\* in order to link his report of a message to the king in Edom 20,14–21 with the given priestly context (20,1–13.22–29), which had the Israelites located in Meribat-Kadesh. See R. Albertz, *Das Buch Numeri jenseits der Quellentheorie: Eine Redaktionsgeschichte von Num 20–24*, ZAW 123 (2011), 171–183+336–347, esp. 175–178.

<sup>34</sup> A proposal in this direction was made by Fistill, Israel (note 4), 76–156.

Numbers, as the explicit cross-reference in 22,2 shows.<sup>35</sup> The redactor, whom we have to thank for the addition of Num 25–36 to the book, therefore seems to have worked later than the Hexateuchal redaction. Thus, the relative chronology of the book's formation would fit the possible date of the Pentateuchal redaction.

## 5 Num 25–36 as part of a Pentateuchal redaction

The classification of the composition Num 25–36 as part of the Pentateuchal redaction can only be regarded as justified if the profile of these chapters fits the shape one would expect of such a redaction. I have shown that the composition is focused on preparations for conquering and distributing the promised land of Canaan (33,50–34,29), which are introduced by the preliminary settlement of the tribes Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh in Transjordan (32). This topic would well fit a redactor who was obliged to exclude the book of Joshua from Israel's founding document, on the one hand, but did not want to lose its important message within the Pentateuch, on the other hand. To fulfill his task, he included in Numbers an outline of what had been told in Joshua about the conquest and distribution of land, and presented it in terms of preparation for the future. Thus, one of the main functions of Num 25–36 was to replace the book of Joshua within the scope of the Pentateuch.<sup>36</sup>

Not all chapters of Num 25–36, however, focus in a narrow sense on the land topic. With regard to some passages, such as the detailed calendar of the obligatory daily, weekly and annual sacrifices (28,1–30,1), or the extensive regulations under which conditional vows made by women are valid or not (32,2–17), one may have the impression that the redactor included these regulations into his final redaction simply because they were thus far missing from the Pentateuch. If one, however, takes into consideration that not the land as such but the inherit-

<sup>35</sup> See Albertz, *Numeri* (note 33), 179–180.340–344. It is not by chance that the redactor of Num 25–36 refers not only back to the Balaam story but also to the Sihon-Og narrative (32,33).

<sup>36</sup> The close connection of Num 26–36 with the book of Joshua was also observed by G. N. Knoppers, *Establishing the Rule of Law? The Composition Num 33,50–56 and the Relationships Among the Pentateuch, the Hexateuch, and the Deuteronomistic History*, in: E. Otto / R. Achenbach (eds.), *Das Deuteronomium zwischen Pentateuch und Deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk*, FRLANT 206, 2004, 135–152, esp. 140 and 151–152. But he drew the conclusion that the section intended to make »the Hexateuch more unified« (*ibid.*, 151) or even to link it with the Dtr History. If one, however, has become aware of the fact that these chapters also intended to correct the original conception presented by the book of Joshua, a substituting function appears to be more probable.

ance of the land is the overwhelming topic of these chapters, then the sacrifices and vows, which had to be paid from the landed property, belong to this section in certain respects. Not by chance, the terms *nāḥal* »to inherit« and *naḥlāh* or *ḥuzzāh* »hereditary property« occur no less than 58 times in these chapters.<sup>37</sup> The same is true for the special case, where portions from the booty were paid to the temple and the Levites (Num 31). And even the introductory chapter 25, which deals with the seduction into apostasy and mixed-marriages, contributes to the topic of land acquisition, because it depicts the danger that would threaten the possession of landed property for all future times (33,55–56; cf. Jos 23,12).

In addition to that, Num 25–36 shows some other characteristics that would fit a redaction that intended to complete and finish a literary work in some way. One of these characteristics is the high number of flashbacks to previous events of the salvation history told before, which are scattered over these chapters. These are not – as often regarded – later redactional additions,<sup>38</sup> but they characterize the Pentateuchal redaction itself. We see summary surveys of the exodus (33,2–4), Israel's long wanderings, and Aaron's death (33,38–39), but also of the conflicts with Dathan, Abiram, and Korah (26,8–11; 27,3; cf. Num 16), the death of Nadab and Abihu (26,61; cf. Lev 10,1–2), the offenses of Moses and Aaron at Meribat-Kadesh (Num 27,13–14; cf. 20,1–13), and the defeat of Amorite kings Sihon and Og (32,33; cf. 21,21–35). For the Reubenites and Gadites, who wanted to settle in Transjordan, the Spy Story of Num 13–14 is used by Moses as a warning example of what happened when Israel despised the promised land and was not ready to conquer it (32,6–15). Many of these flashbacks presuppose the connection of priestly and non-priestly material.<sup>39</sup> In addition, there are many allusions to earlier events and regulations.<sup>40</sup>

The relationship between some of these texts is so close that a literary relationship appears to be probable. The two most impressive examples are the clan list used by the redactor in Num 26,4b–50\*, which closely corresponds to the genealogical listing of the 70 members of the Jacob family in Gen 46,8–27, and the genealogy of Levites in Num 26,57–61, which partly corresponds to the similar genealogy found in Ex 6,18–25. In both cases, the parallels are clearly intrusions

<sup>37</sup> The fact, that these terms occur in Num 1–24 only 11 times (almost entirely in chapter 18), nicely shows the different thematic perspective of Num 25–36.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Noth, *Numeri* (note 25), 205–206, 210; B. Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, AB 4A, 2000, 308; Schmidt, *Numeri* (note 3), 158–159, 164, 196–197, and others.

<sup>39</sup> Cf., for example, Num 32,9, which refers to non-priestly verses 13,23; 14,23 of the Spy Story, while Num 32,11 refers to a priestly verse of the same story (14,29).

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, the references to the temple tax (Num 31,50.54; cf. Ex 30,11–16), to the release year (Num 36,4; Lev 25), or the water of purification (Num 31,23–24; cf. Num 19).

into the books of Genesis or Exodus. Thus, one can suggest that the same redactor, who composed Num 25–36, is also responsible for the corresponding insertions made in Genesis and Exodus. In this case, the redactor would have intended to create compositional links which embrace nearly the entire Pentateuch. With such compositional work the author of Num 25–36 proves to be the Pentateuchal redactor, whom we have been looking for. Nevertheless, the question of which passages of the Pentateuch outside of Num 25–36 can be ascribed to this redactor requires further investigations.<sup>41</sup>

There is insufficient space here to consider the theological aims of such a Pentateuchal redactor. It has become apparent that he is influenced by Deuteronomistic language and concepts more than any prior priestly editor within the Pentateuch. Possibly, he intended to elaborate a synthesis of priestly and Deuteronomistic aims. Deuteronomistic topics can be noticed where he pleaded for a sharp distinction from all foreign influences and condemned mixed-marriages for religious reasons. The priestly interests can be seen where he subordinated Joshua to the authority of the high priest and incorporated him into a commission of priests and laymen to ensure a fair distribution of land.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the theological aims developed by Num 25–35 would perfectly fit the period in which the Pentateuchal redaction is traditionally located, during the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Abstract:** Since a consensus is developing that a Hexateuchal redaction preceded the final Pentateuchal redaction (Blum, Otto, Römer a.o.), the latter must have addressed the problem of removing the book of Joshua from Israel's charter document without abandoning its central theme within the Pentateuch. According to this view Num 25–36 can be ascribed to a Pentateuchal redactor, who created from existing material a well structured composition which focuses on the conquest and the distribution of the promised land as a task for the future (32–34). Thus, the book of Joshua was replaced and factually corrected. The composition was attached to the Balaam story (22–24\*), which had been inserted by the Hexateuchal redactor, by means of several redactional links (22,4.7).

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<sup>41</sup> Probably the motif of YHWH's judgment on Egyptian gods in Ex 12,12b\*, which directly corresponds to Num 33,4. Another possible candidate is Lev 10.

<sup>42</sup> The concept of the land commission, was later added to the book of Joshua, after the Pentateuch had become authoritative (Jos 14,1–5; 18,1; 19,51), see Albertz, *Alignment* (note 29), 293–296.

**Résumé:** Depuis qu'un consensus a été atteint sur le fait qu'une rédaction de l'Hexateuque a eu lieu avant celle, finale, du Pentateuque (Blum, Otto, Römer, etc.), cette dernière a dû retirer le livre de Josué du document constitutif d'Israël, sans renoncer néanmoins à cette thématique centrale du Pentateuque. Dans cette perspective, on peut attribuer Nombres, chaps. 25–36, à un rédacteur du Pentateuque. Celui-ci a utilisé le matériau disponible pour créer une composition littéraire cohérente et bien structurée, centrée sur la conquête et la distribution de la terre promise (chaps. 32–34). Ainsi le livre de Josué a été remplacé et corrigé *de facto*. Cette composition est rattachée au cycle de Balaam (chaps. 22–24\*) et insérée par le rédacteur de l'Hexateuque au moyen de liaisons rédactionnelles (par ex. Nomb. 22,4.7).

**Zusammenfassung:** Seitdem sich ein Konsens darüber herauschält, dass der Pentateuch- eine Hexateuchredaktion vorausging (Blum, Otto, Römer u. a.), muss erstere mit der Aufgabe befasst gewesen sein, das Buch Josua aus der Gründungsurkunde Israels auszugliedern, ohne dessen zentrale Thematik innerhalb des Pentateuchs aufzugeben. Von dieser Sicht her lassen sich die Kapitel Num 25–36 einem Pentateuchredaktor zuschreiben, der aus vorgegebenem Material an die vom Hexateuchredaktor eingestellte Bileam-Perikope (22–24\*; Verknüpfung in 22,4.7) eine literarisch einheitliche und wohl strukturierte Komposition angehängt hat, die um die Eroberung und Verteilung des Landes kreist (32–34), diese aber zu einer Aufgabe für die Zukunft macht. Dadurch wird das Josuabuch ersetzt und zugleich in sachlicher Hinsicht korrigiert.