The Scout Narrative (Numbers 13) as a Territorial Claim in the Persian Period

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This essay endeavors to provide the possible sociohistorical contexts of the non-priestly layers of the scout narrative in Num 13–14. I suggest that the scout motif in these chapters is a literary invention that belongs to a later compositional stage during the Persian period. The scouts' mission took them as far as the Valley of Eshcol, which marks the southern border of Yehud, probably created by the demographic division in the fifth century BCE. The scout narrative can be read as an explanation of the situation at that time, that is, to explain why Judah had lost the land south of the valley. The passages relating to Caleb and Hebron were added even later to the scout story probably as a territorial claim for the Hebron area in the time when the Persian Empire was making the border adjustment in the late fifth or early fourth century BCE.

The narrative of the scouts in Num 13–14 has been recognized as a pivotal narrative in the book of Numbers, as well as in the wilderness story of the Pentateuch. According to the narrative, the scouts dispatched by Moses brought a discouraging report, and the people of Israel claimed they would rather return to Egypt than wage war against the strong people in the land of Canaan. The reaction of the people incurs divine wrath, which results in the demise of the exodus generation and the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. The narrative concludes with the Israelites' abortive conquest of, and defeat by, the Amalekites and the Canaanites, who quite easily chase them back to Hormah. The Israelites' initial attempt at conquest, from the south, failed; they had to make a detour around the Transjordanian area. The story therefore serves as a critical juncture in the literary structure of the wilderness story by providing a justification for the detour and the conquest from the east. The story's indispensable structural function has been recognized by different biblical authors. The priestly and nonpriestly authors produced their own versions in Num 13–14,[1] while a parallel story is found in Deut

[1] In this article I use "priestly" with the lowercase *p* rather than "Priestly" with a capital *P* for the P texts after the Sinai pericope. I agree with the recent tendency in Pentateuch study to

1:19–46. The scout story is the only wilderness story that has three different versions, by priestly, nonpriestly, and Deuteronomistic scribes.

The existence of the three different but similar versions has stimulated discussions of the relationship and literary history of the versions, which have resulted in diverse and often very complicated theories and models of their formation. In spite of the diversity of the recent views, it is commonly admitted that the motif of dispatching the scouts and bringing the fruits of the land is the oldest component of the story, which possibly originated during the monarchic period.[2] From this viewpoint, however, the motif is understood only as a sort of literary convention of biblical and ancient Near Eastern war accounts.[3] The specification of the Valley of Eshcol and Hebron as the place for the scouting operation (nonpriestly) is not sufficiently explained. Close literary and sociohistorical analyses of the story nevertheless indicate that such geographical specification had particular geopolitical significance during the mid- or late Persian period.

Against this backdrop, I will challenge the conventional view and suggest that the motif of the scouts was not an old-core story but a relatively recent literary invention aiming to assert a territorial claim for the Hebron area during the Persian period. For this purpose, I will first undertake a focused redaction-critical analysis, which will show that (1) the invention of the motif of the scouts in Num 13–14 postdates the original layer of the parallel account Deut 1:19–46, which had no scout motif; and (2) the Caleb–Hebron motif is an even later addition. I will then consider the two literary layers in light of the geopolitical changes in the south of Yehud during the Persian period, taking into account recent developments in archaeological research. The sociohistorical interpretation will suggest that (1) the scout motif highlights the southern border of the province of Yehud and (2) the Caleb–Hebron motif presupposes the mixed population of Idumea. Given the limited space of this essay, I will concentrate on the formation of those two nonpriestly layers in Num 13–14.

I. Literary Stratigraphy of the Scout Narrative (Numbers 13–14)

A. *A Brief Survey of Scholarship*

It is generally admitted that the scout narrative in Num 13–14 can be separated into two major strands: the nonpriestly strand (13:17b–20, 22–24, 27, 28, 30, 31;

confine the extent of the classical Priestly source (P) from Genesis to the Sinai narrative (see n. 15 below). Nevertheless, the post-Sinai texts thus far considered as P can still be assigned to a later priestly scribal circle, so that I would designate it as "priestly" for the moment. See further Jaeyoung Jeon, "The Promise of the Land and the Extent of P," *ZAW* 130 (2018): 513–28.

[2] The different models will be discussed in the following section.

[3]

14:1b, 4, [11–25], 39–45) and the priestly strand (13:1–17a, 21, 25, 26, 32, 33; 14:1a, 2–3, 5–10, 26–38).[4] Neither of these parallel stories, however, has been regarded as the result of a single compositional work. While classical source critics have often found two strands, J and E, in the nonpriestly text,[5] Martin Noth, who generally minimized the Elohistic texts, suggested a combination of J with a Deuteronomistic addition of 14:11–23* and P supplemented by a late Priestly addition of Num 13:4–16.[6] Noth's position has been broadly accepted, with some variations.[7] Siegfried Mittmann, for instance, suggests four layers: J, P, an extensive Deuteronomistic redaction, and a secondary Priestly redaction.[8] Similarly, David Frankel finds basic JE and P to be expanded by Deuteronomistic and late Priestly additions.[9] Horst Seebass adds an additional phase of a JE redaction, between J and the Deuteronomistic reworking.[10] Ludwig Schmidt suggests a model of one pre-P text and

[4] See, e.g., Martin Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary,* trans. James D. Martin, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 97–112.

[5] See August Dillmann, *Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua,* KEH 2 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1886), 71–79; Heinrich Holzinger, *Numeri,* KHC 4 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1903), 43–44; Bruno Baentsch, *Exodus – Leviticus – Numeri,* HAT 1.2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903), 514–32; J. Estlin Carpenter and George Harford-Battersby, *The Hexateuch according to the Revised Version*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1900), 2:519; Hugo Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit: Ein Kommentar zu den Mose-Sagen,* FRLANT NF 18 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), 291; George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers,* ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 130–65.

[6] Noth assigns to the basic J narrative Num 13:17b–20, 22–24, 27, 28, 30, 31; 14:1aβb, 4, 11, 23b, 24, 25b, 39–45; and to the basic P narrative he attributes Num 13:1–17a, 21, 25, 26, 32, 33; 14:1aα, 2–3, 5–10, 26–38 (*Numbers*, 97–112).

[7] See, e.g., George W. Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness: The Murmuring Motif in the Wilderness Traditions of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 137–56; Volkmar Fritz, *Israel in der Wüste: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der Wüstenüberlieferung des Jahwisten,* MThSt 7 (Marburg: Elwert, 1970), 19–24, 97–112; J. de Vaulx, *Les Nombres,* SB (Paris: Gabalda, 1972), 164–69, 171–75; Aaron Schart, *Mose und Israel im Konflikt: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zu den Wüstenerzählungen,* OBO 98 (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 80–88. See also, more recently though without specifying the non-P text as J, Olivier Artus, *Etudes sur le livre des Nombres: Récit, histoire et loi en Nb 13,1–20,13,* OBO 157 (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 83–157.

[8] See Siegfried Mittmann, *Deuteronomium 1,1–6,3: Literarkritisch und traditionsgeschichtlich untersucht,* BZAW 139 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), 42–55, 139. In addition to J and P, Mittmann assigns to a Deuteronomistic redaction Num 14:11b–22, 23b, 39a, 42, 44b; and to the secondary Priestly redaction Num 13:2b, 4–16, 18bγ–19, 26, 28abα; 14:1aα, 2*, 5–9, 10a, 26*, 27a, 29, 30–32, 34–36, 38.

[9] See David Frankel, *The Murmuring Stories of the Priestly School: A Retrieval of Ancient Sacerdotal Lore,* VTSup 89 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 119–201.

[10] See Horst Seebass, *Numeri,* 3 vols., BKAT 4 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2011), 2:84–96. For Seebass, the basic J strand consists of Num 13:17b–20, 22–24, 27–28, 30–31; 14:3–4, 8–9, 11abα, 21a, 30a, 31, 24, 25b, 39–41, 43–44a, 45. He assigns to a JE redaction Num 14:14aβb, 17–18, 19b, and to a Dtr reworking Num 14:11bβ–13a*, 14aα, 15–16, 19a, 20, 22–23.

two Priestly layers (P and P^S), expanded by extensive reworking by the pentateuchal redactor.[11]

Whereas the above-mentioned works are still based on the (modified) classical Documentary model,[12] the post-Documentarian models reject the classical notion of J. Critics such as John Van Seters and Martin Rose, for instance, suggest the notion of "late J," an exilic composition influenced by DtrH.[13] Erhard Blum similarly argues for a thorough Deuteronomic/stic compositional activity (*Deuteronomistische Komposition: KD*) during the exilic period that formulated most of the nonpriestly texts of Exodus and Numbers, including Num 13–14.[14] Eckart Otto and Reinhard Achenbach suggest a more complicated process for the formation of our story. They presuppose an old scout tradition that had been the common source for the strands in Num 13–14 (non-p) and Deut 1; they also suggest that the post-P "Hexateuch redaction" has significantly expanded it into the present form of the nonpriestly story.[15]

The classical notion of P is rejected also by an increasing number of critics, who limit the extent of P (or P^g) to the Sinai narrative.[16] According to them, there

He attributes to the basic P Num 13:1–2, 16a, 4b–15, 16b, 17a, 21, 25–26 (without Kadesh), 32–33; 14:1a, 2, 5–7, 10, 26–29, 33, 34b–38.

[11] See Ludwig Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift,* BZAW 214 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 73–113; Schmidt, "Die Kundschaftererzählung in Num. 13–14 und Dtn 1,19–46," *ZAW* 114 (2002): 40–58; Schmidt, *Das 4. Buch Mose: Numeri Kapitel 10,11–36,13,* ATD 7.2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 34–52. Schmidt divides the layers as follows: (1) pre-P text: Num 13:17b–20*, 22a, 23a, 26a*, 27abβ, 28, 30*, 31; 14:1aβb, 11a, 21a*, 23a, 24, 25b; (2) P: 13:1, 2a, 17a, 21, 25, 32, 33aαb; 14:1aα, 2–7, 9aα*bβ, 10, 26*, 27b–29aα, 31, 35, 37, 38; (3) P^s: Num 13:2b–16; 14:26, 29aα, 36; (4) R^P: Num 13:2–3b, 22b*, 24*; 14:8, 9aα*, 11b–22*, 23b*, 27a, 30, 32–34*.

[12] The classical framework is used again in the recent "neo-Documentarian" model, which is a simplified version of the classical Documentary Hypothesis. See, e.g., Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

[13] See John Van Seters, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus–Numbers* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 363–82; Martin Rose, *Deuteronomist und Jahwist: Untersuchungen zu den Berührungspunkten beider Literaturwerke,* ATANT 67 (Zurich: TVZ, 1981), 246–94.

[14] See Erhard Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch,* BZAW 189 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), esp. 177–79, 190–91.

[15] See Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumsrahmens,* FAT 30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 26–109; Otto, *Deuteronomium 1–11,* HThKAT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2012), 377–80; Reinhard Achenbach, "Die Erzählung von der gescheiterten Landnahme von Kadesch Barnea (Numeri 13–14) als Schlüsseltext der Redaktionsgeschichte des Pentateuchs," *ZABR* 9 (2003): 56–123.

[16] See Erich Zenger, "Priesterschrift," *TRE* 27:435–46, esp. 438–39; Zenger, ed., *Einleitung in das Alte Testament,* 5th ed., KStTh 1.1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), 164–70; Matthias Köckert, "Leben in Gottes Gegenwart: Zum Verständnis des Gesetzes in der priesterschriftlichen Literatur,"

is no P text in the post-Sinai narratives, especially in the book of Numbers. Those texts in Numbers so far regarded as P are alternatively identified, for instance, as Hexateuch/Pentateuch redaction (Otto)[17] or as belonging either to a Pentateuch redaction or to Theocratic revisions (ThB) by later priestly scribes (Achenbach).[18]

While the relative chronology between the earlier nonpriestly and the later priestly layers in Num 13–14 is still maintained, scholarly views about the literary relationship between the two nonpriestly passages in Num 13–14 and Deut 1 have dynamically changed in recent decades. In the classical Documentary model, Num 13–14 (JE) influenced the composition of Deut 1; in the models by Rose and Van Seters the nonpriestly story of Num 13–14 was composed based on Deut 1.[19] More recent studies of Otto, Blum, and others, nevertheless, refuse such unidirectional

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JBTh 4 (1989): 29–61, esp. 56–59; Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 60–106; Thomas Pola, *Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift: Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von Pᵍ,* WMANT 70 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995), 213–98; A. Graeme Auld, "Leviticus at the Heart of the Pentateuch?," in *Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas,* ed. John F. A. Sawyer, JSOTSup 227 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 40–51; Auld, "Leviticus: After Exodus before Numbers," in *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception,* ed. Rolf Rendtorff and Robert A. Kugler, VTSup 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 41–54; Eckart Otto, "Forschungen zur Priesterschrift," *TRu* 62 (1997): 1–50, esp. 24–30; Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments: Grundwissen der Bibelkritik,* UTB 2157 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 102–17; Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus,* FAT 2/25 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 340–94; Jaeyoung Jeon, "The Zadokites in the Wilderness: The Rebellion of Korach (Num 16) and the Zadokite Redaction," *ZAW* 127 (2015): 381–411. See also Lothar Perlitt, "Priesterschrift im Deuteronomium?," in *Lebendige Forschung im Alten Testament,* ed. Otto Kaiser (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 65–88; Thomas C. Römer, "Der Pentateuch," in *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments,* ed. Walter Dietrich et al., ThW 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014), 52–166, esp. 69–73. See also Jeon, "Promise of the Land."

[17] See Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch*, 26–109; Otto, *Deuteronomium 1–11*, 377–85. Otto's reconstruction of the literary layers is as follows: (1) Grunderzählung (fragmentary) Num 13:17b–20, 22aα (until "Negeb"), 23, 24, 27abβ, 28abα, 30–31; 14:1b, 40–44a, 45; (2) Hexateuchredaktion: Num 13:1, 2abα, 3a, 21, 22aβb, 25, 26, 27bα, 28bβ, 29, 32, 33; 14:1a, 2–10, 26, 27b, 29aα*, 31, 35, 37, 38, 44b; Josh 14:6–15; (3) Pentateuchredaktion: 13:2bβ, 3b–17a; 14:11-25, 27a, 29*, 30, 32–34, 36, 39.

[18] See Achenbach, "Die Erzählung von der escheiterten Landnahme," 56–123. Achenbach's detailed layer division of Num 13–14, Deuteronomy 1, and Joshua 14, 15 is as follows: (1) vor-dtr Kundschaftererzählung: Num 13:17b–20, 22aα, 23–24, 27*; 14:23a*, 25b*; Deut 1:20*, 22, 23*, 24–26, 28*, 35, (39a*) 39b, 40–44*; (2) DtrL: Deut 1:19a, 20–27a, 34, 35, 39aβb, 40–45*; (3) HexRed: Num 13:17b–20, 22–24, 26a, 27*, 28, 30–31; 14:1b, 11a (21a*), 23b–24, 40–45*; Deut 1:19b, 27b–31, 36–38, 46; Josh 14:6–15*; 15:13–19*; (4) PentRed: Num 13:1, 2a*, 3a, 21, 25–26*, 32–33; 14:1a, 2–5a, 10b, 11b–22, 25a, 26–29a*b, 30a, 31–37, 39; Deut 1:32–33, 39aα*; (5) ThB: Num 13:2b, 3b, 4–16, 17a*, 29; 14:5b, 6–10a, 25a, 29b*, 30b, 38.

[19] See n. 13 above.

models and suggest that the two texts mutually influenced each other in their complicated formational processes.[20]

This brief survey of the different formation models reveals that critics have been discovering complicated formation processes of the three different versions of the story in Num 13–14 and Deut 1. My own analysis in the following sections will agree with the recent tendency, especially with the interdependent relationship between the two nonpriestly versions.

B. *The Scout Motif as a Late Literary Invention*

Preservation of the early, nonpriestly strand in Num 13 has been fragmentary. In this strand, the scouts reach no farther than the Valley of Eshcol and bring fruits collected from there with the report of the fertility of the land as well as the military superiority of the peoples of the land. In agreement with this common view, I would also assign Num 13:17b–20*, 22* (only ויעלו בנגב), 23–24, 26* (ויבא וילכו and 26bβ), 27, 28abα to the earliest strand in Num 13. The later priestly strand is far more self-contained. From the wilderness of Paran, Moses dispatches twelve scouts, one from each tribe, to explore the land to the far north, (the entrance) to Hamath. They bring only a negative report that it is a land that swallows its people. To the basic strand of the priestly layer can be assigned Num 13:1, 2a, 3a, 21, 25, 26a*bα, 32, 33*. Notably, the motif of dispatching the scouts is an integral part of both nonpriestly and priestly stories; the latter seems to have reproduced and expanded the scout motif of the former.

In the parallel story in Deut 1:19–46, however, the scout motif is introduced with a number of literary problems, which raises doubt about whether the motif really belongs to the old tradition in Deut 1. Frankel, therefore, argues that the original story in Deut 1 is about the abortive conquest without the motif of the scouts (Deut 1:20, 21, 26–27, 29–30, 34–35, 39* [41–46]).[21] In general agreement with Frankel, I would support this view based on three points: (1) the verses mentioning the scouts (vv. 22–25, 28) presuppose already the (near) final form of Num 13–14; (2) those verses interrupt the smooth flow of the story; (3) the earlier strand (vv. 19a, 20–21, 26–27) makes perfect sense without the scout motif in terms of both language and content.[22] A few more observations can be added here to support the view that the scout motif was not present in the earliest layer of Deut 1.

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[20] See, e.g., Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, 177–80, 190–91; Frankel, *Murmuring Stories,* 119–201; Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch,* 26–109; Otto, *Deuteronomium 1–11*, 377–82; Achenbach, "Die Erzählung von der escheiterten Landnahme," 61–123

[21] See Frankel, *Murmuring Stories*, 145–48.

[22] See ibid., 148. Frankel also points out that the brief summary of this account in Deut 9:23, which reflects the language of the present account in Deut 1, also lacks the scout motif. But such a brief summary may of course skip some elements.

The description of the operation of the scouts in Deut 1:22–25, 28 closely follows the nonpriestly passages in Num 13: for instance, going up to the mountain (v. 24a; Num 13:17); spying on the cities (v. 22b; Num 13:19b); reaching as far as the Valley of Eshcol (v. 24aβ; Num 13:23a); taking the fruits from there (v. 25a; Num 13:23, 26b); and the positive report about the fertility of the land (v. 25b; Num 13:27).[23] Yet, at the same time, the verses presuppose also the priestly strand of Num 13: the motif of sending one scout from each tribe (v. 23; Num 13:2–15);[24] and the expressions such as וישבו אתנו דבר ("and bring back to us a report," v. 22bα, 25bα;[25] Num 13:26b), הארץ אשר ה׳ אלהינו נתן לנו ("the land that the LORD our God is giving us," v. 25bγ, cf. Num 13:2a), and וטפכם אשר אמרתם לבז יהיה ("and your little ones, who you said would become booty," v. 39a; Num 14:31).[26] In addition, the description of the land by the scouts, טובה הארץ ("it is a good land," v. 25bβ), resembles the statement of Joshua and Caleb in Num 14.7bβ, טובה הארץ מאד מאד ("the land is very, very good" [p]). The latter is often regarded as a later, or even the latest, priestly passage in Num 13–14.[27] These priestly elements in Deut 1:22–25, 28 are integral parts of the scouts passage, without which the verses are too fragmentary to be a proper narrative strand.[28] Such literary features indicate that the present passage (Deut 1:22–25, 28) presupposes the combination of the priestly and nonpriestly strands and therefore is later than the (near) present form of Num 13–14.

The present scout passage in Deut 1:22–25, 28 obtrudes between verses 19*–20 (–21) and verse 26, causing a number of literary problems.[29] First of all, the scouts bring only a positive report about the land (v. 25), which makes the people's disobedience in verse 26 unexpected. The people express their fear of the Amorites in verse 27b, yet the scouts' report never mentions the Amorites or a military threat.

[23] See ibid., 146–47. See further Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch*, 64–67.

[24] Samuel R. Driver argued that the motif of twelve tribes came from JE but was omitted during the process of redaction with P. This assumption, however, is hard to prove. See Samuel R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895), 21–22.

[25] The LXX and the Vulgate lack this passage, but the plus in the MT was probably generated from the same passage in verse 22. See further Lothar Perlitt, *Deuteronomium,* vol. 2, BKAT 5.2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 83; Achenbach, "Die Erzählung von der escheiterten Landnahme," 67.

[26] See Frankel, *Murmuring Stories*, 146–47; also Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch*, 68.

[27] Otto, for instance, regards the verse as part of the Hexateuch redaction, while Achenbach assigns the verse to ThB, one of the latest layers in the Pentateuch. See nn. 17, 18 above.

[28] Eduard Nielsen, for instance, regards those "P-like" passages as later priestly redaction (*Deuteronomium,* HAT 6 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995], 27–32), but that would make the account unreadable. Otto and Achenbach, therefore, assign most of verses 22–25 to an earlier strand without segmenting the verses. Perlitt, too, attributes the passage, except some words in verses 22bβ and 24b, to an earlier strand (*Deuteronomium*, 2:81–85).

[29] See Frankel, *Murmuring Stories*, 145–48.

The report about the military superiority of the people of the land is, at most, indirectly reflected in the complaint of the Israelites in verse 28. This is hardly an original sequence in the narrative. Furthermore, whereas the primary antagonists in the earlier layer (vv. 20, 27; also vv. 43–44[30]) are the Amorites, verse 28 does not mention them. The people of the land in verse 28 are either generally designated as a "mighty people" (עם גדול) or specified as the sons of giants (בני ענקים), which reflects the language of Num 13:28. Further, although the people are commanded to march further to the mountain of the Amorites in the earlier layer (vv. 20–21; also implied in vv. 43–44), the scout passages do not mention it at all. The latter knows only the mountain leading to the Valley of Eshcol (v. 24), rather than the mountain of the Amorites, as quoted from Num 13 (vv. 17bβ, 23aα). The absence of the Amorites in the scout passage corresponds to Num 13–14, which describes the inhabitants of the mountain (Num 14:45) as the Amalekites and Canaanites rather than the Amorites.[31]

If we remove the motif of the scouts (vv. 22–25, 28), the two surrounding parts in Deut 1:19a, 20–21 and 26–27 correspond closely with each other in language and content and form a coherent strand.[32] This strand is the earlier story about the abortive conquest without the scout motif, which can be reconstructed as follows: YHWH commands the people to move from Horeb to the mountain of the Amorites (Deut 1:7a), and they march through the wilderness on the way to the mountain of the Amorites (vv. 19a–20). Moses commands and encourages the people to go up to the mountain (of the Amorites) and to take possession of it (v. 21). But the people refuse to obey YHWH's command (v. 26) due to fear of the Amorites (v. 27). The disobedience and disbelief of the people trigger YHWH's wrath (vv. 34–35*), and the command to make a detour to the south (v. 40). The people, however, carry out an abortive attempt at conquest and are defeated by the Amorites (vv. 41–45*). This is, in itself, a complete story of disobedience, which does not require the scout motif as its indispensable part.

The conventional view that regards the scout motif as the oldest core may have been influenced by the fact that the scouting motif appears frequently in the biblical stories of conquest (e.g., Josh 2:1, 7:2, 18:8, Judg 1:23, 18:2; cf. Gen 42:9, 2 Sam 10:3) as well as in various ancient Near Eastern texts.[33] The major purpose of the

[30] Most critics regard the account of the abortive conquest in Deut 1:40–44 as an essential part of the original layer. See nn. 6, 10, 11, 17, 18 above.

[31] The Amorites are mentioned with four other people in the land in Num 13:29, yet this verse is regarded as a late addition. See, e.g., Noth, *Numbers*, 107.

[32] For instance, the Amorites are consistently described as the antagonists (vv. 19a, 20, 27), and this functions as the central motif of the story. Critics often regard verse 21 as a late addition. See, e.g., Perlitt, *Deuteronomium*, 2:81–85; Nielsen, *Deuteronomium*, 27–32; Achenbach, "Die Erzählung von der escheiterten Landnahme," 67; Otto, *Deuteronomium 1–11*, 370. Most commentators assign also verse 26 (27a) to the earlier layer. But without the command to go up to the mountain in verse 21, people's disobedience in verse 26 (27a) becomes abrupt.

[33] For the use of the intelligence service especially in Neo-Assyrian texts, see Peter Dubovský,

present account (Deut 1), however, is not to describe the conquest proper but to provide a justification for making the detour around Edom, Moab, and Ammon instead of the shorter route from the south. The primary point of the account is the failure of the conquest, which is "non-conquest" rather than a conquest proper. In this regard, the account in Deut 1 is critically different from the other biblical battle accounts with scouts, most of which introduce successful conquests.

In sum, the scout motif is not an old tradition shared by both Num 13–14 and Deut 1 but was initially invented by the author of the nonpriestly strand in Num 13–14. Presumably, a quasi-"literary convention" of sending scouts for conquests in biblical and ancient Near Eastern literature has influenced the later author in developing the original abortive conquest story in Deut 1.

C. *The Secondary Nature of the Caleb–Hebron Motif in Numbers 13*

The nonpriestly strand of the scout narrative in Num 13–14 is not a single literary layer. As critics increasingly recognize, Caleb's speech (Num 13:30–31) and the mention of Hebron (13:22) appear to be secondary to the nonpriestly scout story.[34] Caleb's speech to the people abruptly intervenes, without any introduction of the person of Caleb, and breaks the logical sequence of events. Caleb quiets the people (ויהס כלב את העם) in Num 13:30; the people's rebellious complaints appear only in Num 14:1–4.[35] In addition, the explicit mention of Hebron in verse 22, especially the report of the arrival at Hebron (ויבא עד חברון, v. 22a), produces redundancy with the following note of the arrival at the Valley of Eshcol (ויבא עד נחל אשכל, v. 23a). Even though the Valley of Eshcol and Hebron are located in the immediate vicinity, the repeated reports of the arrival to this vicinity with the identical expression ויבא עד make the literary flow awkward. Usually, when בוא is followed by עד, it means an arrival at the final destination (e.g., Gen 11:31; 50:10; Deut 1:19, 31; Josh 3:1). Since the Valley of Eshcol in verse 23 is deeply embedded in the narrative by the etiological relationship with the scouts' collecting a "cluster of grapes" (אשכול ענבים), the arrival at Hebron in verse 22* (from ויבא to מצרים)

Hezekiah and the Assyrian Spies: Reconstruction of the Neo-Assyrian Intelligence Services and Its Significance for 2 Kings 18–19, BibOr 49 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 2006), esp. 32–160. Further, Herodotus records Cambyses's dispatching spies before his march to Egypt (*Hist.* 3.19).

[34] See, e.g., Christoph Levin, *Der Jahwist,* FRLANT 157 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 375–77; Nobert Rabe, *Vom Gerücht zum Gericht: Die Kundschaftererzählung Numeri 13.14 als Neuansatz in der Pentateuchforschung,* THLI 8 (Tübingen: Francke, 1994), 410–13; Frankel, *Murmuring Stories,* 153–60; Achenbach, "Die Erzählung von der escheiterten Landnahme," 64–65. For the secondary nature of the Caleb tradition in Deut 1 and Josh 14, 15, see also Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch*, 19–20. For Josh 14:6–15, see Ernst Axel Knauf, *Josua,* ZBK.AT 6 (Zurich: TVZ, 2008), 137–40.

[35] See also Frankel, *Murmuring Stories*, 154.

should be regarded as secondary. Deuteronomy 1 contains only the arrival at the Valley of Eshcol (v. 24) without mentioning the arrival at Hebron.

Caleb is firmly connected to Hebron in the following conquest narrative (esp. Josh 14:6–15, 15:14–19, Judg 1:12–15) so that the passages about Caleb (Num 13:30–31) and Hebron (Num 13:22) should be assigned to the same redactional hand.[36] In the parallel account in Deut 1:19–46, notably, neither Caleb nor Hebron is introduced in the main sequence of the narrative. Only Caleb is abruptly mentioned in YHWH's speech (v. 36), which is regarded as a late addition.[37] Achenbach, therefore, argues that the Caleb–Hebron passages in Num 13:22, 30–31 (nonpriestly) and Deut 1:36 and the account of the Calebites' conquest of Hebron in Josh 14:6–15, 15:13–19 belong to the post-Priestly Hexateuch redaction.[38]

This is, to be sure, not to say that the figure of Caleb is a late invention as a whole. Caleb is associated with the Negev already in 1 Sam 30:14 (cf. Josh 15:13–19, Judg 1:11–15) as "Negev of Caleb [נגב כלב]," which implies that there had been an old tradition about a certain Caleb or the actual presence of the group of people called the "Calebites" in southern Judah. What is late is the literary invention of the figure of Caleb as one of Joshua's scouts, probably in order to justify the contemporaneous, or the remembered, presence of the Calebites in the south.

In view of the conclusions of the redaction-critical analysis so far, though selective, we can put the different versions of the story in a chronological order: (1) The story of an abortive conquest has been composed in Deut 1:19–46 without the scout motif. (2) The nonpriestly story in Num 13–14 has been formulated based on that early story in Deuteronomy with the addition of the scout motif. (3) The Caleb–Hebron passages have been added to the existing nonpriestly story in Num 13–14. (4) The priestly strand has been composed, possibly through multiple phases, based on the nonpriestly strand; not only the scouts but also the Caleb motif have been incorporated and reformulated. (5) The motifs of the scouts and Caleb have been inserted in the parallel story in Deut 1. A more comprehensive reconstruction of the literary developments of Deut 1:19–46 and Num 13–14 is impossible in this limited space and should be done on another occasion. For the moment, it is sufficient for this essay to clarify the relative chronology between the versions, in particular, the relative lateness of the nonpriestly scout story in Num 13–14. In line with the recent late dating of Deut 1, this result suggests the Persian period as

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[36] One may assign to the same hand the description of the giants (vv. 22, 28*), which is closely connected to Hebron and Caleb (Josh 15:13–14).

[37] See, e.g., Perlitt, *Deuteronomium*, 2:81–83; Nielsen, *Deuteronomium*, 27–32; Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch*, 19–20; Otto, *Deuteronomium 1–11,* 379; Achenbach, "Die Erzählung von der escheiterten Landnahme," 64–66. Otto assigns Deut 1:36 to the postexilic Pentateuch redaction, but Achenbach attributes the verse to the Hexateuch redaction.

[38] See Achenbach, "Die Erzählung von der escheiterten Landnahme," 64–66. Further, Knauf regards the Calebite passages in Josh 14:6–15, 15:13–19 as post-Deuteronomistic additions, made in the Persian period (*Joshua*, 137–40).

the most plausible date of the former's composition. The next question then arises: What is the purpose of the invention of the scout and Caleb–Hebron motifs? May the geopolitical context of Persian Yehud explain it?

II. Archaeological and Sociohistorical Considerations

A. *The Valley of Eshcol*

According to the nonpriestly scout narrative, the scouts reach the Valley of Eshcol and cut the fruits of the land from there. The precise location of the valley is unknown, but it is considered to be in the vicinity of Hebron. In Gen 14, for instance, Eshcol is personified and introduced as a brother of other cities in the vicinity of Hebron, that is, Mamre and Aner (vv. 13, 24). Edouard Lipiński, therefore, claims that the alternative name of Hebron, Qiryat-arba, meaning "city of four," originated from the four closely connected cultic centers: Eshcol, Mamre, Aner, and Machpelah. According to Lipiński, followed by Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò, the name Hebron, from the root חבר ("to unite"), stems from the same origin.[39] As for its location, since the time of Jerome of Stridonium (ca. 404 CE), and throughout the medieval period, the Valley of Eshcol has been thought to be located to the north of Hebron.[40] In the twentieth century, Gustaf Dalman identified it as Wadi Eshcol, one of the wadis near Bēt Kāḥil, a town situated to the northwest of Hebron.[41] This identification has been broadly accepted.[42] Two questions are then raised: Why did the author pinpoint this wadi as the final destination of the scouts? Did this northwestern area of the environs of Hebron have any significance in the Persian period?

To answer these questions it will be helpful to look briefly into the history of the region. After the Assyrian invasion in the late eighth century BCE, the kingdom of Judah lost its control of the southern region, in particular the military defense line of the Arad–Beer-sheba valley. With the collapse of the southern defense

[39] See Edouard Lipiński, "ʿAnaq-Kiryatʾarbaʿ: Hébron et ses sanctuaires tribaux," *VT* 24 (1974): 41–55; Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò, *The Origin Myths and Holy Places in the Old Testament: A Study of Aetiological Narratives,* trans. Jacek Laskowski, Copenhagen International Seminar (London: Equinox, 2014), 124–25.

[40] Burchard of Mount Sion (ca. 1280 CE) and Ishtori Haparchi (ca. 1322 CE) similarly identified the valley. See further David Moster, "Eshcol (Place)," *EBR* 7:1208–10. See also Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Adjacent Regions, 1838 and 1852* (Jerusalem: Universitas Booksellers, 1970), 1:214; Niesiołowski-Spanò, *Origin Myths*, 126, and the references in n. 70 there.

[41] See Gustaf Dalman, "Jahresbericht," *PJ* 8 (1913): 16–17.

[42] See, e.g., Felix-Marie Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine,* 2 vols., EBib (Paris: Gabalda, 1933; repr., 1967), 1:403–4; Pinḥas Neʾeman, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Geography*, 4 vols. [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Chachik, 1966), 3:245. See further Moster, "Eshcol," 1208–9.

system, southern nomads, Edomites, and Arabs could easily infiltrate the Judean southern hill country. The control of this region was temporarily recovered in the late seventh century BCE, following the Assyrian withdrawal. Soon, however, the kingdom was destroyed by the Babylonians, which accelerated the infiltration of the southern people farther into the north, toward the Shephelah and the Hebron highlands.[43] According to Oded Lipschits, the process was partially violent and partially a gradual and quiet incursion.[44]

Eventually, during the Persian period, the border of Yehud shrank to just north of Hebron.[45] Most critics agree that the southernmost district of Yehud was Phelek Beth-zur and that, therefore, the narrow strip between Beth-zur and Hebron became the southern border of Yehud.[46] This border probably existed from the early Persian period, as critics agree, even before the recognition of Idumea as a separate province in the late-fifth or mid-fourth century BCE.[47] If this was the case, the Valley of Eshcol, which is northwest of Hebron, was very near or possibly the nearest to the southern border of Yehud. The biblical account also tells us that the scouts reached "as far as [עד]" the Valley of Eshcol (Num 13:23; Deut 1:24), implying that this was, in effect, an area near to a border.[48]

The possible recognition by the biblical author that the Valley of Eshcol was the northern end of the southern border of Yehud provides an important clue for interpreting the scout story. According to the story, the Israelites sent the scouts from the southern desert area (Kadesh) northward as far as the border of Yehud. The scouts explored the region, but the people refused to take possession of it. They could have taken the area, but they did not. The story can, therefore, be read as a

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[43] See, e.g., Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. 2005), 228–32, and further references therein.

[44] See ibid., 249.

[45] See also Thomas C. Römer, Oded Lipschits, and Hervé Gonzalez, "The Pre-Priestly Abraham Narratives from Monarchic to Persian Times," *Sem* 59 (2017): 261–96.

[46] See, e.g., Ephraim Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period, 538–332 B.C.* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982), 245–49; Michael Kochman, "Status and Extent of Judah in the Persian Period" (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1980), 127–57; Zechariah Kallai, *The Northern Boundaries of Judah: from the Settlement of the Tribes until the Beginning of the Hasmonean Period* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1960), 80–93; Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas,* 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 129; Lester Grabbe, *The Persian and Greek Periods*, vol. 1 of *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 80; Lipschits, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 174.

[47] See n. 46 above. In contrast to the majority view, Israel Eph'al and others argue that this area was controlled by the Arabs (Qederites) during the Persian period and was recognized as a "province" only in the Hellenistic period ("The Origins of Idumaea" [Hebrew], *Qad* 126 [2003]: 77–79); Yigal Levin, "The Southern Frontier of Yehud and the Creation of Idumea," in *A Time of Change: Judah and Its Neighbors in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods,* ed. Yigal Levin, LSTS 65 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 239–52.

[48] The same expression is used for Hebron (ויבא עד חברון, v. 22aα), yet this is a later addition based on ויבאו עד נחל אשכל (v. 23aα), as we saw above.

reflection of the geopolitical situation of the Persian period, in which the Judahites no longer had control of the lands south of the Valley of Eshcol. Further, the story explains why they had lost control of the southern hill country—because their ancestors had disobeyed YHWH.

Furthermore, the refusal to enter the land in the narrative could be understood by contemporaneous readers/audiences as their refusal to return to Yehud.[49] Our story then may have been intended to criticize the Judahites in diaspora. They refused to return, just as their ancestors did, and the story implies that their refusal causes the delay of the complete resettlement in the land. This criticism could also articulate a strong demand to return and participate in the restoration.

B. Caleb and Hebron

Although the tradition of Caleb, or the Calebites, in the southern hill country may have been old, as we saw, the Caleb and Hebron passages in Num 13, Deut 1, and Josh 14, 15 can be assigned to a relatively late redactional phase of the Hexateuch. Having been systematically added in three different Hexateuchal books, these passages require further investigation into their purpose and historical context. Again, further study of the material culture and geopolitical state of the Hebron in the Persian period may shed light on this matter.

1. The Geopolitical State of the Hebron Area in the Persian Period

Since Tel Hebron was located by W. F. Albright and others in the 1920s in the spur of Jebel Rumeida, the history of the site has been uncovered through the two excavation projects by Philip C. Hammond (1960s) and Avi Ofer (1980s). The excavations have revealed that the site flourished as a fortified city in the Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age I, especially the eleventh–tenth centuries BCE.[50] Ofer suggests that the cyclopean walls from the Middle Bronze Age, which were two meters above the ground even before the excavations, were probably associated with the legend of the Anakites preserved in the present biblical passages.[51]

The importance of Hebron gradually declined after this period. The kingdom of Judah lost control of the site during the invasion of Assyria (late eighth century BCE), and the decline was furthered by the conquest of Judah by Babylonia. The site underwent a significant change during the Persian period. Tel Hebron was

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[49] The wilderness context is often understood as the situation in diaspora. Römer, for instance, says, "die Wüste spiegelt damit auch die Situation der Diaspora wider." See Römer, "Der Pentateuch," 146. For further information, see Jeon, "Promise of the Land," 524–26.

[50] For a summary of the excavations, see Avi Ofer, "Hebron," in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. Ephraim Stern, Ayelet Lewinson-Gilboa, and Joseph Aviram, 5 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993–), 2:606–9.

[51] See ibid.

abandoned during this period; the city had shifted to the valley at the foot of the hill, which was occupied later by the Hasmoneans (1 Macc 5:65; Josephus, *A.J.* 12.8.6 §§350–353). The administrative function of Hebron had shifted to the nearby Jebel Nimra, often identified with Mamre or even Hebron itself.[52] A large public building, most likely a fort, was constructed on this mound in two phases, the late fifth and fourth centuries BCE.[53] A rich ceramic assemblage from the site is marked by Achaemenid motifs. Although the exact nature of this fort is unclear, the erection of the public building signifies that this area regained administrative and/or military importance in accordance with the Persian imperial interest.[54]

This change in the region coincides with the broader shift in the material culture of Yehud in this period. According to Lipschits, "the main change in material culture occurred later in the Persian period, probably during the late 5th or even the early 4th century BCE, when a fundamental modification in the form, style, paleography, and orthography occurred, probably a result of the growing importance of the Southern Levant for the Persian Empire, when it lost its hegemony over Egypt."[55] The Persian kings made large-scale military expeditions into Egypt, in order to quell the revolts and to reoccupy Egypt, especially during the period of its independence (from the Twentieth to Thirtieth Dynasties, 404–343 BCE).[56] In this period, the province of Yehud and the area farther to the south acquired a strategic significance as the southern frontier of the fifth satrap of the empire.[57] A series of fortified sites was constructed along with the new southern frontier from Gaza to the Dead Sea through the Negev; and the taxation system

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[52] See Hananya Hizmi and Zion Shabtai, "A Public Building from the Persian Period in Jabel Nimra Which Is in Hebron" [Hebrew], *Judea and Samaria Research Studies* (1993): 65–86; Avraham Faust, "Forts or Agricultural Estates? Persian Period Settlement in the Territories of the Former Kingdom of Judah," *PEQ* 150 (2018): 34–59, esp. 38, https://doi.org/10.1080/00310328 .2017.1405233).

[53] See Hizmi and Shabtai, "Public Building," 34–59. For further discussion of the Hebron area, see Römer, Lipschits, and Gonzalez, "Pre-Priestly Abraham Narratives," esp. 275–83.

[54] See Faust, "Forts or Agricultural Estates?," 51; Hizmi and Shabtai, "Public Building."

[55] See Oded Lipschits, "Persian-Period Judah: A New Perspective," in *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts,* ed. Louis C. Jonker, FAT 2/53 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 187–211; quotation from 205.

[56] See further Stephen Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West: Egypt and the Persian Empire, 525–332 BCE,* Oxford Studies in Early Empires (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 35–177; Pierre Briant, *Histoire de l'Empire perse: De Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 515–768.

[57] See Alexander Fantalkin and Oren Tal, "The Canonization of the Pentateuch: When and Why?," *ZAW* 124 (2012): 1–18, 201–12. Cf. Kenneth G. Hoglund, *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah,* SBLDS 125 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 213. See also Jaeyoung Jeon, "Egyptian Gola in Prophetic and Pentateuchal Traditions: A Socio-historical Perspective," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 18 (2018): 12–23; Briant, *Histoire de l'Empire perse*, 557–71.

was probably reorganized to support the military expeditions.[58] Nehemiah's rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (445–432 BCE) and the mission of Ezra (more likely 398 BCE) were among the imperial efforts to tighten control over Yehud.[59]

The geopolitical situation presumably led to a reorganization of the border between Yehud and the area to the south that was eventually recognized as a separate province of Idumea. Although the date of the recognition of Idumea as a province is still debated, a number of critics set its date in the fifth or fourth century BCE.[60] The term *Idumea* first appears in Diodorus Siculus's *Bibliotheca Historica* (19.94–95, 98), in which he describes the events that happened around 312 BCE in the area of the Arad–Beer-sheba Valley, the southern Shephelah, and the southern Judean hills. Although whether it designates a political unit may be disputed,[61] the reference indicates the political and demographic state of the area that was distinguished from Yehud. Critics generally agree that this process of distinction had begun much earlier, either during the Babylonian period or the early Persian period.[62] Michael Avi Yonah, followed by Yigal Levin, argues that the area had been detached from Yehud before the mid-fifth century, based on the Nehemiah Memoir, which identifies Beth-zur as the southmost part of his jurisdiction (Neh 3:16).[63] Lipschits also maintains that the provincial border-reorganization started in the mid-fifth century BCE, "apparently on the basis of the marked borders that had

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[58] See, e.g., Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 43; Lipschits, "Persian-Period Judah," 205. For a useful summary of those sites, see Faust, "Forts or Agricultural Estates?," 34–43.

[59] See, e.g., Grabbe, *Persian and Greek Periods*, 131; Franz V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel's Identity*, JSOTSup 361 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 229. For the late dating of Ezra, see, e.g., Hoglund, *Achaemenid Imperial Administration,* 40–44. But it should be noted that the historicity of Ezra is also disputed.

[60] See Amos Kloner, "Idumaea and the Idumaeans," *ARAM* 27 (2015): 177–85; Lipschits, "Persian-Period Judah," 249; Diana Vikander Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem*, BWo (London: Equinox, 2005), 209–81 (for a summary of the different views, see 209–45 and the references there). Israel Eph'al ("Origins of Idumaea," 77–79) and Yigal Levin ("The Formation of Idumean Identity," *ARAM* 27 [2015]: 187–202, esp. 189) suggest the early Hellenistic period as its date.

[61] See Levin, "Idumean Identity," 189.

[62] For the dating of the Babylonian period, see Aharoni, *Land of the Bible*, 410; André Lemaire, "Nabonidus in Arabia and Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period,* ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 285–98, here 290–91. For the views for the Persian period, see, e.g., Levin, "Idumean Identity," 191; Lipschits, "Persian-Period Judah," 249; Juan Manuel Tebes, "Memories of Humiliation, Cultures of Resentment toward Edom and the Formation of Ancient Jewish National Identity," *Nations and Nationalism* 25 (2019): 124–45, esp. 132; Kloner, "Idumaea and the Idumaeans," 177–78.

[63] See Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquests (536 B.C. to A.D. 640): A Historical Geography,* rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 25–28; Levin, "Idumean Identity," 191.

previously existed, with pinpoint adjustments to fit the demographic situation."[64] Provided that the present Caleb–Hebron passages have been added during the mid-fifth to early fourth centuries BCE, their purpose should be understood in this geopolitical situation of the reorganization of the provincial border.

2. The Calebites and Fluid Ethnic Boundaries

Along with the geopolitical situation of Hebron and Idumea in the Persian period, it is important for our purpose to consider the confusing ethnic identity of the Calebites. In the present Caleb–Hebron passages, the Calebites are identified as the Kenizzites (Josh 14:16, Num 32:12). According to the Priestly genealogy of Esau in Gen 36, which is often thought to have originated in the Persian period,[65] Kenaz is a grandson of Esau (v. 11), and the Kenizzites are one of the influential tribes of Edom (vv. 15, 42). The Caleb–Hebron passages, therefore, reflect the mixed population of Hebron in the Persian period, which consisted of Arabs, nomads, Judeans (e.g., Neh. 11.25), and, presumably, the majority of the Edomites.[66]

In spite of his Kenizzite or Edomite origin, the Caleb–Hebron passages emphasize that Caleb was devoted to YHWH (מלא אחרי ה׳, Deut 1:36; similarly, Num 14:24, Josh 14:8). Hebron and the area to the south were given to the Calebites by Joshua (Josh 15:15–19), the leader of the Yahwistic community. In this way, the Calebites are depicted as part of the community. The addition of the Caleb–Hebron passages can therefore be understood as a scribal effort to incorporate the mixed population of Hebron into the Yahwistic community of Yehud. Ernst Axel Knauf similarly claims that the Caleb story (including Josh 14:6–15, 15:13–19) was written in the fourth century BCE as an invitation to all of Idumea to join "biblical Israel," constituted by Yehud and Samaria.[67]

The inclusive attitude toward the Calebites is further strengthened in the later biblical texts. For instance, in Num 13:6, which belongs to a late priestly layer, Caleb

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[64] See Lipschits, "Persian-Period Judah," 249.

[65] See further the discussions in John R. Bartlett, "The Fall and the Rise of the Kingdom of Edom," *PEQ* 104 (1972): 26–37; Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites,* JSOTSup 77 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989); Ernst Axel Knauf, "Alter und Herkunft der edomitischen Königsliste," *ZAW* 97 (1985): 245–53; Knauf, "Genesis 36,1–43," in *Jacob: Commentaire à plusieurs voix de Gen 25–36: Mélanges offerts à Albert de Pury,* ed. Jean-Daniel Macchi and Thomas Römer MdB 44 (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2001), 291–300; André Lemaire, "Edom and the Edomites," in *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception*, ed. André Lemaire and Baruch Halpern, VTSup 129 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 225–43; Kevin Mellish, "Edom, Edomites in Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament," *EBR* 7:403–11.

[66] The Calebites' conquest of the Debir and the area of the Negev (Josh 15:15–19) further reflects the demographic situation of the area. See Tebes, "Nations and Nationalism," 133; Levin, "Idumean Identity," 197.

[67] See Ernst A. Knauf, "Why 'Joshua'?," in *Deuteronomy–Kings as Emerging Authoritative Books: A Conversation,* ed. Diana V. Edelman, ANEM 6 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 73–84, esp. 79.

is described not as a Kenizzite but as the leader (נשיא) of the tribe of Judah. Chronicles, similarly, includes the names of the descendants of Esau found in Gen 36 in the genealogies of the Judean and Simeonite clans.[68] Caleb son of Jephunneh (1 Chr 4:15) and Kenaz (vv. 13, 15; cf. Gen 36:11) are among the names found in the genealogy of clans of Judah. The growing inclusivity testifies not only to an ideological orientation of those texts but also to an actual sociohistorical state of low ethnic boundaries.

Statistical analyses of epigraphic sources show that, by the fourth century BCE, diverse, clan-based ethnic groups coexisted, thus forming a multiethnic community in the northern Negev and Idumea.[69] In particular, the analysis of the names and ethnicity by Ian Stern effectively demonstrates the dynamics in ethnicity in tribes/clans of different ethnic origins in this area. For instance, among a total of fourteen names of the clan of Ye[ho]kal, most likely of Judahite origin, eight names are Idumean and four names are Arabic.[70] Similarly, out of a total of seventeen names, the clan of Gur (*Guru/Gir*) with its Western Semitic origin has five Arabic names, six Western Semitic names, and five Idumean theophoric names with *Qos*. As Juan Tebes rightly points out, ethnic boundaries were low, and identities were fluid among those mixed populations.[71]

Notable examples of the identity fluidity of the Judahites can also be found among the mixed population in the Elephantine fortress. A number of Aramaic legal documents found there show that the Judahites in Elephantine had a dual ethnic identity—Judahite and Aramean (*TAD* B2.9:3–4; B2.10:18; B2.11:2; B3.6:2; B3.13; B4.2:14; B5.2:2). They identified themselves, as a rule, as Arameans; when they distinguish themselves from other ethnic groups, such as the Caspians, Horezmians, Bactrians, and non-Judahite Arameans living in Syene, they were Judahites.[72] It seems that they accepted common Syrian cultural and religious traditions, while still maintaining their own traditions. Karel van der Toorn points out that the presence of the story of Ahiqar as the major literary work found in the

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[68] See Gary N. Knoppers, "Intermarriage, Social Complexity, and Ethnic Diversity in the Genealogy of Judah," *JBL* 120 (2001): 15–30, esp., 23–28, https://doi.org/10.2307/3268591; Tebes "Nations and Nationalism," 133.

[69] See ibid., 132. See also Ian Stern, "The Population of Persian-Period Idumea according to the Ostraca: A Study of Ethnic Boundaries and Ethnogenesis," in Levin, *Time of Change*, 206–38.

[70] See Stern, "Population of Persian-Period Idumea," 218. Since no Judahite names were found for this clan, Stern regards this case to be an acculturation of a Judahite progenitor of the more dominant Idumean society.

[71] See Tebes, "Nations and Nationalism," 133.

[72] See Karel van der Toorn, "Ethnicity at Elephantine: Jews, Arameans, Caspians," *TA* 43 (2016): 147–64, esp. 161. Similarly, Herodotus calls the Judahites "Syrians of Palestine" (*Hist.* 2.104; see also 2.4).

Judahite quarter of Elephantine, and worshiping there the gods like Anat-Bethel, Exhem-Bethel, and Herem-Bethel besides Yahô, illustrates this point.[73]

The cultural and religious fluidity of the Elephantine Judahites and other ethnic groups is visible also in the diversity of the deities they invoke. In the internal communications between the Judahites, they invoke Yahô together with Khnum, the Egyptian deity (*TAD* D7.21) and also Babylonian deities such as Bel, Nabû, Šamaš, and Nergal (*TAD* D7.30:1–3), who were widely served in the different parts of the Persian territory.[74] A Judahite's oath sworn by Yahô is accepted as an ultimate solution for a legal dispute by Dargamana a Khwarezmian (*TAD* B2.2:11–12). In another case, a Judahite woman Mibtaiah swears an oath only by the Egyptian goddess Sati without invoking Yahô (*TAD* B2.8).[75]

Cultural and religious mixing is observable also between Idumea and Yehud. In Chronicles, for instance, we find names of temple personnel with Edomite origins such as Obed Edom (1 Chr 13:13–14, 15:18, 16:5, etc) and Kushaiah (1 Chr 15:17). A certain Barkos (meaning "son of Qos") is mentioned in the list of the temple servants (Ezra 2:53, Neh 7:55).[76] Tebes assumes that those names reflect holding or claims of holding cultic positions in Jerusalem during the Persian period by people with an Edomite background.[77] In addition, the Idumean culture and religion in Maresha show similarities with those of the Judahites such as circumcision and schematic, or even aniconic, representation of Qos.[78]

Regardless of the particular theory of ethnicity that might be advocated in historical research, critics agree that ethnicity is a complex and dynamic process, often influenced by socioenvironmental and socioeconomic conditions.[79] In this

[73] See van der Toorn, "Ethnicity at Elephantine," 162. For the different gods in the temple of Yahô, see Collin Cornell, "Cult Statuary in the Judean Temple at Yeb," *JSJ* 47 (2016): 291–309.

[74] See Bob Becking, "Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance? Two Examples of Lending Deities among Ethnic Groups in Elephantine," in *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, ed. Mladen Popović, Myles Schoonover, and Marijn Vandenberghe, JSJSup 178 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 30–43.

[75] See Becking, "Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance?," 39–42. For further cases, see van der Toorn, "Ethnicity at Elephantine," 148–59. Khwarezmia is a satrapy north of Afghanistan.

[76] See Tebes, "Nations and Nationalism," 134.

[77] See ibid.; also Juan M. Tebes, "The Edomite Involvement in the Destruction of the First Temple: A Case of Stab-in-the-Back Tradition?," *JSOT* 36 (2011): 219–55.

[78] See Amos Kloner, "The Identity of the Idumeans Based on the Archaeological Evidence from Maresha," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 563–73.

[79] See Stern, "Population of Persian-Period Idumea," 226–27; Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions,* BARIS 87 (London: Routledge, 1996), 47–50; Ian Hodder, *Symbols in Action: Ethnoarchaeological Studies of Material Culture*, New Studies in Archaeology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 22–35; Ze'ev Herzog and Ofer Bar-Yosef, "Different Views on Ethnicity in the Archaeology of the Negev," in *Aharon Kempinski Memorial Volume: Studies in Archaeology and Related Disciplines,* ed. Eliezer D. Oren and Shmuel Ahituv (Beersheva: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2002), 151–81.

regard, the geopolitical dynamics in Yehud and Idumea during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE presumably provided the ground for the scribal efforts to incorporate some Edomite clans, represented by the Calebites, into the Yahwistic community of Yehud.

3. The Caleb–Hebron Layer as a Territorial Claim

The present Caleb–Hebron redaction can be understood from a political and territorial perspective as well. The incorporation of Hebron might have reflected the expansion of a Yahwistic community farther south, or, alternatively, the narrative may have supported an attempt to influence imperial administration. By integrating the inhabitants of Hebron in the Yahwistic community, the Yehud leadership could urge the local Persian government to include the Hebron area within the provincial border of Yehud. To be sure, Yehud was not an independent political entity, and their "territorial claim" actually meant a sort of recognition of the area as a district of Yehud by the imperial authority.[80] Such recognition could, nevertheless, have had contemporary benefits in material support or ideological memories that stretched back to the old monarchic days of Judah.

The claim for Hebron may have had further territorial significance. According to Nadav Na'aman and others, Hebron was related to the southern region as far as the Beer-sheba–Arad valley through parallel settlement types and social orientation.[81] Hebron is thus believed to have been the capital of Idumea.[82] The attempt to stretch the community's influence to Hebron was not only about the city itself, but may also have been about reclaiming the monarchic southern border that is the Beer-sheba–Arad valley.[83]

[80] Charles E. Carter argues that the southern border of Yehud actually extended to the south of Hebron in the late Persian period (*The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study*, JSOTSup 294 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999], 100–113). His argument is based on natural "environmental niches" of the area, ignoring the difference of the social environment. As Lipschits maintains, however, the demographic aspect seems to have been far more decisive for the Persian administration ("Persian-Period Judah," 249).

[81] See Nadav Na'aman, "The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah," *TA* 18 (1991): 3–71; Avi Ofer, "The Highland of Judah during the Biblical Period" [Hebrew] (PhD diss., Tel-Aviv University, 1993), 1:103–4.

[82] See Lipschits, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 146–49; Lipschits, "The Rural Economy of Judah during the Persian Period and the Settlement History of the District System," in *The Economy of Ancient Judah in Its Historical Context,* ed. Marvin L. Lloyd, Ehud Ben-Zvi, and Gary N. Knoppers (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 237–64, esp. 240–41. Cf. Edelman, *Origins of the "Second Temple,"* 277.

[83] It is therefore notable that not only Hebron but also areas far to the south, such as Debir (Kiriath Sepher) and Negev, are attributed to the Calebites (Josh 15:13–19, Judg 1:11–15). The Beer-sheba Valley is often recognized as the southern border of Judah in the Deuteronomistic literature (e.g., Judg 20:1, 1 Sam 3:20, 2 Sam 17:11, 1 Kgs 4:25, 1 Chr 21:2).

III. Conclusions

I have endeavored to provide the possible sociohistorical contexts of the non-priestly layers of the scout narrative in Num 13. I have suggested that the scout motif in these chapters is a literary invention of a later compositional stage during the Persian period. The scouts' mission venturing as far as the Valley of Eshcol reflects the southern border of the province of Yehud in the first part of the fifth century BCE. The scout narrative can be read as an explanation of the geopolitical situation of the time, that is, that they had lost control of the land from the Valley to the south. In the context of the restoration, the story is also read as blaming the Judahites who refused to return and who rejected a call to the diaspora Judeans to return to the region.

The Caleb–Hebron passages in Num 13 (vv. 22, 28, 30–31) were added even later, together with the relevant passages in Deut 1 and Josh 14–15 within the hexateuchal imagination. This layer reflects the geopolitical situation in which the borders were reorganized to aid the empire's military strategy against Egypt after the mid-fifth century BCE. Through the story of Caleb, the redactor endeavored to integrate the mixed population of the Hebron region into the Yahwistic community of Yehud. Such integration, if it was successful, might have extended the community's hegemony in the area, which could have been beneficial to the community in economic and political terms. Further, location of the Calebites farther south (Josh 15:13–19, Judg 1:11–15) envisions the monarchic southern border. The claim for the southern territory was not only ideological but could actually be political in the context of the imperial adjustment of the southern border after the mid-fifth century BCE.