

# TRANSLATING A MIDRASH-COMPILATION SOME NEW CONSIDERATIONS

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The purpose of this paper is to adumbrate a few points of interest in the study of a biblical book. The book at hand is Leviticus. What I want to know is how systematically to analyze the composition of the rabbinical exegeses of passages of that book assembled in the collection known as Leviticus Rabbah.

With Leviticus Rabbah we enjoy the results of a truly great scholarly achievement, Mordecai Margulies *Midrash Wwayikra Rabbah. A Critical Edition Based on Manuscripts and Genizah Fragments with Variants and Notes* (Jerusalem, 1953-1960, I-V). Margulies placed the study of Leviticus Rabbah on an entirely new foundation. How so? He supplied an authoritative account of the two basic issues of any ancient document: the text and the principal philological problems. At the same time he left open certain analytical questions. One of these may be called redactional. This is in two aspects.

First, we want to know how to distinguish the distinct components of the composition. The text clearly is composite. Then what are the individual units out of which the composition was constructed? A glance at the excellent translation by J. Israelstam and Judah J. Slotki, *Midrash Rabbah . . . Leviticus* (London, 1939) shows that differentiation among units of thought stands at a rather primitive stage. Israelstam and Slotki present us with long paragraphs, not indicating that these paragraphs are made up of numerous individual units of thought. They also do not systematically tell us which units of thought are shared among other documents, and which ones represent the contribution of the framers of the text at hand alone. It is not criticism of their excellent and pioneering work to recognize that, after nearly half a century, further translation—that is, a fresh and systematic commentary—may provide further insight into the original text. One point of emphasis of any new translation must be differentiation of the long columns of type into distinct units of thought, whole

and comprehensive statements, to be set apart from other such units of thought.

Second, once we see the parts from which the whole has been assembled, we have to ask the redactional question. Why has the framer put together things in the way that he has, and not in some other way? What point did he wish to make by juxtaposing one item with some other? The alternatives prove important in assessing the large-scale meaning and significance of the document as a whole. If the framer of a given unit has so arranged things as to advance a polemic we discover time and again, then we may uncover a significant issue addressed by the document as a whole. If on the other hand the framer does little more than put together this, that, and the other thing, we have to entertain a quite different hypothesis about the context in which the work was done, the purpose motivating it, the intellectual framework encompassing it. This second redactional question, one of overall composition, becomes possible only when the first, the analytical one, has been answered. That is, before we can explain how and why things have been put together as they have, we must clearly distinguish the individual components of the aggregation in hand. None of this has ever demanded systematic inquiry.

A question lying at the other end of a systematic redactional analysis of the document, of course, promises still more critical insight. What in fact is "original" to the plan of the whole, and what has joined the document only later on? I place original in quotation marks, because I do not now know that there was any "original" text, that is to say, a well-planned foundation laid in the execution of a purposive and systematic exegesis of bits of Leviticus. Perhaps, as I indicated, all we have is an aggregation of things about Leviticus that, by one sort of accident or another, merely happened to pile up and reach closure. If, however, we are able to distinguish, in one unit after another, a given syntactic form, or a repeated mode of treating an exegetical problem, or even a single viewpoint, harped upon again and again, then we may affirm that the work proposed not only to collect things, but also to make points. But to test that hypothesis we must accomplish a fresh translation of the document, laying emphasis upon points of form-criticism and redaction-criticism, as I have explained. That is what I now undertake.

With the advantage of Margulies' text and philological commentary, not to mention his systematic citation of parallels, the new translation still cannot claim to represent a considerable advance over the existing one, except in the specified ways. By offering a small sample of it in this setting, I hope to gain the advantage of colleagues' suggestions about the theory of

translation as such: how can I achieve my stated goals more effectively? And, further, are there ways in which I may still more critically define the inquiry at hand?

At the end lies the large and fundamental question of defining what, exactly, a midrash-compilation is. For close to a thousand years before the collection and closure of the materials we know as *Leviticus Rabbah*, exegeses read and explained Scripture. So the work of "midrash," meaning amplification of the basic canonical text, constitutes a convention of diverse forms of Judaism even before the closure of the Hebrew Bible. What is new in *Leviticus Rabbah* is not the reading and exposition of verses of Scripture. What is an innovation is assembling these expositions in just this way, at just this time, and for just the purpose at hand. But until we know what way that was, what age marked the completion of the work, and what purpose was supposed to be served by the compiling of diverse exegeses ("*midrašim*") into a single composition ("*midraš*"), we know nothing. That is, we really cannot say *just what this book is*. We therefore do not now know what it was meant to be, and, therefore, in its own context, what (if anything) it meant as a whole. And that is the case, even though, as is evident, we have a pretty clear notion of what each of its words and phrases means, and even a first-class version of what is original to the document and what was added only by copyists and printers. In the sample translation that follows, as I said, I mean to illustrate modes of translation leading to the answers to the questions just now outlined.

### LEVITICUS RABBAH PARASHAH ONE

- I:1.1.A. "The Lord called Moses [and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of cattle from the herd or from the flock']."
- B. R. Tanhum bar Hinilai opened [discourse by citing the following verse:] " 'Bless the Lord, you his messengers, you mighty in strength, carrying out his word, obeying his word' (Ps 103:20).
- C. "Concerning whom does Scripture speak?
- D. "If [you maintain that] it speaks about the upper world's creatures, [that position is unlikely, for] has not [Scripture

in the very same passage already referred to them, in stating], 'Bless the Lord, all his hosts [his ministers, who do his word]' (Ps 103:21).

- E. "If [you maintain that] it speaks about the lower world's creatures, [that position too is unlikely,] for has not [Scripture in the very same passage already referred to them, in stating], 'Bless the Lord, [you] his messengers' (Ps 103:20). [Accordingly, concerning whom does Scripture speak?]
- F. "[We shall now see that the passage indeed speaks of the lower ones.] But since the upper world's creatures are perfectly able to fulfill the tasks assigned to them by the Holy One, blessed be he, therefore it is said, 'Bless the Lord, *all* of his hosts.' But as to the creatures of the lower world [here on earth], who cannot fulfill the tasks assigned to them by the Holy One, blessed be he, [the word *all* is omitted, when the verse of Scripture states,] 'Bless the Lord, [you] his messengers' — but not *all* of his messengers."
- G. "Another matter: Prophets are called messengers [creatures of the lower world], in line with the following passage, 'And he sent a messenger and he took us forth from Egypt' (Num 20:16).
- H. "Now was this a [heavenly] messenger, [an angel]? Was it not [merely] Moses [a creature of the lower world]?"
- I. "Why then does [the verse of Scripture, referring to what Moses did,] call him a 'messenger'?"
- J. "But: It is on the basis of that usage that [we may conclude] prophets are called 'messengers' [in the sense of creatures of the lower world]."
- K. "Along these same lines, 'And the messenger of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim' (Judg 2:1). Now was this a [heavenly] messenger, [an angel]? Was it not [merely] Phineas?"
- L. "Why then does [the verse of Scripture, referring to Phineas], call him a 'messenger'?"
- M. "But: It is on the basis of that usage that [we may conclude] prophets are called 'messengers.' "
- 2.A. Said R. Simon, "When the holy spirit rested upon Phineas, his face burned like a torch."
- B. [There is better proof of the allegation concerning Phineas, deriving from an explicit reference, namely:] rabbis said, "What did Manoah's wife say to him [concerning Phineas]?"

- 'Lo, a man of God came to me, and his face was like the face of a messenger of God' (Judg 13:6).
- C. [Rabbis continue,] "She was thinking that he was a prophet, but he was in fact a [heavenly] messenger [so the two looked alike to her]."
- 3.A. Said R. Yohanan, "From the passage that defines their very character, we derive evidence that the prophets are called 'messengers,' in line with the following passage: 'Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, in the Lord's agency, said . . .' (Hag 1:13).
- B. "Accordingly, you must reach the conclusion that on the basis of the passage that defines their very character, we prove that the prophets are called 'messengers.' "
- 4.A. [Reverting to the passage cited at the very outset,] "You mighty in strength, carrying out his word [obeying his word]" (Ps 103:20).
- B. Concerning what [sort of mighty man or hero] does Scripture speak?
- C. Said R. Isaac, "Concerning those who observe the restrictions of the Seventh Year [not planting and sowing their crops in the Sabbatical Year] does Scripture speak.
- D. "Under ordinary conditions a person does a religious duty for a day, a week, a month. But does one really do so for all of the days of an entire year?
- E. "Now [in Aramaic:] this man sees his field lying fallow, his vineyard lying fallow, yet he pays his *anona*-tax and does not complain.
- F. "[In Hebrew:] Do you know of a greater hero than that!"
- G. Now if you maintain that Scripture does not speak about those who observe the Seventh Year, [I shall bring evidence that it does].
- H. "Here it is stated, 'Carrying out his word' (Ps 103:20) and with reference to the Seventh Year, it is stated, 'This is the word concerning the year of release' (Deut 15:2).
- I. "Just as the reference to 'word' stated at that passage applies to those who observe the Seventh Year, so reference to 'word' in the present passage applies to those who observe the Seventh Year."
- 5.A. [Continuing discussing of the passage cited at the outset:] "Carrying out his word" (Ps 103:20):
- B. R. Huna in the name of R. Aha: "It is concerning the Isra-

elites who stood before Mount Sinai that Scripture speaks, for they first referred to doing [what God would tell them to do], and only afterward referred to hearing [what it might be], accordingly stating 'Whatever the Lord has said we shall carry out and we shall hear' (Exod 24:7)."

- 6.A. [Continuing the same exercise:] "Obeying his word" (Ps 103:20):
- B. Said R. Tanhum bar Hinilai, "Under ordinary circumstances a burden which is too heavy for one person is light for two, or too heavy for two is light for four.
  - C. "But is it possible to suppose that a burden that is too weighty for six hundred thousand can be light for a single individual?"
  - D. "Now the entire people of Israel were standing before Mount Sinai and saying, 'If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die' (Deut 5:22). But, for his part, Moses heard the voice of God himself and lived.
  - E. "You may find evidence that that is the case, for, among all the Israelites, the [Act of] Speech [of the Lord] called only to Moses, on which account it is stated, 'The Lord called Moses' (Lev 1:1)."

Lev 1:1 intersects with Ps 103:20 to make the point that Moses was God's messenger *par excellence*, the one who blesses the Lord, is mighty in strength, carries out God's word, obeys God's word. This point is made first at No. 1 by proving that the verse speaks of earthly, not heavenly, creatures. Then it is made explicit at No. 6. No. 1 presents two sets of proofs, 1.A-F and G-M. The second may stand by itself. It is only the larger context that suggests otherwise. No. 2 is continuous with 1.G-M, No. 3 is equally continuous with 1.G-M, to which explicit reference is made. No. 4 and No. 5 refer back to the cited verse, Ps 103:20, but not to the context of Lev 1:1. So we have these units:

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|-------------|--|
| 1.A-F       | Ps 103:20 refers to earthly creatures.                             |
| 1.G-M, 2, 3 | Prophets are called messengers.                                    |
| 4           | Ps 103:20 refers to a mighty man who observes the Sabbatical Year. |
| 5           | Ps 103:20 refers to the Israelites before Mount Sinai              |
| 6           | Ps 103:20 refers to Moses.   |

If then we ask what is primary to the redaction resting on Lev. 1:1, it can only be 1.A-F and 6. But since 1.A-F does not refer to Moses at all, but only sets up the point made at No. 6, we must wonder whether basic to the discussion is more than No. 6. Why? No. 6 does not require No. 1. It makes its point without No. 1's contribution. Furthermore, No. 1, for its part, is comprehensible by itself as a comment on Ps. 103:20, and hardly requires linkage to Lev. 1:1. If, therefore, I may offer a thesis on the history of the passage, it would begin with Lev. 1:1 + No. 6. Reference to Ps 103:20 then carried in its wake Nos. 1.A-F, G-M, 2, 3, 4, and 5 — all of them to begin with autonomous sayings formed into a kind of handbook on Ps 103:20. So first came the intersection of Lev. 1:1 and Ps 103:20 presented by No. 6, and everything else followed in the process of accretion and aggregation, mostly of passages in Ps 103:20.

- 1:11.1.A. R. Abbahu opened [discourse by citing the following verse]:  
 “ ‘They shall return and dwell beneath his shadow, they shall grow grain, they shall blossom as a vine, their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon’ (Hos 14:7).  
 B. “ ‘They shall return and dwell beneath his shadow’ — these are proselytes who come and take refuge in the shadow of the Holy One, blessed be he.  
 C. “ ‘They shall grow grain’ — they are turned into [part of] the root, just as [any other] Israelite.  
 D. “That is in line with the following verse: ‘Grain will make the young men flourish, and wine the women’ (Zech 9:17).  
 E. “ ‘They shall blossom as a vine’ — like [any other] Israelite.  
 F. “That is in line with the following verse: ‘A vine did you pluck up out of Egypt, you did drive out the nations and plant it’ (Ps 80:9).”
- 2.A. Another item [= Genesis Rabbah 66:3]: “They shall grow grain” — in Talmud.  
 B. “They shall blossom as a vine” — in lore.
- 3.A. “Their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon [and Lebanon signifies the altar]” — Said the Holy One, blessed be he, “The names of proselytes are as dear to me as the wine-offering that is poured out on the altar before me.”
- 4.A. And why [is that mountain called] “Lebanon?”  
 B. In line with the following verse: “That goodly mountain and the Lebanon” (Deut 3:25).
- 5.A. R. Simeon b. Yohai taught [= Sifre Deut. 6, 28], “Why is it

called Lebanon (LBNN)? Because it whitens (MLBYN) the sins of Israel like snow.

- B. "That is in line with the following verse: 'If your sins are red as scarlet, they shall be made white (LBN) as snow' (Is 1:18)."
- 6.A. R. Tabyomi said, "It is because all hearts (LBB) rejoice in it.
- B. "That is in line with the following verse of Scripture: 'Fair in situation, the joy of the whole world, even Mount Zion, at the far north' (Ps 48:3)."
- C. And rabbis say, "It is because of the following verse: 'And my eyes and heart (LB) shall be there all the days' (1 Kgs 9:3)."

So far as we have a sustained discourse, we find it at Nos. 1, 3. No. 2 is inserted whole because of its interest in the key-verse, Hos 14:7. Reference at that verse to "Lebanon" explains the set-piece treatment of the word at Nos. 4, 5, 6. These units may travel together, but the present location seems an unlikely destination. But someone clearly drew together this anthology of materials on, first, Hos 14:7, and, by the way, second, the word Lebanon. Why the two sets were assembled is much clearer than how they seemed to the compositor of the collection as a whole to belong to the exposition of Lev 1:1. Margulies' thesis that the theme of the righteous proselyte intersects with the personal biography of Moses through Pharaoh's daughter (a proselyte!) seems farfetched. So, in all, the construction of the passage surely is prior to any consideration of its relevance to Lev 1:1, and the point of the construction certainly is the exegesis of Hos 14:7 — that alone. Whether the materials shared with other collections — Nos. 2, 5 — fit more comfortably in those compositions than they do here is not a pressing issue, since, as is self-evident, there is no link to Lev 1:1 anyhow.

- 1.III.1.A. R. Simon in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi, and R. Hama, father of R. Hoshaiah, in the name of Rab: "The Book of Chronicles was revealed only for the purposes of exegetical exposition."
- 2.A. "And his wife Hajehudijah bore Jered, the father of Gedor, and Heber, the father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah — and these are the sons of Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took" (1 Chr 4:17).
- B. "And his wife, Hajehudijah [= the Judah-ite]" — that is Jochebed.
- C. Now was she from the tribe of Judah, and not from the tribe

of Levi? Why then was she called Hajehudijah [the Judahite]?

- D. Because she kept Jews (Jehudim) alive in the world [as one of the midwives who kept the Jews alive when Pharaoh said to drown them].
- 3.A. "She bore Jered" — that is Moses.
  - B. R. Hanana bar Papa and R. Simon:
  - C. R. Hanana said, "He was called Jered (YRD) because he brought the Torah down (HWRYD) from on high to earth."
  - D. "Another possibility: 'Jered' — for he brought down the Presence of God from above to earth.
  - E. Said R. Simon, "The name Jered connotes only the meaning of royalty, in line with the following verse: 'May he have dominion (YRD) from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth' (Ps 72:8).
  - F. "And it is written, 'For he rules (RWDH) over the entire region on this side of the River' (1 Kgs 5:4)."
- 4.A. "Father of Gedor" —
  - B. R. Huna in the name of R. Aha said, "Many fence-makers (GWDRYM) stood up for Israel, but this one [Moses] was the father of all of them."
- 5.A. "And Heber" —
  - B. For he joined (HBR) Israel to their father in heaven.
  - C. Another possibility: "Heber" — for he turned away (H'BYR) punishment from coming upon the world.
- 6.A. "The father of Soco" —
  - B. This one was the father of all the prophets, who perceive (SWKYN) by means of the holy spirit.
  - C. R. Levi said, "It is an Arabic word. In Arabic they call a prophet 'sakya.' "
- 7.A. "Jekuthiel" (YQWTY'L) —
  - B. R. Levi and R. Simon:
  - C. R. Levi said, "For he made the children hope (MQWYN) in their Father in heaven."
  - D. Said R. Simon, "When the children sinned against God in the incident of the Golden Calf . . ."
  - E. " 'The father of Zanoah' —
  - F. "Moses came along and forced them to give up (HZNYHN) that transgression.
  - G. "That is in line with the following verse of Scripture: '[And

he took the calf which they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder] and strewed it upon the water' (Exod 32:20)."

- 8.A. "And these are the sons of Bithiah (BT YH), the daughter of Pharaoh" —
- B. R. Joshua of Sikhnin in the name of R. Levi: "The Holy One, blessed be he, said to Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, 'Moses was not your child, but you called him your child. So you are not my daughter, but I shall call you my daughter' [thus BT YH, daughter of the Lord]."
- 9.A. "These are the sons of Bithiah . . . whom Mered took" —
- B. [Mered] is Caleb.
- C. R. Abba bar Kahana and R. Judah bar Simon:
- D. R. Abba bar Kahana said, "This one [Caleb] rebelled [MRD] against the counsel of the spies, and that one rebelled [MRDH] against the counsel of her father [Pharaoh, as to murdering the babies]. Let a rebel come and take as wife another rebellious spirit."
- E. [Explaining the link of Caleb to Pharaoh's daughter in a different way], R. Judah b. R. Simon said, "This one [Caleb] saved the flock, while that one [Pharaoh's daughter] saved the shepherd [Moses]. Let the one who saved the flock come and take as wife the one who saved the shepherd."
- 10.A. Moses [thus] had ten names [at I Chr 4:17]: Jered, Father of Gedor, Heber, Father of Soco, Jekuthiel, and Father of Zanoah [with the other four enumerated in what follows].
- B. R. Judah bar Ilai said, "He also was called [7] Tobiah, in line with the following verse: 'And she saw him, that he was good (TWB) (Exod 2:2). He is Tobiah."
- C. R. Ishmael bar Ami said, "He also was called [8] Shemaiah."
- 11.A. R. Joshua bar Nehemiah came and explained the following verse: " 'And Shemaiah, the son of Nethanel the scribe, who was of the Levites, wrote them in the presence of the king and the princes and Zadok the priest and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar' (I Chr 24:6).
- B. "[Moses was called] Shemaiah because God heard (SM' YH) his prayer.
- C. "[Moses was called] the son of Nethanel because he was the son to whom the Torah was given from Hand to hand (NTN 'L).

- D. " 'The scribe,' because he was the scribe of Israel.
  - E. " 'Who was of the Levites,' because he was of the tribe of Levi.
  - F. " 'Before the king and the princes' — this refers to the king of kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be he, and his court.
  - G. " 'And Sadoq the priest' — this refers to Aaron the priest.
  - H. " 'Ahimeleh' — because [Aaron] was brother of the king.
  - I. " 'The son of Abiathar' ('BYTR) — the son through whom the Holy One, blessed be he, forgave (WYTR) the deed of the Golden Calf."
- 12.A. R. Tanhuma in the name of R. Joshua b. Qorhah, and R. Menehemiah in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: "He also was called [9] Levi after his eponymous ancestor: 'And is not Aaron, your brother, the Levite' (Exod 4:14)."
- B. And [he of course was called] [10] Moses — hence [you have] ten names.
  - C. Said the Holy One, blessed be he, to Moses, "By your life! Among all the names by which you are called, the only one by which I shall ever refer to you is the one which Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, gave to you: 'And she called his name Moses' (Exod 2:10)," so God called Moses.
  - D. So "he called Moses" (Lev 1:1).

Now we see some slight basis for Margulies' view of the relevance of 1:11, that the daughter of Pharaoh named Moses, and she was a proselyte. But the passage at hand stands fully by itself, leading to the climax at the very end, at which the opening words of the opening verse of the book of Leviticus are cited. The point of the entire, vast construction is the inquiry into the various names of Moses. From that standpoint we have a strikingly tight composition. But still, the unit *is* a composite, since it draws together autonomous and diverse materials. The first passage, No. 1, is surely independent, yet it makes for a fine superscription to the whole. Then the pertinent verse, at No. 2.A, 1 Chr 4:17, is cited and systematically spelled out, Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Not only so, but at No. 10, we review the matter and amplify it with an additional, but completely appropriate, set of further names of Moses, Nos. 10 + 12, to be viewed, in line with No. 12, as a unified construction. No. 11 is inserted and breaks the thought. Then 12.C tells us the point of it all, and that brings us back to Lev. 1:1, on the one side, and to No. 8. But, as we have seen, we cannot refer to No. 8 without drawing along the whole set, Nos. 2-9. So the entire passage forms a single, sustained discussion, in which diverse materials are deter-

minedly drawn together into a cogent statement. We notice that No. 7 presents a text problem, since Levi's statement is not matched by Simon's. Levi speaks of Jekuthiel and Simon of "the father of Zanoah." But the only problem is at 7.B. If we omit that misleading superscription — which served perfectly well at 3.B + C-F — and have 7.D and E change places, we get a perfectly fine autonomous statement.

- 1:IV.1.A. R. Abin in the name of R. Berekhiah the Elder opened [discourse by citing the following verse]: " 'Of old you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, saying, "I have set the crown upon one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people" ' (Ps 89:20)."
- B. "[The Psalmist] speaks of Abraham, with whom [God] spoke both in word and in vision.
- C. "That is in line with the following additional verse of Scripture: 'After these words the word of God came to Abram in a vision, saying . . .' (Gen 15:1).
- D. " ' . . . to your faithful one' — 'You will show truth to Jacob, faithfulness to Abraham' (Mic 7:20).
- E. " ' . . . saying, "I have set the crown upon one who is mighty" — for [Abraham] slew four kings in a single night.'
- F. "That is in line with the following verse of Scripture: 'And he divided himself against them by night . . . and smote them' (Gen 14:15)."
- 2.A. Said R. Phineas, "And is there a case of someone who pursues people already slain?
- B. "For it is written, 'He smote them and he [then] pursued them' (Gen 14:15)!
- C. "But [the usage at hand] teaches that the Holy One, blessed be he, did the pursuing, and Abraham did the slaying."
- 3.A. [Abin continues,] " 'I have exalted one chosen from the people' (Ps 89:20).
- B. " 'It is you, Lord, God, who chose Abram and took him out of Ur in Chaldea' (Neh 9:7)."
- 4.A. ["I have exalted one chosen from the people" (Ps. 89:20)] speaks of David, with whom God spoke both in speech and in vision.
- B. That is in line with the following verse of Scripture: "In accord with all these words and in accord with this entire vision, so did Nathan speak to David" (2 Sam 7:17).
- C. "To your faithful one" (Ps 89:20) [refers] to David, [in line

- with the following verse:] "Keep my soul, for I am faithful" (Ps 86:2).
- D. ". . . saying, 'I have set the crown upon one who is mighty'" (Ps 89:20) —
- E. R. Abba bar Kahana and rabbis:
- F. R. Abba bar Kahana said, "David made thirteen wars."
- G. And rabbis say, "Eighteen."
- H. But they do not really differ. The party who said thirteen wars [refers only to those that were fought] in behalf of the need of Israel [overall], while the one who held that [he fought] eighteen includes five [more, that David fought] for his own need, along with the thirteen [that he fought] for the need of Israel [at large].
- I. "I have exalted one chosen from the people" (Ps 89:20) — "And he chose David, his servant, and he took him . . ." (Ps 78:70).
- 5.A. ["Of old you spoke in a vision to your faithful one . . ."] speaks of Moses, with whom God spoke in both speech and vision, in line with the following verse of Scripture: "With him do I speak mouth to mouth [in a vision and not in dark speeches]" (Num 12:8).
- B. "To your faithful one" — for [Moses] came from the tribe of Levi, the one concerning which it is written, "Let your Thummin and Urim be with your faithful one" (Deut 33:8).
- C. ". . . saying, 'I have set the crown upon one who is mighty' " —
- D. The cited passage is to be read in accord with that which R. Tanhum b. Hanilai said, "Under ordinary circumstances a burden which is too heavy for one person is light for two, or too heavy for two is light for four. But it is possible to suppose that a burden that is too weighty for six hundred thousand can be light for a single individual? Now the entire people of Israel were standing before Mount Sinai and saying, 'If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die' (Deut 5:22). But, for his part, Moses heard the voice of God himself and lived" [= 1:1.6.B-D].
- E. You may know that that is indeed the case, for among them all, the act of speech [of the Lord] called only to Moses, in line with that verse which states, "And [God] called to Moses" (Lev 1:1).
- F. "I have exalted one chosen from the people" (Ps 89:20) —

"Had not Moses, whom he chose, stood in the breach before him to turn his wrath from destroying them" [he would have destroyed Israel] (Ps 106:23).

The whole constitutes a single, beautifully worked out composition, applying Ps 89:20 to Abraham, David, then Moses, at Nos. 1, 3 (Abraham), 4 (David), and 5 (Moses). No. 2 is a minor interpolation, hardly spoiling the total effect. No. 5.D is jarring and obviously inserted needlessly. That the purpose of the entire construction was to lead to the climactic citation of Lev 1:1 hardly can be doubted, since the natural chronological (and eschatological) order would have dictated Abraham, Moses, David. That the basic construction, moreover, forms a unity is shown by the careful matching of the stichs of the cited verse in the expositions of how the verse applies to the three heroes. If we had to postulate an "ideal form," it would be simply the juxtaposition of verses, A illustrated by X, B by Y, etc., with little or no extraneous language. But where, in the basic constituents of the construction, we do find explanatory language or secondary development, in the main it is necessary for sense. Accordingly, we see as perfect a construction as we are likely to find: whole, nearly entirely essential, with a minimum of intruded material. To be sure, what really looks to be essential is the notion of God's communicating by two media to the three great heroes. That is the clear point of the most closely corresponding passages of the whole. In that case, the reorganization and vast amplification come as an afterthought, provoked by the construction of a passage serving Lev 1:1. But that is only a guess.

### Conclusion

What have I accomplished? The reader will concur that the broad research program announced in the opening paragraphs has at best signaled a direction, but has hardly reached fruition. The issue to begin with is how we read the text. In my view, we start with a translation that signifies the smallest whole units of thought, on the one side, and explains how these are put together into coherent propositions, on the other. That is what I have done. All further critical work of literary analysis must rest upon the foundation of an original exercise of differentiation, within long columns of undifferentiated type, among sense-units and thought-units. That is what has been accomplished in pursuing the questions I have raised: what is primary and what is secondary? why have materials been arranged as they have? what tells us the framers' basic thesis of formal expression and

redaction? If we can specify what we construe to be the program for the whole, we also can begin to speculate on why matters have been phrased as they have. From that context defined through formal and redactional policies, we may then proceed to content — if any. The problematic of our document — the thing the framers wished to explore, the conception they wished to propound through composing the document as a whole — comes to the fore only through the labor, amply illustrated here, of detailed analysis of literary traits. It is a tedious work, but all who have approached these complex and subtle documents for their own purposes have done the same tedious work, and so must we. I am grateful to those readers who persist in following it, and promise at the end that elusive reward, a few suggestive generalizations.