

“Scriptural Maps” and the Journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan

Thomas B. Dozeman
United Theological Seminary
Dayton, OH

The journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan is a central story in the Tetrateuch, Deuteronomy, and the Deuteronomistic History. It is described in Numbers 20-21, Deuteronomy 1-3, Judges 11, and also recorded in the wilderness itinerary of Numbers 33.^{i[i]} The biblical historians provide exact locations, specific roadways, and carefully placed borders to define the extent of the Israelite march and its relationship to the neighboring ethnic groups, Edom, Moab, and Ammon. And the realism encourages a literal interpretation, which is partially reinforced by historical geography. Kadesh, Arad, Heshbon, Dibon, and the Wadi Arnon are among the firmly fixed sites structuring the travelogue. But, as J. Maxwell Miller has recently demonstrated, the realism blurs upon careful scrutiny, especially when compared to the topography of southern Transjordan. Ar of Moab, Oboth, Iye-abarim are among the sites lacking a clear location.^{ii[iii]} The geographical realism blurs even further in comparing the travel routes and the borders in the different accounts. The Israelites are confronted by a hostile Edomite nation in Numbers 20, prompting their journey around Edom and Moab in Numbers 20-21, while Deuteronomy 1-3 presents a story of hospitality, in which the Israelites journey through the territory of Edom and Moab.

The journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan is a “scriptural map.” Izak Cornelius applies the term to Christian cartographic drawings, which “depict the Holy Land and the rest of the world.” He writes, “[t]hese are called ‘scriptural maps’ because of the specific ideology behind them and the ecclesiastical function of such maps.”^{iii[iiii]} Yet the term applies equally well to biblical narratives like the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan. Such narratives are characterized by travelogue and geographical realism, yielding a representation of territory

not unlike a map. Zacharia Kallai has argued that the use of geography in biblical historiography is a developed literary tradition, serving ideological purposes for the ancient Israelite historians, advancing themes such as covenant, the divine right to land, and ethnic relations.^{iv[iv]} Miller concluded that the different accounts of the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan are prime examples of the ideological use of geography.^{v[v]} The result is that the stories of the Israelite journey from Kadesh do not simply represent the world, they construct the geopolitical terrain of the Transjordan.

The insight that the representation of territory is a blend of history and ideology has played a central role in the historical-critical interpretation of the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan. The ideological use of geography has arisen as one criterion for rejecting the historical claims of biblical narrative. The journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan is not judged to be history from the late Bronze age, but the geopolitical worldview of later anonymous authors. Biblical interpreters have interpreted the modifications in the travel route to reflect the changing relationship between the Israelites and their neighbors in the Transjordan, opening a window on the social world of the authors and their perceptions of reality. And, as a result, the interpretation of geography as political ideology supported the identification of an anonymous Yahwist historian by nineteenth century scholars, working within the framework of the documentary hypothesis. But the same insight has also led to the rejection of a monarchical Yahwist in more recent scholarship. The following study will trace the rise and fall of the Yahwist in the past century of critical biblical interpretation, paying attention to the shifting literary debate and the changing evaluation of geography in Numbers 20-21.

I.
The Rise of a Paradigm
The Yahwist Historian in the Documentary Hypothesis

The recognition that realistic geography was a mixture of history and ideology is a cornerstone of the historical-critical interpretation of Numbers 20-21, as illustrated by Julius Wellhausen. For Wellhausen the historical problem in evaluating the geography of Numbers 20-21 was to determine whether the origin of the literature was in the Mosaic or the monarchical period. His methodology was primarily literary and political, with little attention to historical geography. He concluded that the journey through the East Jordan presupposed established nations, a political reality not yet realized at the time of Moses. And, as a result, the whole structure of the story in Numbers 20-21, with the Israelite journey south to avoid the hostility of their neighbors, was not Mosaic, but Davidic in origin, reflecting political conflicts of a later period.^{vi[vi]}

Wellhausen identified literary contradictions in geography to demonstrate that there were multiple accounts of the journey from Kadesh to the Transjordan in Numbers 20-21. The most glaring tension was the Israelite arrival in Kadesh at the end of their wilderness journey (Num 20:1a), as compared to their early arrival at the same location in the story of the spies (Numbers 13-14). The geographical contradiction provides a criterion for separating the P and J Histories. The P History locates the spy story in the Midbar Paran with the Israelites arriving at Kadesh only at the end of their wilderness journey (Num 20:1a). The P History also includes additions to the Israelite complaint about water (20:2, 3b, 6, 12), the account of Aaron's death (20:22-29), and an itinerary tracing their journey around Edom (21:4, 10-11).^{vii[vii]}

The Kadesh account of the J History is the more foundational story according to Wellhausen.^{viii[viii]} The people arrive at Kadesh early in their wilderness journey and remain there until they set out for the Transjordan. The J History includes the complaint about water (the non-P literature in 20:1-13), the confrontation with Edom (20:14-21), the war with the king

of Arad (21:1-3), the story of the copper snake (21:4-9), the journey sequence through the Transjordan (21:12-20), and the wars with Sihon (21:21-31) and Og of Bashan (21:32-35).^{ix[ix]} Additional tensions in the geography of the J History allow Wellhausen to take the literary analysis one step further, discerning supplements to the J History.^{x[x]} Most notable is the contradiction between Num 21:20 and 21, where v. 20 locates the Israelite army in Sihon's kingdom at Pisgah, while v. 21 indicates the Israelite arrival at his border.^{xi[xi]} The tensions in geography signal that the Yahwist Source is not a unified document, but includes a history of composition, prompting the designation JE at many points in Wellhausen's analysis in spite of his identification of the literature as J.^{xii[xii]}

The conflicting presentations of geography indicate that the P and J Histories do not simply represent, but construct the geopolitical landscape of the Transjordan. The P History presents the terrain of the East Jordan as a tabula rasa, free of any hostility.^{xiii[xiii]} Wellhausen does not anchor the P version of Numbers 20-21 in a social or political setting.^{xiv[xiv]} His focus is rather on the J History. A central presupposition to Wellhausen's hermeneutical perspective is that the geopolitical presentation of the anonymous J historian is a reliable representation of the time in which the history was written. And, as noted above, he concludes that the Israelite journey north, with hostile encounters from their cousins, requires that the East Jordanian nations are firmly established as social and political communities. The political perspective locates the J historian after the reign of David, since the Mosaic period is a time of "ethnic chaos."^{xv[xv]} Wellhausen's hermeneutical presuppositions with regard geography are foundational to the source-critical paradigm, in which a monarchical dating for the Yahwist Source is central to the composition of the Pentateuch/Hexateuch.^{xvi[xvi]}

Wellhausen also established the paradigm for evaluating the inner-biblical relationships between the three versions of the Kadesh account of the journey through the Transjordan, Numbers 20-21, Deuteronomy 1-4, and Judges 11. Again the ideological use of geography plays a central role. He concluded that the J History was not only foundational for the P History, but also for Deuteronomy 1-4 and Judges 11. The direction of the inner-biblical relationships is determined in part by detecting ways in which the J historian's political presentation of geography is obscured by a more schematic representation in Deuteronomy 1-4 and Judges 11.

Deuteronomy 1-4 is a free adaptation of the J History in Numbers 20-21.^{xvii[xvii]} Wellhausen cites two examples of geography, which indicate the author's literary dependence. First, the vague statement in Deut 1:46, the Israelites "dwelt in Kadesh for many days," presupposes the J History, which, for Wellhausen, clearly states that the Israelites dwelt in Kadesh for forty years. And, second, the equally vague statement in Deut 2:1, the Israelites "dwelt in Seir for many days," also presupposes the J History, where the Israelites turn south after the confrontation with Edom.^{xviii[xviii]} The changes in geography also indicate the literary freedom of the author. The detour to Seir allows the author of Deuteronomy 1-4 to eliminate Edom from the story, focusing exclusively on Moab and Ammon, and it also lays the groundwork for emphasizing the death of the first generation thirty-eight years after leaving Kadesh (2:14).^{xix[xix]} Wellhausen is less specific on the literary relationship between Judg 11:12-29 and Numbers 20-21. He concludes that Jephthah's account to the King of Ammon of the Israelite journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan is a late historiographic addition that does not fit in well with a story about child sacrifice.^{xx[xx]} Yet he judges the story to be an interpretation of the J History, even though it does not clearly correspond to the details of Numbers 20-21 (esp. 20:21). No arguments are provided for the literary dependence. The

reason for the differences between the two accounts is that the J History is aimed at the Moabites, while the story of Jephthah addresses conflicts with the Ammonites.

II.

Modifications in the Paradigm

Wellhausen's literary identification of the J History along with his evaluation of geography undergo modification, within the framework of the source-critical paradigm. Interpreters probe the literary tensions in the Israelite journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan, separating an E History from Wellhausen's J History, and also identifying a more complex literary history between Numbers 20-21, Deuteronomy 1-3, and Judges 11. And increasing research in archaeology and comparative literature complicate Wellhausen's political and ideological interpretation of geography. But, neither the analysis of geography, nor the literary debate over Numbers 20-21, change the source-critical paradigm of a monarchical historiography influencing Deuteronomy and Judges.

Hugo Gressmann represents an initial stage in the literary development of Numbers 20-21, and he also introduces a shift in the evaluation of geography. Gressmann follows a trend in interpretation, in which an E version of the encounter with Edom (Num 20:14-18, 21) and the war against Sihon (Num 21:21-24a, 25a, 31) is distinguished from the J History.^{xxi[xxi]} The criteria for differentiating the versions are largely literary and rhetorical. In the confrontation with Edom (Num 20:14-21), for example, the J History focuses on the Israelites in general, recounting an actual war with Edom, while the E History emphasizes Moses and is limited to the threat of war. The identification of a J and an E History was accompanied by debate concerning their extent and the identification of still further sources. But the more complex literary analysis

did not change the paradigm proposed by Wellhausen, in which the non-Priestly travelogue in Numbers 20-21 is foundational for Deuteronomy 1-3 and Judges 11.

Gressmann's evaluation of geography remains a mixture of history and ideology, although, as noted above, the emphasis shifts to the historical. Gressmann builds on the work of Wellhausen, also concluding that the written accounts of the Israelite journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan are ideological, reflecting the circumstances of the authors. It is the Israelite possession of the land between the Wadi Arnon and the Jabbok River during the monarchical period that is the source for the story of the war with Sihon, the Amorite. His defeat at Jahaz is an indirect way of narrating the Israelite defeat of Moab. Here the intention of the author is discernable, and geography is judged to be political ideology from the monarchical period.^{xxii[xxii]}

But Gressmann also departs from Wellhausen, stating that the journey around Edom and Moab is not an invention by monarchical authors, merely reflecting the geopolitics of their age. A purely ideological presentation of the journey would present the Israelites in a better light, tracing their journey through, not around, Edom and Moab. The fact that all the accounts, Numbers 20-21, Judges 11, and even Deuteronomy 1-3 according to Gressmann, trace the Israelite journey south, around Edom, indicates that an historical tradition lies behind the literary accounts, forcing each writer to take note of the odd round-about route of the Israelites to Canaan.^{xxiii[xxiii]} Thus the intention of the biblical historians is more than a representation of their current geopolitical circumstances; they must also account for received tradition, which, for Gressmann, arises from historical circumstances. Gressmann turns to comparative literature and historical geography to probe the more distant geopolitical background of the pre-literary tradition. For example, he cites the Papyri Anastasi as possible evidence for the presence of

Edomites on both sides of the Arabah from the late Bronze age, thus providing historical background to the claim that Kadesh was a border town on the edge of Edomite territory (Num 20:16).^{xxiv[xxiv]} And Gressmann even translates his interpretation of historical geography to a map of the Sinai Peninsula and Palestine, even though he possessed little first hand knowledge of the topography, geography, and geopolitical history of the Transjordan.^{xxv[xxv]}

Martin Noth represents a second stage in the study of Numbers 20-21, the role of geography in interpretation, and the relationship of Numbers 20-21 to Deuteronomy 1-3 and Judges 11. A key factor marking the transition in interpretation was Noth's interest in geography and the geopolitical history of the Transjordan. J. R. Bartlett rightly concludes that Noth "was acutely aware of the need to see the historical traditions in the context of the physical geography of the land."^{xxvi[xxvi]} Noth's increased knowledge of the topography and history of the Transjordan created insights as well as new problems for interpreting the use of geography in biblical historiography.

Noth follows the trend represented by Gressmann in acknowledging doublets in the non-Priestly version of Numbers 20-21. But, unlike Gressmann, Noth concludes that the present form of the text does not allow for a clear distinction between the J and E Histories. Noth often refers to the non-Priestly literary simply as the Old Pentateuchal sources, and he concludes that literary doublets in this material do not probe the core problem of interpretation in Numbers 20-21.^{xxvii[xxvii]} For Noth the central literary problem is the geography of Numbers 20-21; it is clearly ideological and artificial.^{xxviii[xxviii]} Noth agrees with past interpreters that the confrontation between Edom and the Israelites presupposes historical experiences of a later time.^{xxix[xxix]} Noth cites the archaeological work of Nelson Glueck as evidence that the Edomites

maintained a vast system of border fortresses and guard towers in the monarchical period, which reflect the “particular conditions at the time of composition.”^{xxx[xxx]}

But Noth’s increased knowledge of historical geography introduces a new problem. He concludes that the author(s) appear to have only a “vague idea of the geographical relationships involved” in the monarchical period. It is unclear how the Israelites could pass the northern end of the Gulf of Aqabah without coming into conflict with the Edomites. Furthermore, no reason is supplied for the Israelite journey south around Edom, nor is there any intrinsic connection between Kadesh and Edom.^{xxxi[xxxi]} The new problem for Noth was that the discernment of the geopolitical and ideological intention of a later author no longer accounted for the geographical presentation of the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan. Other tradition-historical and literary forces were also at work in the construction of the story.

Noth concluded that the problems in geography are the result of a merging of the wilderness and conquest traditions in the Old Pentateuchal sources, which were independent of each other at an early stage in their formation. The unmotivated journey of the Israelites south around Edom is the means by which the author(s) combine the wilderness story of Kadesh with the conquest story of Sihon in the Transjordan. The journey “was necessary to bridge the geographical gap between the southern wilderness and the land of East Jordan, from which, according to the determinative central Palestinian tradition of the occupation, the Israelites had to pursue their journey into their possession of the arable land.”^{xxxii[xxxii]} The merger of the wilderness and conquest traditions is also evident in the war with Sihon, when the battle at Jahaz is associated unexpectedly with the wilderness (Num 21:24-5).^{xxxiii[xxxiii]}

Noth introduced a whole new problem for interpreting geography in biblical historiography by suggesting that the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan may be no

more than a literary invention to interrelate two independent traditions. And it is this creative literary activity that accounts for the “vagueness” of the geographical representation. Noth’s hypothesis lays the groundwork for undercutting the foundational assumption of the documentary hypothesis that geography provides reliable information on the social and political worldview of an anonymous author.

Noth also represents a change in the literary evaluation of Numbers 20-21. He reverses in places the direction of dependence between the non-Priestly version of Numbers 20-21 and Deuteronomy 1-3. Scholars had long since suspected that the conquest of Og in Num 21:33-35 was dependent on Deut 3:1-3. Already at the turn of the century G. B. Gray concluded that the story of Og in Numbers was an interpolation from Deuteronomy.^{xxxiv[xxxiv]} But Noth identifies more extensive influence of Deuteronomy 1-3 in Numbers 20-21.^{xxxv[xxxv]} The travel sequence in Num 21:10-20 around Edom and Moab does not belong to the Old Pentateuchal sources, according to Noth. It is rather an editorial composition, combining material from the itinerary list in Numbers 33,^{xxxvi[xxxvi]} Deuteronomy 1-3,^{xxxvii[xxxvii]} and locations from the story of Balaam in Numbers 22-24.^{xxxviii[xxxviii]} Noth also detected the influence of Deuteronomy 1-3 in the geographical presentation of the defeat of Sihon. The schematized boundary of Sihon’s kingdom as extending “from the Arnon to the Jabbok” in Num 21:24a originates in deuteronomistic tradition.^{xxxix[xxxix]} The mention of the Ammonites in Num 21:24b lacks motivation in the larger story of Numbers 21:21-31 and is likely an addition from Deut 3:16. And the sending of spies to Jazer in Num 21:32 is also a later addition from Deuteronomy.^{xl[xl]}

The research of Noth on Numbers 20-21 is crucial for subsequent interpreters. He raised fundamental questions about the role of geography in ancient Israelite historiography. Noth also introduced literary innovation in his evaluation of the journey from Kadesh through the

Transjordan, reversing in many places the relationship between Numbers 20-21 and Deuteronomy 1-3. Although Noth continued to work within the framework of the documentary hypothesis, his research laid the foundation for a reevaluation of the traditional view of the J History. Philip J. Budd gives voice to the unresolved problem: “The difficulty with the view that Num 21:10-20 is almost entirely dependent on other passages is that it is inclined to make the tradition of a Transjordanian journey very late indeed.”^{xli[xli]}

III.

The Debate over the Paradigm

It remains for subsequent interpreters to work out the implications of Noth’s insights. The current state of research on the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan divides into two general groups. One group continues to work within the framework of the documentary hypothesis, modifying the dates of composition, but maintaining the priority of Numbers 20-21 to Deuteronomy 1-3 and Judges 11. Others reject the documentary hypothesis all together, often reversing the literary relationship between Numbers 20-21, Deuteronomy 1-3, and Judges 11. Both approaches continue to undergo modification, especially in view of the current explosion of knowledge in the historical geography of the Transjordan.^{xlii[xlii]}

A number of scholars have sought to work out the implications of Noth’s research on Numbers 20-21 within the framework of the documentary hypothesis. Siegfried Mittmann built on Noth’s hypothesis that Num 21:10-20 was a late literary compilation that included deuteronomistic material. He expanded the influence of Deuteronomy in Numbers 20-21 by identifying the historical credo of Deut 26:5-9 as a literary source for the confrontation with Edom in Numbers 20:14-21, a story that Noth attributed to the Old Pentateuchal sources. But, like Noth, Mittmann did not change the paradigm of the documentary hypothesis.^{xliii[xliii]} The

conflict with Sihon remained a foundational story for his complex literary history of Deuteronomy 1-3.^{xliv[xliv]} Volkmar Fritz also followed Noth in assigning Num 21:10-21 to a late compiler, while restricting further the presence of the J History in Numbers 20-21. He eliminates the J History altogether from Numbers 20, and assigns only the conflict with the king of Arad (Num 21:1-3) and the story of the bronze serpent (Num 21:4b-9) to the J History in Numbers 21. The war with Sihon (Num 21:21-31) may be a story within the E History, but the evidence is not clear.^{xlv[xlv]} The framework of the documentary hypothesis remains intact in this research. But the content of the J and E Histories is restricted, while deuteronomistic and even post-deuteronomistic editing become more influential in the formation of Numbers 20-21.

John R. Bartlett illustrates changes in the documentary hypothesis arising from research on the geography of the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan. Early articles by Bartlett in the 1960's and 1970's focus on the conflict with Sihon and Og in Num 21:21-31. He employed tradition-historical methodology to identify the ideological use of geography and to recover pre-monarchical historical geography. Bartlett concludes that the poem about Sihon's conquest of Moab (Num 21:27-30) is Gadite in origin, recounting an Israelite defeat of Moab, not an Amorite victory. The poem provides insight into the Moabite occupation of the Transjordan north of the Wadi Arnon, possibly preserved in the story of Eglon (Judges 3). The poem was part of the liturgical practice at Gilgal and Mizpah of Gilead, before its preservation in the Davidic court in the 10th century B.C.E. The narrative setting of the poem in JE is no later than the 8th century B.C.E., allowing for the change in subject from Israel to Sihon, the Amorite, as the victor.^{xlvi[xlvi]}

The mixture of ideology and historical geography also provides insight into the account of the defeat of Sihon and Og in Num 21:21-35. The present version of the story, in which the

Transjordan is divided between the kingdoms of Og and Sihon, is a late schematization of the territory. Bartlett reviews the work of Glueck, Noth, and J. Simon to conclude that the original separation of the Transjordan was in three parts: the Plain, Gilead, and Bashan.^{xlvii[xlvii]} Sihon's kingdom included the region of the Plain with Heshbon as the capital. The Israelites occupied Gilead, which, in its earliest usage, designated land south of the Jabbok. And Og ruled over Bashan further north. The Ammonite kingdom was firmly established in the 12th-11th centuries B.C.E., providing a western boundary, while the Moabites occupied land south of the Wadi Arnon. The traditions of Sihon and Og have distinct historical roots, which were preserved separately by northern and southern Israelites. The tradition of Sihon, along with the poem, was preserved by northern Israelites. Og was memorialized as one of the Rephaim in southern, Judahite tradition. The combination of the two Amorite kings into a single story likely began in liturgical practice at Gilgal, before its incorporation in the E History (Num 21:21-35) and later in Deuteronomy.^{xlviii[xlviii]} The sequence of dating easily supports the early to mid-monarchical dating of the J and E Histories presupposed in the documentary hypothesis

Bartlett's more recent research is on the Edomites, not the Amorites, prompting a change of focus from Num 21:21-35 to Num 20:14-21, along with a change in methodology. A tradition-historical investigation of oral legends and pre-monarchical geography is replaced by a literary comparison between Num 20:21-31, Num 21:21-23, and Deut 2:1-8, where the focus shifts to the representation of geography in the late monarchical period. Bartlett considers Mittmann's conclusion that Num 20:14, 17-21 derives from Num 21:21-23 and Deut 26:5-9, before attributing Num 20:14-21 to the E History.^{xlix[xlix]} But dating the literature becomes more tentative. And he cautions that the geographical presentation must be qualified by the knowledge that the story is "political and theological propaganda," not "antiquarian research."^[1]

And, furthermore, study of Edomite cities reveals that the “Old Testament historians and prophets had little firsthand knowledge of the topography and cities of Edom.”^{lii[li]}

Yet Bartlett offers a general framework for dating Num 20:14-21 based on the geopolitical history of the Transjordan and a hermeneutical perspective aimed at discerning the author’s intent. The hostility between the Edomites and the Israelites presupposes the revolt of Jehoram reflected in Amos 1:11-12, making the 8th century B.C.E. the earliest possible date for the E History, not the latest as was the case in his earlier study of Num 21:31-35.^{liii[lii]} New insights in historical geography suggest an even later date for the E historian’s account of Num 20:14-21. The kingdom of Edom flourished in the 8th-6th centuries B.C.E., the Kings Highway probably refers to the Assyrian road system, and the border of Edom likely extended west of the Arabah in the 7th century B.C.E.^{liii[liii]} Bartlett concedes that the presence of these motifs in Num 20:14-21 likely points to end of the monarchical period, in the 7th century B.C.E., as the time of composition. In spite of the shifting dates, Bartlett continues to work within the framework of the documentary hypothesis. He judges Deut 2:1-8 to be a later development from Num 20:14-21. Its idealized picture of Edomite hospitality originates in the post-exilic period, far removed from the political conflict reflected in Num 20:14-21.^{liv[liv]}

John Van Seters represents a rejection of the documentary hypothesis as a framework for interpreting the multiple accounts of the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan. His methodology is primarily a literary comparison between Numbers 20-21, Deuteronomy 2-3, and Judges 11, with little attention to historical geography, although the late dating of Heshbon enters his later writings on the topic.^{lv[lv]} Van Seters argues that the non-Priestly version of Numbers 20-21 is a conflation of Deuteronomy 2-3 and Judges 11, and thus the latest version of the journey. He cites multiple instances where the story in Numbers includes motifs from both

Deuteronomy and Judges, creating a conflicting picture of the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan. An example is the negotiations with the king of Edom, in which there is both war (Num 20:20) and the mere threat of war (Num 20:21). The contradiction is the result of conflation from Deut 2:30a, 32, where there is war against the Israelites, and, Judg 11:17, where there is no war. Similar instances of conflation lead Van Seters to conclude that the confrontation with the king of Edom in Num 20:14-21 is a combination of the theology of holy war and land possession from Deuteronomy 2 and the journey around Edom and Moab from Judges 11.^{lvi[lvi]}

The same method is applied to the war with Sihon and Og in Num 21:21-35. One example is the unexpected mention of the Ammonites within the summary of the Amorite territory in Num 21:24-25, “from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the Ammonites.” Van Seters judges this to be a conflation of Judg 11:22, where the issue of the Ammonite border is central, and, Deut 2:34-36, where the capture of the Amorite cities is the point of focus.^{lvii[lvii]} Literary comparison also indicates that the poem in Num 21:27-30 is not ancient tradition, but a late literary borrowing from Jer 48:45-6.^{lviii[lviii]} The literary comparisons give rise to a new paradigm to account for multiple versions of the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan. Deuteronomy 2-3 emerges as the oldest version of the journey, providing the backdrop for the deuteronomistic story in Judges 11. The historian of Numbers 20-21 is the latest writer. Van Seters identifies the author of Numbers 20-21 as the Yahwist, but this historian has nothing to do with the author of the documentary hypothesis. The Yahwist is an exilic historian, whose work is modeled on the emerging genre of Greek historiography, and not the monarchical historian of the documentary hypothesis.

Van Seter's proposal for a new paradigm to account for the literary composition of Numbers 20-21 continues to undergo review. Bartlett sought to maintain the framework of the documentary hypothesis.^{lix[lix]} Philip J. Budd supported the position of Bartlett by suggesting a 7th century B.C.E. JE History.^{lx[lx]} W. A. Sumner proposed a parallel, yet distinct, development of Numbers 20-21 and Deuteronomy 1-3 from a shared source, maintaining the rudiments of the E History in Numbers 20-21.^{lxi[lxi]}

Others favor the rejection of the documentary hypothesis to account for the composition of Numbers 20-21, but depart from Van Seters in attributing the authorship to an exilic Yahwist historian.^{lxii[lxii]} Erhard Blum represents such a counter-proposal. His identification of a D-Komposition (KD) also presupposes the rejection of the documentary hypothesis, and, along with it, the traditional identification of the J History. KD lacks the unity of Van Seters' Yahwist, exhibiting more complex literary relationships to Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History. Thus Blum questions the literary dependence of Numbers 20-21 on Deuteronomy 1-3 and Judges 11 in many instances. And he concludes that the non-Priestly literature in Numbers 20-21 is less unified than Van Seters proposes.^{lxiii[lxiii]} The confrontation with Edom in Num 20:14-21, for example, may be a post-Priestly addition to the text, since it does not fit well with the travel sequence surrounding the Red Sea Road (Num 14:25b and 21:4a), which Blum assigns to KD.^{lxiv[lxiv]} The confrontation with Sihon and Og in Num 21:21-35 is also not a unified text. Num 21:21-25 may be a pre-deuteronomic version of the war with Sihon, while the war with Og in Num 21:33-5 reflects later, deuteronomistic influence.^{lxv[lxv]} Blum concludes that the literary differences are important for illuminating the profile of the D-Komposition. The debate over new literary paradigms is far from reaching a consensus. But there is agreement between Van Seters and Blum in rejecting the J History of the documentary hypothesis.

IV.

Conclusion

The brief overview has illustrated the important role of ideology and geography for identifying the anonymous J historian in Numbers 20-21, and for discerning the literary relationships between the multiple accounts of the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan. The history of interpretation allows for tentative conclusions in two general areas: first, an evaluation of the J History in Numbers 20-21; and, second, an appraisal of the role of geography in ancient Israelite historiography.

First, has the Yahwist historian of the documentary hypothesis departed as an author of Numbers 20-21? Our research indicates that the question must be expanded beyond the Yahwist to include at least an E historian, and that the larger issue is the documentary hypothesis. Does the documentary hypothesis account for the composition Numbers 20-21, and its literary relationship to Deuteronomy 1-3 and Judges 11? New insights in the historical geography and the geopolitical history of the Transjordan raise problems with the classical dating of the J historian to the early monarchical period.^{lxvi}^[lxvii] But can the framework of the hypothesis be retained?

Bartlett provides the strongest argument for maintaining the framework of the documentary hypothesis. But his work also brings to light significant problems. His research on Num 21:21-35 and Num 20:14-21 demonstrates the changing evaluation of geography in Numbers 20-21, and its implications for dating the literature. The insight that the representation of territory is a blend of history and ideology remains central throughout his work. But the confident focus in the early study of Num 21:21-35 on the pre-monarchical geography of the Transjordan is replaced in Num 20:14-21 with a more tentative study of mid- to late monarchical

geopolitics. The implications of this shift in focus for interpreting Num 21:21-35 are not spelled out. But the change in chronology pushes the framework of the documentary hypothesis to such a late time period that one begins to question whether the literary hypothesis is functioning at all. In addition to the problem of dating, the accumulative evidence for significant deuteronomistic editing in the formation of Numbers 20-21 adds further support to the exploration of new literary hypotheses to account for the composition of biblical historiography.

Van Seters' work raises the additional problem of naming anonymous authors after the breakdown of the documentary hypothesis. The naming of anonymous authors is significant for reaching broad consensus among interpreters. The Yahwist of Van Seters has nothing to do with the Yahwist of the documentary hypothesis. Yet his absence in the present volume indicates the power of naming. Conversely, one suspects that the accumulative use of the J and E historians for more than a century of research is one reason for their retention by contemporary interpreters, even though many recognize problems with the classical formulation of the documentary hypothesis. A challenge facing those who would propose a new literary hypothesis is to reach a working consensus with regard to the identity of the anonymous authors. They must be named, and their names must be broad enough to embrace distinctive emerging hypotheses.

Second, the overview indicates the important role of geography for interpreting ancient Israelite historiography. The new literary paradigms bring into sharper focus problems surrounding the ideological and historical evaluation of geography in Numbers 20-21, which were already implicit in the work of Noth. The documentary hypothesis was based in part on the assumption that modern interpreters could discern the specific geopolitical worldview of anonymous authors. The Yahwist historian was identified in the travelogue from Kadesh through the Transjordan because of the reconstruction of the geopolitics of the monarchy period.

But Noth's increased knowledge of the geopolitical history made the representation "vague," raising the possibility that Numbers 20-21 was not geopolitical commentary at all, but a literary creation. Bartlett echoed the same concern, even though he continued to date the literature by discerning the geopolitical worldview of the author.

Van Seters' hypothesis, that Numbers 20-21 is the result of literary conflation from Deuteronomy 1-3 and Judges 11, moves the text even further from geopolitical realities, since the presentation of geography also becomes a conflation of tradition. J. Maxwell Miller has begun to explore the implications of this insight. After comparing the different accounts of the journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan, he cautions against using biblical literature to deal with problems of toponymy in the Transjordan.^{lxxvii[lxxvii]} Miller judged the geographical presentations in Deuteronomy 2 and Judges 11 to be loose and misleading, while Numbers 20-21 is "incomprehensible in terms of the geographical realities of southern Transjordan."^{lxxviii[lxxviii]} And, as a result, Miller doubts that biblical writers were familiar with Moabite geography, especially south of the Arnon. And, even where precise information is provided, it has become "garbled as a result of the blending of traditions and redactional activity."^{lxxix[lxxix]} The conclusions of Miller call for a thorough, systematic, and comparative evaluation of the function of geography in ancient historiography.^{lxxx[lxxx]} His research brings us back to the insight of Izak Cornelius. The stories of the Israelite journey from Kadesh are "scriptural maps." They do not represent the world, they construct the geopolitical terrain of the Transjordan in light of tradition and the ideological concerns of the authors.

^{i[i]} Numbers 33 will remain outside the scope of the present study. The parallels between Numbers 33 and the geographical notices in Numbers 20-21 suggest some form of literary relationship, although the direction is debated. M. Noth, *Der Wallfahrtsweg zum Sinai*, PJ 36 (1940) 5-28, argued that Numbers 33 was a late compilation of locations from Exodus and Numbers; while F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, 1973, 308-9; and G. I. Davies, *The Way of the Wilderness: A Geographical Study of the Wilderness Itineraries in the Old Testament*, SOTSMS 5, 1979, reverse the relationship. But neither position bears directly on the problem of a monarchical J History in Numbers 20-21, or, for that matter, the relationship of Numbers 20-21 and Deuteronomy 1-3. See the recent studies by Z. Kallai, *The Wandering-Traditions from Kadesh-Barnea to Canaan: A Study in Biblical Historiography*, *The Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982), 175-84 esp. 181-4; and J. M. Miller, *The Israelite Journey Through (Around) Moab and Moabite Toponymy*, JBL 108 (1989), 580-2. for discussion of one possible relationship between all three texts.

ⁱⁱ[iii] Miller, *The Israelite Journey Through (Around) Moab and Moabite Toponymy*, 577-95; see now the detailed study of B. MacDonald, "East of the Jordan:" Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures, *ASOR* 6, 2000.

ⁱⁱⁱ[iii] See I. Cornelius, How Maps "Lie"—Some Remarks on the Ideology of Ancient Near Eastern and "Scriptural" Maps, *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 24 (1998), 217-30.

^{iv}[iv] The extensive writing of Z. Kallai is collected in the volume, *Biblical Historiography and Historical Geography: Collection of Studies*, *Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des Antiken Judentums* 44; 1998. See, in particular, *Territorial Patterns*, *Biblical Historiography and Scribal Tradition—A Programmatic Survey*, 157-164; *The Wandering-Traditions from Kadesh-Barnea to Canaan: A Study in Biblical Historiography*, 186-201; and *The Reality of the Land and the Bible*, 186-201.

^v[v] Miller, *The Israelite Journey Through (Around) Moab and Moabite Toponymy*, 588-90.

^{vi}[vi] J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der Historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, 1889, 345.

^{vii}[vii] Wellhausen, *Composition*, 109-10. For a recent summary of interpretation of the P literature see P. J. Budd, *Numbers*, *WBC* 5, 1984, 215-47.

^{viii}[viii] Wellhausen, *Composition*, 110, speculates that Kadesh may have functioned as the original site for the revelation of divine law, thus preceding Mount Sinai. The original travel sequence, therefore, may have progressed directly to Kadesh from the Red Sea. He points to Exodus 17 and Judges 11 as stories that may retain a memory of the original role of Kadesh..

^{ix}[ix] Wellhausen, *Composition*, 109-10.

^x[x] Wellhausen, *Composition*, 109-11, also judges Num 21:1-3 and 32-35 to be later additions or supplements to the J History.

^{xi}[xi] Wellhausen, *Composition*, 111.

^{xii}[xii] As a result Wellhausen also uses the symbol JE in reference to the non-P History in Numbers 20-21.

xiii[xiii] Wellhausen, Composition, 110.

xiv[xiv] See Wellhausen's discussion of the historical context of the P Source in Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel, trans. Menzies and Black from the 1883 reprint; 1957, 354-6 et passim.

xv[xv] Wellhausen, Composition, 344-5.

xvi[xvi] Wellhausen, Composition, 109-10; 341-46.

xvii[xvii] Wellhausen, Composition, 195-201, identifies three levels of composition in the book of Deuteronomy: (1) the law (chaps. 12-26); (2) two independent editions of the law (1-4; 12-26; 27; and 5-11; 12-26; 28-30); and (3) the combination of the two editions into the present book (the addition of chap. 31). Deuteronomy 1-4 provides a more historiographical setting, intended to recapitulate and replace Deuteronomy 5-11 (pp. 195, 199).

xviii[xviii] Wellhausen, Composition, 200-1.

xix[xix] Wellhausen, Composition, 200-1.

xx[xx] Wellhausen, Composition, 228-9.

xxi[xxi] H. Gressmann, Moses und seine Zeit: Ein Kommentar zu den Mose-Sagen, FRLANT 1, 1913, 300-10. The war against Sihon also separates between J (Num 21:25b, 32, 27-30) and E (Num 21:21-24a, 25a, 31). Gressmann is not innovative in this conclusion, but is following an established trend. See, for example, B. Baentsh, Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri, HKAT 2, 1903, 571-89.

xxii[xxii] Gressmann, Moses und seine Zeit, 302.

xxiii[xxiii] Gressmann, Moses und seine Zeit, 303.

xxiv[xxiv] Gressmann, Moses und seine Zeit, 302 n. 2. Compare E. Meyer, Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme, 1906, 337.

xxv[xxv] Gressmann, Moses und seine Zeit, inside the back cover.

xxvi[xxvi] R. R. Bartlett, Sihon and Og, Kings of the Amorites, VT 20 (1970), 257.

xxvii[xxvii] M. Noth, Num. 21 als Glied der "Hexateuch"-Erzählung, ZAW 58 (1940), 161-89; and Numbers: A Commentary, OLT, trans. by J. D. Martin, 1968, 148-66.

xxviii[xxviii] M. Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, trans. B. W. Anderson, 1981, 206. By "artificial," Noth means that the story of the conflict with Edom (Num 20:14-21) could not have functioned as an independent tradition. Its sole purpose is to link the wilderness and conquest themes in the literary formation of the Pentateuch. See also Num. 21 als Glied der "Hexateuch"-Erzählung, 181; and Numbers, 150-1.

xxix[xxix] Noth, Numbers, 150.

xxx[xxx] Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, 206-7 n. 562. See N. Glueck, Explorations in Eastern Palestine II, AASOR 15, 1935. See further M. Noth, Israelitische Stämme zwischen Ammon und Moab, ZAW 60 (1944), 11-57.

xxxi[xxxi] Noth, Numbers, 151-2.

xxxii[xxxii] Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, 206.

xxxiii[xxxiii] Noth, Num. 21 als Glied der "Hexateuch"-Erzählung, 164.

xxxiv[xxxiv] G. B. Gray, Numbers, ICC, 1903, 306. See already Wellhausen, Composition, 111, who describes Num 21:32-35 as "einen späteren Anhang an J."

xxxv[xxxv] Noth, Num. 21 als Glied der "Hexateuch"-Erzählung, 170-8; Numbers, 158-60.

xxxvi[xxxvi] E.g., Oboth and Iye-abarim in Num 33:43b-44 = Num 21:10-11.

xxxvii[xxxvii] E.g., Wadi Zered in Deut 2:13 = Num 21:12; and the land of Moab at Beth-peor in Deut 3:29; 34:6.

xxxviii[xxxviii] E.g., Bamoth in Num 22:41; 23:14, 28 = Num 20:20.

xxxix[xxxix] M. Noth, Das Land Gilead als Siedlungsgebiet israelitischer Sippen, PJB 37 (1941) 50-3.

xl[xl] Noth, Numbers, 165-6, 236-7.

xli[xli] Budd, Numbers, 238.

^{xlii[xlii]} Recent summaries of the material culture and historical geography of the Transjordan and the Cisjordan include J. F. A. Sawyer and D. J. A. Clines (eds.), *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia*, SJOTSS 24, 1983; J. R. Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, JSOTSS 77, 1989; E. Stern (Hg.), *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Volumes 1-4*, 1993; and D. Vikander Edelman (Hg.), *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*, SBL and ASOR Archaeology and Biblical Series 3, 1995; E. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732-332 B. C. E.)*, The Anchor Bible Reference Library, 2001; and MacDonald, "East of the Jordan:" Territories and sites of the Hebrew Scriptures.

^{xliii[xliii]} S. Mittmann, *Num 20:14-21: eine redaktionelle Kompilation*, in: H. Gese (Hg.), *Wort und Geschichte*, FS K. Elliger, AOAT 18, 1973, 143-9; and *Deuteronomium 1,1-6,3: literarkritisch und traditionsgeschichtlich untersucht*, BZAW139, 1975, 71-9.

^{xliv[xliv]} See M. Weippert, *The Israelite "Conquest" and the Evidence from Transjordan*, in: F. M. Cross (Hgs.), *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900-1975)*, 1979, 15-34, for discussion of the implications of Mittmann's literary study for evaluating the geopolitical history of the Transjordan

^{xliv[xlv]} V. Fritz, *Israel in der Wüste: traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der Wüstenüberlieferung des Jahwisten*, MTS 7, 1970,26-33.

^{xlvi[xlvi]} J. R. Bartlett, *The Historical Reference of Numbers XXI.27-30*, PEQ 101 (1969), 94-100.

^{xlvi[xlvii]} N. Glueck, *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, 1967, 449; Noth, *Israelitische Stämme zwischen Ammon and Moab*, 11, 37; and J. Simon, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament*, 1959, 120.

^{xlvi[xlviii]} Bartlett, *Sihon and Og, Kings of the Amorites*, 257-77.

^{xlix[xlix]} Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*. 90-93, 180-1.

^[1] Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*. 93.

^{li}[^{li}] Bartlett, Edom and the Edomites. 53.

^{lii}[^{lii}] Bartlett, Edom and the Edomites. 85, 91, 126; and Edom in the Nonprophetical Corpus, in: D. Vikander Edelman (Hg.), You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition, Archaeology and Biblical Studies 3, 1995, 17-18

^{liii}[^{liii}] Bartlett, Edom and the Edomites. 38, 90-93.

^{liv}[^{liv}] Bartlett, Edom and the Edomites. 90-93, 180-1; and Edom in the Nonprophetical Corpus, 18, 20-1.

^{lv}[^{lv}] J. Van Seters, The Conquest of Sihon's Kingdom: A Literary Examination, JBL 91 (1972), 182-97; Once Again—The Conquest of Sihon's Kingdom, SBL 99 (1980), 117-24; and The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers, 1994, 383-404.

^{lvi}[^{lvi}] Van Seters, The Life of Moses, 386-93.

^{lvii}[^{lvii}] See Van Seters, The Conquest of Sihon's Kingdom, 183-92; The Life of Moses, 393-8, for additional examples of conflation.

^{lviii}[^{lviii}] Van Seters, The Conquest of Sihon's Kingdom, 192-5; The Life of Moses, 398-404.

^{lix}[^{lix}] Bartlett, The Conquest of Sihon's Kingdom: A Literary Re-Examination, JBL 97 (1978), 347-51

^{lx}[^{lx}] Budd, Numbers, 223.

^{lxi}[^{lxi}] W. A. Sumner, Israel's Encounters with Edom, Moab, Ammon, Sihon, and Og According to the Deuteronomist, VT 18 (1968), 216-28.

^{lxii}[^{lxii}] See K.A. D. Smelik, Een vuur gaat uit van Chesbon, Amsterdamse Cahiers 5 (1984), 61-109, (English summary, 181-83); and possibly G. I. Davies, The Wilderness Itineraries and the Composition of the Pentateuch, VT 33 (1983), 1-13,

^{lxiii}[^{lxiii}] E. Blum, Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch, BZAW 189, 1990, 117-30.

^{lxiv}[^{lxiv}] Blum, Studien, 118-9.

^{lxv}[^{lxv}] Blum, Studien, 127-30.

^{lxvi}[^{lxvi}] See n. 42.

lxvii[lxvii] Miller, The Israelite Journey through Moab, 588.

lxviii[lxviii] Miller, The Israelite Journey through Moab, 582-7.

lxix[lxix] Miller, The Israelite Journey through Moab, 588.

lxx[lxx] See the work of Kallai, n. 4.