

NUMBERS

B'MIDBAR

1 On the first day of the second month, in the second year following the exodus from the land of Egypt, the Eternal One spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, saying:

²Take a census of the whole Israelite community company [of fighters] ^[1] by the clans of its ancestral houses ^[2], listing the names, every male, head by head. ³You and Aaron shall record them by their groups, from the age of twenty years up, all those in Israel who are able to bear arms.

⁴Associated with you shall be a man from representative of each tribe, ^[3] each one the head of his ancestral house.

⁵These are the names of the men representatives ^[4] who shall assist you:

From Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur.

⁶From Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.

⁷From Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab.

⁸From Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar.

⁹From Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon.

¹⁰From the sons of Joseph:

from Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud;

from Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

¹¹From Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideon.

¹²From Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.

¹³From Asher, Pagiel son of Ochran.

¹⁴From Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel.

¹⁵From Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan.

¹⁶Those are the elected of the assembly, the chieftains of their ancestral tribes: they are the heads of the contingents of Israel ^[5].

¹⁷So Moses and Aaron took those men representatives ^[6], who were designated by name, ¹⁸and on the first day of the second month they convoked the whole community company [of fighters], who were registered by the clans of their ancestral houses—the names of those aged twenty years and over being listed head by head. ¹⁹As the Eternal had commanded Moses, so he recorded them in the wilderness of Sinai.

²⁰They totaled as follows:

The descendants of Reuben, Israel's first-born, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, head by head, all males aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—²¹those enrolled from the tribe of Reuben: 46,500.

²²Of the descendants of Simeon, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, their enrollment as listed by name, head by head, all males aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—²³those enrolled from the tribe of Simeon: 59,300.

²⁴Of the descendants of Gad, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, aged twenty years

and over, all who were able to bear arms—²⁵those enrolled from the tribe of Gad: 45,650.

²⁶Of the descendants of Judah, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—²⁷those enrolled from the tribe of Judah: 74,600.

²⁸Of the descendants of Issachar, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—²⁹those enrolled from the tribe of Issachar: 54,400.

³⁰Of the descendants of Zebulun, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—³¹those enrolled from the tribe of Zebulun: 57,400.

³²Of the descendants of Joseph:

Of the descendants of Ephraim, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—³³those enrolled from the tribe of Ephraim: 40,500.

³⁴Of the descendants of Manasseh, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—³⁵those enrolled from the tribe of Manasseh: 32,200.

³⁶Of the descendants of Benjamin, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—³⁷those enrolled from the tribe of Benjamin: 35,400.

³⁸Of the descendants of Dan, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—³⁹those enrolled from the tribe of Dan: 62,700.

⁴⁰Of the descendants of Asher, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house, as listed by name, aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—⁴¹those enrolled from the tribe of Asher: 41,500.

⁴²[Of] the descendants of Naphtali, the registration of the clans of their ancestral house as listed by name, aged twenty years and over, all who were able to bear arms—⁴³those enrolled from the tribe of Naphtali: 53,400.

⁴⁴Those are the enrollments recorded by Moses and Aaron and by the chieftains of Israel, who were twelve in number, ^[7] one man to representative of each ancestral house. ^[8]

⁴⁵All the Israelites males ^[9], aged twenty years and over, enrolled by ancestral houses, all those in Israel who were able to bear arms—⁴⁶all who were enrolled came to 603,550.

⁴⁷The Levites ^[10], however, were not recorded among them by their ancestral tribe. ⁴⁸For the Eternal had spoken to Moses, saying: ⁴⁹Do not on any account enroll the tribe of Levi or take a census of them with the Israelites. ⁵⁰You shall put the Levites in charge of the Tabernacle of the Pact, all its furnishings, and everything that pertains to it: they shall carry the Tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall tend it; and they shall camp around the Tabernacle. ⁵¹When the Tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down, and when

the Tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up; any outsider who encroaches shall be put to death. ⁵²The Israelites shall encamp troop by troop, each man with his division and each under his standard. ¹¹¹ ⁵³The Levites, however, shall camp around the Tabernacle of the Pact, that wrath may not strike the Israelite community; ¹² the Levites shall stand guard around the Tabernacle of the Pact.

⁵⁴The Israelites did accordingly; just as the Eternal had commanded Moses, so they did.

2The Eternal One spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ²The Israelites shall camp each man with his standard, ¹³ under the banners of their ancestral house; they shall camp around the Tent of Meeting at a distance.

³Camped on the front, or east side: the standard of the division of Judah, troop by troop.

Chieftain of the Judites: Nahshon son of Amminadab.

⁴His troop, as enrolled: 74,600.

⁵Camping next to it:

The tribe of Issachar.

Chieftain of the Issacharites: Nethanel son of Zuar.

⁶His troop, as enrolled: 54,400.

⁷The tribe of Zebulun.

Chieftain of the Zebulunites: Eliab son of Helon.

⁸His troop, as enrolled: 57,400.

⁹The total enrolled in the division of Judah: 186,400, for all troops. These shall march first.

¹⁰On the south: the standard of the division of Reuben, troop by troop.

Chieftain of the Reubenites: Elizur son of Shedeur. ¹¹His troop, as enrolled: 46,500.

¹²Camping next to it:

The tribe of Simeon.

Chieftain of the Simeonites: Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.

¹³His troop, as enrolled: 59,300.

¹⁴And the tribe of Gad.

Chieftain of the Gadites: Eliasaph son of Reuel.

¹⁵His troop, as enrolled: 45,650.

¹⁶The total enrolled in the division of Reuben: 151,450, for all troops. These shall march second.

¹⁷Then, midway between the divisions, the Tent of Meeting, the division of the Levites, shall move. As they camp, so they shall march, each in position, by their standards.

¹⁸On the west: the standard of the division of Ephraim, troop by troop.

Chieftain of the Ephraimites: Elishama son of Ammihud.

¹⁹His troop, as enrolled: 40,500.

²⁰Next to it:

The tribe of Manasseh.

Chieftain of the Manassites: Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. ²¹His troop, as enrolled: 32,200.

²²And the tribe of Benjamin.

Chieftain of the Benjaminites: Abidan son of Gideon. ²³His troop, as enrolled: 35,400.

²⁴The total enrolled in the division of Ephraim: 108,100 for all troops. These shall march third.

²⁵On the north: the standard of the division of Dan, troop by troop.

Chieftain of the Danites: Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.

²⁶His troop, as enrolled: 62,700.

²⁷Camping next to it:

The tribe of Asher.

Chieftain of the Asherites: Pagiel son of Ochran.

²⁸His troop, as enrolled: 41,500.

²⁹And the tribe of Naphtali.

Chieftain of the Naphtalites: Ahira son of Enan.

³⁰His troop, as enrolled: 53,400.

³¹The total enrolled in the division of Dan: 157,600. These shall march last, by their standards.

³²Those are the enrollments of the Israelites by ancestral houses. The total enrolled in the divisions, for all troops: 603,550. ³³The Levites, however, were not recorded among the Israelites, as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

³⁴The Israelites did accordingly; just as the Eternal had commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they marched, each man with his clan according to his ancestral house. ¹⁴

3This is the line of Aaron and Moses at the time that the Eternal spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. ²These were the names of Aaron's sons: Nadab, the first-born, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar; ³those were the names of Aaron's sons, the anointed priests who were ordained for priesthood. ⁴But Nadab and Abihu died by the will of the Eternal, when they offered alien fire before the Eternal in the wilderness of Sinai; and they left no sons. So it was Eleazar and Ithamar who served as priests in the lifetime of their father Aaron.

⁵The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ⁶Advance the tribe of Levi and place ~~them~~ ¹⁵ them in attendance upon Aaron the priest to serve him. ⁷They shall perform duties for him and for the whole community ¹⁶ before the Tent of Meeting, doing the work of the Tabernacle. ⁸They shall take charge of all the furnishings of the Tent of Meeting—a duty on behalf of the Israelites—doing the work of the Tabernacle. ⁹You shall assign the Levites to Aaron and to his sons: they are formally assigned to him from among the Israelites. ¹⁰You shall make Aaron and his sons responsible for observing their priestly duties; and any outsider who encroaches shall be put to death.

¹¹The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ¹²I hereby take the Levites from among the Israelites in place of all the male first-born^[17], the first issue of the womb among the Israelites: the Levites shall be Mine. ¹³For every male first-born is Mine: at the time that I smote every [male] first-born^[18] in the land of Egypt, I consecrated every male first-born in Israel, human and beast, to Myself, to be Mine, the Eternal's.

¹⁴The Eternal One spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying: ¹⁵Record the Levites descendants of Levi^[19] by ancestral house and by clan; record every male among them from the age of one month up. ¹⁶So Moses recorded them at the command of the Eternal, as he was bidden. ¹⁷These were the sons of Levi by name: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹⁸These were the names of the sons of Gershon by clan: Libni and Shimei. ¹⁹The sons of Kohath by clan: Amram and Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. ²⁰The sons of Merari by clan: Mahli and Mushi.

These were the clans of the Levites within their ancestral houses:

²¹To Gershon belonged the clan of the Libnites and the clan of the Shimeites; those were the clans of the Gershonites. ²²The recorded entries of all their males from the age of one month up, as recorded, came to 7,500. ²³The clans of the Gershonites were to camp behind the Tabernacle, to the west. ²⁴The chieftain of the ancestral house of the Gershonites was Eliasaph son of Lael. ²⁵The duties of the Gershonites in the Tent of Meeting comprised: the tabernacle, the tent, its covering, and the screen for the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; ²⁶the hangings of the enclosure, the screen for the entrance of the enclosure which surrounds the Tabernacle, the cords thereof, and the altar—all the service connected with these.

²⁷To Kohath belonged the clan of the Amramites, the clan of the Izharites, the clan of the Hebronites, and the clan of the Uzzielites; those were the clans of the Kohathites. ²⁸All the listed males from the age of one month up came to 8,600, attending to the duties of the sanctuary. ²⁹The clans of the Kohathites were to camp along the south side of the Tabernacle. ³⁰The chieftain of the ancestral house of the Kohathite clans was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. ³¹Their duties comprised: the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the sacred utensils that were used with them, and the screen—all the service connected with these. ³²The head chieftain of the Levites was Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, in charge of those attending to the duties of the sanctuary.

³³To Merari belonged the clan of the Mahlites and the clan of the Mushites; those were the clans of Merari. ³⁴The recorded entries of all their males from the age of one month up came to 6,200. ³⁵The chieftain of the ancestral house of the clans of Merari was Zuriel son of Abihail. They were to camp along the north side of the Tabernacle. ³⁶The assigned duties of the Merarites comprised: the planks of the Tabernacle, its bars, posts, and sockets, and all its furnishings—all the

service connected with these; ³⁷also the posts around the enclosure and their sockets, pegs, and cords.

³⁸Those who were to camp before the Tabernacle, in front—before the Tent of Meeting, on the east—were Moses and Aaron and his sons, attending to the duties of the sanctuary, as a duty on behalf of the Israelites; and any outsider who encroached was to be put to death. ³⁹All the Levites who were recorded, whom at the Eternal's command Moses and Aaron recorded by their clans, all the males from the age of one month up, came to 22,000.

⁴⁰The Eternal One said to Moses: Record every first-born male of the Israelite people from the age of one month up, and make a list of their names; ⁴¹and take the Levites for Me, the Eternal, in place of every male first-born among the Israelite people, and the cattle of the Levites in place of every male first-born among the cattle of the Israelites. ⁴²So Moses recorded all the male first-born among the Israelites, as the Eternal had commanded him. ⁴³All the first-born males as listed by name, recorded from the age of one month up, came to 22,273.

⁴⁴The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ⁴⁵Take the Levites in place of all the male first-born among the Israelite people, and the cattle of the Levites in place of their cattle; and the Levites shall be Mine, the Eternal's. ⁴⁶And as the redemption price of the 273 Israelite male first-born over and above the number of the Levites, ⁴⁷take five shekels per head—take this by the sanctuary weight, twenty *gerahs* to the shekel—⁴⁸and give the money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price for those who are in excess. ⁴⁹So Moses took the redemption money from those over and above the ones redeemed by the Levites; ⁵⁰he took the money from the male first-born of the Israelites, 1,365 sanctuary shekels. ⁵¹And Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons at the Eternal's bidding, as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

4The Eternal One spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:

²Take a [separate] census of the Kohathites among the Levites^[20], by the clans of their ancestral house, ³from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who are subject to service, to perform tasks for the Tent of Meeting. ⁴This is the responsibility of the Kohathites in the Tent of Meeting: the most sacred objects.

⁵At the breaking of camp, Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the screening curtain and cover the Ark of the Pact with it. ⁶They shall lay a covering of dolphin skin over it and spread a cloth of pure blue on top; and they shall put its poles in place.

⁷Over the table of display they shall spread a blue cloth; they shall place upon it the bowls, the ladles, the jars, and the libation jugs; and the regular bread shall rest upon it. ⁸They shall spread over these a crimson cloth which they shall cover

with a covering of dolphin skin; and they shall put the poles in place.

⁹Then they shall take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand for lighting, with its lamps, its tongs, and its fire pans, as well as all the oil vessels that are used in its service.

¹⁰They shall put it and all its furnishings into a covering of dolphin skin, which they shall then place on a carrying frame.

¹¹Next they shall spread a blue cloth over the altar of gold and cover it with a covering of dolphin skin; and they shall put its poles in place. ¹²They shall take all the service vessels with which the service in the sanctuary is performed, put them into a blue cloth and cover them with a covering of dolphin skin, which they shall then place on a carrying frame.

¹³They shall remove the ashes from the [copper] altar and spread a purple cloth over it. ¹⁴Upon it they shall place all the vessels that are used in its service: the fire pans, the flesh hooks, the scrapers, and the basins—all the vessels of the altar—and over it they shall spread a covering of dolphin skin; and they shall put its poles in place.

¹⁵When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sacred objects and all the furnishings of the sacred objects at the breaking of camp, only then shall the Kohathites come and lift them, so that they do not come in contact with the sacred objects and die. These things in the Tent of Meeting shall be the portorage of the Kohathites.

¹⁶Responsibility shall rest with Eleazar son of Aaron the priest for the lighting oil, the aromatic incense, the regular meal offering, and the anointing oil—responsibility for the whole Tabernacle and for everything consecrated that is in it or in its vessels.

¹⁷The Eternal One spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ¹⁸Do not let the group of Kohathite clans be cut off from the Levites. ¹⁹Do this with them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most sacred objects: let Aaron and his sons go in and assign each of them to his duties and to his portorage. ²⁰But let not [the Kohathites] go inside and witness the dismantling of the sanctuary, lest they die.

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²¹The Eternal One spoke to Moses: ²²Take a census of the Gershonites also, by their ancestral house and by their clans. ²³Record them from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who are subject to service in the performance of tasks for the Tent of Meeting. ²⁴These are the duties of the Gershonite clans as to labor and portorage: ²⁵they shall carry the cloths of the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting with its covering, the covering of dolphin skin that is on top of it, and the screen for the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; ²⁶the hangings of the enclosure, the screen at the entrance of the gate of the enclosure that surrounds the Tabernacle, the cords thereof, and the altar, and all their service equipment and all

their accessories; and they shall perform the service. ²⁷All the duties of the Gershonites, all their portorage and all their service, shall be performed on orders from Aaron and his sons; you shall make them responsible for attending to all their portorage. ²⁸Those are the duties of the Gershonite clans for the Tent of Meeting; they shall attend to them under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

²⁹As for the Merarites, you shall record them by the clans of their ancestral house; ³⁰you shall record them from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who are subject to service in the performance of the duties for the Tent of Meeting. ³¹These are their portorage tasks in connection with their various duties for the Tent of Meeting: the planks, the bars, the posts, and the sockets of the Tabernacle; ³²the posts around the enclosure and their sockets, pegs, and cords—all these furnishings and their service: you shall list by name the objects that are their portorage tasks. ³³Those are the duties of the Merarite clans, pertaining to their various duties in the Tent of Meeting under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

³⁴So Moses, Aaron, and the chieftains of the community [21] recorded the Kohathites by the clans of their ancestral house, ³⁵from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who were subject to service for work relating to the Tent of Meeting. ³⁶Those recorded by their clans came to 2,750. ³⁷That was the enrollment of the Kohathite clans, all those who performed duties relating to the Tent of Meeting, whom Moses and Aaron recorded at the command of the Eternal through Moses.

³⁸The Gershonites who were recorded by the clans of their ancestral house, ³⁹from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who were subject to service for work relating to the Tent of Meeting—⁴⁰those recorded by the clans of their ancestral house came to 2,630. ⁴¹That was the enrollment of the Gershonite clans, all those performing duties relating to the Tent of Meeting whom Moses and Aaron recorded at the command of the Eternal.

⁴²The enrollment of the Merarite clans by the clans of their ancestral house, ⁴³from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who were subject to service for work relating to the Tent of Meeting—⁴⁴those recorded by their clans came to 3,200. ⁴⁵That was the enrollment of the Merarite clans which Moses and Aaron recorded at the command of the Eternal through Moses.

⁴⁶All the Levites whom Moses, Aaron, and the chieftains of Israel recorded by the clans of their ancestral houses, ⁴⁷from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who were subject to duties of service and portorage relating to the Tent of Meeting—⁴⁸those recorded came to 8,580. ⁴⁹Each one was given responsibility for his service and portorage at the command of the Eternal through Moses, and each was recorded as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

5The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: 2Instruct the Israelites to remove from camp anyone with an eruption or a discharge and anyone defiled by a corpse. 3Remove male and female alike; put them outside the camp so that they do not defile the camp of those in whose midst I dwell.

4The Israelites did so, putting them outside the camp; as the Eternal had spoken to Moses, so the Israelites did.

5[22]The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: 6Speak to the Israelites: When ~~a man~~men or ~~woman~~women individually commits any wrong toward a fellow ~~man~~human being, [23] thus breaking faith with the Eternal, and ~~that person~~they realizes ~~his~~their guilt, 7~~he~~they shall confess the wrong that ~~he~~has~~they have~~ done. ~~He~~They shall make restitution in the principal amount and add one-fifth to it, giving it to ~~him~~the one who ~~he~~was wronged. [24] 8If ~~the man~~that party [is deceased and] has no kins~~man~~man [25] to whom restitution can be made, the amount repaid shall go to the Eternal for the priest—in addition to the ram of expiation with which expiation is made on ~~his~~their behalf. 9So, too, any gift among the sacred donations that the Israelites offer shall be the priest's. 10And each shall retain his sacred donations: each priest shall keep what is given to him.

11The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: 12Speak to the Israelite people and say to them:

[26]If any ~~man's~~wife has gone astray and broken faith with ~~him~~her husband, 13in that a man [27] has had carnal relations with her unbeknown to her husband, and she keeps secret the fact that she has defiled herself without being forced, and there is no witness against her—14but a fit of jealousy comes over him and he is wrought up about the wife who has defiled herself; or if a fit of jealousy comes over one and he is wrought up about his wife although she has not defiled herself—15the ~~man~~husband shall bring his wife to the priest. And he shall bring as an offering for her one-tenth of an *ephah* of barley flour. No oil shall be poured upon it and no frankincense shall be laid on it, for it is a meal offering of jealousy, a meal offering of remembrance which recalls wrongdoing.

16The priest shall bring her forward and have her stand before the Eternal. 17The priest shall take sacral water in an earthen vessel and, taking some of the earth that is on the floor of the Tabernacle, the priest shall put it into the water. 18After he has made the ~~woman~~wife stand before the Eternal, the priest shall bare the ~~woman~~wife's head and place upon her hands the meal offering of remembrance, which is a meal offering of jealousy. And in the priest's hands shall be the water of bitterness that induces the spell. 19The priest shall adjure the ~~woman~~wife, saying to her, "If no ~~man~~other party [28] has lain with you, if you have not gone astray in defilement while married to your husband, be immune to harm from this water of bitterness that induces the spell. 20But if you have gone astray while married to your husband and have

defiled yourself, if a man [29] other than your husband has had carnal relations with you"—21here the priest shall administer the curse of adjuration to the ~~woman~~wife, as the priest goes on to say to the ~~woman~~wife—"may the Eternal make you a curse and an imprecation among your people, as the Eternal causes your thigh to sag and your belly to distend; 22may this water that induces the spell enter your body, causing the belly to distend and the thigh to sag." And the ~~woman~~wife shall say, "Amen, amen!"

23The priest shall put these curses down in writing and rub it off into the water of bitterness. 24He is to make the ~~woman~~wife drink the water of bitterness that induces the spell, so that the spell-inducing water may enter into her to bring on bitterness. 25Then the priest shall take from the ~~woman~~wife's hand the meal offering of jealousy, elevate the meal offering before the Eternal, and present it on the altar. 26The priest shall scoop out of the meal offering a token part of it and turn it into smoke on the altar. Last, he shall make the ~~woman~~wife drink the water.

27Once he has made her drink the water—if she has defiled herself by breaking faith with her husband, the spell-inducing water shall enter into her to bring on bitterness, so that her belly shall distend and her thigh shall sag; and the ~~woman~~wife shall become a curse among her people. 28But if the ~~woman~~wife has not defiled herself and is pure, she shall be unharmed and able to retain seed.

29This is the ritual in cases of jealousy, when a ~~woman~~wife goes astray while married to her husband and defiles herself, 30or when a fit of jealousy comes over a ~~man~~husband and he is wrought up over his wife: the ~~woman~~wife shall be made to stand before the Eternal and the priest shall carry out all this ritual with her. 31The ~~man~~husband shall be clear of guilt; but that ~~woman~~wife shall suffer for her guilt.

6The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: [30]2Speak to the Israelites and say to them: If anyone, ~~man~~men or ~~woman~~women explicitly utters a nazirite's vow, to set ~~himself~~themselves apart for the Eternal, 3~~he~~they shall abstain from wine and any other intoxicant; ~~he~~they shall not drink vinegar of wine or of any other intoxicant, neither shall ~~he~~they drink anything in which grapes have been steeped, nor eat grapes fresh or dried. 4Throughout ~~his~~their term as nazirite, ~~he~~they may not eat anything that is obtained from the grapevine, even seeds or skin.

5Throughout the term of ~~his~~their vow as nazirite, no razor shall touch ~~their~~his head; it shall remain consecrated until the completion of ~~his~~their term as nazirite of the Eternal, the hair of ~~his~~their head being left to grow untrimmed. 6Throughout the term that ~~he~~has~~they have~~ set apart for the Eternal, ~~he~~they shall not go in where there is a dead person. 7Even if ~~his~~their father or mother, or ~~his~~their brother or sister should die, ~~he~~they must not ~~become~~ defile ~~himself~~themselves for them, since hair set apart for ~~his~~their God is upon ~~his~~their head:

⁸throughout ~~his~~their term as nazirite ~~he is~~they are consecrated to the Eternal.

⁹If ~~a person~~someone dies suddenly near ~~him~~by, defiling ~~his~~the consecrated hair, ~~he~~the ~~[nazirite]~~[31] shall shave ~~his~~the head ~~on the day~~at the time ~~he~~of ~~becomes~~becoming pure; ~~he shall~~shaveing it on the seventh day. ¹⁰On the eighth day ~~that person~~he^[32] shall bring two turtledoves or two pigeons to the priest, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ¹¹The priest shall offer one as a purgation offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make expiation on ~~the person's~~his behalf for the guilt ~~that he~~ incurred through the corpse. That same day ~~he~~the head shall ~~be~~ reconsecrated; ~~his~~head ¹²~~and~~and ~~that~~person shall rededicate to the Eternal ~~his~~the term as nazirite; ~~and he shall~~bringing a lamb in its first year as a penalty offering. The previous period shall be void, since ~~his~~the consecrated hair was defiled.

¹³This is the ritual for the nazirite: On the day that ~~his~~the term as nazirite is completed, ~~he~~the person shall be brought to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁴As ~~his~~an offering to the Eternal ~~he~~that person shall present: one male lamb in its first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering; one ewe lamb in its first year, without blemish, for a purgation offering; one ram without blemish for an offering of well-being; ¹⁵a basket of unleavened cakes of choice flour with oil mixed in, and unleavened wafers spread with oil; and the proper meal offerings and libations.

¹⁶The priest shall present them before the Eternal and offer the purgation offering and the burnt offering. ¹⁷He shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of well-being to the Eternal, together with the basket of unleavened cakes; the priest shall also offer the meal offerings and the libations. ¹⁸The nazirite shall then shave ~~his~~the consecrated hair, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and take ~~those~~ locks of ~~his~~ consecrated hair and put them on the fire that is under the sacrifice of well-being.

¹⁹The priest shall take the shoulder of the ram when it has been boiled, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and place them on the hands of the nazirite after ~~he has shaved~~his the consecrated hair ~~has been shaved~~. ²⁰The priest shall elevate them as an elevation offering before the Eternal; and this shall be a sacred donation for the priest, in addition to the breast of the elevation offering and the thigh of gift offering. After that the nazirite may drink wine.

²¹Such is the obligation of a nazirite; except that ~~he~~those who ~~vows~~ an offering to the Eternal of what ~~he~~they can afford, beyond ~~his~~their nazirite requirements, must do exactly according to the vow that ~~he~~has~~they have~~ made beyond ~~his~~their obligation as ~~a~~ nazirites.

²²The Eternal One spoke to Moses: ²³Speak to Aaron and his sons: Thus shall you bless the people of Israel. Say to them:

²⁴The Eternal bless you and protect you!

²⁵The Eternal deal kindly and graciously with you!

²⁶The Eternal bestow ~~His~~[divine] favor upon you and grant you peace!

²⁷Thus they shall link My name with the people of Israel, and I will bless them.

⁷On the day that Moses finished setting up the Tabernacle, he anointed and consecrated it and all its furnishings, as well as the altar and its utensils. When he had anointed and consecrated them, ²the chieftains of Israel, the heads of ancestral houses, namely, the chieftains of the tribes, those who were in charge of enrollment, drew near ³and brought their offering before the Eternal: six draught carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two chieftains and an ox for each one.

When they had brought them before the Tabernacle, ⁴the Eternal One said to Moses: ⁵Accept these from them for use in the service of the Tent of Meeting, and give them to the Levites according to their respective services.

⁶Moses took the carts and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. ⁷Two carts and four oxen he gave to the Gershonites, as required for their service, ⁸and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the Merarites, as required for their service—under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. ⁹But to the Kohathites he did not give any; since theirs was the service of the [most] sacred objects, their portage was by shoulder.

¹⁰The chieftains also brought the dedication offering for the altar upon its being anointed. As the chieftains were presenting their offerings before the altar, ¹¹the Eternal One said to Moses: Let them present their offerings for the dedication of the altar, one chieftain each day.

¹²The one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon son of Amminadab of the tribe of Judah. ¹³His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ¹⁴one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ¹⁵one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ¹⁶one goat for a purgation offering; ¹⁷and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Nahshon son of Amminadab.

¹⁸On the second day, Nethanel son of Zuar, chieftain of Issachar, made his offering. ¹⁹He presented as his offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ²⁰one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ²¹one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ²²one goat for a purgation offering; ²³and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Nethanel son of Zuar.

²⁴On the third day, it was the chieftain of the Zebulunites, Eliab son of Helon. ²⁵His offering: one silver bowl

weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ²⁶one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ²⁷one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ²⁸one goat for a purgation offering; ²⁹and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Eliab son of Helon.

³⁰On the fourth day, it was the chieftain of the Reubenites, Elizur son of Shedeur. ³¹His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ³²one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ³³one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ³⁴one goat for a purgation offering; ³⁵and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Elizur son of Shedeur.

³⁶On the fifth day, it was the chieftain of the Simeonites, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. ³⁷His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ³⁸one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ³⁹one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ⁴⁰one goat for a purgation offering; ⁴¹and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.

⁴²On the sixth day, it was the chieftain of the Gadites, Eliasaph son of Deuel. ⁴³His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ⁴⁴one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ⁴⁵one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ⁴⁶one goat for a purgation offering; ⁴⁷and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Eliasaph son of Deuel.

⁴⁸On the seventh day, it was the chieftain of the Ephraimites, Elishama son of Ammihud. ⁴⁹His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ⁵⁰one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ⁵¹one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ⁵²one goat for a purgation offering; ⁵³and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Elishama son of Ammihud.

⁵⁴On the eighth day, it was the chieftain of the Manassites, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. ⁵⁵His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ⁵⁶one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ⁵⁷one bull of the herd, one ram, and one

lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ⁵⁸one goat for a purgation offering; ⁵⁹and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

⁶⁰On the ninth day, it was the chieftain of the Benjaminites, Abidan son of Gideoni. ⁶¹His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ⁶²one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ⁶³one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ⁶⁴one goat for a purgation offering; ⁶⁵and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Abidan son of Gideoni.

⁶⁶On the tenth day, it was the chieftain of the Danites, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. ⁶⁷His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ⁶⁸one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ⁶⁹one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ⁷⁰one goat for a purgation offering; ⁷¹and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.

⁷²On the eleventh day, it was the chieftain of the Asherites, Pagiél son of Ocran. ⁷³His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ⁷⁴one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ⁷⁵one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ⁷⁶one goat for a purgation offering; ⁷⁷and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Pagiél son of Ocran.

⁷⁸On the twelfth day, it was the chieftain of the Naphtalites, Ahira son of Enan. ⁷⁹His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin of 70 shekels by the sanctuary weight, both filled with choice flour with oil mixed in, for a meal offering; ⁸⁰one gold ladle of 10 shekels, filled with incense; ⁸¹one bull of the herd, one ram, and one lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; ⁸²one goat for a purgation offering; ⁸³and for his sacrifice of well-being: two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five yearling lambs. That was the offering of Ahira son of Enan.

⁸⁴This was the dedication offering for the altar from the chieftains of Israel upon its being anointed: silver bowls, 12; silver basins, 12; gold ladles, 12. ⁸⁵Silver per bowl, 130; per basin, 70. Total silver of vessels, 2,400 sanctuary shekels. ⁸⁶The 12 gold ladles filled with incense—10 sanctuary shekels per ladle—total gold of the ladles, 120.

⁸⁷Total of herd animals for burnt offerings, 12 bulls; of rams, 12; of yearling lambs, 12—with their proper meal offerings; of goats for purgation offerings, 12. ⁸⁸Total of herd animals for sacrifices of well-being, 24 bulls; of rams, 60; of

he-goats, 60; of yearling lambs, 60. That was the dedication offering for the altar after its anointing.

⁸⁹When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with ~~Him~~[God], he would hear the Voice addressing him from above the cover that was on top of the Ark of the Pact between the two cherubim; thus [God]~~He~~ spoke to him.

B'HAALOT'CHA

⁸The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ²Speak to Aaron and say to him, “When you mount the lamps, let the seven lamps give light at the front of the lampstand.” ³Aaron did so; he mounted the lamps at the front of the lampstand, as the Eternal had commanded Moses.—⁴Now this is how the lampstand was made: it was hammered work of gold, hammered from base to petal. According to the pattern that the Eternal had shown Moses, so was the lampstand made.

⁵The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ⁶Take the Levites from among the Israelites and purify them. ⁷This is what you shall do to them to purify them: sprinkle on them water of purification, and let them go over their whole body with a razor, and wash their clothes; thus they shall be purified. ⁸Let them take a bull of the herd, and with it a meal offering of choice flour with oil mixed in, and you take a second bull of the herd for a purgation offering. ⁹You shall bring the Levites forward before the Tent of Meeting. Assemble the ~~whole~~ Israelite community ~~leadership~~[33]. ¹⁰and bring the Levites forward before the Eternal. Let the Israelites lay their hands upon the Levites, ¹¹and let Aaron designate the Levites before the Eternal as an elevation offering from the Israelites, that they may perform the service of the Eternal. ¹²The Levites shall now lay their hands upon the heads of the bulls; one shall be offered to the Eternal as a purgation offering and the other as a burnt offering, to make expiation for the Levites.

¹³You shall place the Levites in attendance upon Aaron and his sons, and designate them as an elevation offering to the Eternal. ¹⁴Thus you shall set the Levites apart from the Israelites, and the Levites shall be Mine. ¹⁵Thereafter the Levites shall be qualified for the service of the Tent of Meeting, once you have purified them and designated them as an elevation offering. ¹⁶For they are formally assigned to Me from among the Israelites: I have taken them for Myself in place of all the first issue of the womb, of all the ~~male~~ first-born of the Israelites. ¹⁷For every ~~male~~ first-born among the Israelites, ~~human~~ as well as beast, is Mine; I consecrated them to Myself at the time that I smote ~~every [male] first-born~~[34] in the land of Egypt. ¹⁸Now I take the Levites instead of every ~~male~~ first-born of the Israelites; ¹⁹and from among the Israelites I formally assign the Levites to Aaron and his sons, to perform the service for the Israelites in the Tent of Meeting and to make expiation for the Israelites, so that no plague may afflict the Israelites for coming too near the sanctuary.

²⁰Moses, Aaron, and the ~~whole~~ Israelite community ~~leadership~~ did with the Levites accordingly; just as the Eternal had commanded Moses in regard to the Levites, so the Israelites did with them. ²¹The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes; and Aaron designated them as an elevation offering before the Eternal, and Aaron made expiation for them to purify them. ²²Thereafter the Levites were qualified to perform their service in the Tent of Meeting, under Aaron and his sons. As the Eternal had commanded Moses in regard to the Levites, so they did to them.

²³The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁴This is the rule for the Levites. From twenty-five years of age up they shall participate in the work force in the service of the Tent of Meeting; ²⁵but at the age of fifty they shall retire from the work force and shall serve no more. ²⁶They may assist their brother Levites at the Tent of Meeting by standing guard, but they shall perform no labor. Thus you shall deal with the Levites in regard to their duties.

⁹The Eternal One spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, on the first new moon of the second year following the exodus from the land of Egypt, saying: ²Let the Israelite people [35] offer the passover sacrifice at its set time: ³you shall offer it on the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, at its set time; you shall offer it in accordance with all its rules and rites.

⁴Moses instructed the Israelites to offer the passover sacrifice; ⁵and they offered the passover sacrifice in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai. Just as the Eternal had commanded Moses, so the Israelites did.

⁶But there were some ~~men~~householders [36] who were impure by reason of a corpse and could not offer the passover sacrifice on that day. Appearing that same day before Moses and Aaron, ⁷those ~~men~~householders said to them, “Impure though we are by reason of a corpse, why must we be debarred from presenting the Eternal’s offering at its set time with the rest of the Israelites?” ⁸Moses said to them, “Stand by, and let me hear what instructions the Eternal gives about you.”

⁹And the Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁰Speak to the Israelite people, saying: When any of you or of your posterity who are defiled by a corpse or are on a long journey would offer a passover sacrifice to the Eternal,—¹¹they shall offer it in the second month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, ¹²and they shall not leave any of it over until morning. They shall not break a bone of it. They shall offer it in strict accord with the law of the passover sacrifice [37]. ¹³But if a ~~man~~householder who is pure and not on a journey refrains from offering the passover sacrifice, that person shall be cut off from ~~his~~ kin, for ~~he did not present~~ the Eternal’s

offering ~~was not presented~~^[38] at its set time; that ~~man~~^{house-}~~holder~~ shall bear ~~his~~^{the} guilt.^[39]

¹⁴And when a stranger^[40] who resides with you would offer a passover sacrifice to the Eternal, ~~he~~^{it} must ~~be~~^{be} offered ~~it~~^{it}^[41] in accordance with the rules and rites of the passover sacrifice. There shall be one law for you, whether stranger or citizen of the country.

¹⁵On the day that the Tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the Tabernacle, the Tent of the Pact; and in the evening it rested over the Tabernacle in the likeness of fire until morning. ¹⁶It was always so: the cloud covered it, appearing as fire by night. ¹⁷And whenever the cloud lifted from the Tent, the Israelites would set out accordingly; and at the spot where the cloud settled, there the Israelites would make camp. ¹⁸At a command of the Eternal the Israelites broke camp, and at a command of the Eternal they made camp: they remained encamped as long as the cloud stayed over the Tabernacle. ¹⁹When the cloud lingered over the Tabernacle many days, the Israelites observed the Eternal's mandate and did not journey on. ²⁰At such times as the cloud rested over the Tabernacle for but a few days, they remained encamped at a command of the Eternal, and broke camp at a command of the Eternal. ²¹And at such times as the cloud stayed from evening until morning, they broke camp as soon as the cloud lifted in the morning. Day or night, whenever the cloud lifted, they would break camp. ²²Whether it was two days or a month or a year—however long the cloud lingered over the Tabernacle—the Israelites remained encamped and did not set out; only when it lifted did they break camp. ²³On a sign from the Eternal they made camp and on a sign from the Eternal they broke camp; they observed the Eternal's mandate at the Eternal's bidding through Moses.

¹⁰The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ²Have two silver trumpets made; make them of hammered work. They shall serve you to summon ~~[military bodies of]~~ the community and to set the divisions in motion^[42]. ³When both are blown in long blasts, the whole ~~community~~^{company} ~~[of fighters]~~^[43] shall assemble before you at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; ⁴and if only one is blown, the chieftains, heads of Israel's contingents, shall assemble before you. ⁵But when you sound short blasts, the divisions encamped on the east shall move forward; ⁶and when you sound short blasts a second time, those encamped on the south shall move forward. Thus short blasts shall be blown for setting them in motion, ⁷while to convoke ~~[military bodies of]~~ the congregation^[44] you shall blow long blasts, not short ones. ⁸The trumpets shall be blown by Aaron's sons, the priests; they shall be for you an institution for all time throughout the ages.

⁹When you are at war in your land against an aggressor who attacks you, you shall sound short blasts on the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the Eternal your God and

be delivered from your enemies. ¹⁰And on your joyous occasions—your fixed festivals and new moon days—you shall sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being. They shall be a reminder of you before your God: I, the Eternal, am your God.

¹¹In the second year, on the twentieth day of the second month, the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle of the Pact ¹²and the Israelites set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. The cloud came to rest in the wilderness of Paran.

¹³When the march was to begin, at the Eternal's command through Moses, ¹⁴the first standard to set out, troop by troop, was the division of Judah. In command of its troops was Nahshon son of Amminadab; ¹⁵in command of the tribal troop of Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar; ¹⁶and in command of the tribal troop of Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon.

¹⁷Then the Tabernacle would be taken apart; and the Gershonites and the Merarites, who carried the Tabernacle, would set out.

¹⁸The next standard to set out, troop by troop, was the division of Reuben. In command of its troop was Elizur son of Shedeur; ¹⁹in command of the tribal troop of Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai; ²⁰and in command of the tribal troop of Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel.

²¹Then the Kohathites, who carried the sacred objects, would set out; and by the time they arrived, the Tabernacle would be set up again.

²²The next standard to set out, troop by troop, was the division of Ephraim. In command of its troop was Elishama son of Ammihud; ²³in command of the tribal troop of Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur; ²⁴and in command of the tribal troop of Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideon.

²⁵Then, as the rear guard of all the divisions, the standard of the division of Dan would set out, troop by troop. In command of its troop was Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai; ²⁶in command of the tribal troop of Asher, Pagiël son of Ochran; ²⁷and in command of the tribal troop of Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan.

²⁸Such was the order of march of the Israelites, as they marched troop by troop.

²⁹Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the Eternal One has said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will be generous with you; for the Eternal has promised to be generous to Israel."

³⁰"I will not go," he replied to him, "but will return to my native land." ³¹He said, "Please do not leave us, inasmuch as you know where we should camp in the wilderness and can be our guide. ³²So if you come with us, we will extend to you the same bounty that the Eternal grants us."

³³They marched from the mountain of the Eternal a distance of three days. The Ark of the Covenant of the Eternal

traveled in front of them on that three days' journey to seek out a resting place for them; ³⁴and the Eternal's cloud kept above them by day, as they moved on from camp.

³⁵When the Ark was to set out, Moses would say:

Advance, O Eternal One!
May Your enemies be scattered,
And may Your foes flee before You!

³⁶And when it halted, he would say:

Return, O Eternal One,
You who are Israel's myriads of thousands!

11 The people took to complaining bitterly before the Eternal. The Eternal heard and was incensed: a fire of the Eternal broke out against them, ravaging the outskirts of the camp. ²The people cried out to Moses. Moses prayed to the Eternal, and the fire died down. ³That place was named Taberah, because a fire of the Eternal had broken out against them.

⁴The riffraff in their midst felt a gluttonous craving; and then the Israelites wept and said, "If only we had meat to eat!" ⁵We remember the fish that we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. ⁶Now our gullets are shriveled. There is nothing at all! Nothing but this manna to look to!"

⁷Now the manna was like coriander seed, and in color it was like bdellium. ⁸The people would go about and gather it, grind it between millstones or pound it in a mortar, boil it in a pot, and make it into cakes. It tasted like rich cream. ⁹When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall upon it.

¹⁰Moses heard the people weeping, every clan apart, ~~each person~~ at the entrance of ~~his~~^{each} tent. ^[45] The Eternal was very angry, and Moses was distressed. ¹¹And Moses said to the Eternal, "Why have You dealt ill with Your servant, and why have I not enjoyed Your favor, that You have laid the burden of all this people upon me? ¹²Did I ~~conceive~~^{produce} all this people, did I ~~bear~~^{engender} them ^[46], that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a ~~nurse~~^{caretaker} carries an infant,' ^[47] to the land that You have promised on oath to their ~~fathers~~ ^[48]? ¹³Where am I to get meat to give to all this people, when they whine before me and say, 'Give us meat to eat!' ¹⁴I cannot carry all this people by myself, for it is too much for me. ¹⁵If You would deal thus with me, kill me rather, I beg You, and let me see no more of my wretchedness!"

¹⁶Then the Eternal One said to Moses, "Gather for Me seventy of Israel's elders ^[49] of whom you have experience as elders and officers of the people, and bring them to the Tent of Meeting and let them take their place there with you. ¹⁷I will come down and speak with you there, and I will draw upon the spirit that is on you and put it upon them; they shall share the burden of the people with you, and you shall not bear it alone. ¹⁸And say to the people: Purify yourselves for

tomorrow and you shall eat meat, for you have kept whining before the Eternal and saying, 'If only we had meat to eat! Indeed, we were better off in Egypt!' The Eternal will give you meat and you shall eat. ¹⁹You shall eat not one day, not two, not even five days or ten or twenty, ²⁰but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you. For you have rejected the Eternal who is among you, by whining before ~~Him~~^[God] and saying, 'Oh, why did we ever leave Egypt!'"

²¹But Moses said, "The people who are with me number six hundred thousand ~~men~~^{foot soldiers} ^[50]; yet You say, 'I will give them enough meat to eat for a whole month.' ²²Could enough flocks and herds be slaughtered to suffice them? Or could all the fish of the sea be gathered for them to suffice them?" ²³And the Eternal answered Moses, "Is there a limit to the Eternal's power? You shall soon see whether what I have said happens to you or not!"

²⁴Moses went out and reported the words of the Eternal to the people. He gathered seventy of the people's elders and stationed them around the Tent. ²⁵Then ~~the Eternal~~, ~~came~~^{after} coming down in a cloud and ~~spoke~~^{speaking} to him; ~~He~~^{the Eternal} drew upon the spirit that was on him and put it upon the seventy ~~representative~~ elders. ^[51] And when the spirit rested upon them, they spoke in ecstasy, but did not continue.

²⁶Two ~~men~~^{of the representatives} ^[52], one named Eldad and the other Medad, had remained in camp; yet the spirit rested upon them—they were among those recorded, but they had not gone out to the Tent—and they spoke in ecstasy in the camp. ²⁷~~A youth~~^{An assistant} ^[53] ran out and told Moses, saying, "Eldad and Medad are acting the prophet in the camp!" ²⁸And Joshua son of Nun, Moses' attendant from his youth, spoke up and said, "My lord Moses, restrain them!" ²⁹But Moses said to him, "Are you wrought up on my account? Would that all the Eternal's people were prophets, that the Eternal put ~~His~~^[the divine] spirit upon them!" ³⁰Moses then reentered the camp together with the elders of Israel.

³¹A wind from the Eternal started up, swept quail from the sea and strewed them over the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on that side, all around the camp, and some two cubits deep on the ground. ³²The people set to gathering quail all that day and night and all the next day—even ~~he~~^{the one} who gathered least ^[54] had ten *chomers*—and they spread them out all around the camp. ³³The meat was still between their teeth, not yet chewed, when the anger of the Eternal blazed forth against the people and the Eternal struck the people with a very severe plague. ³⁴That place was named Kibroth-hattaavah, because the people who had the craving were buried there.

³⁵Then the people set out from Kibroth-hattaavah for Hazereth.

12When they were in Hazeroth, ¹Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married: “He married a Cushite woman!”

²They said, “Has the Eternal spoken only through Moses? Has He[God] not spoken through us as well?” The Eternal heard it. ³Now [God’s] envoy Moses was a-very humble man,^[55] more so than any other man human being on earth. ⁴Suddenly the Eternal One called to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the Tent of Meeting.” So the three of them went out. ⁵The Eternal came down in a pillar of cloud, stopped at the entrance of the Tent, and called out, “Aaron and Miriam!” The two of them came forward; ⁶and He[God] said, “Hear these My words: When a prophets of the Eternal arises among you^[56], I make Myself known to him^[57] in a vision, I speak with him^[58] in a dream. ⁷Not so with My servant Moses; he is trusted throughout My household. ⁸With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of the Eternal. How then did you not shrink from speaking against My servant Moses!” ⁹Still incensed with them, the Eternal departed.

¹⁰As the cloud withdrew from the Tent, there was Miriam stricken with snow-white scales! When Aaron turned toward Miriam, he saw that she was stricken with scales. ¹¹And Aaron said to Moses, “O my lord, account not to us the sin which we committed in our folly. ¹²Let her not be as one dead a stillbirth,^[57] who^[58] emerges from his mother’s womb with half his flesh eaten away-!”^[58] ¹³So Moses cried out to the Eternal, saying, “O God, pray heal her!”

¹⁴But the Eternal One said to Moses, “If her father^[59] spat in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut out of camp for seven days, and then let her be readmitted.” ¹⁵So Miriam was shut out of camp seven days; and the people did not march on until Miriam was readmitted. ¹⁶After that the people set out from Hazeroth and encamped in the wilderness of Paran.

SH’LACH L’CHA

¹³The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Send men^[60] issaries^[60] to scout the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelite people; send one man representative^[61] from each of their ancestral tribes, each one a chieftain among them.” ³So Moses, by the Eternal’s command, sent them out from the wilderness of Paran, all of them being men notables, being^[62] leaders of the Israelites. ⁴And these were their names:

From the tribe of Reuben, Shammua son of Zaccur.

⁵From the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat son of Hori.

⁶From the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh.

⁷From the tribe of Issachar, Igal son of Joseph.

⁸From the tribe of Ephraim, Hosea son of Nun.

⁹From the tribe of Benjamin, Palti son of Rafu.

¹⁰From the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel son of Sodi.

¹¹From the tribe of Joseph, namely, the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi son of Susi.

¹²From the tribe of Dan, Ammiel son of Gemalli.

¹³From the tribe of Asher, Sethur son of Michael.

¹⁴From the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi son of Vophsi.

¹⁵From the tribe of Gad, Geuel son of Machi.

¹⁶Those were the names of the men emissaries, whom Moses sent to scout the land; but Moses changed the name of Hosea son of Nun to Joshua.

¹⁷When Moses sent them to scout the land of Canaan, he said to them, “Go up there into the Negeb and on into the hill country, ¹⁸and see what kind of country it is. Are the people who dwell in it strong or weak, few or many? ¹⁹Is the country in which they dwell good or bad? Are the towns they live in open or fortified? ²⁰Is the soil rich or poor? Is it wooded or not? And take pains to bring back some of the fruit of the land.”—Now it happened to be the season of the first ripe grapes.

²¹They went up and scouted the land, from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, at Lebo-hamath. ²²They went up into the Negeb and came to Hebron, where lived Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the Anakites.—Now Hebron was founded seven years before Zoan of Egypt.—²³They reached the wadi Eshcol, and there they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes—it had to be borne on a carrying frame by two of them—and some pomegranates and figs. ²⁴That place was named the wadi Eshcol because of the cluster that the Israelites cut down there.

²⁵At the end of forty days they returned from scouting the land. ²⁶They went straight to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran, and they made their report to them and to the whole community,^[63] as they showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷This is what they told him: “We came to the land you sent us to; it does indeed flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸However, the people who inhabit the country are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large; moreover, we saw the Anakites there. ²⁹Amalekites dwell in the Negeb region; Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites inhabit the hill country; and Canaanites dwell by the Sea and along the Jordan.”

³⁰Caleb hushed the people^[64] before Moses and said, “Let us by all means go up, and we shall gain possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.”

³¹But the men emissaries^[65] who had gone up with him said, “We cannot attack that people, for it is stronger than we.” ³²Thus they spread calumnies among the Israelites about the land they had scouted, saying, “The country that we traversed and scouted is one that devours its settlers. All the people that we saw in it are men^[66] of great size; ³³we saw the Nephilim there—the Anakites are part of the Nephilim—and we looked like grasshoppers to ourselves, and so we must have looked to them.”

14The whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night. 2All the Israelites^[67] railed against Moses and Aaron. “If only we had died in the land of Egypt,” the whole community shouted at them, “or if only we might die in this wilderness!” 3“Why is the Eternal taking us to that land to fall by the sword?” 4“Our wives^[68] and children will be carried off! It would be better for us to go back to Egypt!” 4And they said to one another, “Let us head back for Egypt.”

5Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembled congregation of the Israelites^[69]. 6And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, of those who had scouted the land, rent their clothes 7and exhorted the whole Israelite community: “The land that we traversed and scouted is an exceedingly good land. 8If ~~the Eternal is~~ pleased with us, the Eternal^{He} will bring us into that land, a land that flows with milk and honey, and give it to us; 9only you must not rebel against the Eternal. Have no fear then of the people of the country, for they are our prey: their protection has departed from them, but the Eternal is with us. Have no fear of them!” 10As the whole community threatened to pelt them with stones,^[70] the Presence of the Eternal appeared in the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites.

11And the Eternal One said to Moses, “How long will this people spurn Me, and how long will they have no faith in Me despite all the signs that I have performed in their midst? 12I will strike them with pestilence and disown them, and I will make of you a nation far more numerous than they!” 13But Moses said to the Eternal, “When the Egyptians, from whose midst You brought up this people in Your might, hear the news, 14they will tell it to the inhabitants of that land. Now they have heard that You, Eternal One, are in the midst of this people; that You, Eternal One, appear in plain sight when Your cloud rests over them and when You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15If then You slay this people ~~to a man~~^{wholesale},^[71] the nations who have heard Your fame will say, 16‘It must be because the Eternal was powerless to bring that people into the land promised them on oath that He^[that god] slaughtered them in the wilderness.’ 17Therefore, I pray, let my lord’s forbearance be great, as You have declared, saying, 18‘The Eternal! slow to anger and abounding in kindness; forgiving iniquity and transgression; yet not remitting all punishment, but visiting the iniquity of fathers^{parents} upon children, upon the third and fourth generations.’ 19Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to Your great kindness, as You have forgiven this people ever since Egypt.”

20And the Eternal One said, “I pardon, as you have asked. 21Nevertheless, as I live and as the Eternal’s Presence fills the whole world, 22none of the men^{adults}^[72] who have seen My Presence and the signs that I have performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and who have tried Me these many times and have disobeyed Me, 23shall see the land that I

promised on oath to their fathers^[73]; none of those who spurn Me shall see it. 24But My servant Caleb, because he was imbued with a different spirit and remained loyal to Me—him will I bring into the land that he entered, and his offspring shall hold it as a possession. 25Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites occupy the valleys. Start out, then, tomorrow and march into the wilderness by way of the Sea of Reeds.”

26The Eternal One spoke further to Moses and Aaron, 27“‘How much longer shall that wicked community keep muttering against Me? Very well, I have heeded the incessant muttering of the Israelites against Me. 28Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Eternal, ‘I will do to you just as you have urged Me. 29In this very wilderness shall your carcasses drop. Of all of you [men]^[74] who were recorded in your various lists from the age of twenty years up, you who have muttered against Me, 30not one shall enter the land in which I swore to settle you—save Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. 31Your children who, you said, would be carried off—these will I allow to enter; they shall know the land that you have rejected. 32But your carcasses shall drop in this wilderness, 33while your children roam the wilderness for forty years, suffering for your faithlessness, until the last of your carcasses is down in the wilderness. 34You shall bear your punishment for forty years, corresponding to the number of days—forty days—that you scouted the land: a year for each day. Thus you shall know what it means to thwart Me. 35I the Eternal have spoken: Thus will I do to all that wicked band that has banded together against Me: in this very wilderness they shall die ~~to the last man~~^{and so be finished off}^[75].”

36As for the men^{messengers}^[76] whom Moses sent to scout the land, those who came back and caused the whole community to mutter against him by spreading calumnies about the land—³⁷those^[77] who spread such calumnies about the land died of plague, by the will of the Eternal. 38Of those men^{messengers}^[78] who had gone to scout the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

39When Moses repeated these words to all the Israelites, the people were overcome by grief. 40Early next morning ~~they~~^[their fighting force] set out^[79] toward the crest of the hill country, saying, “We are prepared to go up to the place that the Eternal has spoken of, for we were wrong.” 41But Moses said, “Why do you transgress the Eternal’s command? This will not succeed. 42Do not go up, lest you be routed by your enemies, for the Eternal is not in your midst. 43For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there to face you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned from following the Eternal and the Eternal will not be with you.”

44Yet defiantly they marched toward the crest of the hill country, though neither the Eternal’s Ark of the Covenant nor Moses stirred from the camp. 45And the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that hill country came down and dealt them a shattering blow at Hormah.

15The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: 2Speak to the Israelite people and say to them:

When you enter the land that I am giving you to settle in, 3and would present an offering by fire to the Eternal from the herd or from the flock, be it burnt offering or sacrifice, in fulfillment of a vow explicitly uttered, or as a freewill offering, or at your fixed occasions, producing an odor pleasing to the Eternal:

4The person who presents the offering^[80] to the Eternal shall bring as a meal offering: a tenth of a measure of choice flour with a quarter of a *hin* of oil mixed in. 5You shall also offer, with the burnt offering or the sacrifice, a quarter of a *hin* of wine as a libation for each sheep.

6In the case of a ram, you shall present as a meal offering: two-tenths of a measure of choice flour with a third of a *hin* of oil mixed in; 7and a third of a *hin* of wine as a libation—as an offering of pleasing odor to the Eternal.

8And if it is an animal from the herd that you offer to the Eternal as a burnt offering or as a sacrifice, in fulfillment of a vow explicitly uttered or as an offering of well-being, 9there shall be offered a meal offering along with the animal: three-tenths of a measure of choice flour with half a *hin* of oil mixed in; 10and as libation you shall offer half a *hin* of wine—these being offerings by fire of pleasing odor to the Eternal.

11Thus shall be done with each ox, with each ram, and with any sheep or goat, 12as many as you offer; you shall do thus with each one, as many as there are. 13Every citizen, when presenting an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Eternal, shall do so with them.

14And when, throughout the ages, a stranger who has taken up residence with you, or one who lives among you, would present an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Eternal—as you do, so shall it be done by 15the rest of the congregation.^[81] There shall be one law for you and for the resident stranger; it shall be a law for all time throughout the ages. You and the stranger shall be alike before the Eternal; 16the same ritual and the same rule shall apply to you and to the stranger who resides among you.

17The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: 18Speak to the Israelite people and say to them:

When you enter the land to which I am taking you 19and you eat of the bread of the land, you shall set some aside as a gift to the Eternal: 20as the first yield of your baking, you shall set aside a loaf as a gift; you shall set it aside as a gift like the gift from the threshing floor. 21You shall make a gift to the Eternal from the first yield of your baking, throughout the ages.

22If you unwittingly fail to observe any one of the commandments that the Eternal has declared to Moses— 23anything that the Eternal has enjoined upon you through

Moses—from the day that the Eternal gave the commandment and on through the ages:

24If this was done unwittingly, through the inadvertence of the community, the ~~whole~~-community ~~leaders~~ shall present^[82] one bull of the herd as a burnt offering of pleasing odor to the Eternal, with its proper meal offering and libation, and one he-goat as a purgation offering. 25The priest shall make expiation for the whole Israelite community^[83] and they shall be forgiven; for it was an error, and for their error they have brought their offering, an offering by fire to the Eternal and their purgation offering before the Eternal. 26The whole Israelite community and the stranger residing among them shall be forgiven, for it happened to the entire people^[84] through error.

27In case it is an individual^[85] who has sinned unwittingly, ~~he~~~~that person~~ shall offer a she-goat in its first year as a purgation offering. 28The priest shall make expiation before the Eternal on behalf of the person who erred, for ~~he~~~~having~~ sinned unwittingly, making such expiation ~~for him that he~~~~that the person~~ may be forgiven. 29For the citizen among the Israelites and for the stranger who resides among them—you shall have one ritual for anyone who acts in error.

30But the person, ~~be~~~~he~~~~whether~~ citizen or stranger, who acts defiantly reviles the Eternal; that person shall be cut off from among ~~his~~~~the~~ people. 31Because ~~he~~~~has~~~~spurned~~~~it~~~~was~~ the word of the Eternal ~~that was spurned~~ and ~~[God's]~~ ~~commandment that was~~ violated ~~His commandment~~, that person shall be cut off—~~he~~~~and~~ bears ~~his~~~~the~~ guilt.

32Once, when the Israelites were in the wilderness, ~~they~~ ~~came upon a man~~~~one of their fellows was found~~^[86] gathering wood on the sabbath day. 33Those who found him as he was gathering wood brought him before Moses, Aaron, and the ~~whole~~-community ~~leadership~~^[87]. 34He was placed in custody, for it had not been specified what should be done to him. 35Then the Eternal said to Moses, “~~The man~~~~This fellow~~^[88] shall be put to death: the ~~whole~~-community ~~leadership~~ shall pelt him with stones outside the camp.” 36So the ~~whole~~-community ~~leadership~~ took him outside the camp and stoned him to death—as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

37The Eternal One said to Moses as follows: 38Speak to the Israelite people^[89] and instruct them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments throughout the ages; let them attach a cord of blue to the fringe at each corner. 39That shall be your fringe; look at it and recall all the commandments of the Eternal and observe them, so that you do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge. 40Thus you shall be reminded to observe all My commandments and to be holy to your God. 41I the Eternal am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I, the Eternal your God.

KORACH

16 Now Korah, son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi, be- took himself, along with Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—descendants of Reuben—²to rise up against Moses, together with two hundred and fifty **represent- atives of the** Israelites^[90], chieftains of the community, cho- sen in the assembly, **men-of-reputewith fine reputations**^[91].³ They combined against Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and the Eternal is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above the Eternal’s congregation?”

⁴When Moses heard this, he fell on his face. ⁵Then he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, “Come morning, the Eternal will make known who is **His[God’s]** and who is holy, and will **grant him direct access — to Himself**^[92]. ~~He will grant access to the one He has chosen~~**the one whom [God] has chosen will be granted access.** ⁶Do this: You, Ko- rah and all your band, take fire pans, ⁷and tomorrow put fire in them and lay incense on them before the Eternal. Then the **man-candidate** whom the Eternal chooses, he shall be the holy one^[93]. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!”

⁸Moses said further to Korah, “Hear me, sons of Levi. ⁹Is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has set you apart from the community of Israel and given you **direct access-to Him**^[94] to perform the duties of the Eternal’s Taber- nacle and to minister to the community and serve them? ¹⁰Now that **He[God]** has advanced you and all your fellow Levites^[95] with you, do you seek the priesthood too? ¹¹Truly, it is against the Eternal that you and all your compa- ny have banded together. For who is Aaron that you should rail against him?”

¹²Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab; but they said, “We will not come! ¹³Is it not enough that you brought us from a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, that you would also lord it over us? ¹⁴Even if you had brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and given us possession of fields and vineyards, should you gouge out those **men’s-subordinates**^[96] eyes? We will not come!” ¹⁵Moses was much aggrieved and he said to the Eternal, “Pay no regard to their oblation. I have not taken the ass of any one of them, nor have I wronged any one of them.”

¹⁶And Moses said to Korah, “Tomorrow, you and all your company appear before the Eternal, you and they and Aaron. ¹⁷Each of you take **his/your fire pan** and lay incense on it, and **each of you bring his/that fire pan** before the Eternal, two hundred and fifty fire pans; you and Aaron also [bring] your fire pans.” ¹⁸~~Each of them took his~~**They each took their fire pan**^[97], put fire in it, laid incense on it, and **took his/a place** at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, as did Moses and

Aaron. ¹⁹Korah gathered the whole community against them at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

Then the Presence of the Eternal appeared to the whole community,^[98] ²⁰and the Eternal One spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²¹“Stand back from this community that I may annihilate them in an instant!” ²²But they fell on their faces and said, “O God, Source of the breath of all flesh! When one **man/member**^[99] sins, will You be wrathful with the whole community?”

²³The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴“Speak to the community and say: Withdraw from about the abodes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”

²⁵Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, the elders of Israel following him. ²⁶He addressed the community, say- ing, “Move away from the tents of these wicked **men- fellows**^[100] and touch nothing that belongs to them, lest you be wiped out for all their sins.” ²⁷So they withdrew from about the abodes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

Now Dathan and Abiram had come out and they stood at the entrance of their tents, with their wives, their children, and their little ones. ²⁸And Moses said, “By this you shall know that it was the Eternal who sent me to do all these things; that they are not of my own devising: ²⁹if these ~~men die as all men~~**do people’s death is that of all humankind**, if their lot ~~be the~~**is humankind’s** common fate ~~of all mankind~~^[101], it was not the Eternal who sent me. ³⁰But if the Eternal brings about something unheard-of, so that the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, you shall know that these **men- fellows**^[102] have spurned the Eternal.” ³¹Scarcely had he finished speaking all these words when the ground under them burst asunder, ³²and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with their households, all Korah’s people and all their possessions. ³³They went down alive into Sheol, with all that belonged to them; the earth closed over them and they vanished from the midst of the congregation. ³⁴All Israel around them fled at their shrieks, for they said, “The earth might swallow us!”

³⁵And a fire went forth from the Eternal and consumed the two hundred and fifty **men/representatives**^[103] offering the incense.

17 The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ²Order Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to remove the fire pans—for they have become sacred—from among the charred remains; and scatter the coals abroad. ³[Remove] the fire pans of those who have sinned at the cost of their lives, and let them be made into hammered sheets as plating for the altar—for once they have been used for offering to the Eternal, they have become sac- red—and let them serve as a warning to the people of Israel. ⁴Eleazar the priest took the copper fire pans which had been used for offering by those who died in the fire; and they were hammered into plating for the altar, ⁵as the Eternal had or-

dered him through Moses. It was to be a reminder to the Israelites, so that no outsider—one not of Aaron’s offspring—should presume to offer incense before the Eternal and suffer the fate of Korah and his band.

⁶Next day the whole Israelite community^[104] railed against Moses and Aaron, saying, “You two have brought death upon the Eternal’s people!” ⁷But as the community gathered against them, Moses and Aaron turned toward the Tent of Meeting; the cloud had covered it and the Presence of the Eternal appeared.

⁸When Moses and Aaron reached the Tent of Meeting, ⁹the Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰“Remove yourselves from this community, that I may annihilate them in an instant.” They fell on their faces. ¹¹Then Moses said to Aaron, “Take the fire pan, and put on it fire from the altar. Add incense and take it quickly to the community and make expiation for them. For wrath has gone forth from the Eternal: the plague has begun!” ¹²Aaron took it, as Moses had ordered, and ran to the midst of the congregation, where the plague had begun among the people. He put on the incense and made expiation for the people; ¹³he stood between the dead and the living until the plague was checked. ¹⁴Those who died of the plague came to fourteen thousand and seven hundred, aside from those who died on account of Korah. ¹⁵Aaron then returned to Moses at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, since the plague was checked.

¹⁶The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁷Speak to the Israelite people and take from them—from the chieftains of their ancestral houses—one staff for each chieftain of an ancestral house: twelve staffs in all. Inscribe each man’s^[105] name on his staff, ¹⁸there being one staff for each head of an ancestral house; also inscribe Aaron’s name on the staff of Levi. ¹⁹Deposit them in the Tent of Meeting before the Pact, where I meet with you. ²⁰The staff of the man^[106] whom I choose shall sprout, and I will rid Myself of the incessant mutterings of the Israelites against you.

²¹Moses spoke thus to the Israelites. Their chieftains gave him a staff for each chieftain of an ancestral house, twelve staffs in all; among these staffs was that of Aaron. ²²Moses deposited the staffs before the Eternal, in the Tent of the Pact. ²³The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Pact, and there the staff of Aaron of the house of Levi had sprouted: it had brought forth sprouts, produced blossoms, and borne almonds. ²⁴Moses then brought out all the staffs from before the Eternal to all the Israelites; each identified and recovered his staff.

²⁵The Eternal One said to Moses, “Put Aaron’s staff back before the Pact, to be kept as a lesson to rebels, so that their mutterings against Me may cease, lest they die.” ²⁶This Moses did; just as the Eternal had commanded him, so he did.

²⁷But the Israelites said to Moses, “Lo, we perish! We are lost, all of us lost! ²⁸Everyone who so much as ventures

near the Eternal’s Tabernacle must die. Alas, we are doomed to perish!”

¹⁸The Eternal One said to Aaron: You and your sons and the ancestral house under your charge shall bear any guilt connected with the sanctuary; you and your sons alone shall bear any guilt connected with your priesthood. ²You shall also associate with yourself your kinsmen the tribe of Levi^[107], your ancestral tribe, to be attached to you and to minister to you, while you and your sons under your charge are before the Tent of the Pact. ³They shall discharge their duties to you and to the Tent as a whole, but they must not have any contact with the furnishings of the Shrine or with the altar, lest both they and you die. ⁴They shall be attached to you and discharge the duties of the Tent of Meeting, all the service of the Tent; but no outsider shall intrude upon you ⁵as you discharge the duties connected with the Shrine and the altar, that wrath may not again strike the Israelites.

⁶I hereby take your fellow Levites^[108] from among the Israelites; they are assigned to you in dedication to the Eternal, to do the work of the Tent of Meeting; ⁷while you and your sons shall be careful to perform your priestly duties in everything pertaining to the altar and to what is behind the curtain. I make your priesthood a service of dedication; any outsider who encroaches shall be put to death.

⁸The Eternal One spoke further to Aaron: I hereby give you charge of My gifts, all the sacred donations of the Israelites; I grant them to you and to your sons as a perquisite, a due for all time. ⁹This shall be yours from the most holy sacrifices, the offerings by fire: every such offering that they render to Me as most holy sacrifices, namely, every meal offering, purgation offering, and reparation offering of theirs, shall belong to you and your sons. ¹⁰You shall partake of them as most sacred donations: only males may eat them; you shall treat them as consecrated.

¹¹This, too, shall be yours: the gift offerings of their contributions, all the elevation offerings of the Israelites, I give to you [and your wives], to your sons, and to the daughters that are with you^[109], as a due for all time; everyone of your household who is pure may eat it.

¹²All the best of the new oil, wine, and grain—the choice parts that they present to the Eternal—I give to you. ¹³The first fruits of everything in their land, that they bring to the Eternal, shall be yours; everyone of your household who is pure may eat them. ¹⁴Everything that has been proscribed in Israel shall be yours. ¹⁵The first [male] issue of the womb of every being, human or beast, that is offered to the Eternal, shall be yours; but you shall have the male first-born of human beings redeemed, and you shall also have the firstling of impure animals redeemed. ¹⁶Take as their redemption price, from the age of one month up, the money equivalent of five shekels by the sanctuary weight, which is twenty *gerahs*. ¹⁷But the firstlings of cattle, sheep, or goats may not be re-

deemed; they are consecrated. You shall dash their blood against the altar, and turn their fat into smoke as an offering by fire for a pleasing odor to the Eternal. ¹⁸But their meat shall be yours: it shall be yours like the breast of elevation offering and like the right thigh.

¹⁹All the sacred gifts that the Israelites set aside for the Eternal I give to you, to your sons, and to the daughters that are with you, as a due for all time. It shall be an everlasting covenant of salt before the Eternal for you and for your offspring as well. ²⁰And the Eternal said to Aaron: You shall, however, have no territorial share among them or own any portion in their midst; I am your portion and your share among the Israelites.

²¹And to the Levites I hereby give all the tithes in Israel as their share in return for the services that they perform, the services of the Tent of Meeting. ²²Henceforth, Israelites shall not trespass on the Tent of Meeting, and thus incur guilt and die: ²³only Levites shall perform the services of the Tent of Meeting; others would incur guilt. It is the law for all time throughout the ages. But they shall have no territorial share among the Israelites; ²⁴for it is the tithes set aside by the Israelites as a gift to the Eternal that I give to the Levites as their share. Therefore I have said concerning them: They shall have no territorial share among the Israelites.

²⁵The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁶Speak to the Levites and say to them: When you receive from the Israelites their tithes, which I have assigned to you as your share, you shall set aside from them one-tenth of the tithe as a gift to the Eternal. ²⁷This shall be accounted to you as your gift. As with the new grain from the threshing floor or the flow from the vat, ²⁸so shall you on your part set aside a gift for the Eternal from all the tithes that you receive from the Israelites; and from them you shall bring the gift for the Eternal to Aaron the priest. ²⁹You shall set aside all gifts due to the Eternal from everything that is donated to you, from each thing its best portion, the part thereof that is to be consecrated.

³⁰Say to them further: When you have removed the best part from it, you Levites may consider it the same as the yield of threshing floor or vat. ³¹You and your households may eat it anywhere, for it is your recompense for your services in the Tent of Meeting. ³²You will incur no guilt through it, once you have removed the best part from it; but you must not profane the sacred donations of the Israelites, lest you die.

CHUKAT

¹⁹The Eternal One spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ²This is the ritual law that the Eternal has commanded:

Instruct the Israelite people ¹¹⁰ to bring you a red cow without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which no yoke has been laid. ³You shall give it to Eleazar the priest. It shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. ⁴Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his

finger and sprinkle it seven times toward the front of the Tent of Meeting. ⁵The cow shall be burned in his sight—its hide, flesh, and blood shall be burned, its dung included—⁶and the priest shall take cedar wood, hyssop, and crimson stuff, and throw them into the fire consuming the cow. ⁷The priest shall wash his garments and bathe his body in water; after that the priest may reenter the camp, but he shall be impure until evening. ¹¹¹⁸**He**~~The one~~ who performed the burning shall also wash ~~his~~**those** garments in water, bathe ~~his~~**body** in water, and be impure until evening. ⁹**A man**~~Another party~~ who is **pure** shall gather up the ashes of the cow and deposit them outside the camp in a pure place, to be kept for water of lustration for the Israelite community. It is for purgation. ¹⁰**He**~~The one~~ who gathers up the ashes of the cow shall also wash ~~his~~**those** clothes and be impure until evening.

This shall be a permanent law for the Israelites and for the strangers who reside among you.

¹¹**He**~~Those~~ who touches ¹¹² the corpse of any human being shall be impure for seven days. ¹²**He**~~They~~ shall purify ~~himself~~**themselves** with ~~#~~**[the ashes]** ¹¹³ on the third day and on the seventh day, and then be pure; if ~~he~~**they** fails to purify ~~himself~~**themselves** on the third and seventh days, ~~he~~**they** shall not be pure. ¹³**Whoever**~~Those who~~ touches a corpse, the body of a person who has died, and does not purify ~~himself~~**themselves**, defiles the Eternal's Tabernacle; ~~that~~**those** persons shall be cut off from Israel. Since the water of lustration was not dashed on ~~him~~**them**, ~~he~~**they** remains impure; ~~his~~**their** impurity is still upon ~~him~~**them**.

¹⁴This is the ritual: When a person ¹¹⁴ dies in a tent, whoever enters the tent and whoever is in the tent shall be impure seven days; ¹⁵and every open vessel, with no lid fastened down, shall be impure. ¹⁶And in the open, anyone who touches a person who was killed or who died naturally, or human bone, or a grave, shall be impure seven days. ¹⁷Some of the ashes from the fire of purgation shall be taken for the impure person, and fresh water shall be added to them in a vessel. ¹⁸**A person**~~Another party~~ who is **pure** ¹¹⁵ shall take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle on the tent and on all the vessels and people who were there, or on ~~the one~~**him** who touched ¹¹⁶ the bones or the person who was killed or died naturally or the grave. ¹⁹The pure person shall sprinkle it upon the impure person on the third day and on the seventh day, thus purifying ~~him~~**that person** by the seventh day. **[The one being purified]** ~~He~~ ¹¹⁷ shall then wash ~~his~~**those** clothes and bathe in water, ~~—~~ and at nightfall ~~he~~ shall be pure. ²⁰If ~~anyone~~**any party** who has become impure ¹¹⁸ fails to ~~cleanse himself~~**undergo purification**, that person shall be cut off from the congregation; for ~~he~~**having** ~~has~~ defiled the Eternal's sanctuary. The water of lustration was not dashed on ~~him~~**that person**, ~~he~~**who** is impure.

²¹That shall be for them a law for all time. Further, ~~he~~**the one** who sprinkled the water of lustration shall wash ~~his~~**those** clothes; and whoever touches the water of lustration shall be impure until evening. ²²Whatever that impure person touches

shall be impure; and the person who touches ~~him~~the impure one^[119] shall be impure until evening.

20The Israelites arrived in a body at the wilderness of Zin on the first new moon, and the people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried there.

^[120]²The community was without water, and they joined against Moses and Aaron. ³The people quarreled with Moses, saying, “If only we had perished when our brothers perished at the instance of the Eternal^[121]! ⁴Why have you brought the Eternal’s congregation into this wilderness for us and our beasts to die there? ⁵Why did you make us leave Egypt to bring us to this wretched place, a place with no grain or figs or vines or pomegranates? There is not even water to drink!”

⁶Moses and Aaron came away from the congregation to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and fell on their faces. The Presence of the Eternal appeared to them, ⁷and the Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying, ⁸“You and your brother Aaron take the rod and assemble the community, and before their very eyes order the rock to yield its water. Thus you shall produce water for them from the rock and provide drink for the congregation and their beasts.”

⁹Moses took the rod from before the Eternal, as ~~He~~he had ~~been~~ commanded ~~him~~. ¹⁰Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation in front of the rock; and he said to them, “Listen, you rebels, shall we get water for you out of this rock?” ¹¹And Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod. Out came copious water, and the community and their beasts drank.

¹²But the Eternal One said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust Me enough to affirm My sanctity in the sight of the Israelite people, therefore you shall not lead this congregation into the land that I have given them.”

¹³Those are the Waters of Meribah—meaning that the Israelites quarrelled with the Eternal—~~through which He affirmed His sanctity~~whose sanctity was affirmed through them.

¹⁴From Kadesh, Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom: “Thus says your brother^[122] Israel: You know all the hardships that have befallen us; ¹⁵that our ancestors^[123] went down to Egypt, that we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and that the Egyptians dealt harshly with us and our ancestors. ¹⁶We cried to the Eternal ~~and He~~who heard our plea, ~~and He sent~~sending a messenger who freed us from Egypt. Now we are in Kadesh, the town on the border of your territory. ¹⁷Allow us, then, to cross your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, and we will not drink water from wells. We will follow the king’s highway, turning off neither to the right nor to the left until we have crossed your territory.”

¹⁸But Edom answered him, “You shall not pass through us, else we will go out against you with the sword.” ¹⁹“We will keep to the beaten track,” the Israelites said to them, “and

if we or our cattle drink your water, we will pay for it. We ask only for passage on foot—it is but a small matter.” ²⁰But they replied, “You shall not pass through!” And Edom went out against them in heavy force, strongly armed. ²¹So Edom would not let Israel cross their territory, and Israel turned away from them.

²²Setting out from Kadesh, the Israelites arrived in a body at Mount Hor. ²³At Mount Hor, on the boundary of the land of Edom, the Eternal One said to Moses and Aaron, ²⁴“Let Aaron be gathered to his kin: he is not to enter the land that I have assigned to the Israelite people, because you disobeyed my command about the waters of Meribah. ²⁵Take Aaron and his son Eleazar and bring them up on Mount Hor. ²⁶Strip Aaron of his vestments and put them on his son Eleazar. There Aaron shall be gathered unto the dead.”

²⁷Moses did as the Eternal had commanded. They ascended Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. ²⁸Moses stripped Aaron of his vestments and put them on his son Eleazar, and Aaron died there on the summit of the mountain. When Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain, ²⁹the whole community^[124] knew that Aaron had breathed his last. All the house of Israel bewailed^[125] Aaron thirty days.

21When the Canaanite, king of Arad, who dwelt in the Negeb, learned that Israel^[126] was coming by the way of Atharim, he engaged Israel in battle and took some of them captive. ²Then Israel made a vow to the Eternal and said, “If You deliver this people into our hand, we will proscribe their towns.” ³The Eternal heeded Israel’s plea and delivered up the Canaanites; and they and their cities were proscribed. So that place was named Hormah.

⁴They set out from Mount Hor by way of the Sea of Reeds to skirt the land of Edom. But the people grew restive on the journey, ⁵and the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why did you make us leave Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread and no water, and we have come to loathe this miserable food.” ⁶The Eternal sent *seraph* serpents against the people. They bit the people and many of the Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned by speaking against the Eternal and against you. Intercede with the Eternal to take away the serpents from us!” And Moses interceded for the people^[127]. ⁸Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Make a *seraph* figure and mount it on a standard. And ~~if~~ anyone who ~~is~~was bitten ~~who then~~ looks at it, ~~he~~ shall recover.” ⁹Moses made a copper serpent and mounted it on a standard; and when ~~anyone was~~ bitten by a serpent, ~~he~~anyone who would looked at the copper serpent ~~and would~~ recover.^[128]

¹⁰The Israelites marched on and encamped at Oboth. ¹¹They set out from Oboth and encamped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness bordering on Moab to the east. ¹²From there

they set out and encamped at the wadi Zered. ¹³From there they set out and encamped beyond the Arnon, that is, in the wilderness that extends from the territory of the Amorites. For the Arnon is the boundary of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. ¹⁴Therefore the Book of the Wars of the Eternal speaks of “. . . Waheb in Suphah, and the wadis: the Arnon ¹⁵with its tributary wadis, stretched along the settled country of Ar, hugging the territory of Moab . . .”

¹⁶And from there to Beer, which is the well where the Eternal One said to Moses, “Assemble the people that I may give them water.” ¹⁷Then Israel sang this song:

Spring up, O well—sing to it—

¹⁸The well which the chieftains dug,

Which the nobles of the people started

With maces, with their own staffs.

And from Midbar to Mattanah, ¹⁹and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth, ²⁰and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the country of Moab, at the peak of Pisgah, overlooking the wasteland.

²¹Israel now sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, ²²“Let me pass through your country. We will not turn off into fields or vineyards, and we will not drink water from wells. We will follow the king’s highway until we have crossed your territory.” ²³But Sihon would not let Israel pass through his territory. **Sihon gathered all his people** ¹²⁹ and went out against Israel in the wilderness. He came to Jahaz and engaged Israel in battle. ²⁴But Israel put them to the sword, and took possession of their land, from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as [Az] of the Ammonites, for Az marked the boundary of the Ammonites. ²⁵Israel took all those towns. And Israel settled in all the towns of the Amorites, in Heshbon and all its dependencies.

²⁶Now Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against a former king of Moab and taken all his land from him as far as the Arnon. ²⁷Therefore the bards would recite:

“Come to Heshbon; firmly built

And well founded is Sihon’s city.

²⁸For fire went forth from Heshbon,

Flame from Sihon’s city,

Consuming Ar of Moab,

The lords of Bamoth by the Arnon.

²⁹Woe to you, O Moab!

You are undone, O people of Chemosh!

His sons are rendered fugitive

And his daughters captive

By an Amorite king, Sihon.”

³⁰Yet we have cast them down utterly,

Heshbon along with Dibon;

We have wrought desolation at Nophah,

Which is hard by Medeba.

³¹So Israel occupied the land of the Amorites. ³²Then Moses sent to spy out Jazer, and they captured its dependencies and dispossessed the Amorites who were there.

³³They marched on and went up the road to Bashan, and King Og of Bashan, with all his **people** ¹³⁰ came out to Edrei to engage them in battle. ³⁴But the Eternal One said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I give him and all his **people** and his land into your hand. You shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites who dwelt in Heshbon.” ³⁵They defeated him and his sons and all his **people**, until no remnant was left him; and they took possession of his country. ²²The Israelites then marched on and encamped in the steppes of Moab, across the Jordan from Jericho.

BALAK

²Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

³Moab was alarmed because that people was so numerous. Moab dreaded the Israelites, ⁴and Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this horde will lick clean all that is about us as an ox licks up the grass of the field.”

Balak son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, ⁵sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor in Pethor, which is by the Euphrates, in the land of his kinsfolk, to invite him, saying, “There is a people that came out of Egypt; it hides the earth from view, and it is settled next to me. ⁶Come then, put a curse upon this people for me, since they are too numerous for me; perhaps I can thus defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom you bless is blessed indeed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”

⁷The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian, versed in divination, set out. They came to Balaam and gave him Balak’s message. ⁸He said to them, “Spend the night here, and I shall reply to you as the Eternal may instruct me.” So the Moabite dignitaries stayed with Balaam.

⁹God came to Balaam and said, “What do these **people** want of you?” ¹³¹ ¹⁰Balaam said to God, “Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me this message: ¹¹Here is a people that came out from Egypt and hides the earth from view. Come now and curse them for me; perhaps I can engage them in battle and drive them off.” ¹²But God said to Balaam, “Do not go with them. You must not curse that people, for they are blessed.”

¹³Balaam arose in the morning and said to Balak’s dignitaries, “Go back to your own country, for the Eternal will not let me go with you.” ¹⁴The Moabite dignitaries left, and they came to Balak and said, “Balaam refused to come with us.”

¹⁵Then Balak sent other dignitaries, more numerous and distinguished than the first. ¹⁶They came to Balaam and said to him, “Thus says Balak son of Zippor: Please do not refuse to come to me. ¹⁷I will reward you richly and I will do any-

thing you ask of me. Only come and damn this people for me.”¹⁸Balaam replied to Balak’s officials, “Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, big or little, contrary to the command of the Eternal my God.¹⁹So you, too, stay here overnight, and let me find out what else the Eternal may say to me.”²⁰That night God came to Balaam and said to him, “If these **men-voys** have come to invite you, you may go with them. But whatever I command you, that you shall do.”

²¹When he arose in the morning, Balaam saddled his ass and departed with the Moabite dignitaries.²²But God was incensed at his going; so an angel of the Eternal **placed himself** in his way as an adversary^[132].

He was riding on his she-ass, with his two servants alongside,²³when the ass caught sight of the angel of the Eternal standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. The ass swerved from the road and went into the fields; and Balaam beat the ass to turn her back onto the road.²⁴The angel of the Eternal then stationed himself in a lane between the vineyards, with a fence on either side.²⁵The ass, seeing the angel of the Eternal, pressed herself against the wall and squeezed Balaam’s foot against the wall; so he beat her again.²⁶Once more the angel of the Eternal moved forward and stationed himself on a spot so narrow that there was no room to swerve right or left.²⁷When the ass now saw the angel of the Eternal, she lay down under Balaam; and Balaam was furious and beat the ass with his stick.

²⁸Then the Eternal opened the ass’s mouth, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times?”²⁹Balaam said to the ass, “You have made a mockery of me! If I had a sword with me, I’d kill you.”³⁰The ass said to Balaam, “Look, I am the ass that you have been riding all along until this day! Have I been in the habit of doing thus to you?” And he answered, “No.”

³¹Then the Eternal uncovered Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the Eternal standing in the way, his drawn sword in his hand; thereupon he bowed right down to the ground.³²The angel of the Eternal said to him, “Why have you beaten your ass these three times? It is I who came out as an adversary, for the errand is obnoxious to me.³³And when the ass saw me, she shied away because of me those three times. If she had not shied away from me, you are the one I should have killed, while sparing her.”³⁴Balaam said to the angel of the Eternal, “I erred because I did not know that you were standing in my way. If you still disapprove, I will turn back.”³⁵But the angel of the Eternal said to Balaam, “Go with **those men-voys**. But you must say nothing except what I tell you.” So Balaam went on with Balak’s dignitaries.

³⁶When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at Ir-moab, which is on the Arnon border, at its farthest point.³⁷Balak said to Balaam, “When I first sent to invite you, why didn’t you come to me? Am I really unable to reward you?”³⁸But Balaam said to Balak, “And now that I

have come to you, have I the power to speak freely? I can utter only the word that God puts into my mouth.”

³⁹Balaam went with Balak and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.

⁴⁰Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and had them served to Balaam and the dignitaries with him.⁴¹In the morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth-baal. From there he could see a portion of the people.

23Balaam said to Balak, “Build me seven altars here and have seven bulls and seven rams ready here for me.”²Balak did as Balaam directed; and Balak and Balaam offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.³Then Balaam said to Balak, “Stay here beside your offerings while I am gone. Perhaps the Eternal will grant me a manifestation, and whatever **Heis** revealed to me I will tell you.” And he went off alone.

⁴God **became manifested Himself**^[133] to Balaam, who **said to Him** stated, “I have set up the seven altars and offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.”⁵And the Eternal put a word in Balaam’s mouth and said, “Return to Balak and speak thus.”

⁶So he returned to him and found him standing beside his offerings, and all the Moabite dignitaries with him.⁷He took up his theme, and said:

From Aram has Balak brought me,
Moab’s king from the hills of the East:
Come, curse me Jacob,

Come, tell Israel’s doom!

⁸How can I damn whom God has not damned,
How doom when the Eternal has not doomed?

⁹As I see them from the mountain tops,
Gaze on them from the heights,

There is a people that dwells apart,
Not reckoned among the nations,

¹⁰Who can count the dust of Jacob,
Number the dust-cloud of Israel?

May I die the death of the upright,
May my fate be like theirs!

¹¹Then Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to me? Here I brought you to damn my enemies, and instead you have blessed them!”¹²He replied, “I can only repeat faithfully what the Eternal puts in my mouth.”¹³Then Balak said to him, “Come with me to another place from which you can see them—you will see only a portion of them; you will not see all of them—and damn them for me from there.”¹⁴With that, he took him to Sedehzophim, on the summit of Pisgah. He built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.¹⁵And [Balaam] said to Balak, “Stay here beside your offerings, while I seek a manifestation yonder.”

¹⁶The Eternal **became manifested Himself** to Balaam and put a word in his mouth, saying, “Return to Balak and speak thus.”¹⁷He went to him and found him standing beside

his offerings, and the Moabite dignitaries with him. Balak asked him, “What did the Eternal say?” ¹⁸And he took up his theme, and said:

Up, Balak, attend,
Give ear unto me, son of Zippor!
¹⁹God is not human ^[134] to be capricious,
Or mortal to have a change His mind of heart ^[135]
Would He ^[God] speak and not act,
Promise and not fulfill?
²⁰My message was to bless:
When He ^[God] blesses, I cannot reverse it.
²¹No harm is in sight for Jacob,
No woe in view for Israel.
The Eternal their God is with them,
And their King’s acclaim in their midst.
²²God who freed them from Egypt
Is for them like the horns of the wild ox.
²³Lo, there is no augury in Jacob,
No divining in Israel:
Jacob is told at once,
Yea Israel, what God has planned.
²⁴Lo, a people that rises like a lioness,
Leaps up like the king of beasts a lion ^[136]
Rests not till it has feasted on prey
And drunk the blood of the slain.

²⁵Thereupon Balak said to Balaam, “Don’t curse them and don’t bless them!” ²⁶In reply, Balaam said to Balak, “But I told you: Whatever the Eternal says, that I must do.” ²⁷Then Balak said to Balaam, “Come now, I will take you to another place. Perhaps God will deem it right that you damn them for me there.” ²⁸Balak took Balaam to the peak of Peor, which overlooks the wasteland. ²⁹Balaam said to Balak, “Build me here seven altars, and have seven bulls and seven rams ready for me here.” ³⁰Balak did as Balaam said: he offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.

²⁴Now Balaam, seeing that it pleased the Eternal to bless Israel, did not, as on previous occasions, go in search of omens, but turned his face toward the wilderness. ²As Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the spirit of God came upon him. ³Taking up his theme, he said:

Word of Balaam son of Beor,
Word of the man ^[137] whose eye is true,
⁴Word of him ^[one] ^[138] who hears God’s speech,
Who beholds visions from the Almighty,
Prostrate, but with eyes unveiled:
⁵How fair are your tents, O Jacob,
Your dwellings, O Israel!
⁶Like palm-groves that stretch out,
Like gardens beside a river,
Like aloes planted by the Eternal,

Like cedars beside the water;
⁷Their boughs ^[139] drip with moisture,
Their roots have abundant water.
Their king ^[ruler] shall rise above Agag,
Their kingdom ^[sovereignty] shall be exalted. ^[140]
⁸God who freed them from Egypt
Is for them like the horns of the wild ox.
They shall devour enemy nations,
Crush their bones,
And smash their arrows.
⁹They crouch, they lie down like a lion,
Like the king of beasts a lioness ^[141] who dares
rouse them? ^[142]
Blessed are they who bless you,
Accursed they who curse you!

¹⁰Enraged at Balaam, Balak struck his hands together. “I called you,” Balak said to Balaam, “to damn my enemies, and instead you have blessed them these three times! ¹¹Back with you at once to your own place! I was going to reward you richly, but the Eternal has denied you the reward.” ¹²Balaam replied to Balak, “But I even told the messengers you sent to me, ¹³‘Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not of my own accord do anything good or bad contrary to the Eternal’s command. What the Eternal says, that I must say.’ ¹⁴And now, as I go back to my people, let me inform you of what this people will do to your people in days to come.” ¹⁵He took up his theme, and said:

Word of Balaam son of Beor,
Word of the man whose eye is true,
¹⁶Word of him ^[one] ^[143] who hears God’s speech,
Who obtains knowledge from the Most High,
And beholds visions from the Almighty,
Prostrate, but with eyes unveiled:
¹⁷What I see for them is not yet,
What I behold will not be soon:
A star rises from Jacob,
A scepter comes forth from Israel;
It smashes the brow of Moab,
The foundation of all children of Seth.
¹⁸Edom becomes a possession,
Yea, Seir a possession of its enemies;
But Israel is triumphant.
¹⁹A victor issues from Jacob
To wipe out what is left of Ir.

²⁰He saw Amalek and, taking up his theme, he said:
A leading nation is Amalek;
But its fate is to perish forever.

²¹He saw the Kenites and, taking up his theme, he said:
Though your abode be secure,
And your nest be set among cliffs,

²²Yet shall Kain be consumed,
When Asshur takes you captive.

²³He took up his theme and said:
Alas, who can survive except God has willed it!
²⁴Ships come from the quarter of Kittim;
They subject Asshur, subject Eber.
They, too, shall perish forever.

²⁵Then Balaam set out on his journey back home; and Balak also went his way.

25 While Israel was staying at Shittim, the ~~people~~menfolk^[144] profaned themselves by whoring with the Moabite women, ²who invited the ~~people~~menfolk to the sacrifices for their god. The ~~people~~menfolk partook of them and worshiped that god. ³Thus Israel attached itself to Baal-peor, and the Eternal was incensed with Israel. ⁴The Eternal One said to Moses, “Take all the ringleaders and have them publicly impaled before the Eternal, so that the Eternal’s wrath may turn away from Israel.” ⁵So Moses said to Israel’s officials, “Each of you slay those of his men^[145] who attached themselves to Baal-peor.”

⁶Just then one of the ~~Israelite~~notables^[146] came and brought a Midianite woman over to his companions, in the sight of Moses and of the whole Israelite community who were weeping^[147] at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ⁷When Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, saw this, he left the assembly and, taking a spear in his hand, ⁸he followed the ~~Israelite~~notable into the chamber and stabbed both of them, the ~~Israelite~~notable and the woman, through the belly. Then the plague against the Israelites was checked. ⁹Those who died of the plague numbered twenty-four thousand.

PINCHAS

¹⁰The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying, ¹¹“Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the Israelites by displaying among them his passion for Me, so that I did not wipe out the Israelite people in My passion. ¹²Say, therefore, ‘I grant him My pact of friendship. ¹³It shall be for him and his descendants after him a pact of priesthood for all time, because he took impassioned action for his God, thus making expiation for the Israelites.’”

¹⁴The name of the ~~Israelite~~notable who was killed^[148], the one who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri son of Salu, chieftain of a Simeonite ancestral house. ¹⁵The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi daughter of Zur; he was the tribal head of an ancestral house in Midian.

¹⁶The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁷“Assail the Midianites and defeat them—¹⁸for they assailed you by the

trickery they practiced against you—because of the affair of Peor and because of the affair of their kinswoman Cozbi, daughter of the Midianite chieftain, who was killed at the time of the plague on account of Peor.”

¹⁹When the plague was over, ²⁶the Eternal One said to Moses and to Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, ²“Take a census of the whole Israelite ~~community~~company [of fighters]^[149] from the age of twenty years up, by their ancestral houses, all Israelites ~~males~~ able to bear arms^[150].” ³So Moses and Eleazar the priest, on the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho, gave instructions about them, namely, ⁴those from twenty years up, as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

The ~~eligible~~male descendants of the Israelites who came out of the land of Egypt^[151] were:

⁵Reuben, Israel’s first-born. Descendants of Reuben: [Of] Enoch, the clan of the Enochites; of Pallu, the clan of the Palluites; ⁶of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the clan of the Carmites. ⁷Those are the clans of the Reubenites. The ~~persons~~men enrolled^[152] came to 43,730.

⁸Born to Pallu: Eliab. ⁹The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, and Dathan and Abiram. These are the same Dathan and Abiram, chosen in the assembly, who agitated against Moses and Aaron as part of Korah’s band when they agitated against the Eternal. ¹⁰Whereupon the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with Korah—when that band died, when the fire consumed the two hundred and fifty ~~men~~representatives^[153]—and they became an example. ¹¹The sons of Korah,^[154] however, did not die.

¹²Descendants of Simeon by their clans: Of Nemuel, the clan of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the clan of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the clan of the Jachinites; ¹³of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahites; of Saul, the clan of the Saulites. ¹⁴Those are the clans of the Simeonites; [~~persons~~men enrolled:] 22,200.

¹⁵Descendants of Gad by their clans: Of Zephon, the clan of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the clan of the Haggites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; ¹⁶of Ozni, the clan of the Oznites; of Eri, the clan of the Erites; ¹⁷of Arod, the clan of the Arodites; of Areli, the clan of the Arelites. ¹⁸Those are the clans of Gad’s descendants; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 40,500.

¹⁹Born to Judah: Er and Onan. Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

²⁰Descendants of Judah by their clans: Of Shelah, the clan of the Shelanites; of Perez, the clan of the Perezites; of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahites. ²¹Descendants of Perez: of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the clan of the Hamulites. ²²Those are the clans of Judah; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 76,500.

²³Descendants of Issachar by their clans: [Of] Tola, the clan of the Tolaites; of Puvah, the clan of the Punites; ²⁴of Jashub, the clan of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the clan of the Shimronites. ²⁵Those are the clans of Issachar; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 64,300.

²⁶Descendants of Zebulun by their clans: Of Sered, the clan of the Seredites; of Elon, the clan of the Elonites; of

Jahleel, the clan of the Jahleelites. ²⁷Those are the clans of the Zebulunites; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 60,500.

²⁸The sons of Joseph were Manasseh and Ephraim—by their clans.

²⁹Descendants of Manasseh: Of Machir, the clan of the Machirites.—Machir begot Gilead.—Of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadites. ³⁰These were the descendants of Gilead: [Of] Iezer, the clan of the Iezerites; of Helek, the clan of the Helekites; ³¹[of] Asriel, the clan of the Asrielites; [of] Shechem, the clan of the Shechemites; ³²[of] Shemida, the clan of the Shemidaites; [of] Hephher, the clan of the Hephherites.—³³Now Zelophehad son of Hephher had no sons, only daughters. The names of Zelophehad's daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.—³⁴Those are the clans of Manasseh; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 52,700.

³⁵These are the descendants of Ephraim by their clans: Of Shuthelah, the clan of the Shuthelahites; of Becher, the clan of the Becherites; of Tahan, the clan of the Tahanites. ³⁶These are the descendants of Shuthelah: Of Eran, the clan of the Eranites. ³⁷Those are the clans of Ephraim's descendants; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 32,500.

Those are the descendants of Joseph by their clans.

³⁸The descendants of Benjamin by their clans: Of Bela, the clan of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the clan of the Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the clan of the Ahiramites; ³⁹of Shephupham, the clan of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the clan of the Huphamites. ⁴⁰The sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: [Of Ard,] the clan of the Ardites; of Naaman, the clan of the Naamanites.

⁴¹Those are the descendants of Benjamin by their clans; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 45,600.

⁴²These are the descendants of Dan by their clans: Of Shuham, the clan of the Shuhamites. Those are the clans of Dan, by their clans. ⁴³All the clans of the Shuhamites; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 64,400.

⁴⁴Descendants of Asher by their clans: Of Imnah, the clan of the Imnites; of Ishvi, the clan of the Ishvites; of Beriah, the clan of the Beriites. ⁴⁵Of the descendants of Beriah: Of Heber, the clan of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the clan of the Malchielites.—⁴⁶The name of Asher's daughter was Sarah.—⁴⁷These are the clans of Asher's descendants; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 53,400.

⁴⁸Descendants of Naphtali by their clans: Of Jahzeel, the clan of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the clan of the Gunites; ⁴⁹of Jezer, the clan of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the clan of the Shillemites. ⁵⁰Those are the clans of the Naphtalites, clan by clan; ~~persons~~men enrolled: 45,400.

⁵¹This is the enrollment of the Israelites ~~men~~: 601,730.

⁵²The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying, ⁵³“Among these shall the land be apportioned as shares, according to the listed names: ⁵⁴with larger groups increase the share, with smaller groups reduce the share. Each is to be assigned its share according to its enrollment. ⁵⁵The land, moreover, is to be apportioned by lot; and the allotment shall be made accord-

ing to the listings of their ancestral tribes. ⁵⁶Each portion shall be assigned by lot, whether for larger or smaller groups.”

⁵⁷This is the enrollment of the Levites by their clans: Of Gershon, the clan of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the clan of the Kohathites; of Merari, the clan of the Merarites. ⁵⁸These are the clans of Levi: The clan of the Libnites, the clan of the Hebronites, the clan of the Mahlites, the clan of the Mushites, the clan of the Korahites.—Kohath begot Amram. ⁵⁹The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam. ⁶⁰To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ⁶¹Nadab and Abihu died when they offered alien fire before the Eternal.—⁶²Their enrollment of 23,000 comprised all males from a month up. They were not part of the regular enrollment of the Israelites, since no share was assigned to them among the Israelites.

⁶³These are the ~~persons~~males enrolled ^[155] by Moses and Eleazar the priest who registered the Israelites on the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho. ⁶⁴Among these there was not one of those enrolled ^[156] by Moses and Aaron the priest when they recorded the Israelites ^[157] in the wilderness of Sinai. ⁶⁵For the Eternal had said of them, “They shall die in the wilderness.” Not one of them survived ^[158], except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

²⁷The daughters of Zelophehad, of Manassite family—son of Hephher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh son of Joseph—came forward. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. ²They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the chieftains, and the whole assembly, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and they said, ³“Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the faction, Korah's faction, which banded together against the Eternal, but died for his own sin; and he has left no sons. ⁴Let not our father's name be lost to his clan just because he had no son! Give us a holding among our father's kinsmen ^{[159]!}”

⁵Moses brought their case before the Eternal.

⁶And the Eternal One said to Moses, ⁷“The plea of Zelophehad's daughters is just: you should give them a hereditary holding among their father's kinsmen ^[160]; transfer their father's share to them.

⁸“Further, speak to the Israelite people as follows: ‘If a ~~man~~householder ^[161] dies without leaving a son, you shall transfer his property to his daughter. ⁹If he has no daughter, you shall assign his property to his brothers. ¹⁰If he has no brothers, you shall assign his property to his father's brothers. ¹¹If his father had no brothers, you shall assign his property to his nearest relative ^[162] in his own clan, ~~and he~~who shall inherit it.’ This shall be the law of procedure for the Israelites, in accordance with the Eternal's command to Moses.”

163¹²The Eternal One said to Moses, “Ascend these heights of Abarim and view the land that I have given to the Israelite people. ¹³When you have seen it, you too shall be gathered to your kin, just as your brother Aaron was. ¹⁴For, in the wilderness of Zin, when the community was contentious, you disobeyed My command to uphold My sanctity in their sight by means of the water.” Those are the Waters of Meribath-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.

¹⁵Moses spoke to the Eternal, saying, ¹⁶“Let the Eternal One, Source of the breath of all flesh, appoint **someone over an envoy to**¹⁶⁴ the community ¹⁷who shall go out before them and come in before them, and who shall take them out and bring them in, so that the Eternal’s community may not be like sheep that have no shepherd.” ¹⁸And the Eternal One answered Moses, “Single out Joshua son of Nun, an inspired **man deputy**,¹⁶⁵ and lay your hand upon him. ¹⁹Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community, and commission him in their sight. ²⁰Invest him with some of your authority, so that the whole Israelite community may obey. ²¹But he shall present himself to Eleazar the priest, who shall on his behalf seek the decision of the Urim before the Eternal. By such instruction they shall go out and by such instruction they shall come in, he and all **the Israelite-, [militia] and** the whole community.”¹⁶⁶

²²Moses did as the Eternal commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community. ²³He laid his hands upon him and commissioned him—as the Eternal had spoken through Moses.

28The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ²Command the Israelite people and say to them: Be punctilious in presenting to Me at stated times the offerings of food due Me, as offerings by fire of pleasing odor to Me.

³Say to them: These are the offerings by fire that you are to present to the Eternal:

As a regular burnt offering every day, two yearling lambs without blemish. ⁴You shall offer one lamb in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. ⁵And as a meal offering, there shall be a tenth of an *ephah* of choice flour with a quarter of a *hin* of beaten oil mixed in—⁶the regular burnt offering instituted at Mount Sinai—an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Eternal.

⁷The libation with it shall be a quarter of a *hin* for each lamb, to be poured in the sacred precinct as an offering of fermented drink to the Eternal. ⁸The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, preparing the same meal offering and libation as in the morning—an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Eternal.

⁹On the sabbath day: two yearling lambs without blemish, together with two-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in as a meal offering, and with the proper libation—

^{10a} burnt offering for every sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its libation.

¹¹On your new moons you shall present a burnt offering to the Eternal: two bulls of the herd, one ram, and seven yearling lambs, without blemish. ¹²As meal offering for each bull: three-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in. As meal offering for each ram: two-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in. ¹³As meal offering for each lamb: a tenth of a measure of fine flour with oil mixed in. Such shall be the burnt offering of pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the Eternal. ¹⁴Their libations shall be: half a *hin* of wine for a bull, a third of a *hin* for a ram, and a quarter of a *hin* for a lamb. That shall be the monthly burnt offering for each new moon of the year. ¹⁵And there shall be one goat as a purgation offering to the Eternal, to be offered in addition to the regular burnt offering and its libation.

¹⁶In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, there shall be a passover sacrifice to the Eternal, ¹⁷and on the fifteenth day of that month a festival. Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. ¹⁸The first day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. ¹⁹You shall present an offering by fire, a burnt offering, to the Eternal: two bulls of the herd, one ram, and seven yearling lambs—see that they are without blemish. ²⁰The meal offering with them shall be of choice flour with oil mixed in: prepare three-tenths of a measure for a bull, two-tenths for a ram; ²¹and for each of the seven lambs prepare one-tenth of a measure. ²²And there shall be one goat for a purgation offering, to make expiation in your behalf. ²³You shall present these in addition to the morning portion of the regular burnt offering. ²⁴You shall offer the like daily for seven days as food, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Eternal; they shall be offered, with their libations, in addition to the regular burnt offering. ²⁵And the seventh day shall be a sacred occasion for you: you shall not work at your occupations.

²⁶On the day of the first fruits, your Feast of Weeks, when you bring an offering of new grain to the Eternal, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. ²⁷You shall present a burnt offering of pleasing odor to the Eternal: two bulls of the herd, one ram, seven yearling lambs. ²⁸The meal offering with them shall be of choice flour with oil mixed in, three-tenths of a measure for a bull, two-tenths for a ram, ²⁹and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. ³⁰And there shall be one goat for expiation in your behalf. ³¹You shall present them—see that they are without blemish—with their libations, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its meal offering.

29In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded. ²You shall present a burnt offering of pleasing odor to the Eternal: one bull of the herd, one ram, and seven year-

ling lambs, without blemish. ³The meal offering with them—choice flour with oil mixed in—shall be: three-tenths of a measure for a bull, two-tenths for a ram, ⁴and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. ⁵And there shall be one goat for a purgation offering, to make expiation in your behalf—⁶in addition to the burnt offering of the new moon with its meal offering and the regular burnt offering with its meal offering, each with its libation as prescribed, offerings by fire of pleasing odor to the Eternal.

⁷On the tenth day of the same seventh month you shall observe a sacred occasion when you shall practice self-denial. You shall do no work. ⁸You shall present to the Eternal a burnt offering of pleasing odor: one bull of the herd, one ram, seven yearling lambs; see that they are without blemish. ⁹The meal offering with them—of choice flour with oil mixed in—shall be: three-tenths of a measure for a bull, two-tenths for the one ram, ¹⁰one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. ¹¹And there shall be one goat for a purgation offering, in addition to the purgation offering of expiation and the regular burnt offering with its meal offering, each with its libation.

¹²On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.—Seven days you shall observe a festival of the Eternal.—¹³You shall present a burnt offering, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Eternal: Thirteen bulls of the herd, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs; they shall be without blemish. ¹⁴The meal offerings with them—of choice flour with oil mixed in—shall be: three-tenths of a measure for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, ¹⁵and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs. ¹⁶And there shall be one goat for a purgation offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its meal offering and libation.

¹⁷Second day: Twelve bulls of the herd, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ¹⁸the meal offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ¹⁹and one goat for a purgation offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its meal offering and libations.

²⁰Third day: Eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ²¹the meal offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ²²and one goat for a purgation offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its meal offering and libation.

²³Fourth day: Ten bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ²⁴the meal offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ²⁵and one goat for a purgation offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its meal offering and libation.

²⁶Fifth day: Nine bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ²⁷the meal offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ²⁸and one goat for a purgation offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its meal offering and libation.

²⁹Sixth day: Eight bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ³⁰the meal offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ³¹and one goat for a purgation offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its meal offering and libations.

³²Seventh day: Seven bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ³³the meal offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ³⁴and one goat for a purgation offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its meal offering and libation.

³⁵On the eighth day you shall hold a solemn gathering; you shall not work at your occupations. ³⁶You shall present a burnt offering, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Eternal; one bull, one ram, seven yearling lambs, without blemish; ³⁷the meal offerings and libations for the bull, the ram, and the lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ³⁸and one goat for a purgation offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its meal offering and libation.

³⁹All these you shall offer to the Eternal at the stated times, in addition to your votive and freewill offerings, be they burnt offerings, meal offerings, libations, or offerings of well-being. **30**So Moses spoke to the Israelites just as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

MATOT

²Moses spoke to the heads of the Israelite tribes, saying: This is what the Eternal has commanded:

³If a **man**^{householder} **167** makes a vow to the Eternal or takes an oath imposing an obligation on himself, he shall not break his pledge; he must carry out all that has crossed his lips.

⁴If a woman **168** makes a vow to the Eternal or assumes an obligation while still in her father's household by reason of her youth **169**, ⁵and her father **170** learns of her vow or her self-imposed obligation and offers no objection, all her vows shall stand and every self-imposed obligation shall stand. ⁶But if her father restrains her on the day he finds out, none of her vows or self-imposed obligations shall stand; and the Eternal will forgive her, since her father restrained her.

⁷If she should marry while her vow or the commitment to which she bound herself is still in force, ⁸and her husband learns of it and offers no objection on the day he finds out, her vows shall stand and her self-imposed obligations shall stand. ⁹But if her husband restrains her on the day that he learns of it, he thereby annuls her vow which was in force or the commitment to which she bound herself; and the Eternal will forgive her.—¹⁰The vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, however, whatever she has imposed on herself, shall be binding upon her.—¹¹So, too, if, while in her husband's household, she makes a vow or imposes an obligation on herself by oath, ¹²and her husband learns of it, yet offers no objection—

thus failing to restrain her—all her vows shall stand and all her self-imposed obligations shall stand. ¹³But if her husband does annul them on the day he finds out, then nothing that has crossed her lips shall stand, whether vows or self-imposed obligations. Her husband has annulled them, and the Eternal will forgive her. ¹⁴Every vow and every sworn obligation of self-denial may be upheld by her husband or annulled by her husband. ¹⁵If her husband offers no objection from that day to the next, he has upheld all the vows or obligations she has assumed: he has upheld them by offering no objection on the day he found out. ¹⁶But if he annuls them after [the day] he finds out, he shall bear her guilt.

¹⁷Those are the laws that the Eternal enjoined upon Moses between a ~~man~~husband and his wife ¹⁷¹, and as between a father and his daughter while in her father's household by reason of her youth.

31 The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Avenge the Israelite people on the Midianites; then you shall be gathered to your kin.”

³Moses spoke to the ~~people~~militia ¹⁷², saying, “Let ~~men~~troops be picked out from among you for a campaign ¹⁷³, and let them fall upon Midian to wreak the Eternal's vengeance on Midian. ⁴You shall dispatch on the campaign a thousand from every one of the tribes of Israel.”

⁵So a thousand from each tribe were furnished from the divisions of Israel, twelve thousand picked for the campaign. ⁶Moses dispatched them on the campaign, a thousand from each tribe, with Phinehas son of Eleazar serving as a priest on the campaign, equipped with the sacred utensils and the trumpets for sounding the blasts. ⁷They took the field against Midian, as the Eternal had commanded Moses, and slew every male ¹⁷⁴. ⁸Along with their other victims, they slew the kings of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. They also put Balaam son of Beor to the sword.

⁹The Israelites ¹⁷⁵ took the women and ~~children~~other noncombatants ¹⁷⁶ of the Midianites captive, and seized as booty all their beasts, all their herds, and all their wealth. ¹⁰And they destroyed by fire all the towns in which they were settled, and their encampments. ¹¹They gathered all the spoil and all the booty, ~~human and beast~~ ¹⁷⁷, ¹²and they brought the captives, the booty, and the spoil to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the whole Israelite community, at the camp in the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho.

¹³Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the chieftains of the community came out to meet them outside the camp. ¹⁴Moses became angry with the commanders of the army, the officers of thousands and the officers of hundreds, who had come back from the military campaign. ¹⁵Moses said to them, “You have spared every female! ¹⁶Yet they are the very ones who, at the bidding of Balaam, induced the Israelites to trespass against the Eternal in the matter of Peor, so that the Eternal's

community was struck by the plague. ¹⁷Now, therefore, slay every male among the ~~children~~dependents ¹⁷⁸, and slay also every woman who has known a man carnally; ¹⁸but spare every ~~young woman~~female dependent ¹⁷⁹ who has not had carnal relations with a man.

¹⁹“You shall then stay outside the camp seven days; every one among you or among your captives who has slain a person ¹⁸⁰ or touched a corpse shall purify himself on the third and seventh days. ²⁰You shall also purify every cloth, every article of skin, everything made of goats' hair, and every object of wood.”

²¹Eleazar the priest said to the troops who had taken part in the fighting, “This is the ritual law that the Eternal has enjoined upon Moses: ²²Gold and silver, copper, iron, tin, and lead—²³any article that can withstand fire—these you shall pass through fire and they shall be pure, except that they must be purified with water of lustration; and anything that cannot withstand fire you must pass through water. ²⁴On the seventh day you shall wash your clothes and be pure, and after that you may enter the camp.”

²⁵The Eternal One said to Moses: ²⁶“You and Eleazar the priest and the family heads of the community ¹⁸¹ take an inventory of the booty that was captured, ~~human and beast~~ ¹⁸², ²⁷and divide the booty equally between the combatants who engaged in the campaign and the rest of the community ¹⁸³. ²⁸You shall exact a levy for the Eternal: in the case of the warriors who engaged in the campaign, one item in five hundred, of persons, oxen, asses, and sheep, ²⁹shall be taken from their half-share and given to Eleazar the priest as a contribution to the Eternal; ³⁰and from the half-share of the other Israelites you shall withhold one in every fifty human beings as well as cattle, asses, and sheep—all the animals—and give them to the Levites, who attend to the duties of the Eternal's Tabernacle.”

³¹Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the Eternal commanded Moses. ³²The amount of booty, other than the spoil that the troops ¹⁸⁴ had plundered, came to 675,000 sheep, 3372,000 head of cattle, ³⁴61,000 asses, ³⁵and a total of 32,000 human beings, namely, the ~~women~~females ¹⁸⁵ who had not had carnal relations.

³⁶Thus, the half-share of those who had engaged in the campaign [was as follows]: The number of sheep was 337,500, ³⁷and the Eternal's levy from the sheep was 675; ³⁸the cattle came to 36,000, from which the Eternal's levy was 72; ³⁹the asses came to 30,500, from which the Eternal's levy was 61. ⁴⁰And the number of human beings was 16,000, from which the Eternal's levy was 32. ⁴¹Moses gave the contributions levied for the Eternal to Eleazar the priest, as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

⁴²As for the half-share of the other Israelites, which Moses withdrew from the ~~men~~troops who had taken the field ¹⁸⁶, ⁴³that half-share of the community consisted of 337,500 sheep, ⁴⁴36,000 head of cattle, ⁴⁵30,500 asses, ⁴⁶and 16,000 human beings. ⁴⁷From this half-share of the Israelites,

Moses withheld one in every fifty humans and animals; and he gave them to the Levites, who attended to the duties of the Eternal's Tabernacle, as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

⁴⁸The commanders of the troop divisions, the officers of thousands and the officers of hundreds, approached Moses. ⁴⁹They said to Moses, "Your servants have made a check of the warriors in our charge, and not one of us is missing. ⁵⁰So we have brought as an offering to the Eternal such articles of gold as each of us came upon: armlets, bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and pendants, that expiation may be made for our persons before the Eternal." ⁵¹Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted the gold from them, all kinds of wrought articles. ⁵²All the gold that was offered by the officers of thousands and the officers of hundreds as a contribution to the Eternal came to 16,750 shekels.—⁵³But in the ranks, everyone kept his booty for himself.—⁵⁴So Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted the gold from the officers of thousands and the officers of hundreds and brought it to the Tent of Meeting, as a reminder in behalf of the Israelites before the Eternal.

32The Reubenites and the Gadites owned ^[187] cattle in very great numbers. Noting that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were a region suitable for cattle, ²the Gadites and ~~the~~ Reubenites ^[leaders] came ^[188] to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the chieftains of the community, and said, ³"Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon—⁴the land that the Eternal has conquered for the community of Israel—is cattle country, and your servants have cattle. ⁵It would be a favor to us," they continued, "if this land were given to your servants as a holding; do not move us across the Jordan."

⁶Moses replied to the Gadites and the Reubenites, "Are your brothers ^[189] to go to war while you stay here? ⁷Why will you turn the minds of the Israelites from crossing into the land that the Eternal has given them? ⁸That is what your fathers ^[190] did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to survey the land. ⁹After going up to the wadi Eshcol and surveying the land, they turned the minds of the Israelites from invading the land that the Eternal had given them. ¹⁰Thereupon the Eternal was incensed and He swore, ¹¹"None of the men ^[191] from twenty years up who came out of Egypt shall see the land that I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for they did not remain loyal to Me—¹²none except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they remained loyal to the Eternal." ¹³The Eternal ~~was~~ incensed at Israel, ~~and for forty years He~~ made them wander in the wilderness ~~for forty years~~, until the whole generation that had provoked the Eternal's displeasure was gone. ¹⁴And now you, a breed of sinful men ^[192], have replaced your fathers ^[193], to add still further to the Eternal's wrath against Israel. ¹⁵If you turn away from Him ^[God], ~~and He who then~~ abandons them once more in the wilderness, you will bring calamity upon all this people."

¹⁶Then they stepped up to him and said, "We will build here sheepfolds for our flocks and towns for our children. ¹⁷And we will hasten as shock-troops in the van of the Israelites until we have established them in their home, while our children stay in the fortified towns because of the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁸We will not return to our homes until ~~the Israelites—every one of them—are~~ ~~every one of the Israelites is~~ in possession of ~~his~~ ^{their} portion. ^[194] ¹⁹But we will not have a share with them in the territory beyond the Jordan, for we have received our share on the east side of the Jordan."

²⁰Moses said to them, "If you do this, if you go to battle as shock-troops, at the instance of the Eternal, ²¹and every shock-fighter among you crosses the Jordan, at the instance of the Eternal, until He ^[God] has ~~personally~~ dispossessed ~~His~~ ^{the} enemies ~~before Him~~. ^[195] ²²and the land has been subdued, at the instance of the Eternal, and then you return—you shall be clear before the Eternal and before Israel; and this land shall be your holding under the Eternal. ²³But if you do not do so, you will have sinned against the Eternal; and know that your sin will overtake you. ²⁴Build towns for your children and sheepfolds for your flocks, but do what you have promised."

²⁵The Gadites and the Reubenites answered Moses, "Your servants will do as my lord commands. ²⁶Our children, our wives, our flocks, and all our other livestock will stay behind in the towns of Gilead; ²⁷while your servants, all those recruited for war, cross over, at the instance of the Eternal, to engage in battle—as my lord orders."

²⁸Then Moses gave instructions concerning them to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the family heads of the Israelite tribes. ²⁹Moses said to them, "If every shock-fighter among the Gadites and the Reubenites crosses the Jordan with you to do battle, at the instance of the Eternal, and the land is subdued before you, you shall give them the land of Gilead as a holding. ³⁰But if they do not cross over with you as shock-troops, they shall receive holdings among you in the land of Canaan."

³¹The Gadites and the Reubenites said in reply, "Whatever the Eternal has spoken concerning your servants, that we will do. ³²We ourselves will cross over as shock-troops, at the instance of the Eternal, into the land of Canaan; and we shall keep our hereditary holding across the Jordan."

³³So Moses assigned to them—to the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph—the kingdom ^[196] of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of King Og of Bashan, the land with its various cities and the territories of their surrounding towns. ³⁴The Gadites rebuilt Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, ³⁵Atroth-shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, ³⁶Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran as fortified towns or as enclosures for flocks. ³⁷The Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, ³⁸Nebo, Baal-meon—some names being changed—and Sibmah; they gave [their own] names to towns that they rebuilt. ³⁹The descendants of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead and captured it, dispossessing the Amorites who were there; ⁴⁰so Moses gave Gilead to Machir son

of Manasseh, and he settled there. ⁴¹Jair son of Manasseh went and captured their villages, which he renamed Havvoth-jair. ⁴²And Nobah went and captured Kenath and its dependencies, renaming it Nobah after himself.

MAS'EI

33 These were the marches of the Israelites who started out from the land of Egypt, troop by troop, in the charge of Moses and Aaron. ²Moses recorded the starting points of their various marches as directed by the Eternal. Their marches, by starting points, were as follows:

³They set out from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. It was on the morrow of the passover offering that the Israelites started out defiantly, in plain view of all the Egyptians. ⁴The Egyptians meanwhile were burying those among them whom the Eternal had struck down, every [male] first-born 197—whereby the Eternal executed judgment on their gods.

⁵The Israelites set out from Rameses and encamped at Succoth. ⁶They set out from Succoth and encamped at Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness. ⁷They set out from Etham and turned about toward Pi-hahiroth, which faces Baal-zephon, and they encamped before Migdol. ⁸They set out from Pene-hahiroth and passed through the sea into the wilderness; and they made a three-days' journey in the wilderness of Etham and encamped at Marah. ⁹They set out from Marah and came to Elim. There were twelve springs in Elim and seventy palm trees, so they encamped there. ¹⁰They set out from Elim and encamped by the Sea of Reeds. ¹¹They set out from the Sea of Reeds and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. ¹²They set out from the wilderness of Sin and encamped at Dophkah. ¹³They set out from Dophkah and encamped at Alush. ¹⁴They set out from Alush and encamped at Rephidim; it was there that the people had no water to drink. ¹⁵They set out from Rephidim and encamped in the wilderness of Sinai. ¹⁶They set out from the wilderness of Sinai and encamped at Kibroth-hattaavah. ¹⁷They set out from Kibroth-hattaavah and encamped at Hazeroth. ¹⁸They set out from Hazeroth and encamped at Rithmah. ¹⁹They set out from Rithmah and encamped at Rimmon-perez. ²⁰They set out from Rimmon-perez and encamped at Libnah. ²¹They set out from Libnah and encamped at Rissah. ²²They set out from Rissah and encamped at Kehelath. ²³They set out from Kehelath and encamped at Mount Shepher. ²⁴They set out from Mount Shepher and encamped at Haradah. ²⁵They set out from Haradah and encamped at Makheloth. ²⁶They set out from Makheloth and encamped at Tahath. ²⁷They set out from Tahath and encamped at Terah. ²⁸They set out from Terah and encamped at Mithkah. ²⁹They set out from Mithkah and encamped at Hashmonah. ³⁰They set out from Hashmonah and encamped at Moseroth. ³¹They set out from Moseroth and encamped at Bene-jaakan. ³²They set out from Bene-

jaakan and encamped at Hor-haggidgad. ³³They set out from Hor-haggidgad and encamped at Jotbath. ³⁴They set out from Jotbath and encamped at Abronah. ³⁵They set out from Abronah and encamped at Ezion-geber. ³⁶They set out from Ezion-geber and encamped in the wilderness of Zin, that is, Kadesh. ³⁷They set out from Kadesh and encamped at Mount Hor, on the edge of the land of Edom.

³⁸Aaron the priest ascended Mount Hor at the command of the Eternal and died there, in the fortieth year after the Israelites had left the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month. ³⁹Aaron was a hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor. ⁴⁰And the Canaanite, king of Arad, who dwelt in the Negeb, in the land of Canaan, learned of the coming of the Israelites.

⁴¹They set out from Mount Hor and encamped at Zalmonah. ⁴²They set out from Zalmonah and encamped at Punon. ⁴³They set out from Punon and encamped at Oboth. ⁴⁴They set out from Oboth and encamped at Iye-abarim, in the territory of Moab. ⁴⁵They set out from Iyim and encamped at Dibon-gad. ⁴⁶They set out from Dibon-gad and encamped at Almon-diblathaim. ⁴⁷They set out from Almon-diblathaim and encamped in the hills of Abarim, before Nebo. ⁴⁸They set out from the hills of Abarim and encamped in the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho; ⁴⁹they encamped by the Jordan from Beth-jeshimoth as far as Abel-shittim, in the steppes of Moab.

⁵⁰In the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho, the Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ⁵¹Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ⁵²you shall dispossess all the inhabitants of the land; you shall destroy all their figured objects; you shall destroy all their molten images, and you shall demolish all their cult places. ⁵³And you shall take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have assigned the land to you to possess. ⁵⁴You shall apportion the land among yourselves by lot, clan by clan: with larger groups increase the share, with smaller groups reduce the share. Wherever the lot falls for anyoneit, that shall be hisits location 198. You shall have your portions according to your ancestral tribes. ⁵⁵But if you do not dispossess the inhabitants of the land, those whom you allow to remain shall be stings in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land in which you live; ⁵⁶so that I will do to you what I planned to do to them.

34 The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ²Instruct the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land of Canaan, this is the land that shall fall to you as your portion, the land of Canaan with its various boundaries:

³Your southern sector shall extend from the wilderness of Zin alongside Edom. Your southern boundary shall start on the east from the tip of the Dead Sea. ⁴Your boundary shall then turn to pass south of the ascent of Akkrabbim and contin-

ue to Zin, and its limits shall be south of Kadesh-barnea, reaching Hazar-addar and continuing to Azmon. ⁵From Azmon the boundary shall turn toward the Wadi of Egypt and terminate at the Sea.

⁶For the western boundary you shall have the coast of the Great Sea; that shall serve as your western boundary.

⁷This shall be your northern boundary: Draw a line from the Great Sea to Mount Hor; ⁸from Mount Hor draw a line to Lebo-hamath, and let the boundary reach Zedad. ⁹The boundary shall then run to Ziphron and terminate at Hazar-enan. That shall be your northern boundary.

¹⁰For your eastern boundary you shall draw a line from Hazar-enan to Shepham. ¹¹From Shepham the boundary shall descend to Riblah on the east side of Ain; from there the boundary shall continue downward and abut on the eastern slopes of the Sea of Chinnereth. ¹²The boundary shall then descend along the Jordan and terminate at the Dead Sea.

That shall be your land as defined by its boundaries on all sides.

¹³Moses instructed the Israelites, saying: This is the land you are to receive by lot as your hereditary portion, which the Eternal has commanded to be given to the nine and a half tribes. ¹⁴For the Reubenite tribe by its ancestral houses, the Gadite tribe by its ancestral houses, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have already received their portions: ¹⁵those two and a half tribes have received their portions across the Jordan, opposite Jericho, on the east, the orient side.

¹⁶The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁷These are the names of the **mencommissioners**:¹⁹⁹ through whom the land shall be apportioned for you: Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun. ¹⁸And you shall also take a chieftain from each tribe through whom the land shall be apportioned. ¹⁹These are the names of the **mencommissioners**: from the tribe of Judah: Caleb son of Jephunneh. ²⁰From the Simeonite tribe: Samuel son of Ammihud. ²¹From the tribe of Benjamin: Elidad son of Chislon. ²²From the Danite tribe: a chieftain, Bukki son of Jogli. ²³For the descendants of Joseph: from the Manassite tribe: a chieftain, Hanniel son of Ephod; ²⁴and from the Ephraimite tribe: a chieftain, Kemuel son of Shiph-tan. ²⁵From the Zebulunite tribe: a chieftain, Elizaphan son of Parnach. ²⁶From the Issacharite tribe: a chieftain, Paltiel son of Azzan. ²⁷From the Asherite tribe: a chieftain, Ahihud son of Shelomi. ²⁸From the Naphtalite tribe: a chieftain, Pedahel son of Ammihud.

²⁹It was these whom the Eternal designated to allot portions to the Israelites in the land of Canaan.

35The Eternal One spoke to Moses in the steppes of Moab at the Jordan near Jericho, saying: ²Instruct the Israelite people to assign, out of the holdings apportioned to them, towns for the Levites to dwell in²⁰⁰; you shall also assign to the Levites pasture land around their towns. ³The towns shall be

theirs to dwell in, and the pasture shall be for the cattle they own and all their other beasts. ⁴The town pasture that you are to assign to the Levites shall extend a thousand cubits outside the town wall all around. ⁵You shall measure off two thousand cubits outside the town on the east side, two thousand on the south side, two thousand on the west side, and two thousand on the north side, with the town in the center. That shall be the pasture for their towns.

⁶The towns that you assign to the Levites shall comprise the six cities of refuge that you are to designate for a **manslayer[male] killer**²⁰¹ to flee to, to which you shall add forty-two towns. ⁷Thus the total of the towns that you assign to the Levites shall be forty-eight towns, with their pasture. ⁸In assigning towns from the holdings of the Israelites, take more from the larger groups and less from the smaller, so that each assigns towns to the Levites in proportion to the share it receives.

⁹The Eternal One spoke further to Moses: ¹⁰Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ¹¹you shall provide yourselves with places to serve you as cities of refuge to which a **manslayer[male] killer** who has **killedslain** a person unintentionally may flee. ¹²The cities shall serve you as a refuge from the avenger²⁰², so that the **manslayerkiller** may not die unless he has stood trial before the assembly.

¹³The towns that you thus assign shall be six cities of refuge in all. ¹⁴Three cities shall be designated beyond the Jordan, and the other three shall be designated in the land of Canaan: they shall serve as cities of refuge. ¹⁵These six cities shall serve the Israelites and the resident aliens among them for refuge, so that any **one man** who **killslays** a person unintentionally may flee there.

¹⁶Anyone²⁰³, however, who strikes another with an iron object so that death results is a murderer; the murderer must be put to death. ¹⁷If **heone** struck **himanother** with a stone tool that could cause death, and death resulted, **he[that person]** is a murderer; the murderer must be put to death. ¹⁸Similarly, if **the object with which heone** struck **himanother** **waswith** a wooden tool that could cause death, and death resulted, **he[that person]** is a murderer; the murderer must be put to death. ¹⁹**Th[is] is the blood-avenger wh[himself]**²⁰⁴ shall put the murderer to death; **th[is] is he-who** shall put **him[that person]** to death upon encounter. ²⁰So, too, if **heone** pushed **himanother** in hate or hurled something at **[the victim]him** on purpose and death resulted, ²¹or if **heone** struck **himanother** with **his[the]** hand in enmity and death resulted, the assailant shall be put to death; **he[that person]** is a murderer. The blood-avenger shall put the murderer to death upon encounter.

²²But if **he[a man]** pushed **him** without malice aforethought or hurled any object at **[the victim]him** unintentionally, ²³or inadvertently dropped upon **[the victim]him** any deadly object of stone, and death resulted—though **he-was** not **being** an enemy **of-his** and **did-not** seeking **his-to** harm—²⁴in

such cases the assembly shall decide between the slayer and the blood-avenger. ²⁵The assembly shall protect the ~~manslayer~~~~killer~~ from the blood-avenger, and the assembly shall restore him to the city of refuge to which he fled, and there he shall remain until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the sacred oil. ²⁶But if the ~~manslayer~~~~killer~~ ever goes outside the limits of the city of refuge to which he has fled, ²⁷and the blood-avenger comes upon him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the blood-avenger kills the ~~manslayer~~~~killer~~, there is no bloodguilt on his account. ²⁸For he must remain inside his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; after the death of the high priest, the ~~manslayer~~~~killer~~ may return to his land holding.

²⁹Such shall be your law of procedure throughout the ages in all your settlements.

^[205]³⁰If anyone ~~kills~~~~slays~~ a person, the ~~manslayer~~~~killer~~ may be executed only on the evidence of witnesses; the testimony of a single witness against a person shall not suffice for a sentence of death. ³¹You may not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of a capital crime; ~~he~~~~[a murderer]~~ must be put to death. ³²Nor may you accept ransom in lieu of flight to a city of refuge, enabling ~~one~~~~a man~~ to return to live on his land before the death of the priest. ³³You shall not pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and the land can have no expiation for blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of ~~him~~~~the one~~ who shed it. ³⁴You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I Myself abide, for I the Eternal abide among the Israelite people.

³⁶The family heads ^[206] in the clan of the descendants of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh, one of the Josephite clans, came forward and appealed to Moses and the chieftains, family heads of the Israelites. ²They said, “The Eternal

commanded my lord to assign the land to the Israelites as shares by lot, and my lord was further commanded by the Eternal to assign the share of our kinsman Zelophehad to his daughters. ³Now, if they marry persons from another Israelite tribe, their share will be cut off from our ancestral portion and be added to the portion of the tribe into which they marry; thus our allotted portion will be diminished. ⁴And even when the Israelites observe the jubilee, their share will be added to that of the tribe into which they marry, and their share will be cut off from the ancestral portion of our tribe.”

⁵So Moses, at the Eternal’s bidding, instructed the Israelites, saying: “The plea of the Josephite tribe is just. ⁶This is what the Eternal has commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad: They may marry anyone they wish, provided they marry into a clan of their father’s tribe. ⁷No inheritance of the Israelites may pass over from one tribe to another, but the ~~Israelite~~ ~~[heirs]~~—~~each of them~~—must remain bound ~~each~~ to the ancestral portion of ~~his~~~~their~~ tribe. ^[207] ⁸Every daughter among the Israelite tribes who inherits a share must marry someone from a clan of her father’s tribe, in order that every Israelite ~~[heir]~~ may keep ~~his~~~~an~~ ancestral share. ⁹Thus no inheritance shall pass over from one tribe to another, but the Israelite tribes shall remain bound each to its portion.”

¹⁰The daughters of Zelophehad did as the Eternal had commanded Moses: ¹¹Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, Zelophehad’s daughters, were married to sons of their uncles, ¹²marrying into clans of descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph; and so their share remained in the tribe of their father’s clan.

¹³These are the commandments and regulations that the Eternal enjoined upon the Israelites, through Moses, on the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho.

[1] 1:2. *s'u et rosh kol adat b'nei yisrael* (NJPS: “Take a census of the whole Israelite community”). *Denotation of edah and Its Relationship to Gender*. At issue is the noun *edah*, which in construct form appears as *adat*. A striking feature of this grammatically *feminine singular* collective term is that its verbs and possessive pronouns are often inflected in the *masculine plural* (see, e.g., 14:10; 17:6; 20:2). That’s because a collective noun’s reference is necessarily nonspecific, which means that the referents’ gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun’s initial corresponding verbal inflection is usually feminine.) At the same time, Hebrew by convention employs the grammatical masculine either where the referent’s gender is known to include at least one male, or where the gender is indeterminate. That is, not only does syntactic concord tend to follow the noun’s semantic orientation rather than its syntactic gender (*IBHS* § 6.6b), but also masculine syntactic concord prevails unless the referent is known to be all-womanly. As a result of these two conventions, if wording governed by *edah* continued (after the initial clause) to be inflected in the feminine, it would imply (contrary to fact) that the referents’ gender was solely womanly. Thus, as usual, the masculine wording does not mean that only men are in view.

A further issue regarding *edah* is its semantic range. My printed comment summarizes the following discussion. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld contends that in Numbers, “women are not really in the narrator’s mind” (*Women’s Bible Commentary*, p. 55). According to my reading too, Israelite women escape much of this book’s (harsh) scrutiny of the incipient Israelite nation. Sakenfeld also holds that women “are absorbed invisibly into [the] community” (p. 51), which raises the question of how “community” is defined. Proper rendering of the term *edah*—and its recurring expressions *kol adat b'nei yisrael* (NJPS: “the whole Israelite community”) and *kol ha-edah* (NJPS: “the whole community”)—is a particular challenge of Numbers.

Typical of its approach to translation, NJPS rendered the term *edah* variously, depending upon the context. Generally, after its 1967 revision it rendered *edah* as “community” (versus “assembly” in its earliest printings; the change was made on the grounds that the latter “could be misunderstood as an elected legislative body,” *JPS Notes* at Exod. 12:3). However, other renderings include: “assembly” in the sense of a body of chosen representatives whose function was either executive (Exod. 34:31; Num. 1:16, 16:2, 26:9) or judicial (27:2, 35:12,24–25); and “band” (14:35), “company” (16:5,11,16), or “faction” (27:3), in the sense of rebellious groups. (NJPS also rendered *edah* exceptionally in two special cases where the whole community is meant: “assembly” [25:7], presumably because “he left the community” has unintended connotations in English; and “congregation” [20:8]—a term usually reserved to render *kahal*—perhaps on the grounds that “provide drink for the community” sounds awkward in English.)

It is Jacob Milgrom who stated that *edah* can variously represent all the Israelites, the adult males, or the chieftains (see his Excursus 1 and at 1:2 for citations; he added that this same semantic range is found with equivalent terms used by other ancient Near Eastern societies). It seems to me that an ancient cognitive category of *hierarchical representation* may be in play; at any rate, such nuances of meaning are not reflected in other recent contextual translations: (a) In Num. chs. 1–20 (*AB = Anchor Bible*), Levine too sees *edah* as simply the priestly designation for “Israelites” (at 1:2) and renders it as “community” except in ch. 16 (“faction”) (likewise in his JPS Leviticus commentary at 4:13, he says that *edah* means “Israelites as a whole”); while (b) NRSV has “congregation” everywhere but in ch. 16 (“company”).

NJPS and Milgrom perceive a semantic range in *edah* that is not unlike modern English idiom, in which we say that “the U.S. invaded Iraq” when in fact only the U.S. military did so (not the entire American populace); or we say that “a congregation hired a rabbi” when in fact it was the board of directors who voted to do so. In other words, in certain situations we grant that smaller bodies represent the larger groups of which they are a part. What we no longer do, however, is presume that the *males* speak for everybody in a “community” or “congregation.” In contemporary English, the “whole community” includes women if not children; it is unduly jarring to discover upon further reading that a typically male subgroup is meant.

This recent change in English usage requires that I revisit the NJPS rendering of *edah* wherever it appears. (Carol Meyers, Susan Niditch, and Adele Berlin concur.) Finding the right substitute term is not easy; as usual, context determines the best English equivalent. But I begin with the root meaning of *edah*: “to come together” (Levine) or “appoint” (BDB).

The present verse immediately restricts the commanded census to males of fighting age (vv. 2–3): the subject is the fighting force. In this context, I bear in mind that one meaning of “company” is “a body of soldiers.” Hence, “Take a census of the whole Israelite company [of fighters].”

[2] 1:2. *l'veit avotam* (when used in an identifying reference, literally “for their fathers’ house”; NJPS: “of its ancestral houses”). The exact nature of this social classification has been much debated. According to its translators’ note, NJPS appears to understand this term as referring to a tribe (which is a defensible interpretation that we will respect). That explains why NJPS generally renders *avot* in Numbers in a gender-inclusive manner as “ancestors” rather than “fathers.” No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “by ancestral houses.”)

[3] 1:4. *we-itkhem ish ish la-matteh* (NJPS: “Associated with you shall be a man from each tribe”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, it appears in a prepositional phrase governed by *et*, which connotes subordination. That is, each *ish* is going to be working on behalf of Moses and Aaron. Further, we learn from this phrase that the military census is to be conducted on a tribal basis: an appointee will come from each tribe. Thus the context evokes both the “agency” and “representative” senses of *ish*. Which of those is the foreground sense? Presumably the latter, for the officials’ identity as tribal leaders is ongoing, whereas their identity as national commissioners is only temporary.

Did the text’s composer(s) perhaps have ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view? The answer here is a qualified yes. Typically, tribal leaders were men. (Everyone on the list that follows is indeed male.) Yet this fact would go without saying. Gender is not at issue.

When gender is not at issue, English idiom expects it to be specified only when it is not obvious to the reader. In this case, the mention of tribal leaders and a male pronoun (“each one the head of *his* ancestral house”) are more than enough evidence for the contemporary reader. Thus we have no warrant for rendering *ish* in gendered terms. Hence, “. . . a representative of each tribe.” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[4] 1:5. *v’eileh sh’mot ha-anashim asher yaamdu it-chem* (NJPS: “these are the names of the men who shall assist you”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here *anashim* has the same referent as in the previous verse. (See note there.) This verse includes two additional elements within the semantic domain of agency: a *formal assignment by name* (for instances with a designation other than *anashim*, see Ezra 8:20; 1 Chron. 12:32; 1 Chron. 16:41; with *anashim*, see 2 Chron. 28:12, 15; 2 Chron. 31:19; cf. Ezra 10:16); and a *task description* (namely, to render assistance). The sense of *anashim* remains the same. Hence, “. . . representatives who shall assist you.” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[5] 1:16. *k’ru’ei ha-edah* (NJPS: “the elected of the assembly”). Given that the verb means “elected” or “assigned” (literally, “called”), this is a different sense of *edah* than was used in v. 2. As Jacob Milgrom comments (ad loc.), here it refers to those elected *to* the assembly, that is, the chieftains (cf. 16:2)—those who, as Rashi says, are “called upon to make decisions.”

Much as stated in the printed edition’s preface, the present translation presumes that it goes without saying that in ancient Israel, such formal leadership roles were typically held by men. Therefore an explicit gender marker is not needed. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “chosen from the congregation.”)

[6] 1:17. *va-yikach moshe . . . et ha-anashim ha-eileh asher nikk’vu b’shemot*. (NJPS: “So Moses . . . took those men, who were designated by name”). Rendering revised in 2006. As in 1:5, the assignment by name is a classic formula of agency (see note

there). Moreover, the governing verb (*va-yikach*) appears to be a standard term for the selection of group representatives (e.g., Gen. 7:2; 47:2; Num. 27:18). That they are men is incidental; that's not the point of the Hebrew text.

On the lack of warrant for gender marking in the translation, see at 1:4. Hence, “those representatives . . .” (Similarly also in v. 44, below.)

[7] 1:44. *u-n'si-ei yisrael sh'neim asar ish* (NJPS: “and by the chieftains of Israel, who were twelve in number”). Because the noun *ish* appears so often right after a cardinal number, it is often construed in such contexts as “individuals.” However, those occurrences are often (if not always) in contexts of agency. It may well be that the text is stating the number of *agents* (or commissioners, warriors, etc.) who are involved. Here the context is of agency. So perhaps in a future printing, the NJPS reading should be changed to “and by the chieftains of Israel, who were twelve representatives.”

[8] 1:44. *ish echad l'veit avotav hu* (NJPS: “one man to each ancestral house”). Rendering revised in 2006. See note above at v. 17. Hence, “one representative of . . .”

[9] 1:45. *kol p'kudei b'nei yisrael . . . mi-ben esrim shanah . . . kol yotzei tzava* (NJPS: “All the Israelites, aged twenty . . . enrolled . . . all those . . . who were able to bear arms”). Repeating language from verses 2–3, this verse twice employs the grammatically masculine term *ben*, which indicates a *non-womanly* referent (roughly equivalent to the referential scope of the English word “son”) whenever it designates a specific individual. Here, however, it is used in nonspecific reference: it refers to a *category* of persons. Therefore those persons' gender is not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

That being said, the text's composer(s) had ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the topic at hand—the registration of the militia (*p'kudim*)—nevertheless surely *excludes* women from view (see also v. 2; cf. below at 31:9).

The NJPS rendering obscures the male connotation. The contemporary audience reads with different gender assumptions, in that nowadays “all the Israelites” is construed as meaning “everyone”—not only men; and “all those . . . who were able to bear arms” is not necessarily restricted to men. Clarification is warranted. (Cf. at 26:2, 4.) Hence, “All the Israelite males . . .” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[10] 1:47. *ha-lviyim* (NJPS: “the Levites”). Because of the gender ambiguity of the rendering “the Levites” as used by NJPS (see my note at Exod. 2:1), I am reserving this English term to refer to *the professional class* (i.e., men only) rather than to *the tribe* (which includes women and children). Throughout this passage, the first meaning pertains. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[11] 1:52. *v'chanu b'nei yisrael ish al machaneihu v'ish al diglo* (NJPS: “The Israelites shall encamp . . . each man with his division and each under his standard”). On the

meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Twice in the present verse, *ish* (literally, “participant”) appears within an idiom in its distributive sense of “each one, anyone.” On that sense, see at Exod. 7:12.

Here *ish* involves the distribution of parties within the Israelite encampment. The group being distributed—of which *ish* must be the constituent unit—is identified in this verse as *b’nei Yisrael* (Israelites). In an ancient group-oriented society, it would have gone without saying that a HOUSEHOLD is the constituent unit of the Israelite polity.

That is, *ish* here designates a household (*bayit*, as distinct from *beit ’avot*, the “ancestral house,” which is a larger unit). (For other instances where *ish* refers to households, see Exod. 12:4; 16:16; Num. 2:2, 34. Note that the Bible elsewhere applies the noun *ish* to even larger group entities—such as clans, tribes, and nations.) This is consistent with this passage’s overall emphasis on groups rather than individuals, as indicated by the use of the terms *machaneh* (“division”) and *degel* (“standard”). It is also consistent with other passages (Exod. 33:8, 10) that depict the Israelites as camping by household during their wilderness wanderings. Surely if a household contained more than one combatant, they would have continued to “camp” together within their household.

One consequence of this reading is that noncombatants (including males) remain in view: the household includes them, too.

In contrast, NJPS views *ish* as referring to individual members of the militia, as if noncombatants are not part of the Israelite encampment. Perhaps in a future printing, the rendering should be changed to: “. . . each [household] with its division and each under its standard.” Similarly in 2:2, below.

[12] 1:53. *v’lo-yiyeh ketzef al-adat b’nei yisrael* (NJPS: “that wrath may not strike the Israelite community”). Potential encroachment on the hallowed grounds is not restricted by gender. The term *edah* is used here in its widest sense (Jacob Milgrom, *ad loc.*; see my note at 1:2). No change to NJPS.

[13] 2:2. *ish al diglo . . . yachanu b’nei yisrael* (NJPS: “the Israelites shall camp . . . each with his standard”). In 2005, prior to realizing that *ish* could apply to households (as well as to individuals), I had concluded that the military topic at hand *excludes* women from view. On those grounds, English idiom warranted a gendered rendering—and so I inserted the word “man.”

However, as explained in the note at 1:52, above, the actual reference is to households, and women are not excluded from view. Hence a more accurate rendering would be “. . . each [household] with its standard.” Perhaps in a future printing, the printed rendering should be changed. (NRSV: “the Israelites shall camp . . . each in their respective regiments.”)

[14] 2:34. *nasa'u ish l'mishp'chotav* (NJPS: “they marched, each with his clan”). Grammatically and semantically speaking, this clause parallels the situation discussed in the previous comment; see there. Hence, “they marched, each man with his clan” (2005); however, this rendering should be revisited. I propose “. . . each [household] with its clan.” (NRSV: “everyone by clans.”)

[15] 3:6. *v'haamadta otq* (NJPS: “and place them in attendance”). This pronominal suffix’s grammatically masculine antecedent is *mattei levi* (literally, “the staff of Levi”; NJPS: “the tribe of Levi”). As will eventually become evident (“record every male . . .,” v. 15), that general term for “tribe” is being used to designate a representative subset, namely its male members. (For other instances of such usage, see *mattei levi* in 1:49; *b'nei gad* in 32:2; *b'nei yisrael* in 31:9.) As a group term it is intrinsically nonspecific; therefore the wording itself does not exclude women from view.

In English idiom, however, the implicit exclusion of women from view warrants a gender marker at the first possible instance. Contemporary readers think of “the tribe of Levi” as inclusive. Therefore the rendering should make clear (via an insertion) that this is not the case here. Hence, “its [men].” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[16] 3:7. *kol ha-edah* (NJPS: “the whole community”). On the semantic range of *edah*, see my note at 1:2. In this passage, its widest sense is evoked. Women are not excluded from view. No change to NJPS.

[17] 3:12. *kol b'chor* (NJPS: “all the first-born”). The noun *b'chor* occasionally takes the additional specification *zachar* (“male”; Num. 3:40–43; Deut. 15:19), which illustrates the property that *b'chor* shares with grammatically masculine nouns in general: when it refers to a *category* of persons, its referent’s gender is not specified. (Alternatively, those paired terms may have an intensive sense, but that seems less likely.) The specifically feminine equivalent, *b'chorah*, is attested; even so, whenever *b'chor* is used in a categorizing reference, womanly referents are not necessarily excluded.

In this case, however, the text’s composer(s) relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that females are not in view here. My printed comment at 3:13 presents the evidence that in the Bible, the Tenth Plague’s related metaphors and legal sequelae involve only males. Here I can add another consideration: What is at stake in this passage’s ritual exchange with the Levites is each family’s relationship with God, which had evidently been placed in the hands of the *b'chor*. From a familial perspective, this term would implicitly refer to the first-born *male*, given that the society was patrilocal: a first-born woman (like daughters in general) tended to leave the homestead upon marriage.

Contemporary readers, in contrast, come to the text with other gender assumptions. Because the English term “first-born” is usually used generically, the rendering “all the first-born” is misleading, implying all genders. When only males are intended, English idiom calls for more specific wording.

In passages where the maleness is explicitly specified (e.g., *kol-b'chor zachar*, Num. 3:40 and 43, below), NJPS renders as “first-born male.” To distinguish those instances from those where the person’s sex is only inferred, I render *b'chor* (alone) as “male first-born.” (See also my note at Exod. 11:5.) Hence, “all the male first-born.”

[18] 3:13. *kol b'chor* (NJPS: “every first-born”). Rendering revised in 2006. In my note at Exod. 11:5, I explained why I have rendered such references to victims of the plague in terms of “[male] first-born” (with brackets, to respect the textual ambiguity). So also at Num. 8:17, below. Hence, “every [male] first-born.” (NRSV: “all the firstborn.”)

[19] 3:15. *b'nei levi* (when used in an identifying reference, literally “sons of Levi”; NJPS: “the Levites”). On the intersection of referential gender and “the Levites,” see my note at Exod. 2:1. On the present usage, compare my notes at Num. 1:47 and 4:2. The professional class of “Levites” does not yet exist; here it is in the process of being formed. The focus is actually on lineal descent from Levi.

In a similar situation (26:4), NJPS renders *v'nei yisrael* contextually as “the descendants of the Israelites”; for precision, I adapt that approach here. The gender is clear in context, for the verse later specifies “every male.” Hence, “the descendants of Levi.” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[20] 4:2. *b'nei levi* (when used in an identifying reference, literally “sons of Levi”; NJPS: “the Levites”). Here—and in vv. 23, 30, 35, 39, 43, and 47, below—the instructions are given in terms of *ben* and *b'nei*; although those terms are used elsewhere in a generic sense, in this chapter it is only the tribe’s males who are meant (see my notes at 1:45 and 3:6).

English idiom calls for marking gender unless it is clear by implication. Here, the term “Levites” implies the maleness (see my note at 1:47), and thus no further clarification is required. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[21] 4:34. *n'si-ei ha-edah* (NJPS: “chieftains of the community”). This should perhaps be changed to “chieftains of the assembly” so as to be more consistent with the NJPS rendering in 1:16 (regarding the same personnel), taking *edah* in its narrowest sense. But from a gender perspective, a change is not warranted in this context. No change to NJPS.

[22] 5:6. *ish o ishah ki ya'asu* (NJPS: “when a man or woman commits”). My printed comment at 5:5 sums up the following discussion: In this passage, women are explicitly included, and so the wording must be meant as generic. Interspersed in this passage are grammatically masculine singular inflections—initially the plural form cited here, but later singular. As in Exod. 21:20–21, these provide a banner example of how such language can have a generic reference.

In rendering, English idiom requires consistency in number, following either the Hebrew singular or plural formulations. (NRSV resorted to the singular; NLT, to the plural; while Robert Alter was unusually inconsistent here in grammatical number.) I adopt the plural because it helps maintain the distinction between perpetrator (plural) and victim (singular). However, the disadvantage of plurals alone is that a reader might infer that this procedure applies only to a group of wrongdoers, not to an individual. This warrants a clarifying adverb. Hence, “When men or women individually commit any wrong . . .”

[23] 5:6. *mi-kol chattot ha-adam* (literally: “of any wrongs of a person”; NJPS: “any wrong toward a fellow man”). The reference is nonspecific. Here, as in most instances in the Bible, the noun *adam* points to a *category* of persons rather than to a particular individual; the referent’s gender is thus not *solely* female. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On which *adam* is being referred to here, see Jacob Milgrom and Robert Alter, *ad loc.* (contra Ramban). In context, *adam* has a generic reference, for all persons are potential victims of these types of misdeed (see the enumeration in Lev. 5:20–26).

In translation, NJPS presumably intended the idiomatic rendering “fellow man” to have a gender-neutral reference, but that term’s gender ambiguity is likely to mislead readers. For clarity, I am substituting a neutral equivalent in such cases. Hence, “any wrong toward a fellow human being.” (NRSV: “wrongs another”; Alter: “any of the human offenses.”)

[24] 5:7. *asher asham lo* (literally: “[the one] whom he wronged him” [per *BDB*] or “[the one] whom he is guilty with regard to” [per *HALOT*]; NJPS: “him whom he has wronged”). The antecedent of both *asher* and *lo* is *adam* in v. 6, which in this context is gender-inclusive (see previous note).

In translation, NJPS presumably intended “him/he” in their neutral sense, but the gender ambiguity is likely to mislead readers. For clarity, I am substituting a neutral equivalent in such cases. Because the Hebrew idiom is not directly translatable into English, use of the passive voice would not degrade precision. Hence, “the one who was wronged.” (NRSV: “the one who was wronged.”)

[25] 5:8. *v'im ein la-ish go'el* (NJPS: “If the man has no kinsman”). Rendering revised in 2006. This clause introduces a subcase and raises three interpretive issues:

1. The grammatically masculine word *ish* has the same referent as *adam* in v. 6 (so Saadiah), which in this context is gender-inclusive (see my note there). Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here the context evokes the “participant” sense of *’ish*, and the denotation is a “party (to a legal proceeding).”

NJPS seems to have unduly “masculinized” the text here by its rendering of *ish* as “man,” which also fails to reflect the relational nature of *ish*. Therefore I am substituting a gender-neutral term in the translation, while recognizing the demonstrative force of the article, as English idiom warrants.

2. As stated in my printed comment, *go’el* (literally, “redeemer”) designates a relative regardless of social gender (see my note at Lev. 25:48). Possibly NJPS intended “kinsman” to be neutral, but at any rate the ambiguity is likely to mislead readers. For clarity, I am substituting a neutral noun in the translation.

3. The subcase’s situation is described elliptically. Rashi, Jacob Milgrom, Robert Alter, and others (but not Gunther Plaut!) explain the subcase’s implicit presumption that the victim has since died. For clarity, I insert this implication into the translation, as NJPS did in Lev. 21:1: “None shall defile himself for any [dead] person among his kin . . .” (This is not a matter of gender per se.)

Hence, “If that party [is deceased and] has no kin.” (NRSV: “If the injured party has no next of kin.”)

261 5:12–31. *ish . . . ishto . . . ish-ah . . . ishah* (NJPS: “man . . . wife . . . her husband . . . woman”). Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. The immediate context counterposes *ish* with its feminine counterpart; in such situations, the term’s male gender component is activated, restricting the scope of reference to men. Further, the possessive pronominal suffix with *ishah* evokes the sense of *ish* as a (male) party to a marriage relationship, i.e., a husband. (On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1.)

In this passage, NJPS (as well as KJV, OJPS, Baruch Levine, Richard Friedman, NRSV, NLT, and Robert Alter) made customary yet uncharacteristic—and I think unwarranted—distinctions due merely to the presence of a possessive suffix: It rendered *ish* as “man” when the word stands alone (vv. 12, 15, 30, and 31), whereas *ish* with a possessive suffix (*ish-ah* or *ishech*) it rendered as “her husband” or “your husband” (vv. 13, 20, 27, and 29). (I am not counting here its rendering of *ish* as “man” where it refers to the wife’s other sexual partner; vv. 13, 19, and 20.) Similarly, it rendered *ishah* as “woman” when uninflected (vv. 18–19, 21, 22, and 24–31), whereas *ishah* with a possessive suffix (*ishto*) it rendered as “his wife” (vv. 12, 14, 15, and 30).

The text is clearly referring to the same two spouses throughout this passage, using the same terms to do so—*ish* and *ishah*, respectively. I know of no evidence that an ancient Israelite audience would have understood the terms differently depending upon the presence or absence of a possessive suffix. Moreover, this passage

applies only to people who are married—which means most adults, but not all; yet the relational meaning of *ish* and *ishah* is lost when they are rendered as “man” and “woman,” respectively. Hence, in accord with NJPS’s contextual, plain-sense approach, I have rendered *ish* as “husband” and *ishah* as “wife” consistently whenever the context suggests that relationship, regardless of possessive suffix. (This is not a matter of gender per se.)

[27] 5:13. *v’shachav ish otah shichvat zera* (NJPS: “in that a man has had carnal relations with her”). Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here the forensic context evokes the basic sense of *ish* as “[another] party” to a situation (e.g., Exod. 2:12), while the immediate co-text restricts the referent of *ish* to one who is capable of having sexual relations with a woman, i.e., an adult male. That gendering is supplied by the Hebrew co-text, not by *ish* itself, and it comes across clearly enough in the sentence’s translation. Hence there is no warrant for a gendered rendering of *ish*.

The NJPS rendering as “a man” is more gendered than the original Hebrew text. Moreover, “man” does not reflect how the ancient Israelites understood *ish*, which is as a relational term. Perhaps better (in a future printing), “another party.” (For instances where NJPS represents *ish* in English by the term “another . . .,” see Gen. 41:38; Lev. 19:20; Deut. 19:16.) For the time being, no change to NJPS. (NRSV: “if a man has had intercourse with her”).

[28] 5:19. *im lo shachav ish otach* (NJPS: “If no man has lain with you”). Rendering revised in 2013. See above at 5:13. In this context of a forensic declaration, “party” is idiomatic English. Hence: “If no other party has lain with you.”

[29] 5:20. *va-yitein ish bach et sh’chavto mi-baladei isheich* (NJPS: “if a man other than your husband has had carnal relations with you”). See above at 5:13. Perhaps better (in a future printing), “if any party other than your husband has had carnal relations with you.”

[30] 6:2–21. *ish o ishah ki yafli lindor neder nazir* (NJPS: “if anyone, man or woman, explicitly utters a nazirite’s vow”). Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. Meanwhile, the immediate co-text counterposes *ish* with its feminine counterpart, which then restricts the referential gender of *ish* to non-women.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, the topic evokes the basic sense of *ish* (and *ishah*) as “a participant” in the situation, that is, someone who is partaking in the nazirite regimen.

The wording establishes an inclusive case from the outset. (The explicit specification of *o ishah*, “or a womanly participant,” suggests that there is something about

the nazirite vow such that typically a woman would not be in view from the start if the term *ish* alone were used. As Lev. 27:2 ff. and other biblical passages show, the issue is not vowing per se; women are expected to take part in making vows. Perhaps the specification here helps to disambiguate *ish* from its alternative meaning as “householder”; see further below, at 30:3.) Later references to the party in question use grammatically *masculine singular* inflections that, because their reference is non-specific, simply indicate that the pool of potential participants is “not solely womanly.” An ancient Israelite audience would have found such a construction unremarkable (compare Exod. 21:20–21; Num. 5:6–8).

Surely NJPS intended the pronouns (“he, his, him, himself”) to be neutral, but the gender ambiguity is likely to mislead contemporary readers. For clarity, in vv. 1–8 I am rendering in the (gender-neutral) plural. Hence, “any men or women . . .”

At the same time, in vv. 9–20 of this passage I am substituting gender-neutral equivalents in the translation, for there the singular language better reflects the distinctly individualistic nature of the institution of nazirite.

At the end of the passage, v. 21, I resort again to pluralizing. Baruch Levine explains (*AB*, ad loc.) that the force of the awkward Hebrew syntax there is that “the nazirite who has the means to offer more [than the minimum] is expected to do so.” It seems to me that a plural rendering does not distort this meaning; and it certainly scans better than any singular formulation that I came up with. (NRSV and NLT render in the plural for the entire passage.)

[31] 6:9. Rendering revised in 2008 (from “person” to “[nazirite]”), for clarity. In line with normal Hebrew style, the text itself has no subject here, only a masculine-inflected verb.

[32] 6:10, 12, 14. Rendering revised in 2008 (from “the” to “that”), for better accord with English idiom.

[33] 8:9, 20. *kol adat b'nei yisrael* (NJPS: “whole Israelite community”); elsewhere this expression refers more specifically to all adult males or to a council of elders, and that may be the sense in this passage. The logic of the story implies that this assembled party is identical to what is designated as *b'nei yisrael* (NJPS “the Israelites”) in v. 10. Gunther Plaut, Jacob Milgrom, and Baruch Levine all hold that a logistical consideration—namely, the physical space constraint on being able to lay hands upon a limited number of Levites—implies that the plain sense of *b'nei yisrael* there is a representative subgroup. Which representatives? Ibn Ezra says that “the Israelites” refers to the firstborn males for whom the Levites are being substituted (vv. 16–18). Milgrom, citing the commentary *Sefer ha-Mivchar* (by the Karaite Aaron b. Joseph, ca. 1300), says that it refers to elders—which would be a more expected sense of term *edah*. (On this restrictive sense of *edah* as “leadership,” see my note at Lev. 24:14–15; on its semantic range and relationship to gender, see at Num. 1:2.)

In other words, God is employing two general terms, *edah* and *b'nei yisrael*, to refer to a representative subgroup; the text's composer(s) could rely upon its ancient audience to construe this situation in light of their cognitive category of *hierarchical representation*. Because their reference is intrinsically nonspecific, the wording itself does not exclude women from view.

Yet one can distinguish the contours of a gendered social institution: a typically male leadership council. The text's ancient Israelite audience—oriented by their experience to the concrete reality of such an institution—would have perceived it as being in the textual foreground, while viewing in the background the nation whom the council represented; cf. below at 31:9.

NJPS's rendering *edah* here as "community" causes the contemporary reader to miss the allusion to the gendered social institution that was self-evident to the ancient audience. Contemporary readers think of "the whole community" as inclusive. The translation needs to make the implicit representational body more explicit, to make up for the cultural information that the original audience had but which the contemporary audience lacks. (Once this is done in v. 9, the restricted reference of "the Israelites" in v. 10 is clearly implied and needs no further specification.) Hence, "Israelite community leadership." (NRSV: "the whole congregation of the Israelites").

[34] 8:17. *chol b'chor* (NJPS: "every first-born"). Rendering revised in 2006. See my note at 3:13. Hence, "every [male] first-born."

[35] 9:2. *va-yaasu v'nei yisrael et ha-pasach* (NJPS: "let the Israelite people offer the passover sacrifice"). Here the plural noun *banim* (in construct form) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections are masculine.)

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text's composer(s) had sufficient reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the activity in question surely *excludes* women from view. The answer is no, based upon the following considerations: (1) the Torah's sense that the heart of a sacrifice is a shared meal (see my note at Lev. 1:2); (2) the original paschal sacrifice in Egypt was shared among the entire household (Exod. 12:3 ff.); (3) the Bible matter-of-factly portrays households headed by widows (I Kings 17; II Kings 4), who according to the Torah's regulations would have been required to "offer" a paschal sacrifice; and (4) when the Torah discusses the annual paschal sacrifice and excludes various categories of persons (e.g., Exod. 12:43 ff.; see my printed comment at Num. 9:6), it does not explicitly exclude women.

Thus there is no warrant to render in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: "the Israelites.")

[36] 9:6–7. *anashim asher hayu t'mei-im* (NJPS: “some men who were unclean”). Rendering revised in 2006. As always, the plural noun *anashim* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *anashim* (and its singular equivalent, *ish*) in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The group of which these *anashim* are members is *beney yisrael* (vv. 4–5). Yet the context of situation also evokes the noun’s more specific relational sense as “householders” (see, for example, 1:52, 16:26, 27:8, 30:3, 32:2, 35:9, and 36:7–8), for they are the responsible parties who arrange for a passover sacrifice—which is organized by household (Exod. 12:3 ff.), the basic social unit.

Neither the role of householder nor corpse-related ritual impurity reliably excludes women. (Even in rabbinic literature, the Second Passover applies to women: Tosefta *Pesachim* 8:1 mentions as among its participants “menstruants and parturients.”) Thus an ancient Israelite audience would have imagined that the group who approached Moses and Aaron was typically male, but not exclusively so.

Thus there is no warrant for rendering *anashim* here in gendered terms. NJPS appears to have unduly “masculinized” the text in this passage. To convey the ancient understanding more accurately, I am substituting a gender-neutral rendering. Hence, “some householders. . . .” (NRSV: “certain people”; Baruch Levine [AB]: “persons.”)

[37] 9:10–11. *ish ish ki . . . lachem o l'doroteichem . . . v'asah . . . ya'asu* (NJPS: “When any of you or of your posterity . . . would offer . . . they shall offer it”). The Hebrew text’s grammatical number jumps from singular to plural to singular and back again. This is a typical impersonal construction (see my note at Lev. 1:2–4). The noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. In the present verse, *ish* (literally, “participant”) appears within an idiom in its distributive sense of “each one, anyone.” On that sense, see at Exod. 7:12. For other instances of the opening formula *ish ish ki*, see Lev. 15:22; 24:15; Num. 5:12.

Here the context does not exclude women (see the previous two notes); thus there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

Like KJV and OJPS before it, NJPS (and NRSV and Robert Alter after it) reflected the Hebrew’s shifts in number by employing “they” as an indefinite singular pronoun. This makes for rather awkward English, although from a gender perspective it is not wrong. Consistent with NJPS treatment elsewhere, I am merely inserting an em dash to ease the transition from “any” to “they.” (So also Baruch Levine [AB].) Otherwise, no change to NJPS.

[38] 9:13. *lo hikriv* (NJPS: “he did not present”). The verbal inflection is grammatically masculine yet the construction is impersonal. The sense is gender inclusive (see next note). This warrants a passive rendering, as NJPS often resorted to elsewhere, e.g., Lev. 2:8 (see my note there). Hence, “was not presented.” (NRSV: “for not presenting.”)

[39] 9:13. *v’ha-ish . . . v’chadal laasot ha-pesach . . . chet’o yissa ha-ish ha-hu* (NJPS: “But if a man . . . refrains from offering the passover sacrifice . . . that man shall bear his guilt”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding pronouns and verbal inflections are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here in verse 13, the activity of “offering the passover sacrifice” evokes the sense of *ish* as “householder”; the text’s composer(s) could not rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the topic *excludes* women from view. (See at 9:2, 6–7.)

Thus there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. NJPS seems to have unduly “masculinized” the text here by its rendering of *ish* as “man.” (Perhaps it was meant as an indefinite pronoun, akin to “any” in v. 10.) To convey more accurately the relational nature of *ish* and its non-exclusive reference, I am recasting the translation to be clearly gender-neutral (meanwhile substituting “pure” for “clean,” as discussed in the printed book’s preface). Hence, “But if a householder . . . that householder. . .” (NRSV: “But anyone who is clean . . . such a one.” Similarly Baruch Levine [AB].)

[40] 9:14. *v’chi yagur it’chem ger* (NJPS: “and when a stranger who resides with you”). Here the noun *ger* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ger*, see at Exod. 12:19; see also my printed comment here; contrast Exod. 12:48 and see my printed comment there. Terminologically speaking, women are not excluded from view. Adele Berlin opines that “a female *ger*, it seems to me, would be an independent female stranger (an unusual case) or the stranger who is the wife of a *ger*,” which she also sees as rare (pers. comm., 4/29/05).

I imagine that such persons were not so uncommon. Let us contrast the *ger* with other social roles. Carolyn Leeb, in her book *Away from the Father’s House: The Social Location of Na’ar and Na’arah in Ancient Israel*, perceptively understands some of the Bible’s *na’arim* and *na’arot* as outsiders who have established a dependent or client work relationship with an Israelite corporate household; she suggests that before they found their patron, such persons would have been classed as *gerim*.

One such resident outsider who is not a *ger* appears to be “Ruth the Moabite” (Ruth 2:2, 21; 4:5, 10). Given that Ruth had been married for a decade before being

widowed (1:4–5), we ought to interpret Boaz’s labeling of her as a *na’arah* (2:5) in the social-role sense that Leeb describes (cf. Boaz’s *na’arot* in 2:8), rather than in the age-related sense of the term. That is, because she is engaged in gleaning on someone else’s land, Boaz presumes her to be part of a poor Israelite household, which turns out to be true—that of Naomi. (That Ruth calls herself a *nochriyyah* [“foreigner,” 2:10] may be seen in context as an expression of her gratitude—she makes more of Boaz’s kindness by minimizing her own ties to the Israelites.)

Another type of outsider is one who obtains special permission to dwell in the land. Examples of such people, who enjoy the protection of the local ruler, are David’s parents, who found refuge in Moab (I Sam. 22:3–4).

A third type of outsider is the war captive (Num. 31:35; Deut. 21:10; II Kings 5:2; etc.); such persons were quickly claimed by a particular household, which thus afforded protection to them. They were not socially exposed like *gerim*.

In contrast, *gerim* were persons who ventured to a new land on their own and lacked local social protection there. My own view is that the nearly endless WARS and FAMINES in the ancient world would have caused social disruptions and desperation in neighboring societies, which would have meant that not only men but also women and children occasionally sought refuge with the people of Israel (among other places). The Bible does not seem to describe refugees *coming into* the land of Israel because of WAR, but it does describe them *leaving* for that reason; such persons would be *gerim* from the perspective of their new host country. Examples include King David’s household—implicitly including females—fleeing from Absalom’s rebellion, II Sam. 15–16; after the destruction of Jerusalem, “all the people, young and old, . . . set out and went to Egypt because they were afraid of the Chaldeans,” II Kings 25:26 (Jeremiah repeatedly describes the Judean refugee community in Egypt via the verb *lagur*, Jer. 42:17, 22; 44:12, 14, 28; the presence of women among them is mentioned in Jer. 41:16–18; 44:15–20); and after the same devastation, “all the Judeans who were in Moab, Ammon, and Edom, or who were in other lands” would have thought of themselves as *gerim* there before they “returned from all the places to which they had scattered,” Jer. 40:11–12.

Similarly, the Bible does not seem to describe people *entering* the land of Israel due to FAMINE, but it does describe them *leaving* for that reason; again, such persons would be *gerim* from the perspective of their new host country. Among these are women: Sarai in Egypt (Gen. 12:10–20; note the verb *lagur* in v. 10); Jacob’s daughter, daughters-in-law, and grand-daughters in Egypt (Gen. 46:7, 15, 26; note the verb *lagur* in 47:4, where Jacob’s sons do not yet presume the ruler’s protection; indeed, their families enjoyed such protection for a limited time, which is why the Torah so often says that the Israelites were *gerim* in Egypt); and the Shunammite woman (II Kings 8:1–3; note the verb *lagur* in v. 1).

Topically speaking, although a *ger* who “would offer a passover sacrifice” was most likely to be a male, the topic does not *exclude* women from view. In short, we have no warrant to conclude that the text’s ancient Israelite audience would have reliably *excluded* women from view in this passage.

Thus we have no warrant to render in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “alien.”)

[41] 9:14. *ya’aseh* (NJPS: “he must offer it”). Because the subject is nonspecific, this verb’s masculine inflection is a grammatical feature (for concord) and not a semantic one.

NJPS may have intended “he” to be neutral, but at any rate the gender ambiguity is likely to mislead readers. For clarity, I recast the sentence to avoid the male pronoun. The verb may be rendered in the passive voice without creating ambiguity as to the responsible party. Hence, “it must be offered.”

[42] 10:2–4. *l’mikra ha-edah u-lmassa et ha-machanot* (NJPS: “to summon the community and to set the divisions in motion”). The group term *edah* has a wide semantic range; see my note at 1:2.

The present topical context is military and thus excludes women. In this chapter, the text returns to its ongoing portrayal of Israel as “God’s army”—a metaphor stretching all the way back to the Book of Exodus. (This understanding is based on that of Jacob Milgrom, and at odds with that of Baruch Levine.) In the ancient Near East, an army was the epitome of masculinity; thus the text’s imagery now brings Israelite men into the foreground, while Israelite women and children, whom we know to be part of the camp, remain in the background. (The responsibility of a plain-sense translation is to convey the foreground.)

As the Israelites now depart from Mt. Sinai (vv. 11–12), the text portrays their movement in elaborately detailed military terms (vv. 13–28). But how was that army mobilized? An army logically needs a way to be called to arms, and then directed to march in an orderly fashion. That, I suggest, is precisely what the Torah is spelling out at the start of this passage (vv. 2–8), just prior to its relating the troop movements. (Verses 9–10 step out of the scene momentarily, in order to link the practices of the text’s later Israelite audience to this wilderness narrative.) In short, the context suggests that the primary purpose of the trumpets discussed in vv. 2–8 is military. As I parse the passage, the two operative phrases of verse 2, “summon the *edah*” and “set the divisions in motion,” are developed in vv. 3–4 (reiterated in v. 7) and in vv. 5–6, respectively.

As in 1:2, the gender-inclusive term “community” is a misleading rendering here in 10:2. On the other hand, English idiom expects gender to be specified only when it is not obvious to the reader. In this case, the specification of the representative subgroup would be enough for the contemporary reader to imagine the referents’ gender. Therefore I supply a clarifying insertion. Hence, “to summon [military bodies of] the

community and to set the divisions in motion.” (NRSV: “for summoning the congregation, and for breaking camp.”)

[43] 10:3. *kol ha-edah* (NJPS: “the whole community”). See the previous note and my printed comment: The topical context of this chapter restricts the referent of *edah* to a male-only subgroup. Thus “community” is a misleading rendering, as in 1:2. Hence, “the whole company [of fighters].” (NRSV: “the whole congregation.”)

[44] 10:7. *ha-kahal* (NJPS: “the congregation”). The mass noun *kahal* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that any corresponding verbal inflections are masculine.)

Kahal is a synonym for *edah*; the scope of its reference is determined by the context. It can mean “adult male Israelites” (Josh. 8:35); such a restricted meaning seems most likely in this context. (See the previous two notes; none of the other contexts of *kahal* in Numbers exclude women as clearly as this instance.) Hence, “[military bodies of] the congregation.” (NRSV: “the assembly.”)

[45] 11:10. *ha-am . . . ish l’fetach oholo* (NJPS: “the people . . . each person at the entrance of his tent”). The noun *ish* (“participant”) appears here in its distributive sense of “each one, anyone.” On that sense, see at Exod. 7:12. The group being distributed—of which *ish* must be the constituent unit—is identified in this verse as *am* (“collectivity”). The scope of the noun *am* varies depending upon the situation. Each of these nouns refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord with the masculine noun *ish* that the possessive pronominal suffix is masculine.)

The topical context does not reliably exclude women from view. In v. 8, the same *am* is gathering, grinding, pounding, boiling, and making cakes of food. In ancient Israel these were women’s activities (Carol Meyers, “Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible,” *Women’s Bible Commentary*). See further the discussion of parallel wording at Exod. 33:8.

By its rendering of *ish* as “person” NJPS shows that it intended “his” in a gender-neutral sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral formulation via an idiomatic equivalent. Hence, “the people . . . at the entrance of each tent.” (NRSV: “all at the entrances of their tents.”)

[46] 11:12. *hariti . . . y’lidtihu* (NJPS: “conceive . . . bear them”). Rendering revised in 2006. This verse begins with two short rhetorical questions—each with its own verb, inflected in the first person as *hariti* and *yaladti*, respectively. As many scholars have noted, Moses here uses human imagery to express his exasperation—and to make a point about his and the people’s relationship to God.

Here I must call attention to the passage's ambiguities. Contrary to the decisive-sounding claims of many scholars, I believe that the text does not warrant assigning a definite sex as the implied subject of the twin metaphor. As I shall argue below, such indeterminacy is so conspicuous that it should be considered intentional.

Both verbs refer to the biological production of offspring; thus the interpretive issue in v. 12a is one of sex rather than gender. However, the parent's sex is indefinite. Regarding the first question, the Torah does apply the verb *harah* to a female parent, which may be the case here (so Tikva Frymer-Kensky [*Goddesses*, p. 267, n. 15]; Judith Antonelli, p. 412). However, the verb can refer to a male parent (so Targum Onkelos here). Mayer Gruber argues for an implied *male* subject on formal grounds: "It is true that in prose the verb *h-r-h* refers definitely to pregnancy, but in poetry *h-r-h* is only a word akin to *y-l-d* (= *holid*), and rhetorical questions belong to poetry, not to prose" ("Feminine Similes," p. 77, n. 9; my transl.).

Regarding Moses' second question, the Bible most often employs the verb *yalad* for giving birth (so Jeffrey Tigay at Deut. 32:18). Yet a male sense (fathering) is attested (Prov. 23:22). In our verse, Ibn Ezra takes the verb's referent as manly, and Ramban acknowledges that this is defensible (although he himself takes its referent in womanly terms). While it is true that a different inflection is normally used for men, Mayer Gruber explains that the Torah is not grammatically consistent throughout: "According to source criticism, Num. 11:12 belongs . . . to the J source. . . . In the J source, the question *he-anochi yaladti* is akin to *he-anochi holadti* in the priestly writings" (op. cit.; my transl.).

Regardless of how the first two questions portray God's biological sex (female, male, both, or neither), the upshot is the same. These two rhetorical questions both imply a negative answer, while *anochi* ("I") is given a doubled syntactic emphasis. Thus what Moses means is: "It's You (God) who is responsible!"

Probably the indeterminacy (bivalence) of the sexual imagery in this verse is not accidental. Biblical theology would seem to preclude assigning a biological sex to God—even in what is obviously a figure of speech—for to do so would have undercut the radical claim that this one God transcends all dualities and supercedes all other deities. Tikva Frymer-Kensky underscores the biblical contrast with the polytheist pantheons of other ancient Near Eastern peoples: "The monotheist God is not sexually a male. . . . sexuality was simply not part of the divine order" (*Goddesses*, pp. 188–189).

NJPS took the imagery in both questions as female. During production of the printed edition (2005), I let stand the NJPS renderings on the grounds that they were defensible. However, I hinted in my printed comment that it might be more accurate to give the sexes "equal time," rendering one verb in male terms and another in female terms (so perhaps KJV: "conceived . . . begotten."). To truly convey the text's bivalence most accurately, the rendering was changed in 2006 to a sex-neutral formu-

lation. (Candidate terms included “breed, produce, beget, procreate, engender.”) Hence: “produce . . . engender them.” (NRSV: “conceive . . . give birth . . .”)

[47] 11:12. *ka-asher yissa ha-omen et ha-yonek* (NJPS: “as a nurse carries an infant”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *omen* refers nonspecifically to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.) The Bible, when referring to a specifically to a woman, elsewhere uses the grammatically feminine form (*omenet*), which the text pointedly did not employ here. Therefore many interpreters have construed the masculine form *omen* here as referring to a man: Brenda Forster (citing Isa. 49:23; II Kings 10:1, 5; Ruth 4:16); Targum Onkelos; Nachmanides (after noting that a generic reading is possible); Jacob Milgrom; Baruch Levine (*AB*); Robert Alter. More precisely, however, the reference is *agnostic* as to gender.

Others, relying on the context of the preceding two verbs, take *omen* as woman (Judith Antonelli, p. 412). However, the metaphors in this verse’s two halves should be treated as distinct—with distinct referents. Such a shift in imagery would be expected, given the literary conventions for rhetorical questions in biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic (David Sperling, pers. comm.; Mayer Gruber, “Feminine Similes,” p. 77, n. 9). (Furthermore, the womanly reference in the first two questions is far from certain; see previous note.)

As for the meaning of *omen*, it is used multiple times for a NON-PARENTAL GUARDIAN but never does it clearly refer to a biological PARENT (although in some cases the nurturer’s precise relationship to the dependent is not spelled out). In other words, *omen* does not designate a parental role per se; it denotes caretaking more generally.

And the topic of this metaphor—the care of children in transit—does not appear to have been a clearly gender-marked activity in ancient Israel; see my printed comment at Deut. 1:31. As Brenda Forster states, the Bible overall describes “both males and females . . . in supportive, caring roles with children” (p. 323). Therefore neither gender can be reliably excluded from view. Indeed, regardless of how we take the gender (man or woman, parent or non-parent), the upshot is the same. Moses is saying: “You (God) are asking too much of me!” This point does not depend upon a specified gender. It is not germane.

Therefore we have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. The NJPS rendering of *omen* as “nurse” is less overtly gendered than the OJPS “nursing-father,” which in turn was based upon the KJV “nursing father.” However, it is likely to be construed as referring to only a *woman* (which is also incorrect). Contemporary readers will naturally construe “nurse” according to usage frequency, and the two most common senses of “nurse” are *wetnurse* and *woman who takes care of a young child* (without providing milk). The first such sense admirably suits the collocations “con-

ceive,” “bear,” “bosom,” and “infant.” Therefore, most readers will imagine (incorrectly) a *wetnurse* and look no further. (The NJPS rendering of *yoneik* as “infant” rather than the more common, narrower rendering as “sucking child” or “nursing child” may have been intended to discourage that misinterpretation, but the implication is too subtle to be noticed in casual reading.) Much less common is the gender-inclusive sense of “nurse” as *one who looks after or fosters*.

For clarity, I seek a more recognizably gender-neutral term than “nurse” for a non-parental provider of childcare. Hence, “as a caretaker carries an infant.” (NRSV: “as a nurse carries a sucking child.”)

[48] 11:12. *la-avotav* (NJPS: “their fathers”). Rendering revised in 2006. (Regarding the grammatically masculine singular possessive suffix: Its antecedent is *am*, “collectivity”; NJPS renders the pronoun reasonably in the plural.) The plural term *avot* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

In the specific context of God’s *promises of land*, an ancient audience would have heard the term *avot* as referring to the patriarchs specifically. That is because in ancient Israel the ancestral land holding was patrimonial—typically inherited and controlled by males. (Compare my rendering in situations regarding other gendered social institutions; see my notes to Exod. 3:6, 12:3; Lev. 24:14 and 26:7. See also my notes at Num. 8:9; 20:15; 31:9.) No change to NJPS.

[49] 11:16. *esfah li shiv'im ish mi-ziknei yisrael* (NJPS: “gather for Me seventy of Israel’s elders”). Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1.

Together with the mention of selection from a larger pool (*mi-ziknei yisrael*; “[from among] Israel’s elders”) and a beneficiary (*li*; “for Me”), the verb *asaf* denotes the assembly of a team for a particular task. (This verb is also used in an agency sense in Num. 21:23; cf. Num. 10:25; 1 Sam. 14:52; Isa. 52:12.) In this case, the task is to “share the burden of the people with you” (v. 17); those elders, selected by Moses, will become God’s deputized agents. (Contrast *v’shiv'im mi-ziknei yisrael* [NJPS: “seventy elders of Israel,” Exod. 24:1, 9], where those chosen implicitly represent the Israelites rather than God; it is not stated who selects them.) In other words, both the co-text and the context evoke the occasional sense of *ish* as “one who acts on behalf of another party.”

An ancient Israelite audience would have understood the body from which these agents are to be drawn, namely *ziknei yisrael* (“elders of Israel”), as typically male—but not exclusively so. (See at Exod. 3:16.)

Therefore we have no warrant to render in gendered terms. Perhaps in a future printing, the rendering might explicitly reflect the semantic force of *ish*: “seventy rep-

representative elders of Israel.” Meanwhile, no change to NJPS. (NRSV: “seventy of the elders of Israel.”)

[50] 11:21. *ragli* (NJPS: “men”). Grammatically speaking, as a singular collective term, *ragli* does not specify its referents’ gender.

This substantive comes from the word *regel* (“foot”), meaning “footmen, infantry, foot soldiers” (Jacob Milgrom; Baruch Levine; so NJPS at I Sam. 4:10); see printed comment. Moses is using a technical military term.

The NJPS rendering is an informal term for troops. However, “men” can be easily misconstrued to mean that Moses is implying that “the people” consists *only* of its menfolk, or that only men *deserve* to be counted. For clarity, I choose a more precise rendering. Hence, “foot soldiers.” (NRSV: “on foot.”)

[51] 11:25. *va-yitten al shiv'im ish ha-z'kenim* (NJPS: “and put it upon the seventy elders”). Rendering revised in 2006. The noun *ish* is conspicuous by its presence (cf. Ezek. 9:6, *anashim ha-z'kenim*). On the gender of its reference and on its meaning, see the note at v. 16.

The construct chain *ish ha-z'kenim* can be construed either as indicating an *entity–class (genus)* relationship (“members of the elders”) or an *entity–origin* relationship (“agents from the elders”) (*BHRG* § 25.4). (The construction [definite number + *'ish* + *ha-zeqenim*] is unique.) NJPS has taken it in the former sense; however, the conspicuous usage in an agency context would more likely evoke the latter sense. Hence, “. . . the seventy representative elders.” (NRSV: “the seventy elders.”)

[52] 11:26. *va-yish'aru sh'nei anashim ba-machaneh* (NJPS: “two men . . . had remained in camp”). Rendering revised in 2006. The reference is indefinite yet specific. In such a case, a singular referent’s gender would be specified grammatically as *not womanly*, whereas the plural is less restrictive: *not solely womanly*.

In light of the co-text, the indefinite form evokes the basic sense of *ish* as “participant, party.” What’s salient is that they belonged to the specially designated group of seventy. Their gender is not at issue.

There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. The NJPS rendering places undue emphasis on gender. I seek a rendering that conveys the group affiliation that is explicit in the Hebrew text. Hence, “two of the representatives.” (NRSV: “two men.”)

[53] 11:27. *va-yarotz ha-naar va-yaged l'Mosheh* (NJPS: “a youth ran out and told Moses”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *naar* has a definite and particular reference, so that it specifies its referent’s gender as “non-womanly.”

The term *naar* denotes subordination; and communicating information to superiors is one of the most common tasks performed by *naarim* in the Bible (Carolyn Leeb, *Away from the Father’s House*, pp. 42–45; Leeb’s thesis is that *naar* denotes a

social status of being outside the normal protection offered by one's *beit av* [home household]). See at Exod. 24:5 and 33:11.

As for contextual rendering, in English narration the word “subordinate” is not idiomatic. Hence, “an assistant.” (NRSV: “a young man.”)

[54] 11:32. *ha-mam'it asaf asarah chamarim* (NJPS: “he who gathered least had ten *chomers*”). This grammatically masculine participle (used as a substantive) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text's composer(s) had ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view. The answer is no. That audience viewed neither food gathering nor the craving of meat as a gender-specific activity.

Presumably NJPS intended “he” in a gender-neutral sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more clearly gender-neutral rendering. Hence, “the one who gathered least.” (NRSV: “the least anyone gathered.”)

[55] 12:3. *v'ha-ish Mosheh anav m'-od* (NJPS: “Now Moses was a very humble man”). Rendering revised in 2006 and again in 2010. This story revolves around a challenge to Moses' authority as God's designated agent. As explained at Exod. 11:3 (*gam ha-ish Mosheh*), the conspicuous usage and narrative context evoke the occasional sense of *ish* as “agent, envoy.” That God is the principal is implicit information.

NJPS seems to have understood the force as “he knew that he was only human” (and so Milgrom, *ad loc.*), a sense that—so far as I know—is otherwise unattested. (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, etc. do not comment on this appositional construction, either in Exodus or here.) Nor has the story implied that he or anyone else considered him to be divine.

There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms, whereas the relational meaning should be made explicit. Hence, “now [God's] envoy Moses was very humble.” (NRSV: “the man Moses.”)

[56] 12:6. *n'viachem . . . ba-mar'ah eilav etvadah* (NJPS: “a prophet . . . among you, I make Myself known to him in a vision”). Here the noun *navi* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding pronominal suffixes are masculine.)

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text's composer(s) had ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view. The answer is no; in-

deed, this story turns on the fact that Miriam is among those who are considered to be prophets.

Thus there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. See my printed comment. Hence, “prophets . . . among you.” (NRSV: “prophets among you.”)

[57] 12:12. *meit asher b'tzeit^o mei-rechem immo* (NJPS: “one dead, who emerges from his mother’s womb”). The participle *meit* (used here as a substantive) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding possessive pronominal suffixes are masculine.) Indeed, the term *meit* is similarly used repeatedly (by the narrator and several characters) to designate corpse of a dead woman prior to burial (namely, Sarah in Genesis 23).

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) had ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* a woman from view. The answer is no, for the situation applies regardless of the fetus’s sex. Furthermore, Aaron is suggestively comparing a woman (Miriam) to the fetus in question, as if she (metaphorically) fit into such a category. Thus we have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

Note that the ancient Israelite audience did not perceive even live newborns as *persons*. (Only after a neonate had survived for at least a week was it admitted to the human realm.)

NJPS probably intended “his” in a generic sense, which I will replace with a more gender-neutral formulation. Meanwhile, its use of the personal pronoun “who” connotes a sense of personhood that seems out of place. For clarity, I render *meit* contextually, as did Baruch Levine (*AB*). Hence, “a stillbirth which emerges from its mother’s womb.” (No internal comma, because the relative clause is restrictive.) (NRSV: “one stillborn, whose . . . comes out of its mother’s womb.”)

[58] 12:12. (The exclamation point is a copyediting change to NJPS that is not related to gender per se.)

[59] 12:14. *v'aviha yarok yarak b'faneha* (NJPS: “if her father spat in her face”). See my printed comment, to which I now add the following considerations:

(1) Although the situation is a hypothetical one, the noun’s reference is definite and particular; thus our noun specifies its referent’s gender as “not womanly.”

(2) The ancient audience would have understood the *av*’s need to maintain clear lines of authority within the household as a proper and necessary use of power, for the household’s ability to function was a matter of its members’ life and death in a subsistence society. As Carol Meyers has described that era, “the meaning of individual existence [was] fully subsumed into the characteristics and exigencies of the groups on which the individual [was] dependent for survival” (*Discovering Eve*, p. 123).

(3) This verse’s specification of gender is consistent with v. 7, which portrays God as a (typically male) head of a *bayit*, which designates a corporate household or a monarch’s court (cf. Gen. 41:40): “Moses . . . is trusted throughout my *bayit*.”

In short, there is warrant for rendering in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “if her father . . .”)

[60] 13:2. *sh’lach l’cha anashim v’yaturu et eretz K’naan* (NJPS: “send men to scout the land of Canaan”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *anashim* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *anashim* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. In this long pericope (Numbers 13–14), *anashim*—including its singular equivalent (*ish*)—seems to be a theme word, for it occurs twelve times. Here, the governing verb is *shalach* (or *shallach*). When used with a personal object and a stated beneficiary (*l’cha*, that is, “for your sake”), it is probably the Bible’s most common verb to denote the dispatch of a messenger or envoy. Such persons are designated as *anashim* (or its singular equivalent, *ish*) in many instances, including: Lev. 16:21 (see my note there); Deut. 1:22; Josh. 2:1; 2:3–7; 7:2; 8:3, 12; 18:4, 8, 9 Judg. 18:2; 20:12; 21:10; 1 Sam. 9:16–17; 2 Kgs. 2:16–17; 20:12–14; Isa. 39:1–3; Jer. 26:22–23; Ps. 105:17; 2 Chron. 2:6. Such situations readily evoke the occasional sense of *ish* as “a participant who acts on another’s behalf; agent.” So also in v. 16, because of the similar qualifying phrase there: *asher shalach Mosheh latur et haaretz* (“whom Moses sent to scout the land”).

Did the text’s composer(s) have ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the topic surely *excludes* women from view? The answer here is a qualified yes. The activity in question is scouting the land on behalf of one’s tribe, and the stated qualification is being a *nasi* (“chieftain”). Typically, tribal leaders and representatives were men, but this is immaterial to translation of the text. (Everyone on the list that follows is indeed male.)

When gender is not at issue, English idiom expects it to be specified only when it is not obvious to the reader. The contemporary audience is likely to assume that “scouts” and “chieftains” are probably men, which is quickly confirmed by the list in vv. 4 ff. Thus we have no warrant for rendering *ish* in gendered terms.

NJPS failed to recognize that this special sense is in the foreground here. Its rendering of *anashim* as “men” misleadingly implies that the ancient audience would have viewed gender as the foreground criterion. To better convey the ancient understanding of this passage, I have substituted a more precise term. Hence, “send emissaries to scout the land of Canaan.” (NRSV: “send men to spy out the land of Canaan.”)

[61] 13:2. *ish echad ish echad l’matteh avotav t’shal’chu*. (NJPS: “send one man from each of their ancestral tribes”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *ish* refers to

a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding numerals and possessive pronominal suffix are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. As in 1:4, the phrasing evokes the “representative” sense of *ish*: an appointee from each tribe who will take part in an official communal project.

On the emissaries’ gender, and on the lack of warrant for rendering *ish* here in gendered terms, see the previous note. NJPS appears to have unduly “masculinized” the text in this passage, while failing to convey the relational semantic content. To convey the ancient understanding more accurately, I am substituting a gender-neutral rendering. Hence, “send one representative from each of their ancestral tribes.” (NRSV: “from each of their ancestral tribes you shall send a man.”)

[62] 13:3. *kullam anashim rashei b’nei yisrael hemah* (NJPS: “all the men being leaders of the Israelites”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *anashim* (the plural of *ish*) refers to a *category* of persons, whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. In the present verse, the pointed and highly conspicuous presence of this term—after the same parties have already been designated as *anashim* in v. 1 and as *ish* in v. 2—evokes the sense of *anashim* as “those who act on behalf of (their own group or of another party).” That is, each emissary is selected to represent his tribe, while serving as agents of the nation as a whole. The point may be to underscore that as representatives they are duly authorized—and therefore they can (and will) legitimately be held responsible for the entire populace’s fate.

At the same time, the sentence construction places *anashim* in apposition with the designation *rashei b’nei yisrael* (“leaders of the Israelites”). This apparent parallelism has induced some interpreters to construe *anashim* as “persons of consequence; persons of distinction; important personages” (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Baruch Levine [AB], and Jacob Milgrom). Rashi even states categorically: “Every instance of [indefinite] *anashim* in the Bible is the language of prominence (*chashuvim*).”

For the time being, in this instance I will accept that assessment. For surely in ancient Israel, a group’s representatives are most naturally drawn from its already distinguished and prominent members. Yet that may not be the denotation of *anashim*. Apposition per se does not require synonymy. The more normal (albeit less recognized) representational sense of *ish* may be sufficient to account for its usage here. (Compare Exod. 4:19, 10:7, 16:20; 17:9, 18:21; Num. 1:5, 17; 11:26; 16, 31; 14:36, 38; 16:2, 35; 22:20; 34:17, 19.)

NJPS failed to recognize the special nuance of *anashim* here. Its rendering as “men” misleadingly implies that gender was an explicit criterion. I have substituted a

more precise term. Hence, “all of them being notables, leaders of the Israelites.” (NRSV: “all of them leading men among the Israelites”)

[63] 13:26. *kol adat b'nei yisrael . . . kol ha-edah* (NJPS: “the whole Israelite community . . . the whole community”). On the challenges of construing and translating the term *edah*, see my note at 1:2. If one understands *ha-edah* as the fighting force (which takes this designation because it represents the community on the battlefield; as in chs. 1, 10, and 14), then the narrative goes as follows: when the scouts return, they quite reasonably address their report to that body—namely, the ones who must put their lives on the line in the projected war of conquest. The story of the scouting expedition thus focuses on the militia’s will to fight.

Although Rashi mentions this reading, neither Ibn Ezra nor Ramban adopt it; for them, the plain sense of *edah*, *am*, *kahal*, *b'nei yisrael*, *anashim*, and *ish* in this passage is gender-inclusive. The text gives no definitive reason to read those terms more restrictively, and although its overall military metaphor often places dependents in the background, it does not erase them from the picture. The whole populace is in this together.

In my printed comment here, I adopted the latter position: the plain sense appears to be gender-inclusive. Nine years later, I prefer to argue that the text is not concerned with precisely who the actors are (or whether women are in view); the actual actors are not in focus, but rather their representational link to the nation. Unless we can say that the text’s composer(s) had good reason to believe that the ancient audience would surely have pictured a male-only body in the foreground—which is not the case in this account—the translation should be as vague as the source text. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “all the congregation of the Israelites . . . all the congregation.”)

[64] 13:30. *vayahas Kalev et ha-am* (NJPS: “Caleb hushed the people”). On the challenges of translating the term *am*, see my note at Exod. 1:9–11. On the sense of *am* in this passage, see above at 13:26 regarding the term *edah* (which refers to the same group in question), and my printed comment here. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[65] 13:31. *v'ha-anashim asher alu imo* (NJPS: “but the men who had gone up with him”). Rendering revised in 2006. See the notes on *anashim* as “emissaries” earlier in this pericope (13:2, 16). To construe this term the same way here heightens the drama, by lending weight to the opinion that these characters proceed to express. Indeed, they had been chosen to be scouts, and those assembled now listen to them, because of their status as the tribes’ agents. Hence, “but the emissaries who had gone up with him.” (NRSV and Baruch Levine: same as NJPS.)

[66] 13:32. *v'chol ha-am asher ra-inu . . . anshej middot* (NJPS: “all the people that we saw . . . are men of great size”). Here the noun *ish*, in its plural construct equivalent

form, refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, the group term *am* (“collectivity”) evokes the “membership” sense of *anashim*. Indeed, the constituent unit of an *am* is frequently referred to as an *ish*. (More conventional views would view *anshei* as a “generic noun of class.” Yet in relational terms, the referents of *anshei* exemplify the quality expressed by the genitive term *middot*, “[remarkable] measure.” Regardless, the English rendering would not be affected.)

This report is employing general terms presumably to refer to a more specific group, namely, the likely members of the militia whom the Israelites would face in battle. With the utterance thus worded, that militia’s gender is not at issue. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

Given the rendering here of *am* as “people,” perhaps NJPS intended “men” in a neutral sense. Nowadays, however, that sense can actually be conveyed more clearly without the word “men.” Hence, delete “men.” (So NRSV; Baruch Levine.)

[67] 14:2. *vayalonu al Moshe . . . kol b'nei yisrael* (NJPS: “all the Israelites railed against Moses”). On the challenges of translating the term *b'nei*, see my note at Exod. 1:7. On the sense of *b'nei* in this passage, see my printed comment here. Logically, the participants are not the entire Israelite nation but rather a typical or representative activist subset—and here they are designated in terms of the nation that they represent. At the same time, we do not have reason to conclude that the ancient audience would perceive this subset as necessarily restricted to men. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[68] 14:3. *vayomru aleihem kol ha-edah . . . nasheinu v'tapeinu yihyu lavaz* (NJPS: “the whole community shouted at them, . . . ‘our wives and children will be carried off’”). The word *nasheinu* here is often cited as proof that throughout this passage, the antagonists are (married) men only, not women. However, other readings are possible: (1) While Jacob Milgrom (at 1:2) does construe *edah* in 14:1–4 to mean “adult males,” he still perceives that women were involved in the general protests (at 14:22). (2) The ancient audience might have been expected to take the reference to “wives” elliptically—as if reading “[the men said,] ‘Our wives and children will be carried off!’” (3) Given the plural verb and the loose logical connection between the spoken clauses, I perceive here what George Savran has called “multivocality in group speech”—that is, a cascade of negative reactions uttered by various members of the crowd, which eventually converges on the idea of returning to Egypt. In this reading, the text depicts a chaotic and thus realistic scene. Hence my printed changes in punctuation in vv. 2–3, which indicate that the character who mentioned “our wives” is only one of many protesters. (NRSV: overall, the same as NJPS.)

[69] 14:5. *kol kahal adat b'nei yisrael* (NJPS: “all the assembled congregation of the Israelites”). This train of terms is unique in the Bible. (The closest equivalent is *kol kahal adat yisrael* in Exod. 12:6, regarding the paschal offering prior to the tenth plague. On *kahal*, see above at 10:7) Orlinsky called such expansive terminology a “pleonasm” (JPS *Notes* at Exod. 12:6). My literary reading views it here not as indicating a sudden change in Moses and Aaron’s audience (compared to *kol ha-edah* in v. 1 and *kol b'nei yisrael* in v. 2) but rather as a dramatic intensification by the storyteller at a defining moment in the history of the Israelite “community.” Gender is not at issue.

In such a situation, English idiom would not specify gender. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “all the assembly of the congregation of the Israelites.”)

[70] 14:10. *v'yom'ru kol ha-edah lirgom ba-avanim* (NJPS: “As the whole community threatened to pelt them with stones”). On the challenges of translating the term *edah*, see my note at 1:2. This instance differs from the similar context of stoning in 15:32–36 (see my note there), in that the party involved here is not as clearly defined. Rather than a duly constituted leadership body, it is an unruly crowd.

Presumably, those who are issuing threats would claim to represent the people’s will. At any rate, the text refers to them in broad terms, due to their salience for the national fate. Although arguably those individuals making the threats are men, the ancient audience’s inference of the referenced gender is not reliably different than that of the contemporary audience. Gender is not at issue, and this body has already been in the scene for some time. Thus there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “but the whole congregation threatened to stone them.”)

[71] 14:15. *v'heimatah et ha-am ha-zeh k'ish echad* (NJPS: “If then You slay this people to a man”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding adjective is masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here it occurs in a conventional idiom that appears nine times in the Bible; we should prefer a construal of this expression that fits its other contexts, too. This is not difficult: The prior mention of a group evokes the basic sense of *ish* as “member, participant.” (The constituent unit of an *am* is frequently referred to as an *ish*.) Hence the expression means “as one unit”—that is, the group behaves, or is treated, as if it consists of only one member. (Compare: “Amasa won over the hearts of every householder in Judah *k'ish echad* [i.e., as if of one mind],” 2 Sam. 19:15; “then all the people rose *k'ish echad* [i.e., as if of one mind] and declared . . .,” Judg. 20:11.) Here it means that God would

be treating the individual members of the group *without regard for individual differences*. The issue expressed, then, is neither the hypothetical slaughter's *speed* (Rashi: "suddenly"; NRSV, TNIV: "all at one time") nor *thoroughness* (NJPS: "to a man"; URJ 2005: "—every single person—") but rather its utter lack of discrimination: its being *wholesale* slaughter. (In that respect, Moses' implicit objection is like Abraham's explicit question: "Will you sweep away the innocent along with the guilty?"; Gen. 18:23.)

Gender is not at issue. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

A fitting rendering is the adverb "wholesale." Hence, "if you then slay this people wholesale." (NRSV: see above)

[72] 14:22. *ki khol ha-anashim ha-ro-im et k'vodi* (NJPS: "none of the men who have seen My presence"). The printed comment here was revised in the 3rd printing (2006). Here the plural noun *anashim* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *anashim* (and its singular equivalent, *ish*) in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here the context evokes its primary sense as "participants; members of the group in question," and the precise reference must be gleaned from the context. (In this case, it excludes Levites.) Note that Josh. 5:6 understands that God's punishment here was aimed specifically at *anshei ha-milchamah* ("the men of military age"). Yet because the present qualifying phrases are not that specific, I follow Jacob Milgrom, who interprets contextually here: "does not include children." Hence, "adults." (NRSV: "people").

[73] 14:23. *et ha-aretz asher nishbati la-avotam* (NJPS: "the land that I promised on oath to their fathers"). Rendering revised in 2006; see my third note at 11:12. No change to NJPS.

[74] 14:29. *v'chol p'kudeichem l'chol misparchem* (NJPS: "of all of you who were recorded in your various lists"). God does not state outright who is being addressed here. The second-person plural language refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

Did the text's composer(s) nonetheless have ample reason to rely upon the Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view? The answer here is yes. For that ancient audience would take for granted that a census is for military purposes, which restricts the sense to men only (so also 1:2–3). (Regarding God's momentary focus on men, see my printed comment at Deut. 1:35.)

English idiom calls for gender to be specified when it first becomes germane. For that reason, the gender-neutral NJPS rendering is misleading: to contemporary readers, an otherwise unqualified "all of you" means everybody (not only men). Further,

because a modern census includes women as well as men, our text's reference to being counted in a census will probably not be construed as a gendered clue. So in order that today's readers will understand this passage in the same way as the ancient audience, I add a bracketed insert, which accords with English idiom while making explicit the culturally implicit content. Hence, "of all of you [men] who were recorded in your various lists." (NRSV: "of all your number, included in the census.")

[75] 14:35. *kol ha-edah ha-raah ha-zot . . . yittamu v' . . . yamutu* (literally: "all this evil community . . . shall be finished and . . . they shall die"; NJPS: "all that wicked band . . . shall die to the last man"). The subject governing the latter verbs is *edah* (NJPS: "band"), which refers either to the men addressed in vv. 29b–33 (see previous note), or to the people as a whole (with certain exceptions, such as the Levites), per the inclusive reading of this episode (see my note at 13:26; compare the muttering *edah* [NJPS: "community"] mentioned at the start of God's utterance; 14:27). Either way, God is not declaring that men will die but women won't. Gender is not at issue.

English idiom generally specifies gender only when it first becomes germane, but not thereafter (except in pronouns). So here, at the end of God's declaration, there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

NJPS chose an idiom here that arguably means "without exception," yet it expresses this meaning via gender-restricted (male) wording; for in such an expression, "man" refers primarily or exclusively to males. Therefore the NJPS rendering is more gendered than the original wording. As a remedy, I substitute a more clearly gender-neutral idiom. Hence, "they shall die and so be finished off." (NRSV: "they shall come to a full end, and . . . they shall die.")

[76] 14:36. *v'ha-anashim asher shalach mosheh latur et haaretz* (NJPS: "As for the men whom Moses sent to scout the land"). Rendering revised in 2006. By definition, a plural reference is nonspecific, and therefore its referents' gender is not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. It happens that these referents are all male; however, that fact goes without saying.

The context of agency evokes the sense of *anashim* as "agents, representatives"; see my notes earlier in this long pericope (13:2, 16). The same usage is repeated twice more in this notice by the narrator (vv. 36–38).

In none of these cases is there warrant for rendering in gendered terms, because English idiom does not specify gender in such a situation.

The NJPS rendering employs "men" in its occasional sense of "male subordinates." Such a rendering is more gendered than the original wording. (That is why the present translation reserves the term "men" for contexts in which it means "adult males.") As a remedy, I am substituting a more precise rendering. Hence, "emissaries." (NRSV, Levine: "men.")

[77] 14:37. *va-yamutu ha-anashim motzi-ei dibat ha-aretz ha-ra-ah* (NJPS: “those who spread such calumnies about the land died”). On the meaning in Hebrew, see the previous note.

NJPS downplays this second instance of *anashim* in vv. 36–38, apparently for the sake of English idiom, where a narration style that repeated “men” three times would weaken the force of the irony, sounding stilted. Here I respect NJPS’s sense of style. No change to NJPS. (NRSV, Levine: “men.”)

[78] 14:38. *anashim* (NJPS: “men”). Rendering revised in 2006. See my note on verse 36. Hence, “emissaries.” (NRSV, Levine: “men.”)

[79] 14:39–40. *va-ydabber moshah et-ha-d’varim ha-eileh el kol b’nei yisra’el va-yit-ab’lu ha-am m’od . . . va-ya’alu* (NJPS: “When Moses repeated these words to all the Israelites, the people were overcome by grief. . . . they set out”). As stated above, Hebrew parlance commonly employs a general group term to designate a representative subset of that group, and this passage is no exception. In general in Exodus and Numbers, Moses communicates with the people via its representatives, sometimes called “elders,” who are referred to *kol b’nei yisra’el* (“all the Israelites”) or *ha-am* (“the collectivity”). Those terms do not necessarily mean that the entire populace was physically present; rather, the reference may be in terms of representative function. The mention of grieving is a gender marker for women’s involvement. (On women’s role in public mourning, see my note at 20:29.) Then verses 40–45 relate a move toward armed conflict. An ancient Israelite audience would surely have presumed that only the (male) militia was going into battle, and this would go without saying. Although for the verbs and possessives of vv. 40–45, the only available antecedent noun is the *am* here in v. 39, the actual actors may differ. The text is not concerned with precisely who the actors are (or whether women are in view); the actual actors are not in focus, but rather their representational link to the nation.

The translation needs to be similarly vague—at least until the point where the representative actors take on a gendered cast that is different from contemporary norms. To convey the implicit gender-specificity of verse 40’s reference to the militia, I insert a clarification in brackets. Hence, “the people were overcome by grief. . . . [their fighting force] set out.” (NRSV: “the people mourned greatly. They . . . went up.”)

[80] 15:4. *v’hikriv ha-makriv korbano* (NJPS: “the person who presents the offering . . . shall bring”). See printed comment. On women presenting voluntary offerings, see Mayer Gruber, “Women in the Cult According to the Priestly Code.” No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “whoever presents such an offering.”)

[81] 15:15. [*ka-asher taasu, ken yaaseh*] *ha-kahal* (NJPS: “as you do, so shall it be done by the rest of the congregation”). The NJPS translators noted that the meaning of this clause is uncertain. On *kahal*, see above at 10:7. Here, Baruch Levine and Jacob Mil-

grom disagree on whether the *ger* (“stranger”) in the previous verse is classed as part of this group. Nonetheless, *ger* is an inclusive category (see my note at 9:14).

Did the text’s composer(s) have reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view? No; see previous comment.

Gender is not at issue. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the assembly.”)

[82] 15:24. *mei-einei ha-edah . . . v’asu khol ha-edah* (NJPS: “through the inadvertence of the community, the whole community shall present”). On the challenges of translating the term *edah*, see my note at 1:2. This is one of many cases in the Torah where a general term refers to a specific subset that represents the larger body, typically by acting on its behalf. Occasionally, *kol ha-edah* was used to refer to the TYPICALLY MALE community leadership, in their capacity as representatives of the nation as a whole. Compare Exod. 12:3; Lev. 4:13, 8:3, 9:5, 24:14; and Num. 8:9; 15:32–36.

Who is actually responsible for bringing the bull to the sanctuary here? According to Jacob Milgrom, it is the community’s “national representatives.” The text’s ancient Israelite audience—oriented by their experience to the concrete reality of such an institution—would have perceived it as being in the textual foreground, while viewing in the background the people whom the council represented. A plain-sense rendering ought to convey what’s in the foreground.

NJPS’s rendering of *kol ha-edah* here as “community” causes the contemporary reader to miss the allusion to the gendered social institution that was self-evident to the ancient audience. Our edition presumes that readers will bear in mind that in ancient Israel the formal communal leadership was typically male. Hence, “through the inadvertence of the community, the community leaders shall present.” (NRSV: “without the knowledge of the congregation, the whole congregation shall offer.”)

[83] 15:25. *kol adat b’nei yisrael* (NJPS: “the whole Israelite community”). Here, in contrast to the previous verse, it is not merely the leadership but the whole community that needs expiation. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “all the congregation of the Israelites.”)

[84] 15:26. *ki l’khol ha-am bi-shgagah* (NJPS: “for it happened to the entire people through error”). The referential scope of the noun *am* (“collectivity”) is established by the context. Here *kol ha-am* appears to comprise two components mentioned earlier in this verse: “the whole Israelite community” (*edah*) plus “the stranger residing among them.” Because neither component is gender-restricted (see previous note and my note at 9:14, respectively), the entirety isn’t, either. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the whole people.”)

[85] 15:27–28, 30–31. *nefesh* (NJPS: “individual” in v. 27; “person” in vv. 28, 30–31). On the meaning of *nefesh* and its relationship to gender, see my note at Exod. 12:15 and Lev. 2:1; and see below, 31:35 and 46, where it designates a solely female group.

Presumably NJPS intended the masculine pronouns that refer to this term (“he, his, him”) in their neutral sense. For clarity, I am substituting for those pronouns more clearly neutral wording in this passage.

[86] 15:32. *va-yimtz'u ish m'koshesh etzim* (NJPS: “they came upon a man gathering wood”). Rendering revised in 2008. Here the noun *ish* refers to a specific person—whose gender is thus not womanly. The ancient audience would probably have imagined that the perpetrator is manly—the most likely option (prototyping)—although he could be of ambiguous or indeterminate gender.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, the prior clause mentions *b'nei Yisrael* (“the Israelites”), which governs the subsequent mention of *ish*, evoking its basic sense of “a member [of the group in question].” True, the forensic context (an incident) also evokes the basic sense of *ish* as “party [to a situation or case]; participant.” (These different nuances are available in English, but not in Hebrew.) Yet this aspect is secondary, especially given that this episode turns on the implicit fact that laws about observing the Sabbath apply only to *Israelites*. This party is not simply an “individual”; rather, he is the member of a group that has strict norms.

The NJPS rendering is thus misleading, for it begs the question as to how Moses knows that this guy is an Israelite—as if the text hasn’t told us so. The rendering should convey this material fact. Hence, “one of their fellows was found gathering wood.” (NRSV: “they found a man gathering sticks.”)

[87] 15:32–36. *vayakrivu oto . . . el kol ha-edah . . . ragom oto va-avanim kol ha-edah . . . va-yotziu oto kol ha-edah el mi-chutz la-machaneh* (NJPS: “brought him before . . . the whole community . . . the whole community shall pelt him with stones. . . . the whole community took him outside the camp”). Rendering revised in 2006. On the challenges of construing the term *edah*, see my note at 1:2.

The offense committed was against the entire community, but practically speaking, the number of actors must be much smaller. Occasionally, *kol ha-edah* was used to refer to the TYPICALLY MALE community leadership, in their capacity as representatives of the nation as a whole. Here, they are the body that actually hears the case, takes the man outside, and stones him. (Alternatively, the passage could be construed in terms of Deut. 17:7, where the witnesses—empowered to be representatives of the community—are the ones who initiate the stoning.) See further above, at verse 24.

Given today’s gender role assumptions, the NJPS rendering as “the whole community” prompts a generic gender perception, which is inaccurate. Our edition presumes that readers will bear in mind that in ancient Israel the formal communal lead-

ership was typically male; rendering in those terms will provide a more accurate picture. Hence, “the community leadership.” (NRSV: “the whole congregation.”)

[88] 15:35. *mot yumat ha-ish* (NJPS: “the man shall be put to death”). Rendering revised in 2006. The article has weakly demonstrative force. On the noun’s referential gender and meaning, see above at verse 32. Here, the usage is conspicuous, given that a pronoun could have served just as well to indicate who was meant—as was done repeatedly in the previous two verses. That is, the perpetrator is being referred to in terms of his membership in the community (namely, *b’nei yisrael*, mentioned at the start of this verse), or perhaps in his identity as “the party in question,” that is, the defendant in the case. Most simply put, he is to be executed as a member of the people Israel.

The NJPS rendering misses the nuance of membership, viewing him in isolation. To convey this idea in idiomatic English, I am drawn to the word “fellow,” which still is a male term yet superior to “man” in that it evokes the notion of fellowship. Hence, “this fellow shall be put to death.” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[89] 15:38. *Dabeir el-b’nei yisrael v’amarta aleihem v’asu lahem tzitzit* (NJPS: “Speak to the Israelite people and instruct them to make for themselves fringes”). This plural term refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding pronoun is masculine.)

The term’s referential gender is inclusive by default, yet it is sometimes used to refer to a “representative” subgroup that excludes women. Did the text’s composer(s) have ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view? The answer here is no. Although Baruch Levine says that this passage refers “most probably [to] all adult Israelite males,” he gives no explanation. In contrast, Jeffrey Tigay comments at the parallel in Deut. 22:12: “There is nothing in the commandment to suggest that it is limited to men.” Bill Hallo and Meir Malul find that the evidence is both sparse and ambiguous regarding whether ancient Near Eastern women wore identifying tassels on their hems as men did. (So my printed comment.) Nili Sacher Fox is more definite: “Artistic depictions . . . show women wearing tasseled garments, especially women of high status” (*TAWC*, ad loc.).

We have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the Israelites.”)

[90] 16:2. *va’anashim mi-b’nei yisra’el* (NJPS: “together with . . . Israelites”). Rendering revised in 2006. As always, the noun *anashim* (the functional plural of *ish*) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The usage of *anashim* is made conspicuous by its “fronted” syntactic placement. At first, following Baruch Levine, I thought that the status sense of this term (see my note at 13:3) was in the foreground in this context. However, it appears here in a construction that connotes selection and appointment (e.g., Gen. 47:2; Deut. 1:23; Josh. 4:2; Jer. 38:10; Ruth 4:2). The referents are described later in the verse as “chieftains of the community, chosen in the assembly.” Thus the context evokes the “representatives” sense of *anashim*. (Compare at 1:5, 17, 44: 11:16, 26.)

Did the text’s composer(s) perhaps have ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view? The answer here is no. Typically, “chieftains” were men—but not always. Yet this would go without saying. Gender is not at issue.

When gender is not at issue, English idiom expects it to be specified only when it is not obvious to the reader. In this case, the mention of “chieftains” is enough evidence for the contemporary reader. Thus we have no warrant for rendering *anashim* in gendered terms. Hence, “together with . . . representatives of the Israelites.” (NRSV: “Israelite men”; Levine: “accompanied by . . . personages from among the Israelites.”)

[91] 16:2. *anshei shem* (NJPS: “men of repute”). Rendering revised in 2006. On the grammatical form, see my note at 13:32: the expression itself is gender neutral.

This expression does not appear anywhere else. Another (variant?) form, *anshey ha-shem*, also appears only once (Gen. 6:4). Presumably reputation is the point of the expression.

Given that these individuals’ maleness is not the foreground issue, the most accurate rendering of this term would be “with fine reputations.” Our translation takes for granted that readers realize that in ancient Israel, “chieftains” are probably men. Hence, “with fine reputations.” (NRSV: “well-known men.”)

[92] 16:5. *v’hikriv elav* (literally, “and will draw [that party] close to Him”; NJPS: “and will grant him access to Himself”). Rendering revised in 2013. The reference is to a category of persons whose gender is typically but not exclusively manly (see the first note at 16:2). The verb’s direct object is implied, based on its mention earlier in the verse.

Women are not excluded from view.

NJPS supplied the direct object “him,” because the idiom “grant access” normally requires an object for clarity; arguably it intended that pronoun in its gender-neutral sense. At any rate, the rest of the sentence does make clear which party is intended.

To avoid referring to God via a reflexive personal pronoun, I adopt an idiom equivalent to “access to Himself.” Hence, “and will grant direct access—,” where the

em dash indicates that the following clause serves as an amplification. (NRSV: “and who will be allowed to approach him.”)

[93] 16:7. *ha-ish asher . . . hu ha-kadosh* (NJPS: “the man whom . . . , he shall be the holy one”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection and pronoun are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The qualifying phrase that immediately follows this expression emphasizes God’s choice of the *ish* from a field of aspirants. The context of a contest evokes the primary sense of *ish* as a “participant.” In English idiom, one who participates in a contest for selection is called a “candidate.”

The reference is to a category of persons whose gender is typically but not exclusively manly (see the first note at 16:2).

A gendered rendering is not warranted. Hence, “the candidate whom . . . , he shall be the holy one.” (NRSV: “the man whom . . . shall be the holy one.”)

[94] 16:9. *l’hakriv etchem elav* (literally, “to bring you near to Him”; NJPS: “and given you access to Him”). My approach for the similar idiom at v. 5 applies here as well; hence, “and given you direct access.”

[95] 16:10. *achecha b’nei levi* (NJPS: “your fellow Levites”). The plural noun *achim* (when used in an identifying reference, literally “brothers”) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

Here, *achim* refers to the professional class of Levites—that is, men. Nevertheless, the NJPS rendering reflects the foreground nuance, which is about neither literal brotherhood nor gender so much as a sense of kinship. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “your brother Levites.”)

[96] 16:14. *ha-einei ha-anashim ha-hem t’nakker* (NJPS: “Should you gouge out those men’s eyes?”). Rendering revised in 2006. As always, the noun *anashim* (the functional plural of *ish*) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (The corresponding pronoun is masculine purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The definite article and demonstrative pronoun are pointing to a specific group in the scene; the expression refers in context to the speakers—as NJPS notes, following Rashi. (Ibn Ezra says that it refers to the elders who accompanied Moses, but the latter are not mentioned until v. 25, so they are not yet in view.) Yet the term also works as part of a metaphor. The NJPS note states that gouging out eyes was a punishment for runaway slaves and rebellious vassals. This imagery evokes *anashim* in its primary sense

of “participants” in a hierarchical relationship. (The point of the metaphor is then that Moses is seeking to abuse his authority.)

Gender is not at issue. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

In a subordinate relationship, idiomatic English would choose a more specific term than “participants,” such as “subordinates.” Hence, “shall you gouge out those subordinates’ eyes.” (NRSV: “Would you put out the eyes of these men?”)

[97] 16:17–18. *u-kchu ish machtato . . . v’hikravtem . . . ish machtato . . . va-yikchu ish machtato . . . va-yaamdu* (NJPS: “each of you take his fire pan . . . and each of you bring his fire pan. . . . Each of them took his fire pan . . . and took his place”). Rendering revised in 2013. This is the distributive usage of *ish*, which is agnostic with regard to gender (see my note at 9:10–11); gender is supplied by the context. In this case, the 250 chieftains are likely to be (nearly all) men.

Gender is not at issue. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

Arguably JPS meant “his” in its classic gender-neutral sense. But in this adapted translation, we should avoid apparently gendered pronouns in gender-neutral settings. At any rate, in this passage (as in many), the Hebrew third-person possessive pronoun is poorly represented in English by the mechanical reproduction of a third-person possessive pronoun. NJPS already renders one third-person pronoun via the *second* person at the end of verse 17 (“your fire pans”). The antecedent to the reference to the 250 challengers’ fire pans is in verse 6, so in those cases the “possession” is recently acquired; it can be represented in English via the deictic pronoun “that.” Meanwhile, it can be assumed that the challengers did not already have a fixed station at the sanctuary, a situation that calls for a more indefinite indication of “possession” in English in this passage: “a place” rather than “his place.” Hence, “each of you take your fire pan . . . and each of you bring that fire pan. . . . They each took their fire pan . . . and took a place.” (NRSV: “and let each one of you take his censer . . . and each one of you present his censer. . . . So each man took his censer . . . and they stood.”)

[98] 16:19. *kol ha-edah* (NJPS: “the whole community”). On the challenge of the term *edah*, see my note at 1:2. The context here does not give us enough reason to specify a more narrow sense of *edah*. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the whole congregation.”)

[99] 16:22. *ha-ish echad yecheta* (NJPS: “when one man sins”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding adjective and verbal inflection are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Moses’ question relates individual to community. This setting evokes the primary sense of *ish* as

“member of a group,” where the group in view is *kol ha-edah* (“the whole community”; end of vv. 19 and 22).

Gender is not at issue. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

This is one of the few situations where English idiom regularly employs the word “member.” Hence, “when one member sins.” (NRSV: “shall one person sin.”)

[100] 16:26. *ha-anashim ha-r'sha'im ha-eileh* (NJPS: “these wicked men”). Rendering revised in 2006. The noun *anashim* (the functional plural of *ish*) is used to identify specific persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (The group identified includes at least one not-specifically-womanly referent.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, the group in view is the *edah* whom Moses is addressing (start of this verse). Moses’ question in verse 22 (see there) continues to evoke the basic meaning of *anashim* as “members of a group.” He pointedly insists on using that term here, referring to these rebels in terms of their relationship to the community. (The usage of *anashim* is conspicuous; if the focus were on wickedness only, the designation *anashim* could as easily have been omitted.)

Gender is not at issue. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

English idiom does not favor “members” in direct quoted speech. Hence, “. . . fellows.” (NRSV, Levine: “. . . men.”) So also in v. 30.

[101] 16:29. *im k'mot kol ha-adam yamutun eileh, u-fkudat kol ha-adam yippaked aleihem* (literally, “if like the death of all human beings these die, and the appointment of all human beings is appointed upon them”; NJPS: “if these men die as all men do, if their lot be the common fate of all mankind”). The reference using *eileh* (“these”) is definite and specific, but the exact referent is unclear. It could refer to the rebels (per *ha-anashim ha-eileh*, “these fellows,” in v. 26 and at the end of v. 30); however, it could also refer to their families as well. (Unlike NJPS, the Hebrew does not include a co-referent noun.) At any rate, gender is not at issue.

As for the noun *adam*, here—as in most instances in the Bible—it points to a *category* of persons rather than to a particular individual: the referent’s gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

What is the nature of that category in context? Mortals. Again, gender is not at issue.

Presumably, NJPS meant “all men” and “mankind” in their original, gender-neutral sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more clearly neutral rendering. While doing so, I also recast the idiom to make more clear that Moses is calling attention to the manner of death—rather than the fact of death itself—reflecting the emphasis implied by the word order.

As for the second clause, here *adam* continues to have a generic reference; I have rendered so as to convey that in idiomatic English. Hence, “if these people’s death is

that of all humankind, if their lot is humankind’s common fate.” (NRSV: “if these people die a natural death, or if a natural fate comes on them”; Baruch Levine: “if these persons die in the manner usual for all human beings, if the fate of all mankind befalls them.”)

[102] 16:30. *ha-anashim ha-eileh* (NJPS: “these men”). See my note at 16:26. Hence, “these fellows.” (NRSV: “these men.”)

[103] 16:35. *ha-chamishim u-mataim ish makrivei ha-k'toret* (NJPS: “the two hundred and fifty men offering the incense”). Rendering revised in 2006. This is the same band that was introduced in 16:2 by the designation *anashim* (see my note there), and referred to again in vv. 16–18. Hence, “the two hundred and fifty representatives. . . .” (NRSV: same as NJPS)

[104] 17:6–12. *kol adat b'nei yisrael . . . ha-edah . . . mitoch ha-edah ha-zot . . . el ha-edah . . . ha-kahal . . . ba-am . . . al ha-am* (“the whole Israelite community . . . the community . . . from this community . . . to the community . . . the congregation . . . among the people . . . for the people”). These group terms, which refer to those who “railed against Moses and Aaron” and who are then punished by a plague, do not restrict their referents’ gender. Two contextual factors argue for an inclusive reading here. First, plague generally strikes everyone without regard to gender. Second, when (on the previous day) the earth swallowed up “all Korah’s people” (v. 32), it did not discriminate by gender. Thus the ancient Israelite audience would not have considered gender as being at issue.

There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

NJPS has rendered these terms inclusively. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: akin to NJPS.)

[105] 17:17. *ish et-sh'mo tichtov al matteihu* (NJPS: “inscribe each man’s name on his staff”). Rendering revised in 2006. This is the distributive usage of *ish*, which is agnostic with regard to its referents’ gender (see my note at 9:10–11); that gender is supplied by the context. In this case, we know from Numbers 7 that these tribal “chieftains” are all men.

Yet their gender is not at issue, nor will the contemporary audience be misled regarding it (given the masculine pronoun in the verse). There is no warrant for rendering *ish* in gendered terms.

Arguably, JPS supplied “man” rather than a pronoun in order to distinguish the intended referent from other possible antecedents (staffs? ancestral houses?). But I think the reference is clear enough without a noun, so I substitute a more clearly gender-neutral rendering. Hence, “inscribe each one’s name. . . .” (NRSV: “Write each man’s name on his staff.”)

[106] 17:20. *ha-ish asher evchar bo* (NJPS: “the man whom I shall choose”). See my note at 16:7. Hence, “the candidate. . . .” (NRSV: “the man whom I choose.”)

[107] 18:2. *et achecha mattei levi* (lit. “your brothers, the staff of Levi”; NJPS: “your kinsmen the tribe of Levi”). Here all the men of the tribe are intended. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “your brothers of the tribe of Levi.”)

[108] 18:6. *acheichem ha-l’vi-im* (NJPS: “your fellow Levites”). Rendering revised in 2006. As stated in the Preface of the printed book, in this translation the term “Levites” refers to the professional class of men from the tribe of Levi. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “your brother Levites.”)

[109] 18:11. *l’cha . . . ul-vanecha v’livnotecha itt’cha* (NJPS: “to you, to your sons, and to the daughters that are with you”). As at Lev. 10:14, daughters are here explicitly entitled to partake of the donations. What about the priests’ wives?

For Exod. 20:10 and Deut. 12:12 (see my notes there), I determined that in the context of a household, the pronoun *attah* (“you,” 2ms) is meant in a gender-inclusive sense, for it refers to the household’s primary couple, who runs the household. As Carol Meyers puts it, masculine terms are sometimes “meant to include the female half of a conjugal pair” (pers. comm., 3/4/05). The same pertains here to the pronominal suffix in *l’cha*. Indeed, the end of the verse (“everyone of your household . . . may eat”) indicates that the wife is included implicitly in the foregoing list. In short, an ancient Israelite audience would have understood here that “to you” includes the priests’ wives. But contemporary readers are not likely to think in those terms, which calls for a clarifying insertion in brackets. Hence, “to you [and your wives], to your sons, and to the daughters that are with you.”

[110] 19:2. *b’nei yisra’el* (NJPS: “the Israelite people”). See my printed comment. The foreground sense is gender-inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the Israelites.”)

[111] 19:8–10. *v’ha-soref . . . v’asaf ish tahor . . . ha-osef* (NJPS: “he who performed the burning . . . a man who is clean shall gather up . . . he who gathers up”). Rendering revised in 2013. The two masculine participles (used substantively, literally “the burner” and “the gatherer”) and the noun *ish* refer to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The context of carrying out a task as part of a larger sequence evokes the basic sense of *ish* as “participant; party.” The point of the designation here seems to clarify that this is a different party from the one who’s responsible for the preceding step, namely incinerating the ingredients. (On *ish* as “another . . .,” see above at 5:13.) Support for this view that *ish* is used to introduce another party comes from the fact that in the next verse this party is referenced more simply, without recourse to a noun.

A priest is called for in throwing ingredients into the fire, but a priest is not specified for the other two roles: burner and gatherer. (Jacob Milgrom, citing *Sifrei* § 124, states that the gatherer is not necessarily a priest. Although Ibn Ezra understands the priest mentioned in v. 7 to be the same as *ha-soref* in v. 8, that reading does not make

sense, because then the two sentences would be redundant. And while Chiz’kuni seems to assume that the gatherer is a priest, he offers no proof.)

Could the text’s composer(s) rely upon the ancient audience to understand that women are not in view—as would be true for priests? I find little evidence either way. Compare my note at Lev. 16:21, 26, where I rendered similar cultic functionaries in inclusive terms. However, the actions involved with respect to the red cow seem somehow more “priestly” than with the goat for Azazel. Thus the key phrase *chattat hi* in v. 9 could be construed to mean “it is a purification offering” (so Jacob Milgrom and Baruch Levine, but not NJPS). Adele Berlin takes these roles as having been occupied by men. Even so, gender is not at issue in the text itself, so without a more reliable indication that women are excluded, there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

Therefore we opt for a gender-neutral rendering. (For rendering *ish* as “another party,” see above at 5:13.) Hence, “The one who performed the burning . . . wash those garments . . . bathe in water. . . . Another party who is pure. . . . The one who gathers up the ashes . . . wash those clothes.” (NRSV takes all these references to be manly.)

[112] 19:11–13. *ha-nogei’a b’met* . . . (NJPS: “he who touches the corpse . . .”). This masculine participle *nogei’a* (used substantively) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the subsequent pronouns are masculine.)

The present context concerns corpse-related ritual impurity, which the Torah treats consistently regardless of gender; and both men and women were equally susceptible to it (see my printed comment at 9:6–7). As Adele Berlin notes, such ritual impurity derived from everyday life and was often unavoidable.

Given that the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient audience to construe women as in view, there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

Presumably NJPS intended its masculine pronouns in a neutral sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more clearly gender-neutral rendering, couched in the plural. A plural rendering does not distort the sense unduly, for touching a corpse is not a forbidden act (and indeed, for the sake of proper burial it is praiseworthy). Hence, “those who touch the corpse . . .” (Similarly NRSV.)

[113] 19:12. *bo* (NJPS: “with it”). Here I incorporate the NJPS translators’ note (“i.e., the ashes, as in v. 9”) into the text, because otherwise the antecedent appears to be the corpse. A bracketed insertion for clarification is consistent with NJPS practice elsewhere (e.g., 6:20, 23:15). Hence, “with [the ashes].” (Not a matter of gender per se.) (NRSV: “with the water.”)

[114] 19:14. *adam ki yamut b'ohel* (NJPS: “when a person dies in a tent”). The reference is nonspecific. Here, as in most instances in the Bible, the noun *adam* points to a *category* of persons rather than to a particular individual; the referent’s gender is thus not *solely* female. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

Here *adam* has an impersonal and gender-inclusive reference. NJPS renders accordingly. (Similarly in v. 16, where NJPS supplies “person” in rendering idiomatically.) No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “when someone dies in a tent.”)

[115] 19:18, 19, 21. *v'taval ba-mayim ish tahor . . . v'hizzah ha-tahor . . . u-mazzeih mei ha-niddah* (NJPS: “a person who is clean shall dip [it] in water. . . . the clean person shall sprinkle it. . . . Further, he who sprinkled the water of lustration”). Rendering revised in 2013. These three terms are treated together because they all refer to the same party: the noun *ish*, the nominal adjective *tahor* (literally “the pure one”), and the participle *mazzeih* (used substantively; literally “the sprinkler”) co-refer to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The context of carrying out a task as part of a larger project evokes the basic sense of *ish* as “participant; party.” The point of this designation seems to be that this party is distinct—not the one who handled the preceding step, namely preparing the potion. (Supporting the view that *ish* is introducing a new party is the fact that in the next verse our same party is referenced merely via a nominal adjective, as *ha-tahor*, and again in verse 21 via only the participle *mazzeih* in a definite construction. Compare above at 19:9.)

The text does not specify that this *ish*, who sprinkles the “water of lustration” to undo corpse contamination, must be a priest (and therefore reliably male). Ibn Ezra says: apparently not. But perhaps it goes without saying. Adele Berlin sounds a note of caution: “I don’t know if a woman can do the lustration; perhaps for another woman.” I have no grounds to say that the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to *exclude* women from view. (It seems less “priestly” than the process of preparing the concoction in the first place, and therefore more likely to be understood inclusively.) Therefore we have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

Given the discourse function of *ish* in v. 18, a better rendering for *ish tahor* seems to be “another party who is pure.” On rendering *ish* as “another party,” see above at 5:13.

As for v. 19, NJPS is appropriately gender neutral. No change to NJPS.

As for v. 21, we should note that NJPS rendered *ish tahor* in v. 18 in inclusive terms (in contrast to its rendering in v. 9 as “a man who is clean”), so presumably here in v. 21 it meant “he” in a neutral sense. At any rate, I now substitute a more clearly gender-neutral equivalent for the pronoun. Hence, “. . . the one who sprinkled.” (NRSV: “a clean person . . . the clean person . . . the one who sprinkles.”)

[116] 19:18–20. *v'al ha-nogei'a* (NJPS: “or on him who touched”). See my note at 19:11–13. The terminology for the ritually impure person continues to make inclusive reference.

Presumably NJPS intended its masculine pronouns in a neutral sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more clearly gender-neutral rendering. Here, pluralizing did not seem necessary to produce felicitous English. Hence, “or on the one who touched,” etc. (NRSV: “and on whoever touched” and also renders in the plural.)

[117] 19:19. *v'chibes* (NJPS: “he shall then wash”). The implied subject changes midway through the verse, from the purifier to the purified. Because clarification was needed as to the identity of the subject here, NJPS supplied a translators’ note: “I.e., the person being cleansed.” In order to maintain gender neutrality, I have simply moved this note into the text. A bracketed insertion for clarification is consistent with NJPS practice elsewhere (e.g., 6:20, 23:15). Hence, “[the one being purified] shall then wash.” (NRSV keeps the subjects distinct by rendering the latter one in the plural.)

[118] 19:20. *v'ish asher yitma* (NJPS: “If anyone who has become unclean”). Rendering revised in 2013. Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The context is a purification project that evokes the basic sense of *ish* as “participant; party.” The point of a designation via this noun seems to be that this party differs from the one mentioned just previously. (Compare above at v. 18.)

The referent was introduced in v. 11. Women are not excluded from view. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

NJPS rendered *ish* here in inclusive terms. However, the relational sense of *ish* can be made more apparent. Hence, “If any party who has become impure.” (NRSV: “Any who are unclean.”)

[119] 19:22. *v'ha-nefesh ha-noga'at* (NJPS: “the person who touches him”). NJPS supplied a direct object (“him”) for the sake of idiomatic English. I have made a simple substitution of noun phrase, so as to supply the implied object while maintaining gender neutrality. Hence, “the person who touches the impure one.” (NRSV perceives a different direct object: “anyone who touches it.”)

[120] 20:2–13. *am; edah; kahal; morim; b'nei yisrael* (NJPS: “people”; “community”; “congregation”; “rebels”; “Israelite people”). In referring to the complainers and to the nation in this passage, the text uses many group terms; for all of them, the referents’ social gender depends upon the context. The expressed complaints involve thirst and concern for watering the livestock, both of which an ancient Israelite audience perceived as gender-inclusive concerns (see my printed comment at 19:2). Therefore the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon that audience to construe that women were in view.

Gender is not at issue. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered form.

NJPS has rendered those terms with inclusive language. No change to NJPS.

[121] 20:3. *bi-gva acheinu lifnei Yhvh* (NJPS: “when our brothers perished at the instance of the Eternal”). The plural noun *achim* (when used in an identifying reference like this, literally “brothers”) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. Here, it refers not to biological brothers but rather those to whom the people now feel comradeship.

According to Rashi, the complainers are focusing on the means of death, referring to those who have died by *dever* (“pestilence”), for that is not as ugly as dying of thirst, which is what the complainers believe awaits them. In the Torah, however, God is not said to have caused death by *dever* in the wilderness. (The term is used only in 14:12, in a divine threat that Moses then talks God out of manifesting.) Apparently Rashi is referring to a *magefah* (“plague”), which occurred twice, in 14:37 and in 17:11–22. In the first instance, only men were killed (see below); in the second instance, it appears that both men and women were killed (see my note at 17:6–12).

Ibn Ezra, whose opinion Gunther Plaut cites favorably, comments that *acheinu* refers to “the wilderness generation who died.” His assertion seems to be based on two considerations. First, similar language: *lifnei Yhwh* is a distinctive term, rarely used with regard to death; but the ten scouts who counseled against entering the Promised Land perished *lifnei Yhwh* (14:36–37, where that phrase is translated as “by the will of the Eternal,” versus “at the instance of the Eternal” in the present verse). Their sudden deaths are the first to be reported after the “wilderness generation” is sentenced to die (14:29–35). A weaker verbal link is to Korah’s rebellion, where 250 leaders (presumably male, but not exclusively so) were offering incense *lifnei Yhwh* (16:16–17) when divine fire consumed them (16:35).

The second consideration is a thematic alignment: the speakers in the present passage question Moses’ *competence*; in so doing, they would naturally identify themselves with the complainants regarding the scouts’ report (ch. 14), who also took issue with Moses’ competence. (In contrast, the rebels led by Korah in ch. 16 took issue with Moses’ *legitimacy* as leader.) In a way, the ten scouts are being recalled as martyrs for the cause.

(Reinforcing this conclusion is the use of *acheinu* in Deut. 1:28 to refer clearly to those same scouts; NJPS: “our kinsmen.”)

Ibn Ezra’s reading points to the plain sense of the text: *acheinu* alludes to the ten high-profile tribal leaders who served as scouts and died soon thereafter. All of them were men (13:2–15).

English idiom warrants rendering in gendered terms (rather than as, say, “comrades”) because the immediate familial nuance is rhetorically salient. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “when our kindred died before the LORD.”)

[122] 20:14. *ko amar achicha Yisrael* (NJPS: “Thus says your brother Israel”). The ancient Israelite audience was accustomed to the Bible’s habit of referring to the relationship between ethnic groups in terms of family genealogy. In that mode, the audience would have taken *achicha* here as an allusion to their patriarch Jacob (progenitor of “Israel”) as having been the brother of Esau (progenitor of “Edom”). In other words, Moses personifies the two peoples as part of his rhetoric: an appeal to kinship. (So Rashi, quoting Midrash Tanchuma. And Jacob Milgrom concurs, adding that “the personification of a people in the singular is frequently found in direct address [e.g., Exod. 14:26].”) Thus the meaning of *ach* in this context its literal sense (in an identifying reference) as “brother.” The NJPS rendering is accurate. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: Same.)

Meanwhile, on grammatical grounds, I have inserted a comma after brother, because “Israel” is non-restrictive: Esau had no other brother. (This is not a matter of gender per se.)

[123] 20:15. *va-yeir’du avoteinu mitzraimah . . . va-yarei-u lanu mitzrayim va-la-avoteinu* (when used in an identifying reference, literally “our fathers . . . with us and with our fathers”; NJPS: “our ancestors went down to Egypt . . . the Egyptians dealt harshly with us and our ancestors”). The masculine noun *av* usually refers to male progenitors yet the plural form is more vague. In this context clearly the reference is inclusive: according to the Torah, all of Israel’s forebears dwelled and suffered in Egypt. There is no reason to infer that Moses would be singling out the Israelite men, for it is the entire people that is seeking passage through Edom. (This is one of the few passages in which NJPS rendered non-literally a reference to Israel’s forebears using *avot*.) No change to NJPS.

[124] 20:27–29. *l’einei kol ha-edah . . . va-yir-u kol ha-edah* (NJPS: “in the sight of the whole community . . . the whole community knew”). On the many possible senses of *edah*, see my note at 1:2. In this context, the text’s composer(s) could not rely upon an ancient Israelite audience to perceive the situation as excluding women from view. Everyone could have seen the three men walking up the mountain, and the two men coming down. Thus there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. The NJPS rendering is appropriately inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the whole congregation . . . all the congregation.”)

[125] 20:29. *va-yivku . . . kol beit yisrael* (NJPS: “all the house of Israel bewailed”). Wailing refers implicitly to women, who composed laments and served as the public voice of mourning in ancient Israel (II Sam. 1:24; Exod. 33:4; Jer. 9:17–19; Lam. 2:10; II Chron. 35:25; Carol Meyers, *WIS*, 328; “Everyday Life,” p. 256.) This would go without saying. (Compare Lev. 10:6, where *beit yisrael* is also linked with mourning.) In other words, the text’s composer(s) could not rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to understand that women are excluded from view.

There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. The NJPS rendering is appropriately gender inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “all the house of Israel mourned.”)

[126] 21:1–2, 21–25, 31. *ba yisrael. . . va-yillachem b'yisrael va'yishb' mimmenu shevi. . . va-yiddor yisrael neder. . . va-yishlach yisrael mal'achim. . . va-yakkeihu yisrael l'fi charev. . .* (NJPS: “Israel was coming. . . he engaged Israel in battle and took some of them [when used in an identifying reference like this, literally “of him”] captive. . . Then Israel made a vow. . . Israel now sent messengers. . . But Israel put them [literally: him] to the sword . . .”). This chapter is distinctive in containing three passages in which the actor is *yisrael* (in the masculine singular), a figurative personification of the nation. The genre is prose rather than poetry, which means that the personification does not wholly obscure our view of the people: when “Israel” speaks in v. 22, “he” talks in plural terms as “we.”

In practice, the term *yisrael* refers variously to the people of Israel as a whole and to its (male) militia acting on the people’s behalf. The militia is designated in terms of its representing the nation; the singular name melds them into one entity: “Israel.” In other words, the text’s rhetoric prevents us from viewing the gendered social institution (the army) as distinct from the people. (Compare in situations regarding other gendered social institutions; see my notes to Exod. 3:6, 12:3; Lev. 24:14 and 26:7. See also my notes at Num. 8:9; 20:15; 31:9.)

There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. NJPS reflects the unusual Hebrew rhetoric—and does so with an inclusive rendering, which seems accurate. No change to NJPS. (NRSV also renders in terms of “Israel.”)

[127] 21:5–7. *va-ydabber ha-am beilohim . . . va-yamot am rav mi-yisrael. Va-yavo ha-am . . . va-yitpallel moshe b'ad ha-am* (NJPS: “and the people spoke against God . . . and many of the Israelites died. The people came to Moses. . . And Moses interceded for the people.”). On the challenges of translating the noun *am* (literally “collectivity”), see my note at Exod. 1:9–11. Its referent’s social gender is inferred from the context.

In this passage, the instigator is the *am*. Neither complaining nor being bitten by snakes were gender-marked activities in ancient Israel. Thus the text’s composer(s) could not rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to understand that women are excluded from view.

There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. The NJPS rendering is appropriately gender inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV also renders in terms of “the people.”)

[128] 21:8–9. *kol ha-nashuch v'ra'ah oto va'chai. . . im nashach ha-nachash et ish v'hibbit* (NJPS: “if anyone who is bitten looks at it, he shall recover. . . when anyone was bitten by a serpent, he would look”). The language is grammatically mascu-

line yet impersonal: it refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

The text’s composer(s) could not rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to understand that women are excluded from view, as victims of snakebite. Thus there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

NJPS has rendered idiomatically via impersonal language, including the passive voice. This implies that NJPS intended “he” in its neutral sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more clearly gender-neutral formulation. Hence, “anyone who was bitten who then looks at it shall recover. . . . when bitten by a serpent, anyone who looked.” (NRSV: “everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live. . . . whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look.”)

[129] 21:23. *va-ye-esof Sichon et kol amo va-yeitzei . . . likrat Yisrael* (NJPS: “Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel”). Rendering revised in 2013. The noun *am* is a basic-level term that means “collectivity”; the type of group is then specified by the context. Here the *am* instigates a military attack. By implication, the group in view is a militia.

Because militias were understood to be male-only bodies, the text’s composer(s) could rely upon the text’s ancient audience to exclude women from view—without needing to use a more clearly gendered term than *am*.

The translation’s audience would construe “people” with some dissonance in this context, given that the referent of “people” is usually gender inclusive. For clarity a term with more clearly gendered connotations is preferable. Elsewhere NJPS often renders *am* as “troops” (e.g., Deut. 20:2, 5, 8), which suits this situation as well. Accordingly, in 2006 we changed the rendering of *am* in verses 33–35 from “people” to “troops”—but unfortunately we overlooked this nearly identical instance, just ten verses earlier in the same passage. Hence, “Sihon gathered all his troops. . . .”

[130] 21:33–35. *va-yeitzei . . . likratam, hu v’chol amo la-milchamah. . . . natati oto v’et kol amo. . . . va-yakku . . . et-kol amo* (NJPS: “[he], with all his people, came out . . . to engage them in battle. . . . I give him and all his people. . . . They defeated . . . all his people”). Rendering revised in 2006. See above at v. 23. Hence, “[he], with all his troops, came out . . . to engage them in battle. . . . I give him and all his troops. . . . They defeated . . . all his troops.” (NRSV renders in terms of “the people.”)

[131] 22:9, 20, 35. *mi ha-anashim ha-elleh immakh . . . im liqro lekha ba’u ha-anashim . . . lekh im ha-anashim* (NJPS: “What do these people want of you. . . . If these men have come to invite you. . . . Go with the men”). Rendering revised in 2006. This term is used three times to designate the elders and dignitaries (*sarim*). As always, the noun *anashim* (the functional plural of *ish*) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

(It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* (“participant”) in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. For the first printing, I thought that in the present context, the salient sense of this term was playing off of a contrast between human beings and God. But upon reflection, this is not the plain sense. Rather, as in dozens of cases, this narrative evokes the “agency” sense of our term (*va-yishlach mal’akhim ’el bil’am*; v. 5). The king’s delegation is participating here as representatives of the principal who sent them on their mission. The immediate context of each instance retains the awareness of these visitors as doing what emissaries do. Therefore the “agency” sense occupies the foreground throughout.

Did the text’s composer(s) perhaps have ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view? The answer here is no. Typically, elders, dignitaries, and king’s emissaries were men—but not always. Yet this would go without saying. Gender is not at issue.

When gender is not at issue, English idiom expects it to be specified only when it is not obvious to the reader. In this case, we have no warrant for rendering *anashim* in gendered terms. Hence, “What do these envoys want of you. . . . If these envoys have come to invite you. . . . Go with those envoys.” (NRSV: “men . . . men . . . men”).

[132] 22:22, 24, 26. *va-yityatzev mal-akh . . . l’satan lo . . . va-ya’amod . . . va-ya’amod* (NJPS: “an angel . . . placed himself . . . as an adversary . . . stationed himself . . . stationed himself”). Rendering revised in 2006. In Hebrew, the noun *mal-akh* (“angel, messenger”) is grammatically masculine. However, this does not in itself mean that all angels were seen as having manly gender. Rather, in the ancient Near East, the gender attributed to celestial human-like beings presumably reflected the corresponding human social gender. In the human realm, both men and women worked as messengers, and women were known to refer to themselves via the grammatically masculine term of office (Samuel A. Meier, “Women and Communication in the Ancient Near East” [1991]). Thus an ancient Israelite audience had grounds to take a generic mention of angels in a gender-inclusive sense.

In this case, however, the wording immediately suggests a particular act by a particular angel; therefore the ancient audience would take the initial masculine language (v. 22) as an identifying reference to a non-womanly messenger. The verse further specifies that this angel is to function as a *satan* (“adversary”), a noun whose confrontational and military associations have a manly cast (cf. I Sam. 29:4; I Kings 5:18; 11:14, 23, 25). And by v. 23, when we learn of the “drawn sword,” the picture of a warrior—i.e., of manly gender—is clear. (In the ancient Near East, the wielding of weapons was a marker of manliness.) The anthropomorphism and the corresponding gender picture become clear only gradually, incidental to the designation.

When gender is not at issue, English idiom does not specify it unless it is either not obvious to the reader or is more convenient. In this case, we have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms, except for the convenience of reflexive reference that the gendered pronoun “himself” provides—and which NJPS had opted for in the latter verses.

During initial production of the printed book, I replaced “placed himself” in the initial verse with a gender-neutral equivalent: “stood planted.” But this was contextually awkward and so I modified it in 2006. Hence, “an angel . . . took a position . . . as an adversary . . . stationed himself . . . stationed himself.” (NRSV: “the angel . . . took his stand . . . as his adversary . . . standing . . . stood.”)

[133] 23:4. *va-yikkar Elohim* (NJPS: “God manifested Himself”). The verb is a rare *niph-al* (passive/reflexive) form of the verbal root *k-r-h*; it is used in the Torah only in those unusual settings in which either God self-reveals to a non-Israelite or a divine revelation is described to a non-Israelite. (Compare Exod. 3:18.) The Hebrew construction has no reflexive pronoun.

NJPS supplied the word “Himself” presumably for idiomatic English—because the English verb “manifest” is generally transitive. To avoid the apparent attribution of gender to God, we sought an alternative to the gendered reflexive pronoun. We opted for an adjectival formulation. (According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, that verb is also used intransitively in reference to spirits and ghosts. However, we judged that intransitive usage to be too strange.) Hence, “became manifest.” (NRSV: “met.”)

[134] 23:19. *lo ish El vi-ychazeiv* (NJPS: “God is not man to be capricious”). Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* (“participant”) in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here the word is contrasted with God and placed in poetic parallel with *ben-adam* (NJPS: “mortal”). This context evokes the basic sense of *ish* as designating a party in relationship, typically as a member of a (human social) group. Only in relationship to others does a person feel prompted to dissemble.

Women are not excluded from view. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

Presumably NJPS meant “man” in its oldest, inclusive sense. For clarity, I substitute a gender-neutral equivalent. Hence, “human.” (NRSV: “a human being.”)

[135] 23:19. *v'yitnecham* (NJPS: “to change His mind”). The inflection is reflexive and generally has an emotional component (BDB: “be sorry; rue”); cf. another reflexive form in Exod. 13:17, *pen yinnachem ha-am* (NJPS: “the people may have a change of heart”). I can adapt here the English idiom from that NJPS rendering, while maintaining gender neutrality. Hence, “have a change of heart.”

[136] 23:24. *Hen am k'lavi yakum / V'kha-ari yitnasa* (NJPS: “Lo, a people that rises like a lion, / Leaps up like the king of beasts”). Rendering revised in 2006. The intended difference between the two Hebrew nouns in their designation or referent is no longer clear. They seem to refer either to different sexes or to different breeds. Among lions, the female is the hunter who supplies the pride’s food, whereas the male mostly rests. Thus the poet’s ensuing description (“Rests not till it has feasted on prey”) would seem have lionesses in view.

NJPS construed the two terms instead as referring to the species as a whole. Then it opted for “king of beasts” because English lacks another one-word term for “lion.” This approach unduly obscures the contribution of the female. In the general spirit of this adaptation, we now restore her to the prominent place that she held in traditional English translations. Hence, “Lo, a people that rises like a lioness, / Leaps up like a lion.” (NRSV: “lioness . . . lion.”)

[137] 24:3, 15. *ne’um ha-gever* (NJPS: “Word of the man”). On the denotation of the noun *gever* and its relationship to gender, see my online notes at Exod. 10:11. Here the reference is definite and particular. The manly nuance is salient. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[138] 24:4. *ne’um shomei-a* (NJPS: “Word of him who hears”). Rendering revised in 2006. The Hebrew term is a participle. In this identifying reference to himself, Balaam’s masculine inflection conveys that the referent’s social gender is non-womanly.

NJPS supplies a pronoun per English idiom. However, English idiom does not normally specify gender where it is already known. NJPS may have meant “him” in a neutral sense, but it makes the Hebrew wording seem more gendered than it actually is. We now choose a more clearly non-gendered pronoun. Hence, “Word of one who hears.” (NRSV: the oracle of one who hears.)

[139] 24:7–9. *dalyav . . . motzio . . . kara* (NJPS: “their boughs . . . freed them . . . they crouch”). In this poetic passage, the description is couched in the masculine singular. The references are identifying in nature, and the referential gender is non-womanly. An ancient Israelite audience would take this as alluding metaphorically to Jacob/Israel—the people as personified by their ancestor (vv. 1–2, 5). Arguably the people, not Jacob, are in the foreground: it is their tents that Balaam is looking upon. NJPS likewise renders consistently in the plural, in terms of the people as a whole. This is the plain sense: the references to sovereignty and to the Exodus cannot refer literally to Jacob. Compare Deut. 32:9 ff. Admittedly the ancient Israelite audience understood poetic license and their sense of identification with Jacob would have permitted a literal rendering of the image. Yet based on my charge I see no compelling reason to change NJPS. (NRSV: “his buckets . . . brings him out . . . he crouched.”)

[140] 24:7. *v'yarom mei-Agag malko; v'tinasei malkhuto* (NJPS: “Their king shall rise above Agag, / Their kingdom shall be exalted.”). Here is a gender-matched pair of nouns in poetic parallel. The references are *categorizing* in nature; thus the referential gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the lexicon. The foreground issue is domination. Although a regnant queen of Israel may be unlikely, she is not excluded from view.

There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. Therefore I seek a more generic rendering. Hence, “Their ruler shall rise above Agag, / Their sovereignty shall be exalted.” (NRSV: “king . . . kingdom.”)

[141] 24:9. *kara shakhav ka-ari; ukhlavi* (NJPS: “They crouch, they like down like a lion, / Like the king of beasts”). Rendering revised in 2006. See my note at 23:24. Here the two Hebrew terms appear in reverse order, but the argument is the same. Hence, “They crouch, they like down like a lion, / Like a lioness.” (NRSV: “lion . . . lioness.”)

[142] 24:9. *mi y'kimmenu* (NJPS: “who dare rouse them”). In this clause, the subject and verb are couched in the singular. Presumably NJPS chose a plural rendering—if indeed it was intentional—in order to match its ongoing plural rendering of the thematic subject (namely, Israel; see my note at vv. 7–9, above); but to me saying “who dare” seems awkward. I have adjusted it to the singular “who dares.” (This change is not related to gender per se.) (NRSV: “who will rouse him up.”)

[143] 24:16. See my note at 24:4.

[144] 25:1–2. *va-yachel ha-am liznot el b'not moav* (NJPS: “the people profaned themselves by whoring with the Moabite women”). The scope of the noun *am* (literally, “collectivity”) varies by the situation.

Interpreters debate just how to take the sexual language (*liznot el*) here. Some say that the idolatry is painted figuratively as “whoring”—a metaphoric betrayal of God as Israel’s true partner. Others hold that the Torah intends to depict sexual license along with the idolatry. (And the two views are not mutually exclusive.) The latter view is highly likely, given that the reported activity centers around Moabite women (vv. 1–2) and features a couple in heterosexual embrace (vv. 6–8), and in light of the Bible’s abiding concern with regard to neighboring peoples: intermarriage will lead to idolatry (e.g., Josh. 22:16–17; Exod. 34:15b–16). If so, however, the Israelite perpetrators are presumably men rather than women. (The Bible elsewhere makes no mention of lesbian sex, let alone condemn it as “whoring.”) Given the deeds in question, women are excluded from view.

With the term *ha-am*, the article refers back to the mention of “Israel” at the start of the verse. The adult male participants are pointedly designated in terms of the nation, because their actions reflect upon the nation as a whole.

NJPS has construed the literal sense of the sexual language as its plain sense. However, the NJPS rendering of *ha-am* here as “the people” as the actor is misleading. In contemporary parlance “the people” implies both men and women, whereas English idiom calls for gender to be specified when it first becomes relevant, as here. A gendered rendering is more appropriate. Hence, “the menfolk profaned themselves by whoring with the Moabite women.” (NRSV: “the people began to have sexual relations with the women of Moab.”)

Finally, the term *ha-am* occurs twice more in v. 2, thus emphasizing the perpetrators’ representation and implication of the entire nation. (That point is made sufficiently clear by v. 3.) Yet a shift to render as “the people” would misleadingly imply that the Israelite women decided to get involved in the worship of Baal-peor, too. Because the narrator offers no indication of this shift in referent, I presume that the referent remains the same: “the menfolk.”

[145] 25:5. *hirgu ish anashav* (NJPS: “each of you slay those of his men”). Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons. As for the next noun, *anashim* (the functional plural of *ish*), as always it refers to a *category* of persons. The gender of their referents is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* (“participant”) in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. In this distributive construction (with a plural verb), *ish* means simply “each,” as it refers to members of the *shof’tei yisrael* (“Israel’s officials”) to whom Moses is issuing an order. As for *anashim*, its possessive inflection refers to those “officials” as well, implying subordination. Indeed, according to Jacob Milgrom (ad loc., citing biblical and extrabiblical evidence), ancient Near Eastern military officers had a dual military and judicial commission. Thus an official’s *anashim* would be “those under his command” (Milgrom, citing Ramban) when the militia is mustered. This situation thus evokes the “subordinate” and “representative” senses of *anashim*, which in military contexts can warrant rendering as “troops.” The evocation of the institution of the militia excludes women from view, with regard to both *ish* and *anashim*. Furthermore, in this episode, the perpetrators (who are facing punishment) are men. Thus the text’s composer(s) had ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context *excludes* women from view.

Contemporary readers, in contrast to the ancient audience, are not likely to infer the military context. Because gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a rendering here in gendered terms. On both counts, the NJPS rendering seems accurate: “his” and “men.” No change to NJPS. (NRSV renders both aspects inclusively: “your people.”)

[146] 25:6. *ish mi-b’nei yisrael ba* (NJPS: “one of the Israelites came”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *ish* refers to a specific person—whose gender is thus not womanly. The ancient audience would probably have imagined that the perpetrator is manly—the most likely option (prototyping)—an assumption that is quickly con-

firmed by the verb *va-yakrev*, which has a (hetero)sexual overtone (so Rashbam, citing Lev. 18:6 and Gen. 20:4), and reinforced by his sexual intercourse with a woman (vv. 8; cf. v. 14).

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, the primary meaning of “participant” would fit, and the expression could be as simple as NJPS has it: “one [typical member] of the Israelites.” However, contextual indications evoke a more precise sense. Moses’ concern to have the ringleaders impaled (v. 4), followed shortly by this fellow’s taking the initiative to bring a Midianite woman “over to his companions,” implies that this *ish* is one of the instigators and a (manly) person of influence—that is, *ish* not as typical but rather as exemplary: *ish* as “representative.” After-the-fact information confirms that in the formula in question, the ancient audience would have reliably construed this more elevated nuance of *ish*. The same fellow is conspicuously designated three times as *ish yisrael* (vv. 8, 14)—as opposed to the gentile formulation *ish ha-yisraeli* (Lev. 24:10; cf. 2 Sam. 17:25). The former expression, which appears in the Bible for the first time in this passage, refers most often to the army (that is, the tribe’s or nation’s battleworthy representatives). In some cases, it refers to autonomous and responsible men: householders (Deut. 29:9; Judg. 21:1), council members (Judg. 8:22; 2 Sam. 15:13, 16:18, 17:14, 20:2), and leaders (Josh. 9:6–7, Judg. 7:14). This particular *ish* is indeed one of the latter—a “chieftain” (v. 14) who is consorting with none other than the daughter of a “tribal chieftain” (v. 15). Cf. *anashim mi-b’nei yisrael* in Num. 16:2, where I construe *anashim* as “representatives.” (The only other instance of *ish mi-b’nei yisrael* is in 1 Sam. 9:2, where it is ambiguous.)

Although gender is germane, it is also immediately evident from the context. Therefore English idiom does not expect a rendering in gendered terms. Representation is more salient, yet NJPS overlooks that nuance. To convey the exemplary sense of *ish*, I substitute more specific language. Hence, “one of the Israelite notables.” (NRSV: “one of the Israelites.”)

[147] 25:6. *kol-adat b’nei-yisrael v’hem bochim* (NJPS: “the whole Israelite community who were weeping”). On how *edah* takes its gender-sense from context, see my note at 1:2. Here an ancient Israelite audience would have interpreted *edah* inclusively; see my comment at 20:29. The NJPS rendering is appropriately inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the whole congregation of the Israelites, while they were weeping.”)

[148] 25:14. *v’shem ish yisrael ha-mukkah* (NJPS: “the name of the Israelite who was killed”). Rendering revised in 2006. See my first note at 25:6; the nuance here is that of representation. Contrast the formulation in the next verse, *ha-ishah ha-mukkah hamidianit* (NJPS: “the Midianite woman who was killed”): the participle intervenes before the national affiliation, indicating that she was not representing her people in the same respect as he was.

To convey the exemplary sense of *ish*, I insert more specific language. Hence, “the name of the Israelite notable who was killed.” (NRSV: “the slain Israelite man.”)

[149] 26:2. *kol adat b'nei yisrael* (NJPS: “the whole Israelite community”). See my note at 1:2. Hence, “the whole Israelite company [of fighters].” (NRSV: “the whole congregation of the Israelites.”)

[150] 26:2. *kol yotzei tzava b'yisrael* (NJPS: “all Israelites able to bear arms”). Both the noun *kol* and the participle *yotzei* refer to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

In the ancient Near East, arms were borne only by men (a gender category that perhaps, as Assyriologist Kate McCaffrey’s unpublished work suggests, includes a class of females who lived as men and were referred to via masculine pronouns). Thus the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context *excludes* women from view.

Meanwhile, contemporary readers—for whom both the military and a census are inclusive settings—are likely to construe the phrase “all Israelites” inclusively. Because gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a gender marker. In order that the present audience will perceive the passage’s plain sense, I make the maleness explicit. (Cf. NJPS at Exod. 38:8, which similarly makes the womanly-gender sense explicit.) Hence, “all Israelite males able to bear arms.” (In retrospect, “men” might have been more accurate than “males.”) (NRSV: “everyone in Israel able to go to war.”)

[151] 26:4. *u-vnei yisrael ha-yotz'im mei-eretz mitzrayim* (NJPS: “The descendants of the Israelites who came out of the land of Egypt were:”). As in v. 2, the grammatically masculine language does not exclude women from view, whereas the situation does: this clause introduces the results of the census, in which only the male descendants were counted—and only those of a certain age. As the militia, these men represent the nation on the battlefield; such representation is conveyed by referring to them in national terms.

In rendering *b'nei*, NJPS has employed the gender-neutral “descendants of”—rather than “sons of”—presumably not to imply that women are in view, but rather because more than one generation is involved in the lineages named. Proper translation also turns on whether contemporary readers can be relied upon to assume that “the descendants” is restricted in its referential gender, and will be confused by the lack of a gender marker. Arguably, because gender is germane, English idiom expects a gender marker. (Cf. my note at 1:45). Hence, “The [eligible male] descendants . . .” (NRSV: “The Israelites, who came out of the land of Egypt, were:”)

[152] 26:7. *va-yiyu f'kudeihem* (NJPS: “the persons enrolled came to”). The plural noun *p'kudim* always refers to a *category* of persons. The gender of its referent is thus not

solely womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection and possessive pronoun are masculine.)

As for semantic content, see my printed comment. In a military census, women are excluded from view.

Because gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a rendering here in gendered terms.

NJPS supplied “persons” for the sake of idiomatic English, but that rendering is misleadingly inclusive. Hence—for this term’s recurring appearances throughout the chapter (except v. 63)—“the men enrolled.” (NRSV: “the number of those enrolled.”)

[153] 26:10. *ba-echol ha-eish et chamishim u-matayim ish* (NJPS: “the two hundred and fifty men”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here *ish*, which is used as a collective, refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, the context evokes a more specific nuance than the word’s basic meaning (“participants”). From 16:2 we know that these particular characters were chieftains and thus represented others. That status carried weight that was relevant to the politics of the challenge to Moses’ authority. The denotation of *ish* is therefore “representatives.”

On the lack of warrant for rendering in gendered terms, see at 16:2. Hence, “. . . representatives.” (NRSV: “. . . men.”)

[154] 26:11. *u-ynei Korach lo meitu* (NJPS: “the sons of Korah, however, did not die”). The plural noun *banim* always refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

The spotlight here is apparently on the origin of the clan of Levites known as *b’nei Korach*, who later served as well-known Temple functionaries (see Gunther Plaut’s comment). Thus the ancient Israelite audience would have heard *b’nei* in terms of how Levitical membership was defined: the male descent line. Contemporary readers, however, are unlikely to make the same cultural association. Because gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a rendering here in gendered terms. The NJPS rendering is appropriately gender-specific. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[155] 26:63. *eileh p’kudei mosheh* (NJPS: “these are the persons enrolled by Moses”). The plural noun *p’kudim* always refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the semantics and the exclusion of women from view, see my printed comment and my notes at vv. 2 and 7.

Because gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a rendering here in gendered terms. Indeed, a contemporary reader is all too likely to infer from the false generic that women's not being counted means that women didn't count.

NJPS supplied "persons" for the sake of idiomatic English, which demands an explicit object of enrollment; however, that rendering is misleadingly inclusive. For clarity, I make the gendered sense explicit. Here "males" is a more appropriate rendering than "men" (compare at vv. 2 and 7, above), in that this summary statement follows—and so incorporates—the reported Levite count, which included boys. Hence, "these are the males enrolled by Moses." (NRSV: "those enrolled.")

[156] 26:64. *uv-eileh lo hayah ish mi-p'kudei Mosheh* (NJPS: "among these there was not one of those enrolled by Moses"). In 26:7 ff., I modified the inclusive rendering so as to specify the gender. In this context, however, the male-gender sense is already clear (v. 63). No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[157] 26:64. *asher pak'du et b'nei yisrael* (NJPS: "when they recorded the Israelites"). At the start of this chapter, I modified the inclusive rendering so as to specify the gender. In this context, however, the male-gender sense is already clear (v. 63); and when such is the case, English idiom generally omits a gender marker. There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[158] 26:65. *v'lo notar mei-hem ish* (NJPS: "not one of them survived"). Here *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, the primary meaning as "a participant" suffices. The referent is a body of men (v. 63). The text's composer(s) had ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view.

Also for contemporary readers, the gendered sense is already clear from the context. Thus we have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. NJPS is appropriately gender neutral. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: "not one of them was left.")

[159] 27:4. *t'nah lanu achuzah b'toch achei avinu* (NJPS: "give us a holding among our father's kinsmen"). As a plural noun, *achim* always refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

The term *ach* has a wide semantic range; it is not necessarily a gendered term. Here, what is at issue is the patrimony. In addition, the speakers have no literal "brothers." Thus an ancient Israelite audience would readily understand *achim* in terms of members of the extended family, for any clan would be concerned to preserve its link to the land holding. At the same time, the daughters seek to be included among this group. Compare my note at Lev. 25:48–49.

Did the text's composer(s) have ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view? The answer here is yes, because the point of the story is to establish whether daughters can inherit in the absence of a son. It's as if the question is being raised for the first time, the providing the precedent for future generations.

A gendered rendering into English is warranted. Appropriately, the NJPS rendering is likely to be construed as such. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: "among our father's brothers.")

[160] 27:7. *b'toch achei avihem* (NJPS: "among their father's kinsmen"). See the previous note. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: "among their father's brothers.")

[161] 27:8. *ish ki yamut u-ven 'eyn lo* (NJPS: "if a man dies without leaving a son"). Rendering revised in 2006. Here *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection and possessive pronoun are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The general sense of *ish* as "a party (to a legal proceeding)" would fit here; yet a recognized, specialized sense is also readily evoked: one who represents a group by virtue of his position, namely, a "householder." In the case at hand, the petitioners are seeking to preserve their father's *shem* and his right to an *achuzah* (v. 4); and God has responded by speaking in terms *achuzat nachalah* and *nachalah* (v. 7). These are terms that apply only to the head of a *beit av*, that is, a householder. Indeed, the stated ruling applies only to a householder; no other man in Israelite society possesses a *nachalah* that, after his death, needs to be transferred to someone else's control. (For *ish* as "householder," see also 1:52, 9:6–7, 16:26, 30:3, 32:2, 35:9, and 36:7–8.)

Did the text's composer(s) have ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context *excludes* women from view? Yes, for gender is at issue in this case. In saying so, I am assuming that the subcase of what happens upon the death of a woman householder (e.g., a widow) is not addressed here; it is not the immediate concern, and there is reason to think it would be handled differently.

Because gender is already evident, English idiom does not expect a rendering in gendered terms. Thus we have no warrant for doing so. Hence, "if a householder dies without leaving a son." (NRSV: "If a man dies, and has no son.")

[162] 27:11. *u-ntatem et nachalato li-sheiro ha-karov elav* (NJPS: "you shall assign his property to his nearest relative"). See my printed comment. Here the grammatically masculine noun *sh'eir* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

Jacob Milgrom states that *sh'eir* here means “male relatives”—so that the land remains in the clan. However, Baruch Levine believes that land could be assigned to a *female* next of kin, for the reasons covered in my printed comment. Presumably some means was found to keep the land within the clan’s control: “one of the most strictly observed social principles in the ancient Near East was the preservation of the family patrimony” (Ben-Barak, “Inheritance by Daughters,” p. 22; see also her “Mutual Influences,” p. 8); cf. Frymer-Kensky, “The Shunammite,” *Reading the Women of the Bible*).

In employing a generic term, the text’s composer(s) lacked reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view. Thus we have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. The NJPS rendering is appropriately inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “nearest kinsman.”)

[163] 27:12–23. On the rendering of *ha-edah* (NJPS: “the community”) in this passage, see my comment at 20:2. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the congregation.”)

[164] 27:16. *yifkod . . . ish al ha-edah* (NJPS: “appoint someone over the community”). Rendering revised in 2006 and again in 2010. Here the grammatically masculine noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections in v. 17 are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, the co-text evokes its occasional sense as “appointed agent.” The verb does so by establishing the agency (with *ish* as the object, see also Josh. 10:18 and Neh. 12:44; with another object, see Num. 4:27; 1 Kgs. 14:27; 2 Kgs 25:22; Jer. 1:10; Ezr. 1:2; 2 Chron. 12:10; 36:23). The term is used elsewhere for Moses as God’s envoy (*ha-ish Mosheh*, Exod. 11:3, Num. 12:3; *Mosheh ha-ish*, Exod. 32:1, 23; *ish ha-Elohim*, Deut. 33:1), which is precisely the role in question here.

In 2006, I understood *ish* to mean “leader” in the context of the preposition *al* (NJPS: “over”). However, as the other cited instances demonstrate, *al* simply points to the scope of responsibility that is delegated by the agency. When leaders are called *ish*, it usually indicates that they have been appointed by someone with higher authority (see, e.g., Exod. 2:14).

Gender is not at issue; it goes without saying. The job description “go out before them and come in before them” (v. 17) is an idiom that refers to military leadership (Jacob Milgrom, Baruch Levine, and Robert Alter—all following the Targums, *Sifrei*, and Ibn Ezra). Because the military context restricts the referents’ gender to men, the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view.

When gender is not germane, English idiom generally omits a gender marker. Thus we have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

NJPS renders *ish* in its least specific sense. I substitute the more pointed nuance. Hence, “. . . appoint an envoy to the community . . .” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[165] 27:18. *ish 'asher ruach bo* (NJPS: “an inspired man”). Rendering revised in 2006 and 2010. On the masculine noun *ish*, see the previous note. Here, that noun’s presence is conspicuous, in that the sentence would be grammatical even without it. The context then infuses that pointed usage with the sense of *ish* as “appointed agent”: Joshua has been Moses’ exemplary deputy (Exod. 17:9; 33:11; Num 11:28) and also reliably loyal to God as an emissary (Num. 13:16; 14:6–9), as God had already acknowledged (14:38); as such, he is the obvious choice to become God’s agent directly.

In 2006, I had understood *ish* in such conspicuous usage to mean “leader.” I took my cue from Ibn Ezra, ad loc., who cites David’s charge to Solomon regarding kingship: “be strong as you become an *ish*”; 1 Kings 2:2). Upon further study, however, I have realized that *ish* there means not “leader” (king) but rather “successor on the throne”; see, e.g., 1 Kings 8:25; 9:5. Ibn Ezra’s point is that the *ish* in question requires “inspiration” because Moses is seeking someone who can handle the delegated responsibilities of leadership.

On the gender considerations, see the previous note.

NJPS renders *ish* in an ironically uninspired fashion. I substitute the more pointed nuance. Hence, “an inspired deputy.” (NRSV: “a man in whom is the spirit.”)

[166] 27:21. *hu v'chol b'nei yisrael ito v'chol ha-edah* (NJPS: “he and all the Israelites, the whole community”). Rendering revised in 2006. As a plural noun, *banim* always refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

The gender sense of both group terms derives from context. The Hebrew construction (noun phrases both headed by *kol* and joined by a copular *vav*) suggests that the two terms do have not identical referents. (As the NJPS rendering shows, it’s possible that the second phrase restates the first, but such usage is rare. My analysis here follows Jacob Milgrom.) Regarding the first term, the verse’s reference to “going out and coming in” provides a military context (see my note at v. 16), while the prepositional phrase *ito* implies subordination to Joshua’s command—as befits a militia. In other words, *b'nei yisrael* refers here to the (male) fighting force, which represents the whole nation on the battlefield. As for the second term, the context of Joshua’s inauguration into general leadership suggests the widest possible sense: here, *edah* means “community.”

The present translation assumes that wherever the text makes visible the contours of a gendered social institution that represents the community as a whole (e.g., 8:9, 15:24; 20:15; 31:9; but cf. 21:1–2), an ancient Israelite audience would perceive that male body as being in the foreground. That consideration applies to the militia here.

For the first noun phrase in question, because its referential gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a rendering that conveys the gendered situation. Hence, “he and all the Israelite [militia] and the whole community.” (NRSV: “both he and all the Israelites with him, the whole congregation.”)

[167] 30:3. *ish ki yiddor neder l-Adonai* (NJPS: “if a man takes a vow to the LORD”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the grammatically masculine noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The situational context here evokes the term’s occasional specialized sense as “householder.” (That meaning arises from how *ish* denotes an exemplary participant, namely, one who represents another party—which in this case is the ongoing corporate household. For a list of other such instances, see at Exod. 2:21.) The group to whom Moses is speaking is identified in the previous verse as *rashey ha-mattot li-vney yisrael* (“the heads of the Israelite tribes”). That is, the addressees are themselves householders, whereas the dependent members of the populace are not present. Meanwhile, as Jacob Milgrom comments, “it is rare to find a law addressed to Israel’s leaders rather than to the people themselves.” Such an unusual context prompts a default reading that restricts the referent of *ish* to members of the specified group.

Furthermore, such a construal is reinforced by the nature of the topic, namely the ability to make a vow freely. In Israelite society, that ability exemplified the autonomous authority that was possessed only by the head of a *beit av* (i.e., a householder). (See Deut. 12:17–18; Judg. 11:30, 35; 1 Sam. 1:21; Jer. 44:25.) The householder’s position is distinctive. Other things being equal, the audience would expect that any discussion of vowing would begin with the householder, before treating dependents—and that is exactly how this passage is structured.

In addition, the topic of vowing evokes householders because the Torah’s laws are generally addressed most directly to those parties who are most in a position to abide by them. Laws with economic consequences are implicitly formulated so as to address the principal executives of a household. After all, they are the ones ultimately responsible for everyday economic decisions. (See further below.) (Likewise, the *av* mentioned in vv. 4–6, and the *ish* mentioned in vv. 7–16, can be presumed to refer specifically to the household’s head, acting in the typical roles of father and husband, respectively.)

Compare the syntactically and topically similar clause in Num. 6:2, *ish o ishah ki yafli lindor neder nazir* (NJPS: “if anyone, man or woman, explicitly utters a nazirite’s vow”). Here, the feminine counterpart noun *ishah* appears not in the same phrase as *ish* but rather in the next verse—in a parallel formula (*v’ishah ki tiddor*

neder); this paired pattern is unique in the Torah. Our passage's distinctive placement of *ish* and *ishah* has prompted two schools of interpretation. According to one reading, *ish* and *ishah* are mutually exclusive terms: *ish* refers to a man (v. 3), while *ishah* refers to the complementary case of a woman (vv. 4–13) (Jacob Milgrom [pers. comm., 2/19/04]; Adele Berlin [pers. comm., 6/13/04]; Carol Meyers [pers. comm., 4/21/05]; and others, including NJPS). According to the other reading, *ish* is a generic term (“anyone”) that includes *ishah* as a special case—that is, *ish* introduces a general principle (v. 3), followed by a limited number of subcases centered on a woman (vv. 4–13) (*Sifrei*; Targum Jonathan; Mayer Gruber [pers. comm., 6/2/04]).

However, the passage's summary in v. 17 does not support either of those interpretations particularly well. It speaks only in terms of the paired relationships covered in vv. 4–9 (daughter–father) and 11–16 (wife–husband). In other words, the text's own categorization is in terms of *attached versus autonomous persons*. It does not frame those foregoing laws in terms of gender distinctions (“man” versus “woman”), nor in terms of general versus special cases (“anyone” versus “daughter/wife”).

I am arguing for a third interpretation that better fits the summary's categories: dependents versus the householder. For the ancient Israelite audience would understand this discussion in terms of their society's basic economic and social unit: the corporate household, which typically consisted of more than one nuclear family. Its leadership consisted of a chief executive officer called the *av* (literally “father”), while his principal wife was the chief operating officer (COO). They coordinated the efforts of the household's members so that the enterprise would remain a going concern.

That household orientation—which would go without saying—conditions this passage's interpretation. Vows typically involve a donation of economic assets to a shrine. Such an utterance might (temporarily) reduce the household's productive capacity—and its resilience in a crisis. It could not only reduce the household's assets but also make the individual less available for work (such as by leaving home to travel to and from the sanctuary). Was it in the household's best interests? Granting the household's executive a limited right to annul a household member's vow or oath provided a way for the household's needs to be taken into account.

Surely this need for the executive to represent the household applied without regard to its members' gender. Indeed, a limited right to annul the vows or oaths of *any* member of the household—male or female, whether offspring or cousin or servant—would be consistent with the authority that the Torah elsewhere grants to the head of household (and his wife) with no evident regard to the gender of its members (Exod. 20:12; 21:15, 17; Lev. 19:3; Deut. 5:16), except where gender roles make such distinctions relevant (Deut. 21:18–21; 22:13–21). It explains why the book of Samuel takes for granted that even a royal prince like Absalom (an adult male)

needed to ask his father’s permission to go fulfill a vow (2 Sam. 15:7–8). Nonetheless, the most instructive case is that of a girl/woman, because in a patrilocal society, she customarily moved from one domicile to another when she married. To convey what this practice meant, I adduce Carol Meyers’ general model of how ecological and economic conditions impacted gender:

The highlands of Palestine represent perhaps the most fractured, complex combination of ecosystems in the world. . . . Consequently, only the individual farmers, knowing intimately the conditions of their own land . . . , can make the minute yet essential adjustments in agricultural technique that can mean the difference between want and plenty. . . . [Women] would have had to learn the management of their husband’s household. . . . If the male held the authority to determine the method of completing household tasks as well as the means of integrating behavior into a cultural system, he did so because of his prior tie to the land that was the source of the household’s survival. (*Discovering Eve*, pp. 183, 185–186)

In other words, a bride’s prior commitments (vows or oaths) might well not suit her new village and its local ecological conditions. Further, a new wife would not yet be an expert in her household’s unique economic situation and in the optimal timing of local economic events, such as harvests. Thus her vows and oaths for some time after marriage had a greater likelihood of clashing with the household’s needs than did those of its resident subordinate men. In short, the ancient audience would have seen *women as the paradigm for the legal question at hand*: it is they who grow up in one household (vv. 4–6), move to another household (vv. 7–9), and take on a new legal status (vv. 11–13), possibly even functioning as the household’s COO.

Treating the case of a girl/woman is sufficient to cover all members of the household, including its boys/men. Her case establishes that the authority for annulment remains local, as individuals come and go. Further, it exemplifies the potentially conflicting assessment of the executive versus the other household members. For if even the COO’s vow or oath is subject to review, how much more so those of the household’s other members—who have lesser status and authority.

(Although *ish* as “householder” is presumptively manly, it includes in its purview a never-married adult woman who is living on her own, away from her father’s house. Ray Westbrook observes that “women who never married would not be mentioned [explicitly] because they were not recognized as a separate [standard legal] category”; pers. comm., 11/3/04. At the same time, the Bible elsewhere portrays matter-of-factly unmarried women living on their own—i.e., prostitutes, e.g., Josh. 2:18, I Kings 3:16–17; or perhaps mediums, e.g., I Sam. 28:24–25; such women might have also been widows or divorcées, but then one would expect the text to say so, because those were recognized categories. Presumably such a woman was autonomous with regard to her vows and oaths, given that she had no one to annul her commitments. As a householder, she is among the referents of the *ish* in v. 3.)

The NJPS rendering as “man” does not convey the salient sense of *ish* as a householder; it misleadingly suggests that the passage is framed in terms of a man/woman dichotomy; and it also overspecifies the referential gender. Hence, “If a householder makes a vow. . . .” (NRSV: “When a man makes a vow. . . .”)

[168] 30:4. *v'ishah ki tiddor neder l-Adonai* (NJPS: “If a woman makes a vow to the LORD”). If the noun *n'urim* at this verse’s end includes a minor female in its referential scope, then so does *ishah* here. Indeed, as a relational noun with the basic sense of “[womanly] participant,” the scope of *ishah* can include children (31:18, 35; Judg. 21:14). But that would create a translation gender-accuracy problem, given that the English term “woman” is an adult-only category. However, further analysis suggests that childhood is not actually in view (see next note). Hence, no change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[169] 30:4. *b'veit aviha bi-n-ureha* (NJPS: “while still in her father’s household by reason of her youth”). Jacob Milgrom, citing Lev. 22:13, takes the age period of the abstract noun *n'urim* as “embracing childhood up to the point she is married.” (So, too, Carol Meyers, pers. comm.) In contrast, Robert Alter, based upon his understanding of the term *na'arah*, holds that the period referred to is “from puberty until marriage.” I find Milgrom’s argument wanting, because the verse he adduces could also be read in support of Alter’s view. Furthermore, the present passage (30:2–17) conspicuously fails to define for a boy when the father’s period of authority (childhood) ends and male self-responsibility for vows begins. Thus childhood appears to be outside the scope of the passage’s concerns. (So Adele Berlin, pers. comm., 6/13/04.) While this conclusion affects the construal of *ishah* at this verse’s start (see previous note), it does not affect the translation. For either way, the NJPS rendering is acceptable in gender terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “in her youth.”)

[170] 30:5. *v'shama aviha et nidrah* (NJPS: “and her father learns of her vow”). Here the grammatically masculine noun *av* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

Can we rule out that a mother is also in view? In ancient Israel, in the father’s absence, the mother’s authority appeared to have equaled that of the father with regard to matters such as selling children into slavery (Exod. 21:7); and it is widely acknowledged that a widow/mother took at least temporary control of her husband’s estate and served as guardian for the minor children. However, childhood is evidently not within this passage’s purview (see the previous note). Therefore, a mother is not necessarily in view—but we not ruled it out.

More germane is the claim made at v. 3 that the *av* here refers to the householder (who was the subject of that verse) specifically in his parental role. To that extent, the

role is presumptively manly—that is, a father. Thus, women are not excluded entirely (for they occasionally headed households; see at v. 3). Yet a gender-inclusive rendering (“parent”) would be misleading, for it would imply that it refers equally to either parent (in a two-parent household). However, a household has only one CEO at a time, and the default is the father. This reality seems best rendered into English via a gendered term. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “and her father hears of her vow.”)

[171] 30:17. *bein ish l'ishto* (NJPS: “between a man and his wife”).

Here, *ishah* means “wife,” for it is inflected with the possessive pronoun (which does not suit its prior appearance in v. 4). Correspondingly, by virtue of its being counterposed with “wife” as in vv. 8, 12–15, *ish* it designates the “husband” (strictly speaking, it means “the [marital] partner who is not a wife”—a sense that does not suit its prior appearance near the start of this passage, in v. 3).

As an English designation for a husband, the NJPS rendering of *ish* as “man” is unduly old-fashioned. Hence, “between a husband and his wife.” (NRSV: “concerning a husband and his wife.”)

[172] 31:3. *vaidabbeir moshe el ha-am* (NJPS: “Moses spoke to the people”). On the challenges of translating the term *am*, see my note at Exod. 1:9–11. Here the term *am* refers to a particular group that is involved in military affairs. Either the noun retains its generic sense (“collectivity”) or else the narrator is referring to Moses’ addressees in terms of how they represent the nation for the present purpose. Practical considerations imply that Moses conveys his military instructions directly to the fighting men rather than the entire people.

On how to render a gendered social institution that represents the community as a whole, see my note above, at 27:21. Compare *am ha-tzava* (NJPS: “troops”) in 31:32 and *am* (“force”) in 20:20. Here the *am* is not yet “troops” per se, only potentially so. Hence, “the militia.” (NRSV: “the people.”)

[173] 31:3. *hechal'tzu mei-it-chem anashim la-tzava* (NJPS: “Let men be picked out from among you for a campaign”). As always, the plural noun *anashim* refers to a category of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *anashim* (and its singular equivalent, *ish*) in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. The governing verb *chalatz* seems to designate a process of selection or picking out from a larger body for a given purpose (JPS *Notes*, ad loc., citing the corresponding verb *va-yimmas'ru*, “were furnished,” in 31:5; the removal of particular stones in Lev. 14:40, 43; Num. 32:17 ff.; cf. rescue in 2 Sam. 22:20 and in Psalms; cf. the withdrawal of sandals in Deut. 25:9; Isa. 20:2). Thus here it evokes our noun’s more specific relational sense as “representatives.” Rashi perceptively likens the usage here to that in Exod. 17:9 (“Moses said to Joshua, ‘Pick [*bachar*] some

troops [*anashim*] for us, and go out and do battle . . .”; see my note there) and in Deut. 1:15 (“So I took your tribal leaders, wise and experienced representatives [*anashim*] . . .”). See my notes at Exod. 17:9 and 18:21 (“deputies”).

Unlike biblical Hebrew, English idiom does not speak of soldiers in terms of their representing their nation on the battlefield; it prefers a role designation. Nor is the military purpose conveyed by *la-tzava* made entirely clear by the NJPS rendering “for a campaign.” Both considerations suggest the rendering “troops” for clarity. This is also compatible with the NJPS rendering later in the passage: *anshei ha-tzava* as “troops” (v. 21). Hence, “troops . . . for a campaign.” (NRSV renders according to the nonspecific sense of *anashim*: “arm some of your number for the war.”)

[174] 31:7. *va-yahargu kol-zachar* (NJPS: “they . . . slew every male”). This is a background note for consideration of terms later in this passage; no change to NJPS. On the restricted sense of “every” here, see *kol-zachar* in 1 Kgs. 11:15–16 in light of vv. 14, 17; and see my second note at v. 9.

Why does the text refer to Midianite warriors by the sex-identifier *zachar*, “male”? (In contrast, it refers to the Israelite combatants in more role-related terms—as *anshei ha-tzava*, v. 21; *anshei ha-milchamah*; v. 28; and *am ha-tzava*, v. 32.) On one level, the earlier clash between the nations [25:1–18] centered on Midianite women and involved sexual activity; correspondingly, the present passage categorizes Midianites by sex; cf. vv. 15, 17. On a deeper level, the narrative’s underlying ideology holds that Midianite males are unredeemably outsiders; further, this quality infects any females with whom they have sexual relations, whereas virgin females are blank slates (Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 78–89).

Alternatively, perhaps *zachar* may designate that which stands out or protrudes (thus not only corresponding to *n’keivah* [“female”], which comes from a verbal root meaning “pierce” [see the related noun *nekev*, “passage, orifice, pipe,” and the Siloam tunnel inscription], but also referring to those who show themselves on the battlefield—representing the rest of their people—without referring to their sex per se. However, this construal would not seem to account for the usage of the phrase *kol-zachar* in Genesis 17 and 34, Leviticus 6, or Numbers 1 and 3, and elsewhere.

[175] 31:9. *va-yishbu v’nei yisra’el* (NJPS: “the Israelites took . . . captive”). Here the plural noun *banim* (in construct form) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

In this passage, *b’nei yisra’el* (as “the Israelites”) have been represented on the battlefield by its militia. The troops have already been occupying the foreground as the story has unfolded (vv. 3–8). Thus, few if any readers would take *b’nei yisra’el* here as alluding to any other Israelites but those troops. Rather, “the Israelites” is a key identifier: rhetorically counterposed to “Midian” in the same clause, it indicates

the fulfillment of God's instructions in v. 2. That is, *b'nei yisra'el* signals that the combatants are members of the Israelite team, so to speak—in the sense of *b'nei* as denoting membership in a group.

One could posit that the construction is elliptical: it alludes to the troops without mentioning them outright, as it emphasizes their group identity. One might then render the ellipsis via a bracketed insertion: “the Israelites’ [troops].” However, I think that a more precise understanding of *b'nei yisra'el* here is as a figure of speech. It is a synecdoche that relates the whole (namely the people) to the part (the troops). Thus this is a classic case of using a generic term to refer to a gendered subgroup.

On how to render a gendered social institution that represents the community as a whole, see my notes above, at 8:9 and 27:21. For English readers, the military context already restricts the referent's gender to men; no further specification is needed.

In his discussion of gender issues in translation, Michael V. Fox cites this verse as an exemplar: “*B'nei yisra'el* can be translated ‘Israelites’ without much distortion (NRSV, NJPS). Still, acceptability is not always accuracy. There are many indications that the writers were thinking of the men of Israel, with the women and children as appendages. This conclusion is sometimes unavoidable, as in Num. 31:9. . . . Here I would treat the phrase as a unit and translate ‘men of Israel’ throughout” (“Translation and Mimesis,” *Biblical Translation in Context* [2002], p. 218).

Fox is correct that those who do what is described in vv. 9–12 cannot literally be “the Israelites”: take captives, seize the booty, burn down the habitations, gather the spoil, and bring it all home. Indeed, taken literally it would be a logical contradiction to say so, for the body to whom the spoil is brought is *adat b'nei yisra'el* (literally, “the community of the Israelites”; v. 12): how can a group carry stuff to themselves?

Fox proposes altering NJPS on gender grounds “throughout.” The term *b'nei yisra'el* appears in only a few other places in the passage: *n'kom nikmat b'nei yisra'el me-eit ha-midyanim*, “Wreak the vengeance of the Israelites on the Midianites” (v. 2, transl. Robert Alter); Moses' claim that the females are the ones who prompted *b'nei yisra'el* to sin “in the matter of Peor” [see ch. 25] (v. 16); the half-share of booty for *b'nei yisra'el* (vv. 30, 42), which is equated with *kol ha-edah* (v. 27); and the officers' donation of gold in behalf of *b'nei yisra'el* (v. 54). It is plausible that *b'nei yisra'el* means “men of Israel” in all cases, given that it was the men who had let themselves be tempted into the sin that Moses refers to. If so, then this would be the men's war rather than Israel's war. But several aspects of the story suggest a wider meaning to the combat: the repeated mention of “Israel” rather than only the menfolk; the direct involvement of national institutions—Moses, Eleazar the priest, the sacred utensils and trumpets; and the divine instigation and the devotion of conquered humans to God (on this last item, see Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, p. 35). In short, Michael Fox put forth a sound principle yet chose a poor example to illustrate his point. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[176] 31:9. *va-yishbu v'nei yisra'el et n'shei midyan v'et tafam* (NJPS: “the Israelites took the women and children of the Midianites captive”). Rendering revised in 2010. Classically, lexicographers have held that the singular collective term *taf* literally means “children,” such that by extension it can include certain types of adults as well (KB). However, as I contended in my note at Exod. 10:10, it often refers to “dependents.” Let me now cite also Michael O’Connor, who rigorously treats the word’s semantics, *taf* designates both “dependents” in general and sometimes specifically the prototypical dependents, namely “children” (“Biblical Hebrew Lexicography: *taf*’Children, Dependents’ in Biblical and Qumranic Hebrew,” *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 25/2 [1999]: 25–40). He examines this passage in detail and concludes (rightly, in my view) that the more general meaning is the salient one here.

We will be misled in interpreting *taf* if we take categorically the earlier statement *va-yahargu kol-zachar* (NJPS: “they . . . slew every male”; v. 7), for in v. 17 some Midianite males are clearly still alive. The claim in v. 7 is located on the battlefield and thus logically refers only to the Midianite combatants; see my note above and my printed comment there. Therefore the term *taf* in the present verse must include adult male Midianites who, for various reasons, were not on the battlefield. (To exclude those men from consideration would be uncharacteristic of the Hebrew narrative, which is otherwise highly detailed and comprehensive in accounting for all that was once Midianite.) In other words, the NJPS rendering of *taf* as “children” is misleading.

Like O’Connor, I conclude that the nuance of *taf* throughout the pericope must be “dependents.” This passage’s categories simply make more sense if *taf* is understood to include not only children but also other types of dependents: the infirm (whether due to illness or old age) and the disabled—both male and female.

In this verse, the grammatical relationship between *nashim* and *taf* is copular; the intended semantic relationship is probably to highlight the *nashim* by stating them first, as a subgroup of the larger group—which is stated last. This pattern is evident elsewhere: *et ha-nashim v'et ha-am* (literally, “the women and the people”; NJPS: “the women and the rest of the people”), Gen. 14:16; *yayin v'shechar* (NJPS: “wine or . . . any other intoxicant”), Num. 6:3; *mikneinu v'chol b'hemteinu* (NJPS: “our flocks, and all our other livestock”), Num. 32:26. Cf. also NJPS in Num. 31:27, 30. That *nashim* are being singled out from the other dependents can be explained as their being the subgroup of greatest concern, here due to the sexual theme underlying the story (vv. 15–16). Compare Gen. 14:16 and 1 Sam. 30:1–6.

In the context of combat, English idiom prefers the rendering “noncombatant” to the more generic term “dependent.” Indeed, NJPS renders the unrelated term *tofsei milchamah* as “combatant” in v. 27. I supply the word “other” from the context, as in the NJPS examples cited above. Hence, “. . . the women and other dependents . . .” (NRSV: “. . . the women . . . and their little ones . . .”)

[177] 31:11. *ba-adam u-va-b'heimah* (NJPS: “man and beast”). The reference is nonspecific. Here, as in most instances in the Bible, the noun *adam* points to a *category* of persons rather than to a particular individual; the referent’s gender is thus not *solely* female. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

Here *adam* refers to noncombatants, who—it will turn out (vv. 15–18)—are both male and female. Meanwhile, however, did the text’s composer(s) perhaps have ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view? No, because here the *adam* is counterposed with animals (so that the captives’ gender is less germane than their identity as human beings). See further at v. 26, below.

Presumably NJPS intended its rendering as generic. Now I seek a more clearly inclusive term; see my note at Exod. 8:13. Hence, “human and beast.” (NRSV: “both people and animals.”)

[178] 31:17. *hirgu kol zachar ba-taf* (NJPS: “slay every male among the children”). The NJPS rendering appears to misrepresent the situation; it ignores the disposition of adult male noncombatants. See my notes above at v. 9 and below at v. 18. Hence, “every male among the dependents.” (NRSV: “every male among the little ones.”)

[179] 31:18. *v'chol ha-taf ba-nashim . . . hachayu lachem* (NJPS: “spare every young woman”). Baruch Levine remarks that this verse “does not read smoothly as is,” largely because the expression *ha-taf ba-nashim* is unusual. He sees two categories referenced in this verse: girls (presumed to be virgin), and virgin women: “all the young children among the females, [and those] who have not known lying down with a male.” I agree that *nashim* in the expression *taf ba-nashim* must be construed in terms of gender rather than age, on the grounds that *taf* and *nashim* are distinct (albeit overlapping) categories in this passage (see v. 9); see further below. However, *taf* is better understood in this passage as “dependents” rather than “children” (see above at v. 9). Indeed, although Levine asserts that *taf* “seems always to refer to prepubescent children,” such a claim does not withstand scrutiny, for in Num. 14:31 it refers to persons up to age twenty (cf. v. 29).

Susan Niditch reads this pericope as if the only ones intended to be spared are “virgin girl children”—as opposed to adult women who are virgins—“to make the fence around her purity stronger and I believe to have her ‘unmarked,’ blank-slate quality all the clearer” (*War in the Hebrew Bible*, p. 86). She perceives that the term *taf* in the present narrative places more emphasis on girlhood than do similar passages dealing with female captives: *ishah* (NJPS: “woman”), Deut. 21:11; *na'arah v'tulah* (NJPS: “maidens”), Judg. 21:12; *nashim* (NJPS: “girls”), Judg. 21:14. However, this distinction does not appear tenable. For Moses did not command the killing of all adult women: he said to kill only the sexually experienced ones (v. 17). Therefore the expression *ha-taf ba-nashim* here must somehow account not only for girl

virgins but also for adult virgins—the converse set (logical complement) to what Moses specified in the previous clause.

Adele Berlin points toward the solution by noting that the condition “‘who has not had carnal relations’ . . . is not a matter of age” (pers. comm., 6/13/04). For while the term *ishah* (“participant,” represented here by its functional plural, *nashim*) normally refers only to adults (as in v. 17), it can include girls as well (see esp. 31:35, Judg. 21:14, and see further my first note at Num. 30:4). If so, then *ha-taf ba-nashim* can indeed refer to female dependents of all ages—as it logically must. Apparently, in contrast to the previous verse, the prefixed preposition *b’*- here is used in its sense of introducing a particular condition, which yields: “the participating dependents who are female.”

The NJPS solution is unsatisfactory: because the English term “woman” is normally understood as an age-bound category, the NJPS rendering excludes the (prepubescent) girls that Moses clearly intends to be spared. Hence, “spare every female dependent.” (NRSV: “all the young girls . . . keep alive for yourselves.”)

[180] 31:19. *nefesh* (NJPS: “person”). The grammatically feminine common noun *nefesh* points here to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the meaning of *nefesh* and its relationship to gender, see my note at Exod. 12:15 and Lev. 2:1; and see below, vv. 35 and 46, where it designates a solely female group. Here, women are clearly not excluded from view by the situation, for according to the narrative both women and men are to be killed.

NJPS properly conveys the absence of gender specificity in the Hebrew. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[181] 31:26. *atah v’Elazar ha-kohen v’rashei avot ha-edah* (NJPS: “You and Eleazar the priest and the family heads of the community”). Women are not excluded by the grammar. In this compound construct chain, the plurals of the noun *av* (literally, “father”) and of the noun *rosh* (“head”) specify their referents’ gender only insofar as they exclude an *all*-female group. And as a collective noun, *edah*’s reference is necessarily nonspecific, which means that its referents’ gender is thus not *solely* womanly.

In terms of semantics, the group in question comprises men presumptively—but not exclusively. See my discussion of *z’kenim* (“elders”) at Exod. 3:16, my excursus on “Women as Clan Leaders and in Genealogies” at the similar term *rashei beit avot*, Exod. 6:14, and my note on *edah* above, at Num. 1:2.

Although NJPS usually renders *avot* in Numbers as “ancestors,” it properly prefers “family” as a modifier of “heads” in rendering the present abbreviated formula (see Jacob Milgrom, *ad loc.*). Presumably this is because “ancestral” connotes persons who are dead—which would be confusing. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the heads of the ancestral houses of the congregation.”)

[182] 31:26. *sa et rosh malko-ach ha-sh'vi ba-adam u-va-b'heimah* (NJPS: “take an inventory of the booty that was captured, man and beast”). See my printed comment here, and my note above at v. 11.

Here *adam* refers specifically to virgin females of all ages. Thus this is an exemplary case that shows that *adam* is not an intrinsically manly term. (cf. Ibn Ezra at Exod. 10:11).

Presumably NJPS intended its rendering as generic. Now I seek a more clearly inclusive term. Hence, “human and beast.” (NRSV: “human and animal.”)

[183] 31:27. *bein tof'sei ha-milchamah ha-yotz'im la-tzava u-vein kol ha-edah* (NJPS: “between the combatants who engaged in the campaign and the rest of the commu-nity”; literally: “. . . and the whole community”). The grammatically feminine common noun *edah* points here to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the various nuances of *edah*, see above at 1:2. Here it refers to the recipients of half of the booty from campaign against the Midianites—but do those recipients consist of a particular, gendered group (which is contrasted with the 2% of the militia who took part in the Midianite campaign)? From what little we know about the distribution of booty (I Sam. 30:21–31, II Sam. 8:8–12; 12:26–31), its mode of distribution was not “for men only.” On the contrary, when the Israelites “strip” the populace upon leaving Egypt (Exod. 12:35–36), the collection is portrayed as conducted by women, household by household, with the proceeds distributed directly to their children (Exod. 3:22).

Possibly *edah* here designates the inactive members of the militia, or the communal leaders (cf. v. 26). Yet I cannot clearly make out the contours of particular gendered social institution that represents the community as a whole; such a matter is not in the foreground. Rather, the national symbols and institutions employed in the campaign (see my note at v. 9) suggest the widest possible interpretation: the whole nation sponsored the battle, thus the whole nation shares in the spoils.

In the absence of clear evidence of gender-constrained scope, we have no warrant to render into English via a term that suggests a restriction in gender. NJPS appropriately conveys a non-restrictive meaning. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “all the congregation.”)

[184] 31:32. *asher baz'zu am ha-tzava* (NJPS: “that the troops had taken”). The noun *am* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

On the challenges of translating the term *am* (“collectivity”), see my note at Exod. 1:9–11. Here its referent is constrained by the modifying noun *tzava* (whose basic sense is “array” or “service”)—that is, the contingent that actually fought in the campaign, which comprised only 2% of the Israelite militia. Compare in 20:20 (“force”) and 31:3.

NJPS does not directly render the added word *tzava*. Yet “deployed troops” would seem to be a more precise rendering of the phrase. Apparently NJPS thought that this sense was already clear from the context. At any rate, this is not a matter of gender; thus it is beyond the scope of the present project. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[185] 31:35. *v'nefesh adam min-ha-nashim asher lo yad'u mishkav zakhar* (NJPS: “women”). (On *nefesh*, see above at v. 19; on *adam*, see above at v. 26.) As we saw in 30:4 and 31:18, the noun *ishah* (“participant”; and its functional plural, *nashim*) can designate referents in a larger age range than the English “woman.” Indeed, v. 18 implies that girls make up the majority of the virgins left alive and counted here.

NJPS is misleading in terms of age. I see a more age-inclusive noun. Hence, “females.” (NRSV: “women who had not had carnal relations.”)

[186] 31:42. *asher chatzah Moshe min ha-anashim ha-tzov'im* (NJPS: “which Moses withdrew from the men who had taken the field”). Rendering revised in 2006. See above, my second note to v. 3 at the start of this episode.

The phrase *ha-anashim ha-tzov'im* is not a unit; *ha-anashim* would mean “the troops” by itself in this story. As in v. 32 (see my note there), the mention of *tzava* restricts the reference to the relatively few warriors who took part in the campaign.

NJPS misses the representational nuance, which is normally reflected in English by a role designation. Hence, “. . . the troops who had taken the field.” (NRSV: “which Moses separated from that of the troops.”)

[187] 32:1. *hayah li-v'nei r'ujen v'li-vnei gad* (NJPS: “the Reubenites and the Gadites owned”). The gender sense of the group term *b'nei* must be taken from the context. Now, the ancient Israelite audience was patrilineal in its tracking of inheritance. While property ownership per se was not restricted by gender, it could be argued that the present text’s attribution of ownership to entire tribes would have been perceived as alluding to those who held the title to tribal patrimony, namely men.

That being said, the overall point of this verse is not to establish ownership so much as to disclose these tribes’ economic focus on cattle-raising, as background for what follows. As a mention of the main tribal activity, the statement would be understood in a generic sense. Indeed, it appears that in ancient Israel, the actual work of cattle-raising was mostly in women’s hands (see my printed comment at 19:2). In this context, then, the ownership title in men’s hands would go without saying.

NJPS renders in tribal terms, which seems not only correct but also understandable to the contemporary audience. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[188] 32:2. *va-yavo'u v'nei-gad u-vnei r'ujen* (NJPS: “the Gadites and the Reubenites came”). Here the plural noun *banim* (in construct form) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the

grammar. (The corresponding verbal inflection is masculine, but purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord.)

Surely the entire tribes do not go to see Moses—that would be impractical. Rather, they send a delegation. (The Bible gives ample evidence that the Israelites operated in that manner.) This group comprises men presumptively—but not exclusively. See my excursus on “Women as Clan Leaders and in Genealogies” at Exod. 6:14.

This is one of those cases where a presumptively gendered social institution comes into the foreground as it proceeds to represent a larger, inclusive body. See my notes to Exod. 3:6, 12:3; Lev. 24:14 and 26:7; Num. 8:9; 20:15; 31:9.) The ensuing military discussion (another sphere of men) merely confirms the initial presumption.

NJPS renders in tribal terms. The effect in English is misleading, because the contemporary and ancient audiences do not share the same gender-role assumptions. Although I expect readers to presume that formal leadership roles are occupied by men, here the need to do so is not readily apparent, for the leaders are not named as such (i.e., as “heads” or the like). Rather, the NJPS rendering is a generic, all-inclusive phrase—as in the previous verse. For clarity, I insert a signal here, to preclude startling the reader upon encountering the unavoidably gendered mention of “our wives” in verse 26. Hence, “the Gadite and Reubenite [leaders].” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[189] 32:6. *ha'acheichem yavo-u la-milchamah* (NJPS: “are your brothers to go to war”). The plural noun *achim* (which when used in an identifying reference is literally “brothers”) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

Here, *achim* designates the (all-male) military, thus excluding women from view. The warriors’ gender provides grounding for Moses’ figure of speech. That the ancient Israelites considered a brother to be a man’s closest kin (closer than one’s sister, wife, or children) can be seen from the word order in Deut. 13:7 and 28:54.

Because gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a rendering in gendered terms. NJPS renders literally, as appropriate. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[190] 32:8. *ko asu avoteichem* (NJPS: “that is what your fathers did”). The plural noun *avot* (which when used in an identifying reference is literally “fathers”) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

Here, *avot* designates certain predecessors in tribal leadership—namely, the two scouts who represented the tribes in question (chaps. 13–14). This identifying reference excludes women from view. The scouts’ manly gender provides grounding for Moses’ figure of speech. With this one word, Moses accomplishes several things: he refers to a prior generation; he impugns the present generation’s dangerously close

kinship in spirit to that prior generation; and he emphasizes their public leadership role—a responsibility that fathers have (whereas parents in general do not).

Because gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a rendering in gendered terms. NJPS renders literally, as appropriate. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[191] 32:11. *im-yir-u ha-anashim ha-olim mi-mitzrayim mi-ben esrim shanah va-malah et ha-adamah* (NJPS: “none of the men from twenty years up who came out of Egypt shall see the land”). As always, the noun *anashim* (the functional plural of *ish*) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (The corresponding participle is masculine purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord.)

Here *anashim* alludes in particular to 14:29 (for other cross-references, see my printed comment); see my note there. (Regarding God’s focus on men as opposed to women, see my printed comment at Deut. 1:35.)

Because gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a rendering here in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the people.”)

[192] 32:14. *tarbut anashim chata-im* (NJPS: “a breed of sinful men”). The noun *anashim* (the functional plural of *ish*) is in apposition with *chata-im* (“sinners”), implying that they have the same referent. As plurals, both terms refer to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

Here *anashim* is conspicuous by its very presence, for its referent could have been identified via the co-referent *chata-im* alone. In a context of agency, such a construction usually evokes the specialized sense of *anashim* as “participants who are representing others; agents.” (Cf. *anashim achim* in Gen. 13:8.) Moses provided such an agency context in v. 8 (see my note there).

This is the only place in the Bible that the word *tarbut* appears (*KB*) and its root is ambiguous (Jacob Milgrom)—making it challenging, in turn, to fix the intended referent of *anashim*. However, the most straightforward reading of this verse is that Moses is continuing to refer to the “fathers” that he spoke of earlier, in v. 8 (rather than to the new generation of tribal leaders who have now petitioned him).

NJPS seems likewise to interpret in that manner. However, I now realize that they missed the representational nuance. In a future printing, it would be worth considering another rendering for *anashim*, such as “emissaries,” as in 13:2. (NRSV: “sinners.”)

[193] 32:14. *kamtem tachat avoteichem* (NJPS: “you . . . have replaced your fathers”). See above at v. 8. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[194] 32:18. *ad hitnachel b'nei yisra'el ish nachalato* (NJPS: “until every one of the Israelites is in possession of his portion”). Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding possessive pronoun is masculine.)

The construction with *ish nachalato* must be distributive, even though the grammatical construction is with an infinitive rather than the usual plural. The indirect referent of *ish* (that is, the group of which the *ish* is a member) is ambiguous. NJPS construes it as alluding to individual Israelite householders. Compare Saadia’s equally plausible interpretation: “until every one of the Israelite tribes is in possession of its portion.”

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Here, women cannot be excluded from view. Although the title to landholdings is typically to be inherited patrilineally, what lies presently in the foreground is the *complete* distribution of the land, rather than its *typical* distribution. The public case of the petition of Zelophehad’s daughters (chap. 27) demonstrated that some women stood to receive landholdings, at least temporarily. Thus there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

NJPS renders *ish* indefinitely (“one” rather than “man”). Presumably, then, it intended “his” in its generic sense as well. For clarity, I substitute a more clearly gender-neutral formulation. Hence, “until the Israelites—every one of them—are in possession of their portion.” (NRSV: “until all the Israelites have obtained their inheritance.”)

[195] 32:21. *ad horisho et oyvav mi-panav* (NJPS: “until He has dispossessed His enemies before Him”). As my printed comment points out, this verse’s militaristic, metaphorical God language carries a strong male overtone. However, to render this clause in masculine terms would be jarring and too likely to be perceived as a mistake, or worse. (The same reasoning precludes a shift to rendering in feminine terms whenever the prose text speaks of God as a shepherd, or provider of sustenance, or fulfilling other classically female-gender functions.) In prose passages, I must hold to a consistent portrayal of God’s unity and therefore gender neutrality. To use a musical image, God’s non-gendered unity is the melody line from which the military overtone resonates. Hence, “until [God] has personally dispossessed the enemies.”

[196] 32:33. *mamlachah* (NJPS: “kingdom”). See my note at Deut. 3:4. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

[197] 33:4. *kol b'chor* (NJPS: “every first-born”). See my note at Exod. 11:5. Hence, “every [male] first-born.” (NRSV: “all their firstborn.”)

[198] 33:54. *el asher yetzei lo shamah ha-goral, lo yihyeh* (NJPS: “wherever the lot falls for anyone, that shall be his”). This clause poses some challenges: The Torah’s de-

scription of the land allocation process is cryptic, which makes the force of certain terms unclear. Furthermore, the Hebrew idiom does not translate literally into English. Strangest of all, the grammatically masculine pronoun *lo* (“it” or “him” or “person’s”) has no clear antecedent.

Rashi, Ramban, Abravanel, Jacob Milgrom, and Baruch Levine understand that (1) the word *lo* refers to the clan—even though *mishpachah* (“clan”) is grammatically feminine; and (2) the pronoun *el* is addressing location. This is really the only available and logical choice, and it seems to be the plain sense in context. Indeed, no one seems to question that the verse’s two masculine inflections of *nachalato* also refer to the (feminine) clan!

It appears that the NJPS rendering as “anyone . . . his” was intended in the neutral sense of those terms—just as Levine’s rendering is also in terms of “anyone.” (Cf. KJV, OJPS: “any man.”) So Milgrom understands the NJPS formulation. I am substituting a more clearly gender-neutral formulation. Hence, “wherever the lot falls for it, that shall be its location.” (NRSV: “the inheritance shall belong to the person on whom the lot falls.”)

[199] 34:17. *eileh sh’mot ha-anashim asher yinchalu lachem et ha-aretz* (NJPS: “these are the names of the men through whom the land shall be apportioned for you”). Rendering revised in 2006. As always, the noun *anashim* (the functional plural of *ish*) refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (The corresponding verbal inflection is masculine purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord.)

Here the immediate dependent (“*asher*”) clause qualifies the *anashim* as individuals who are being given a specific commission. This context thus evokes the “agency” sense of *anashim*, in which individuals perform a task on behalf of others—in this case, the people of Israel. That they are both men is immaterial to the word choice. See further my notes at 13:2 and 13:3.

Contemporary readers can easily see (in the same verse) that the agents in question were both well-known men. Therefore we have no warrant to render in gendered terms.

In idiomatic English, an official yet temporary body that meets in order to accomplish a task is called a “commission.” Hence, “these are the names of the commissioners . . .” So too for the resumptive repetition *eileh sh’mot ha-anashim* in v. 19. (NRSV: “. . . men.”)

[200] 35:2. *v’nat’nu la-lyiyim . . . arim la-shavet* (NJPS: “assign . . . towns for the Levites to dwell in”). For purposes of the printed book, the English term “the Levites” refers to the professional class of men. The Hebrew text does not mean to suggest that the Levites live in the assigned towns by themselves (i.e., without their

families); but this issue is in the background, not the foreground. Hence I relegated it to a printed comment, rather than to the translation itself.

The plain sense is that these towns are granted to the Levites by virtue of their public ritual role, and only secondarily do those towns serve to house and sustain their families. In other words, an ancient Israelite audience would have understood that the towns are “assigned” to the Levites, who as householders represent their families. (On a similar allocation to priests, see my note at Lev. 10:14.) No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “for the Levites to live in.”)

[201] 35:6, 11, etc. *ha-rotzei-ach*. . . . *rotzei-ach makkeh nefesh* (NJPS: “a manslayer. . . . a manslayer who has killed a person”). The grammatically masculine term *rotzei-ach* refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* female. Women are not excluded by the grammar. Regarding *nefesh*, see below.

Did the text’s composer(s) have ample reason to rely upon the ancient Israelite audience to know that the situational context surely *excludes* women from view? The answer appears to be yes. (See my printed comments on v. 6.) The experts on ancient Israelite culture regarding women suggest that mental prototyping would prompt the audience to consider only the case of a *man* who kills by accident:

(1) Phyllis Bird believes that “we are dealing with a situation governed by particular social, economic and legal customs that pertained particularly to males. . . . Asylum[’s] . . . provisions would make no sense for a woman in ancient Israel” (“Translating Sexist Language as a Theological and Cultural Problem” [1988], p. 93).

(2) Katherine Doob Sakenfeld writes that “the laws governing unintentional taking of human life (35:22–28) seem highly unlikely to be enforceable for female perpetrators” (p. 55). She appears to mean that it’s hard to imagine a woman living in an asylum city on her own.

(3) Adele Berlin opines that “a lone female in a refuge city . . . strikes me as highly unusual.”

(4) Carol Meyers remarks that “there is no way of knowing whether a female who commits homicide could flee on her own to a city of refuge.”

In other words, the protection of a *woman* who kills by accident is one of the many topics that the Torah’s laws do *not* directly cover. Why might the text have omitted the possibility of a female killer? As Timothy M. Willis has noted (*The Elders of the City* [SBL, 2001], pp. 89 ff., esp. 134–137) with regard to Deut. 19:1–13, the text focuses on scenarios that are straightforward and easy to imagine, from which underlying principles can be teased. Thus it does not address more complex possibilities. Perhaps the apparent omission from consideration here of a female killer should be seen in this light. That is, in the world of the ancient Near East, her gender would simply be an additional complication to consider—one that would obscure the particular principles that the text is pointing to.

Meanwhile, the text treats the *victim* of homicide in gender-neutral terms. The grammatically feminine common noun *nefesh* points here to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female. Women are not excluded by the grammar. On the meaning of *nefesh* and its relationship to gender, see my note at Exod. 12:15 and Lev. 2:1; see below, 31:35 and 46, where it designates a solely female group; and cf. Gen. 9:5. See also my printed comment at v. 11. There is no reason to think that women are excluded from view by the nature of this situation.

The NJPS rendering of *rotzei-ach* as “manslayer” has become inadequate, as the meaning of “man” has evolved from a true generic to an unreliable one. Readers may be prompted to think in male-only terms. (Later on, when NJPS renders the same term contextually as “murderer,” there is no such problem.) I now substitute a more clearly gender-inclusive term. One alternative rendering is “slayer,” but NJPS uses that in this passage to render *makkeh*, and it’s best to preserve the distinction of terms. Another option is “homicide,” for which Webster’s lists the latter as its original sense “a person who kills another,” yet in my experience that term is used most often in its more recent sense, “the killing of a human being by another.” The best choice appears to be “killer.” Hence, “a [male] killer.” (NRSV: “a slayer”—rendering all references in inclusive terms.)

[202] 35:12, 19, 21, 24, 25, 27. *go-el*; *go-el ha-dam* (NJPS: “avenger; blood-avenger”). This grammatically masculine term refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* female. Women are not excluded by the grammar.

In this case, it appears that an ancient Israelite audience would have understood *go-el* to designate a presumptively male-gender role. Consider:

(1) Timothy M. Willis contrasts the *go-el ha-dam* with the *go-el* who redeems land: “the *go-el ha-dam* need not have financial prowess, but military ability, i.e., the one best able to avenge his dead relative with strength and courage” (*Elders of the City*, p. 138, n. 106).

(2) Harry Hoffner observed that “the masculinity of the ancient was measured by . . . his prowess in battle” (“Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity,” p. 327). That is, it was men who were raised to kill others when necessary—and success in doing so was the yardstick of manhood. Such training would be called for because the murderer might resist being killed (and his family would also resist), no matter how justified that death would have seemed to the society as a whole. This may be reflected in literary symbolism: in the ancient Ugaritic epic of *AQHT*, a woman named Pughat sought to avenge her brother’s killing, yet she prepared to do so by putting on men’s clothing *under* her women’s apparel—becoming secretly masculine, as it were (Hoffner, op. cit., citing *ANET*, p. 155; however, others interpret the text to mean that Pughat disguised herself as the goddess Anat—who had contracted her brother’s murder—in order to gain entry to the killer).

(3) The present passage states that the avenger shall kill the murderer *b-fig'o vo* (vv. 19, 21), which NJPS takes as “upon encounter.” That is indeed one meaning of the expression that is plausible here (*KB*). However, a more-often attested sense of the phrase also suits this context: “by striking down (with a sword)”: Exod. 5:3; Judg. 8:20–21; 15:12; 18:25–27; I Sam. 22:17–19; II Sam. 1:15; I Kings 2:25, 28–34, 46 (J. J. Finkelstein, “The Ox That Gored” [1981], p. 26, n. 3; Jacob Milgrom at 35:19; cf. *KB*: “to fall upon someone with intent to kill”). That handling a sword was a characteristically “manly” activity can be inferred from an archeological finding across the ancient Near East: when a sword is found among grave goods, it is always with the burial of a male. Robert Alter sees “encounter” as the foreground meaning in our passage, with “stab” as merely a possible pun. Yet the parallel formulation in Deut. 19:6 speaks not about “encounter” (which has an almost accidental flavor) but rather about hot pursuit followed by a mortal blow. This seems more true to what is at stake: what avenger with any sense of family duty would *passively await* a chance meeting with one’s kin’s killer? Thus the ancient audience might well take an attack with blade as the foreground sense of the term in our passage; this would provide an additional reason to understand the role of avenger as a man’s job.

Although the avenging role was undertaken ideally by a male, it did not categorically exclude women. Arguably the demand for family honor and solidarity was such that if no man were readily available but a woman was, the responsibility devolved upon her—as for Pughat in the Ugarit epic, above, who actively sought after her brother’s killer. (Ezekiel appears to take for granted that his Israelite audience was familiar with this centuries-old epic. Merely in passing he cites its main protagonist, Danel; Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3.) Likewise, the biblical praises heaped upon a Kenite woman, Jael, who killed the fugitive general Sisera after he sought refuge in her tent (Judg. 4–5) suggest that if an opportunity for vengeance presented itself to a woman in the victim’s family, she would be praised for seizing that opportunity. And the fact that women were practiced in the slaughter of animals (Gen. 27:9, 14; 1 Sam. 28:24) further supports the notion that women would not have been considered unfit for the avenger role.

In short, we have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms. In translation, the avenger’s gender is germane only in v. 19; see further there.

[203] 35:16–21. In this passage, the references to the killer are couched in the same grammatically masculine terms as the prior passage, where it was determined that only a male killer was intended. However, here the issue is *murder*—and the murderer is to be executed. There is no reason to think that an ancient Israelite audience would expect women to be excluded from such regulations. (Our working assumption that women are not considered as killers in this chapter applies only to the provisions for the system of asylum.) Thus we have no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

Just as NJPS shifted its rendering of *rotzei-ach* contextually from “manslayer” in the previous passage to “murderer” in this passage, so I now reformulate the rendering of NJPS’s language in more clearly gender-neutral terms. The recurring idiom “if one struck another” (repeated with other verbs) is indebted to Baruch Levine [AB] and is a precise rendering of the Hebrew *hikkahu*.) (NRSV: “anyone who strikes another,” and so forth.)

[204] 35:19. *go’el ha-dam hu yamit et ha-rotzei-ach . . . hu y’mitennu* (NJPS: “The blood-avenger himself shall put the murderer to death; it is he who shall put . . . to death”). Rendering revised in 2013. As discussed at v. 12, this role is presumptively manly—but not exclusively so. Gender is not at issue.

In translation, the avenger’s gender is germane only in this verse, which twice refers to the avenger via the emphatic pronoun *hu*. NJPS renders these pronouns with terms that would be taken nowadays as excluding women. Until 2011, in my analysis of this verse I had confused typically male with exclusively male, which led me to preserve the NJPS wording. However, more clearly gender-neutral wording is warranted. Hence, “It is the blood-avenger who shall put the murderer to death; this is who shall put . . . to death.” (NRSV: “the avenger of blood is the one . . . the avenger of blood.”)

[205] 35:30–31, 33. Similar to vv. 16–21 (see my note there), the Torah is here stating general principles that are best understood in gender-neutral terms. Thus I now reformulate the rendering of NJPS’s language in more clearly gender-neutral terms. (NRSV also renders inclusively.)

[206] 36:1. *va-yikr’vu rashei ha-avot* (NJPS: “the family heads . . . came forward”). On this formula, with a focus on the gender sense of *avot*, see my note at 31:26. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the heads of the ancestral houses.”)

[207] 36:7, 8, 9. *ish b’nachalat matteh avotav yidbaku b’nei yisrael . . . yir’shu b’nei yisrael ish nachalat avotav . . . ish b’nachalato yidbaku mattot b’nei yisrael* (NJPS: “the Israelites must remain bound each to the ancestral portion of his tribe. . . every Israelite may keep his ancestral share. . . the Israelite tribes shall remain bound each to its portion”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category*; thus the gender of referents is thus not *solely* womanly. Women are not excluded by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding possessive pronoun is masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at Exod. 1:1. Semantically speaking, *ish* here features in a distributive construction, meaning “each.” In the first and second instances, *ish* refers to someone who has charge of an ancestral (tribal) portion. Because most men and most Israelites have no such stake in a *nachalah*, this requirement refers neither to men (in general), nor to Israelites (in general), but specifically to a householder’s heirs. Thus this situation also evokes the representational

sense of *ish*, which is used to designate a “householder” (see my notes above at 9:6–7, and at Exod. 2:21) or an “heir/successor” (e.g., Gen. 4:1; 1 Kgs. 2:1; 8:25; 9:5; Jer. 22:30; 29:32; 33:17; 2 Chr. 6:16; 7:18).

In the third instance, the syntactic subject is slightly different, such that *ish* refers to a tribe rather than to an individual householder. (So also Milgrom.)

In the first two instances, the text is employing the general *b'nei yisrael* to refer to a representative subgroup (namely, heirs to landholdings); the text’s composer(s) could rely upon its ancient audience to construe this situation in light of their cognitive category of *hierarchical representation*. Yet because their reference intrinsically includes Zelophehad’s daughters, the scope of this subgroup clearly does not exclude women from view. Thus there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

In those instances, the NJPS rendering (in terms of “his”) and the original URJ rendering (in terms of “Israelites”) missed the mark; a more precise gender-neutral insertion is warranted. Hence, “the Israelite [heirs]—each of them—must remain bound to the ancestral portion of their tribe. . . . every Israelite [heir] may keep an ancestral share.” (NRSV: “all Israelites shall retain the inheritance of their ancestral tribes. . . . all Israelites may continue to possess their ancestral inheritance.”) As for the third instance, no change to NJPS. (NRSV: “each of the tribes of the Israelites shall retain its own inheritance.”)