PRACTICAL PAPERS FOR
THE BIBLE TRANSLATOR

Published twice yearly (April and October) by the United Bible Societies
Vol. 55, No. 2, April 2004

EDITOR: Graham S. Ogden

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Rosario U. Yu

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Dr Eric Hermanson — *Translation Consultant, Bible Society of South Africa*
Prof Luke Timothy Johnson — *Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, USA*
Rev Tito Lahaye — *Translation Advisor, Bible Society of Paraguay*
Prof Ben C. Ollenburger — *Professor of OT, Associated Mennonite Seminary, Elkhart, IN, USA*
Prof Christo Van der Merwe — *Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Languages, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch, South Africa*

DAVID J. CLARK

THE PLACEMENT OF SECTION HEADINGS: A NEGLECTED OLD TESTAMENT DISCOURSE RESOURCE[1]

The author is a retired UBS translation consultant who is now serving as a voluntary part-time translation consultant with the Institute for Bible Translation. He is based in Woking, England.

Introduction

This article is frankly experimental. In any translation of the Bible that includes section headings (henceforth SHs), the translators have to decide where to put them. Ideally this decision should be based on a thorough discourse analysis of each book of the Bible in the source text, but very often such analyses do not exist. As a result, translators end up by following the SHs in the Good News Bible (GNB) or some other influential version in a major language. Even a modern discourse analysis has the drawback that it is not carried out by a native speaker of the source language. For Hebrew, we do have evidence of discourse divisions made by native speakers, but until very recently we have not taken it seriously.

Not long ago I encountered a book, *Delimitation Criticism: A New Tool in Biblical Scholarship* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2000). It is edited by Marjo Korpel and

1 I am very grateful to Prof Robert Gordon, Dr Marjo Korpel, and Dr Lénart de Regt for their patient and valuable comments on an earlier and even more tentative draft of this article. They are not of course responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation that remain.

Josef Oesch. From it I learnt that in the Hebrew text there are sets of marks that indicate where the scribes themselves recognised major breaks in the text. These marks are preserved in the scribal tradition of the Masoretic Text (MT) that dates from the 6th to 9th centuries A.D. However, in fact, they go back much further than that, as some of them have been found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, from the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C. There are also some such marks in manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate and Syriac Peshitta translations (4th and 5th centuries A. D.), and even in the Greek Septuagint, whose origins lie in the 3rd century B. C. Although the divisions there are not identical with those in the MT, there is considerably more overlap than could be the result of chance. So it seems that this tradition of dividing the text into major units is very old indeed. In fact the older the manuscript, the more detailed the divisions are likely to be (Korpel and Oesch, 323). Some scholars such as Oesch and Tov (Korpel and Oesch, 5, 10) think it may even go back to the time when the texts reached the written form in which they have come to us. Yet strangely only relatively recently has this tradition come under serious study by western (especially Dutch) scholars, under the label of Delimitation Criticism. This kind of study has the potential to be a useful tool for translators in making decisions about where the major breaks are in OT books, and thus where SHs should be placed, and consequently how they might best be worded.

In connection with the Northern Sami OT Revision project in Norway and Finland, I recently had the opportunity to try to apply some of the information in the Hebrew text to current Bible work. I chose to work on the book of Numbers. The present article describes the divisions printed in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS), and relates them to the SHs in the GNB. It suggests where some alterations in GNB could be made that would hopefully reflect more accurately the way the structure of the book was understood by native speakers of Hebrew.

I make no claim to be an expert. Both my understanding of the significance of the various markers in the Hebrew, and the conclusions I draw are subject to correction. However it seems worthwhile for somebody to try to apply an ancient tradition to a modern need.

The markers studied

BHS is based on the text of *Codex Leningradensis*, the oldest dated manuscript of the Hebrew Old Testament (A. D. 1008). It must be admitted that different families of Hebrew manuscripts vary somewhat in their marking of the divisions. Such variation affects the choice between the two main markers much more than the presence or absence of a marker. This article is limited to the markers shown in BHS for the very practical reason that this is the edition of the Hebrew text that is most easily obtainable, and is used by virtually all Old Testament translators working in co-operation with the United Bible Societies.

In the book of Numbers there are four kinds of marker printed in BHS. For a long time I had been only vaguely aware of these markers, and had never seen any explanation of their meaning. In all probability most translators have shared my ignorance. In discussing these markers I shall retain the Hebrew terms for them, since there are no accepted English equivalents as far as I am aware, and any

attempt to translate them would probably bring in some unjustified overtones from English linguistic terminology.

Smaller units

The two oldest and so most significant markers are found in the text itself, and occur at the ends of smaller units. These markers are the Hebrew letters *pe* (פ) and *samek* (ס). These two letters are the first letters of the Hebrew words *petuchah* and *setumah* (plurals *petuchot* and *setumot*), referring respectively to "open" and "closed" units. The use of these letters to mark unit boundaries preserves a much older tradition that goes back well beyond the Christian era (Korpel and Oesch, 155).

The terminology I find a little confusing. I would expect that a "closed" unit represented a more significant break than an "open" unit, but in fact it is the other way round: the *petuchot* generally represent more significant breaks than the *setumot* (Korpel and Oesch, 315). The implication of this is that a string of *setumot* at the ends of successive units suggests that these units are to be seen as somehow linked with each other more closely than a string of units ended by *petuchot*. Certainly the larger units discussed below normally end with a *petuchah*. There are 95 *petuchot* in the book of Numbers, making a total of 96 units, since the final one is unmarked. This article deals only with the 59 *petuchot* that coincide with larger unit markers or are related to GNB SHs. There are 64 *setumot*, but this article mentions only those 17 that relate to larger unit markers or GNB SHs.

Larger units

The largest division is called a *parash* (plural *parashot*), and is marked by the Hebrew letters *p-r-sh* (פרש) in the inner margins of BHS at the beginning of the unit. The book of Numbers is divided into ten *parashot*, though the Hebrew letters occur only nine times. The beginning of the book is obviously the beginning of a *parash*, so the marker does not occur at 1.1.

The remaining division is called a *seder* (plural *sedarim*), and indicates units used in the Jewish lectionary. It is shown by the Hebrew letter *samek* (ס) in the inner margins of BHS, again at the beginning of the unit. This ס is the same letter that marks the *setumot* but because the *seder* markers are always in the margin, and the *setumot* markers are always in the text, the two cannot be confused. In the book of Numbers there are 33 *sedarim*, and they conflict with the *parashot* at only one place: one *seder* covers 4.17–5.10, whereas a *parash* ends at 4.20. This means that it is not immediately clear whether 4.17-20 is to be taken as more closely linked with the preceding verses or the following ones. However, the *sedarim* divisions often arise from liturgical or homiletic considerations rather than linguistic ones, so these markers are the least useful from a linguistic perspective, and are given the least weight in this article (see the discussion of the new *seder* at 23.10 below).

The *parashot* may also reflect lectionary readings, but at least in the book of Numbers, they always occur at linguistically defensible places, so it is probably better to end a unit after a *petuchah* at 4.20, the *parash* boundary, than after a *setumah* at 4.16, the *seder* boundary. It is notable that only once does a *parash* end with a *setumah* (22.1), whereas several *sedarim* end with a *setumah* (4.16; 20.13;

28.25), or even with no marker at all (2.34; 23.9; 36.13). The last one, however, is at the end of the book, so no additional indication of closure is required there.

In the chart below, the first two columns show the boundaries of the *parashot* and *sedarim*. A blank line marks the end of each *parash* except the first. Each *parash* contains between two and four *sedarim*. Columns three and four show how the *petuchot* and the GNB SHs in the book of Numbers relate to the *parashot* and *sedarim*. Normally the beginning of a *parash* and/or a *seder* is preceded by a *petuchah,* for instance at 8.1. The places where a *parash* or *seder* is preceded instead by a *setumah* are shown in the third column by the symbol [ס] with square brackets, for instance at 20.14. If neither a *petuchah* nor a *setumah* precedes a new *seder*, this is indicated by a dash in the third column, for instance at 3.1.

GNB SHs occur at all the points listed in the fourth column except those marked "No SH" in the fifth column. The places where GNB has a SH but a *setumah* precedes it rather than a *petuchah* are shown by the symbol (ס) with round brackets in the third column, for instance at 3.14. Places where GNB has a SH with no supporting marker in the Hebrew are shown by dashes in the second and third columns, for instance at 4.34. The sixth and seventh columns show where additions and deletions to GNB SHs are suggested. The symbol # used in these columns indicates that a GNB SH differs from the Hebrew markings, but no change is proposed. Where cells in columns six and seven are blank, this means that GNB has a SH, and it seems to be in the right place, so no change is proposed. There are unique problems in the *parash* that covers 22.2–25.9, and these will be discussed separately.

Chart

Larger divisions in the Masoretic Text of Numbers and how the *petuchot* relate to them:

Parashot **(Largest sections)**	ס ***Sedarim*** **(Lectionary sections)**	**Preceding *Petuchah* or *Setumah***	**Reference**	**GNB SH?**	**Add SH +**	**Delete SH -**
1.1–4.20	ס 1.1-54		1.1			
	ס 2.1-34	פ	2.1			
	ס 3.1–4.16	-	3.1		#	#
		פ	3.5			
		פ	3.11	No SH	+	
		(ס)	3.14			-
		(ס)	3.40			-
		פ	3.44	No SH	+	
		פ	4.1			
	ס 4.17–5.10 (The only place in Numbers where a *seder* does not coincide with a *parash*)	[ס]	4.17	No SH	#	#

p-r-sh 4.21–7.89		פ	4.21			
		פ	4.29			
	-	-	4.34			-
		פ	5.1			
		פ	5.5			
	ס 5.11-31	פ	5.11			
	ס 6.1-21	פ	6.1			
	ס 6.22–7.47	פ	6.22			
		פ	7.1			
	ס 7.48-89	פ	7.48	No SH	#	#
p-r-sh 8.1–12.16	ס 8.1–9.23	פ	8.1			
		פ	8.5			
		פ	9.1			
		פ	9.15			
	ס 10.1–11.15	פ	10.1			
		פ	10.11			
	-	-	10.33			-
		פ	11.1			
	-	-	11.4			-
	ס 11.16-22	פ	11.16	No SH	+	
	ס 11.23–12.16	פ	11.23	No SH	#	#
	-	-	11.31			-
		פ	12.1			
p-r-sh 13.1–15.41	ס 13.1–14.10	פ	13.1			
	-	-	14.1			-
	ס 14.11-45	פ	14.11			
		פ	14.26			
	-	-	14.39			-
	ס 15.1-37	פ	15.1			
		פ	15.32			
		פ	15.37			
p-r-sh 16.1–18.32	ס 16.1–17.15	פ	16.1			
		פ	17.1 MT = 16.36 GNB			
	-	-	17.6 MT = 16.41 GNB			-
		פ	17.9 MT = 16.44 GNB		+	

	ס 17.16–18.32	פ	17.16 MT = 17.1 GNB			
		(ס)	18.1			-
		(ס)	18.8			-
		(ס)	18.21			-
		פ	18.25			
p-r-sh 19.1–22.1	ס 19.1–20.13	פ	19.1			
	-	-	19.11			-
		פ	20.1			
	ס 20.14–22.1	[ס]	20.14		#	#
		פ	20.22			
		(ס)	21.1			-
		פ	21.4			
	-	-	21.10			-
		פ	21.21			
	-	-	22.1			-
p-r-sh 22.2–25.9	ס 22.2–23.9	[ס]	22.2	No SH	+	
		-	22.22		#	#
		-	22.36		#	#
	-	-	22.41		#	#
	ס 23.10–24.25	-	23.10	No SH	#	#
		-	23.13		#	#
		-	23.27		#	#
	-	-	24.14		#	#
	ס 25.1-9	פ	25.1			
p-r-sh 25.10–30.1	ס 25.10–26.51	פ	25.10	No SH	+	
		פ	26.1			
	ס 26.52–27.14	פ	26.52	No SH	+	
		(ס)	27.1			-
		(ס)	27.12			-
	ס 27.15–28.25	פ	27.15	No SH	+	
		פ	28.1			
		פ	28.9			
		(ס)	28.11			-
		(ס)	28.16			-
	ס 28.26–30.1	[ס]	28.26			
		פ	29.1			

		(ס)	29.7			-
		ס	29.12			
p-r-sh 30.2–32.42	ס 30.2-17	ס	30.2 MT = 30.1 GNB			
	ס 31.1-24	ס	31.1			
		(ס)	31.13			-
	ס 31.25-54	ס	31.25			
	ס 32.1-42	ס	32.1			
p-r-sh 33.1–36.13	ס 33.1-56	ס	33.1			
		(ס)	33.50			-
	ס 34.1–35.8	ס	34.1			
		ס	34.16			
		ס	35.1			
	ס 35.9–36.13	ס	35.9			
		ס	36.1			
Totals						
10	33	59		11	8	23

The significance of the markers

It seems likely that when two or three of the markers occur together, the more important the break in the text appeared in the eyes of the scribes. So in places where a *petuchah* is followed by both a new *parash* and a new *seder*, a SH is almost certainly justified in a modern translation. When a *petuchah* is followed only by a new *seder*, a SH may also be justified, though careful evaluation will be required. Since both *parashot* and *sedarim* are quite long, modern translations will probably need more SHs than these markers may suggest. In that case, the principles adopted in the chart are as follows:

1) A SH should normally be preceded at least by a *petuchah* in BHS (though that does not imply that every *petuchah* should trigger a new SH).
2) If a SH is preceded only by a *setumah*, the justification for the SH is debatable and should be examined carefully.
3) If a SH occurs at a point where there is no marker at all in the Hebrew, then it is likely to be in the wrong place.
4) Conversely, if there is a *petuchah* followed by a new *parash* in the Hebrew, and no SH in the translation, then there probably should be one.

It is now necessary to summarise the above suggestions for alterations to GNB SHs. The strongest proposal is to add a SH at 25.10, where all three markers occur in BHS, and are apparently totally ignored in GNB. In seven cases a proposed deletion and a proposed addition are close together, and this amounts in effect to moving the SH rather than removing it. These are from 3.14 to 3.11, from

3.40 to 3.44, from 11.4 to 11.16, from 16.41 to 16.44, from 22.1 to 22.2, from 27.1 to 26.52, and from 27.12 to 27.15. These proposals are discussed below. Such movements would end a section with a *petuchah* rather than a *setumah* or no marker at all. There are 23 proposed deletions and only eight proposed additions, so the total number of SHs could be reduced by up to fifteen.

There is occasionally a marker in BHS which is not matched by a SH in GNB. In one such case (7.48, where a new *seder* begins) the absence of a SH seems to be an advantage in the translation, as indicated by the # in columns five and six. The new *seder* at 7.48 seems designed more to break in half a long and repetitive list than to reflect any structural feature. Similarly there is no proposal to add a SH at 11.23. Despite the *petuchah* after 11.22 and the new *seder* beginning at 11.23, a SH at that point would appear to disrupt the narrative, and to offer no real advantage. Presumably the new *seder* begins at 11.23 because it is a verse emphasising the Lord's power and reliability.

The most difficult section of Numbers in terms of Delimitation Criticism is the *parash* that runs from 22.2–25.9, the account of Balaam and Balak. It contains no *setumot*, and only one *petuchah*, at the end of ch. 24, so there is no real guidance as to how the scribes understood the internal structure of chs. 22–24. The symbol # in the sixth and seventh columns in this unit indicates that there is no ancient evidence for changing the existing GNB SHs, even though they have no confirmation in BHS. The most interesting feature of this *parash* is that it includes 25.1-9, the account of the immorality of the Israelites at Peor. Presumably this offers support for the tradition that Balaam was in some way involved in instigating it (compare Num 31.16; Rev 2.14). The lack of any GNB SH at 25.10 has the effect of linking 25.1-9 with what follows rather than what precedes, and thus distorts significantly the ancient understanding of the structure.

The *seder* beginning at 23.10 deserves some further comment. In terms of the flow of the narrative it seems to be placed ineptly, coming as it does in the middle of one of Balaam's oracles. However, it does begin with a statement that constitutes a blessing on Israel, and one can see that this may well have a theological purpose at the beginning of a reading in the synagogue liturgy. I have not studied the *sedarim* outside the book of Numbers, but have haphazardly come across a few other places where a similar purpose could easily have influenced the placement of the *seder* marker: these are at Judg 2.7 (rather than 2.6 which is preceded by a *petuchah*); 3.31 (rather than 4.1, which speaks of the people's sin); and 5.31 (rather than 6.1, which again speaks of the people's sin). The last instance is the more striking since 5.31 is followed by a *petuchah*. Similar considerations may have affected the placement of some *seder* markers in Numbers, for instance at 6.22 rather than 7.1, and probably also at 3.1 and 11.23. It may be that 3.1-4 should be linked with 2.32-34 rather than with 3.5-10, despite the new seder at 3.1.

Implications for section headings in Numbers

If SHs are added, deleted, or moved from one place to another, it makes a difference to the way the various units in the text are linked together or separated, and this in turn may affect the theological interpretation. We shall now examine the proposed changes in the GNB SHs that arise from this study,

and try to assess what if any effect they may have on the interpretation of the text.

Proposals to move SHs

1, 2. The first two are to move from 3.14 to 3.11, and 3.40 to 3.44. These moves would bring 3.11-43 into one fairly long section after a short section covering only 3.5-10, and before another short one covering only 3.44-51. The long section would then consist not only of the actual census of the Levite clans (3.14-39) but also its framing units 3.11-13 and 3.40-43. These emphasise that the Levites are to belong to the Lord as substitutes for the first-born in the other tribes. Thus the census is to be understood not just as a bureaucratic exercise (as a modern western perspective might suggest), but as an aid to the theological goal of organising the substitution of the first-born. The GNB SH now at 3.14 could be placed at 3.11, and a new SH at 3.44 could be "Buying back the extra first-born sons" or something similar. This is in all likelihood a fairer reflection of the perspective of the original editors and scribes.

3. The next proposed move is from 11.4 to 11.16. The effect of this is to bring together into one unit the two instances of complaining by the people in 11.1-3 and 11.4-15. The GNB SH now at 11.4 ("Moses chooses seventy leaders") could be placed at 11.16, since it does not refer to anything in 11.4-15. The SH at 11.1 would be better as "The people complain."

4. The next proposed change is to move the SH from 16.41 (BHS 17.6) to 16.44 (BHS 17.9). Beginning a new unit at 16.44 would reflect a common feature in the placement of *petuchot*, namely that the first words of the following section are "The Lord said ... " Here as in other places in Numbers, the Lord addresses Moses. (In fact 66 out of the 160 *petuchot* and *setumot* units in Numbers are followed by a verb of speaking, that is over 41%.) Nothing vital seems to depend on such a change here, though it might be maintained that to close the previous section with "Moses and Aaron went and stood in front of the tent" increases the dramatic suspense before the climax of the story. The wording of the SH would not need to be changed.

5. The following change from 22.1 to 22.2 is simply a reflection of the BHS division marks. 22.1 is then a conclusion to the account of the victory over Sihon and Og rather than scene-setting for the story of Balaam and Balak. This is the layout in the Jerusalem Bible (JB) and New Jerusalem Bible (NJB).

6, 7. The final proposals for a move of SH are probably more significant. If a SH is placed at 26.52 rather than 27.1, then the legislation about female inheritance arising from the case of the daughters of Zelophehad is to be seen as an integral part of the rules about the division of the land, and not just an afterthought as it appears at present. If the further move of the SH from 27.12 to 27.15 is made, then Moses' sight of the promised land is linked with the instructions for dividing it. This episode has no obvious logical link with the appointment of Joshua in 27.15-23, whereas it has greater significance when linked with the division of the land in which

Moses would have no part. For the section from 26.52–27.14 we could propose as a SH "Rules for dividing the land." The GNB SH now at 27.12 could simply be moved without change to 27.15.

Proposals to delete SHs

1. The first place is 4.34. If the SH is removed, the census of the Levites (especially in the abridged form in which it is translated in GNB) is linked more closely with the duties of the Levites, and appears less of an administrative task in its own right. Within Numbers 4 as a whole there is a good case for using two levels of SH as do JB and NJB, but if this is done, any break at 4.34 should be at most a lower level SH.
2. The next deletion occurs at 10.33. There is no indication of a break in BHS, and no particular reason to insert one since 10.33-36 is also concerned with the breaking and pitching of the camp dealt with in 10.11-32. The SH in GNB seems to be a purely impressionistic break with no foundation.
3. In 11.31 GNB has another SH with no support from BHS. If the BHS indicators are followed, the unit would be 11.23-35, or perhaps 11.16-35. Through ch. 11 there is an interweaving of themes that makes the question of SHs unusually complex. The appointment of seventy elders (11.16-17, 24-30) and the provision of meat (11.18-23, 31-35) are intertwined in such a way that they cannot be readily disentangled. This suggests that one SH should cover 11.16-35 and embrace both themes: perhaps "The Lord chooses elders and provides meat" would be suitable. The new *seder* marked at 11.23 seems to interrupt the dialogue between the Lord and Moses, and is probably another example of a place where a *seder* begins with a statement glorifying God without much regard for its context. Despite the *petuchah* at the end of 11.22, it is probably best not to insert a SH at 11.23. Does the BHS division imply some sort of connection between the provision of elders empowered by the spirit and the provision of meat? If so, it is not easy to see what it could be, other than perhaps to underline that the Lord is the source of all blessings, both spiritual and material.

4, 5. In 14.1 there is no marker in BHS, with the effect that the complaints of the people are linked more closely with the expedition and report of the spies than appears from the GNB. Perhaps the placement of the GNB SH is influenced by the traditional chapter number. If the SH at 14.1 is removed, and 13.1–14.10 is joined into one section, a SH at 13.1 could be "The spies' expedition and its results." A similar situation exists at 14.39, where the GNB SH has no support in BHS. If 14.26-45 is treated as one section, the SH at 14.26 could be simply "The Lord punishes the people."

6, In ch. 18, GNB has SHs at 18.1, 8, and 21, supported only by *setumot* in
7, BHS. Since the effect of *setumot* is more to link units than to separate
8. them, these SHs are questionable, and should be reconsidered. If 17.1–18.24 is treated as a single section, the effect is to link the duties and privileges of the priests more closely with the divine choice of Aaron and the tribe of Levi demonstrated by the budding of Aaron's staff. This may well be the intent of the BHS markers, but it would be difficult to find a SH that covers the whole unit adequately. Something like "The choice, duties, and privileges of the Levites" may serve, but could be deemed too long. If shorter sections are reckoned necessary in a translation, at least the GNB SHs at 18.1, 8, and 21 are at appropriate points. This may be another place at which two levels of SH could be used, a higher level at 17.1 and a lower level at 18.1, 8, and 21.

9. In 19.11 there is no support in BHS for a SH, and the GNB SH could be removed. A SH to cover the whole of 19.1-22 could be "Removing ritual uncleanness."

10. At 21.1 there is a preceding *setumah*, so that 21.1-3 should probably be seen as linked more closely with 20.22-29 than the SH in GNB suggests. Presumably the vow in 21.2 and the victory over the king of Arad in 21.3 are seen as validating the transfer of priestly authority from Aaron to Eleazar in 20.28, and confirming the Lord's continuing care for his people. The SH at 21.10 has no BHS support and could be removed. The resulting unit would be 21.4-20, linking punishment for more complaints with the provision of water. A suitable SH might be "The Lord punishes and provides for his people." If necessary this could be shortened to "Further travels." The focus on the bronze snake in the present SH at 21.4 may arise more from the well known reference to it in John 3.14 than from its importance in the narrative of Numbers.

11, In 28.11, 16, and 26 the situation is similar to that in ch. 18. The GNB SHs
12, are preceded by *setumot* rather than *petuchot*. So they are in appropriate
13. places but they obscure the link in BHS between the various special offerings. This is another place where two levels of SH may be helpful. A higher level SH of "Special offerings" at 28.9 would parallel that of "Regular offerings" at 28.1. Then the existing SHs at 28.9, 11, 16, and 26 could remain as lower level SHs. If the *seder* marker at 28.26 is considered sufficiently important, the heading there could revert to the higher level, though this is probably not necessary.

14. At 29.7 there is only a *setumah* preceding, which would link the Day of Atonement offerings in 29.7-11 more closely with the New Year offerings in 29.1-6 than the GNB SHs suggest. Again, it would be possible to have a higher level SH at 29.1 "Offerings in the seventh month," then lower level SHs as at present at 29.1, 7, and perhaps 12, notwithstanding the preceding *petuchah*. JB and NJB employ two levels of SH in chs. 28–29, but do not follow the BHS markers in deciding which is which.

15, 16. In ch. 33 there are preceding *setumot* at 33.40 and 33.50, yet only the second one leads to a SH in GNB. It may be better to resort to two levels of SH again, a higher level one at 33.1, such as "Summary of the desert journey," and lower level ones at 33.1, 40, and 50. The first two could be "From Egypt to Mount Hor," "From Mount Hor to the plains of Moab," and the third could stay as it is.

Proposals to add SHs

It remains only to comment on the absence of a GNB SH at 25.10. Since this break is marked by a *petuchah*, a *parash*, and a *seder*, the evidence in its favour is very strong indeed. The lack of a SH links the immorality at Peor in 25.1-9 with what follows rather than what precedes, and this is clearly contrary to the scribal intent. A new SH at 25.10 would not only minimise this link, but would put more focus on the zeal of Phinehas and the permanence of the priesthood. Here as elsewhere, scribal markers focus on the prominence of the Levites.

Conclusion

Although this study is only tentative, the results it throws up are surely significant and challenging enough to justify further and more detailed study by scholars with more specialised knowledge of the field. We can no longer afford to ignore ancient scribal markers when deciding where to put SHs and how to word them.

GRAHAM S. OGDEN

KINGS AND LABORERS: Temporal Idioms in Isaiah 16.14; 21.16; and 23.15

The author is a UBS translation consultant based in Australia.

There are three occasions in Isaiah when temporal phrases are linked either with kings or with laborers. They are 16.14 and 21.16, where we note the phrase "like the years of a hired worker" (*kishnē sākîr*), and 23.15 where the phrase "like the days of one king" (*kîmē melek 'echād*) appears. The simple question is, what do these phrases mean? What is the significance of comparing a period of time to that of a hired laborer or of a king?

From the point of view of social standing, the king and the laborer are obviously at opposite ends of the social spectrum. In Israel, once the kingdom was established, the king represented its highest office. His role was that of upholding the law, administering justice, providing a religious and spiritual example as Yahweh's representative on earth. The laborer on the other hand, represented the lowest social category, along with orphans and widows. Special regulations made it incumbent on employers of laborers to pay the wages due for the day's work immediately upon completion of the day's task. Payment should never be delayed (Lev 19.13; Deut 24.14; Mal 3.5). The reason for this special concern for the immediate payment of wages due is "because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them" (Deut 24.15). There were other regulations that guarded the