

The Table of Nations (Genesis 10) – A Socio-cultural Approach

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I

Whenever a scholar settles down to investigate the Biblical Table of Nations (Gen 10), he soon finds that the most intriguing question is: what was the criterion according to which the nations and countries were distinguished and divided into three main groups? Why would a scribe be tempted to link up Cush (an African people) with Nimrod, a hero belonging to the Mesopotamian world¹?

This question, asked time and again², is the result of two factors: (1) The warranted and plausible presupposition that the classification of the ancient world into three groups must follow a certain leading principle, each group being definable by its own characteristics and peculiarities. (2) The attempts of the scholars to trace the leading principle, and the various proposals offered by them, stem from the very fact that the answer given by the Biblical author in the text itself is not satisfactory. From verses 5. 20. 31 we can learn that the author of Gen 10 employs, or rather mentions, several criteria concurrently: *ethnopolitical* (לְמוֹשֶׁפְּחָתָם, בְּנוֹיָהֶם – after their families, nations³); *linguistic* (לְלִשְׁנָתָם – after their tongues); and *geographic* (בְּאֶרֶצָתָם – in their countries), thus causing confusion to anybody who is looking for a single guiding rule. Moreover, the alleged principles of classification cannot be employed simultaneously since each of them entails different and even contradictory ways of grouping. If we take, for example, the linguistic criterion, one should link together the cities in Mesopotamia with Aram, Canaan and the sons of Eber, but not with Cush and Egypt.

The principle of *ethnic* affinity has to be abandoned since there is no ethnic connection between Elam and Aram, or between Egypt and the great cities of Mesopotamia. The land and peoples are not enumerated in *geographical* sequence, or according to geographical proximity. Lud, in Asia

Minor (Jes 66,19) is grouped with Shem (in verse 13 with Ham) and not, as one would expect, with Japheth. The linking of Ashur with Sheva (verses 22. 27), negates any ground for the contention that geographical order is the leading criterion for the threefold division of mankind⁴.

The untenability of the three aforementioned criteria served as an impetus for the scholars to search after another, more appropriate guiding principle. Nevertheless, the various criteria proposed by the scholars could not illuminate it satisfactorily. The conjecture that the Biblical author distinguished the peoples according to colour of skin, after the manner of the Egyptians⁵, is inapplicable. The theory that the Table was based upon political-historical considerations, as previously suggested by Wilhelm Spiegelberg⁶ is applicable only for part of the list (*i. e.* Egypt and the areas predominantly under Egyptian influence), and it cannot be rigorously carried through the whole text, nor can it be safely used as an argument for fixing the date of the Table⁷. For the same reason, the suggestion that the Table of Nations »is a list of states and nations enumerated according to the political sympathies and antipathies«⁸ is unsatisfactory.

The solution of the classical source criticism is that the Table of Nations, in its present form, is a redactional composition in which two literary sources are interwoven (*i. e.* J and P), with some very late additional interpolation⁹.

The argument for this interlacing of two different sources is based on inner discrepancies, contradictions and differences in style¹⁰. This textual analysis of the list is very convincing¹¹. Indeed, it is impossible, on the basis of the two sources theory (*i. e.* J and P) to lay down any strict rule concern-

¹ In Mi 5,5 Nimrod is clearly connected with Ashur. On Nimrod see E. A. Speiser, In Search of Nimrod, EI V (B. Mazar Vol.) 1958, 32–36; E. Lipinski, Nimrod et Aššur, RB 73 (1966), 77–93.

² The main works on Gen 10 are listed in the commentary of C. Westermann on Genesis. See G. Westermann, Genesis, BKAT 1, 1974; M. Jastrow has defined the chapter as »one of the most puzzling documents of antiquity,« M. Jastrow, The Hamites and the Semites in the Tenth Chapter of Genesis, Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 43 (1904), 173.

³ The usual translation for גֹּוֹי is »nation« used »largely for a political entity centered in a given locality« whereas עַם (»people«) is used »primarily for a genetically related group«, see E. A. Speiser, IDB III, 235–236.

⁴ For climatic-geographical approach see the Book of Jubilees, chs. 8–9; A. H. Sayce, JBL 44 (1925), 197 »the three sons of Noah represent three zones of the known world.« G. Hölscher claims for the principle of Geographical proximity, (North, Middle and South), G. Hölscher, Drei Erdkarten, 1949, 45–46. The order in each section, according to Hölscher, is from east to west (49, 52, 54).

⁵ H. Grapow, Die Bildlichen Ausdrücke des Aegyptischen, 1924, 106–107.

⁶ W. Spiegelberg, Aegyptologische Randglossen zum Alten Testament, 1904, 9–11. See also Sayce, op. cit. (above n. 4), 197.

⁷ Cf. B. Mazar, who also claims that the list of Ham reflects the Egyptian Empire, but in the New Kingdom Period (15–13 centuries B.C.). B. Mazar, RHJE 1 (1947), 33–68.

⁸ I. M. Diakonoff, Father Adam, AfO Beiheft 19 (RAI XXVIII, Wien) 1982, 22. See also M. Jastrow, op. cit. (above n. 2), 206–207.

⁹ See Westermann, Genesis, 662–706 (esp. 665–673) and the bibliography in 662–663; P. Weimar, Untersuchungen zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Pentateuch, BZAW 146, 1977, 146–150. It seems that the main principle of P is geographical. See Skinner, Genesis, 193.

¹⁰ E. g., כִּישׁ כְּנָעַ, see details in Westermann, Genesis, 666–670.

¹¹ Cf. Cassuto who rejects completely the »Documentary Hypothesis« but admits that »without doubt the material was derived from different sources«. U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, 1964, 185.

ing the classification of mankind, but at the same time it bears a decisive argument according to which the present text is not a genuine composition of a particular author, but the work of a redactor. We fully agree that the author of the Table incorporated material from both J and P¹², but our contention is that the interlacing of two different sources is only one phase, and a late one, in the long history of the development of the tradition underlying the composition, or rather, the compilation of Genesis 10.

It is widely recognized that Genesis 10 is a late composition, probably not earlier than the 8th century B. C. E.¹³ The Table is an artificial composition in a genealogical pattern reflecting no reality in any historical period. The genealogy of Noah pretends to embrace the entire pre-Israelite world and its population¹⁴, but at the same time, the ethnogeographical map which emerges from this enumeration of countries and nations cannot be assigned to any historical period. Moreover, the intention of the scribe to grasp the entire inhabited world both synchronically and diachronically in the framework of the belief that all mankind originated from one progenitor, using at the same time a tripartite pattern, resulted in a puzzling Table of Nations with a complex of inconsistent principles of division; hence the many remarks and suggestions proposed regarding the structure, meaning and historical background of this mysterious chapter.

II

A possible escape from this confusion and impasse may be provided by the suggestion which I intend to introduce here. This suggestion, though admittedly tentative, ignores the individual problems but focuses on the basic idea underlying the Table of Nations.

Simply stated, this article will hold that (1) the Table of Nations in its present form and content is the outcome of an old document which after a long process of transmission, updating and changing of the principle of classification has reached the form of the extant text in Gen 10¹⁵. Using the argument for »original nucleus« of the Table, I am in league with J. Simons who has already claimed that »it seemed safe enough to assume a priori that the contents of Genesis X are probably made-up of an original nucleus, and small or greater secondary elements«¹⁶. (2) That the proposed proto-

¹² See details G. W. Coats, Genesis, 1983, Vol. I, 89–93, and in the commentaries referred to in note 2.

¹³ Westermann, Genesis, 680–681; Speiser, Genesis, 71:1.

¹⁴ In line with Gen 9,19 – שלשה אלה בני נח ומאחלה נפצה כל הארץ

¹⁵ This means that J and P both ultimately derived from the same old document. For a similar gradual process of transmission concerning the Epic of Gilgamesh, see E. Lipinski, IEJ 34 (1984), 208.

¹⁶ J. Simons, The Table of Nations (Genesis X): Its General Structure and Meaning, OTS 10 (1954), 155–184 and references to former literature in 156–157. Nevertheless, we differ

text contained three predominant features (a) a model of the threefold division of population, (b) the division was based on a definable principle, (c) the principle reflects a socio-economic and socio-cultural approach¹⁷. Thus, in the Biblical Table of Nations human society is divided into three types of communities, each with a distinct life-style, each operating in a different setting.

In order to prove the two above-mentioned premises, let us start with Gen 4,20–22¹⁸. This passage provides an analogy to Gen 10, and may serve as inferential evidence as well as a pattern for the formulation of the nuclear document since both passages are identical both in their historiographical character and in their functional purpose¹⁹.

The *first* and most conspicuous feature both of Gen 4 and Gen 10 is the tripartite scheme²⁰. In regard to Gen 4, it is said: Jabal, the ancestor of tent-dweller and herdsmen (*i.e.* pastoral nomads). Jubal, the ancestor of all musicians (»who handle lyre and pipe«); Tubal-Cain, the ancestor (a restoration of the verse)²¹ of all craftsmen and smiths.

The threefold division is not limited to the sons of Lamech (Gen 4) and to the sons of Noah (Gen 10). There are other cases of tripartite division such as the three sons of Adam: Cain, Abel and Seth, to wit, a trichotomic approach to the *oikoumenē*²². The genealogy of Shem in Chapter 11 is closed with three sons, Abraham, Nahor and Haran²³. Dedan, the son of Abraham and Keturah has three sons (Gen 25,3). In various commentaries on Gen 10, one can find the note that the Greeks traced their descent from

in the method of investigation, in the content of the »hard core« of the Table and in the leading principle underlying the nuclear document.

¹⁷ By socio-economic and socio-cultural criterion I mean classification of mankind into various groups according to social and economic practices in all fields of culture – the political organization, the social hierarchy and stratification, the economic basis and sources of maintenance and mode of life. In the following we shall use the term »socio-cultural.«

¹⁸ This passage may stand by itself as an independent tradition since verse 23 can be connected directly with verse 21 on the one hand, and because of the absence of any relics of this tradition in Gen 11, 28–31 on the other.

¹⁹ See Westermann, Genesis, 671, according to whom »Der J-text von Gen 10 steht Gen 4,7–26 nahe.«

²⁰ »The threefold division of mankind is a feature common to P and J,« see Skinner, Genesis, 192.

²¹ See R. Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, s.v.; Skinner, Genesis, 119 who reads: »He became the father of every artificer in brass and iron«; Westermann, Genesis, 451 and there on the suggestion that the component »Cain« is a late addition.

²² It is true that Seth was conceived by his mother as a replacement for Abel, but that is only one version of the various traditions. On Seth as an additional element in the light of the widespread threefold scheme see A. Papasyan, in Drevnij Vostok 4, 1983, 39 (Russian). On the three sons of Ham (excluding Put) and the three sons of Shem (excluding Ashur and Lud) see Westermann, Genesis, 686, 701.

²³ On the tendency to close a genealogy with three names see Skinner, Genesis, 192.

a supposed eponymous ancestor, Hellen, who had three sons – Dorus (Dorians), Aeolus (Aeolians) and Xuthus (Ionians and Achaeans)²⁴.

The *second* remarkable feature in Gen 4 is that the criterion of classification is *professional*, each group having a definite occupation, pastoral nomadism, musical entertainment and smithing²⁵. In enumerating the three sons of Dedan (Gen 15,3) we have substantially the same kind of threefold division of a clan according to a socio-cultural criterion. The sons of Dedan are *לְאֻמִּים יִלְאֻשִׁים לְמוֹשֶׁה, אֲשֹׁרִים*. Albright, following certain ancient translations, maintains that »these are not clan names, but names of classes or professions« – peasants (or footmen), craftsmen and semi-nomadic tribesmen²⁶.

The *third* lucid feature of the list in Gen 4 is the intention of the author to convey the concept of the »culture heroes«. The genealogical line of Lamech includes three »culture heroes«, each one is the ancestor (*אבי*) of a certain human group, or a founder/inventor of a definite occupation²⁷. *אבי כל, אבי כל* are *termini technici* in a context dealing with ancestors, founders and inventors, those who mark the cultural beginning of mankind²⁸. The idea of an ancestor of a definite group or a founder of a certain profession is not unique to the genealogical list of Lamech. It was the universal custom of antiquity to invent a legendary founder of a city, state, people or profession²⁹. Cain (or his son Enoch) is the ancestor of city dwellers (Gen 4,17)³⁰. Lugalbanda and Dumuzi are two of the many godly ancestors and founders of various branches of human civilizations³¹.

²⁴ See e. g., Skinner, Genesis, 190. Iapetos, the son of Uranos and Gaia had three sons: Atlas, Prometheus and Epimetheus. On the principle of grouping deities, after a model of triads (or »trinity«) containing three independent divine components, see M. Khvedelidze, »Babylonian and Egyptian Triads« apud. H. Klengel, Gesellschaft und Kultur im alten Vorderasien. 1982, 137–141.

²⁵ According to Skinner, Genesis, 118 »the three sons represent three permanent social divisions and (we must suppose) three modes of life.«

²⁶ W. F. Albright, Dedan, in Geschichte und Altes Testament (A. Alt Festschrift) 1953, 10–11 and there on Lamech's three sons.

²⁷ W. W. Hallo, Antediluvian Cities, JCS 23 (1970), 64.

²⁸ Noah, the son of Lamech, is the discoverer of the vine-culture. For the connection of Lamech's genealogy with the origin and development of culture, from the Biblical author's point of view, see Westermann, Genesis, 441, 447–448 and there also parallels with ancient near eastern literature.

²⁹ Skinner, Genesis, 190.

³⁰ Cassuto, Genesis I, 229–230; C. V. Wolf, IDB III, 559; Hallo, op. cit. (above n. 27), 64. On leagues of twelve cities or tribes (amphictionies) in Ionia who traced their origins to *oikistai* who founded their motherland. See M. Weinfeld, apud G. Strecker (ed.), Das Land Israel in Biblischer Zeit, 1983, 63.

³¹ On the seven antediluvian Sages (NUN.ME = *apkallu*) of Mesopotamia, e. g., Enmenduranna of Sippar that was the ancestor of all diviners, see Hallo, op. cit. (above n. 27), 62–64; I. S. Klotchkoff, Late Babylonian List of Scholars apud H. Klengel, op. cit. (above

Philo of Byblos mentions pairs of mortal discoverers of the necessities of civil human life such as the invention of iron working and other crafts³². Hephaistos was the first of all men to sail³³. Aminos and Magos had introduced villages and flocks. Prometheus, the son of the god Iapetus, was considered by the craftsmen, particularly in Attica, to be the supreme craftsman³⁴.

III

The list of Lamech in Gen 4 is an indispensable text for our purpose as it may justifiably serve as a paradigm for any literary piece which includes the conception of threefold division of population according to socio-cultural principle cast in the form of genealogy and bound up with the idea of a »culture hero«. We claim that the nuclear text of Gen 10 was substantially built after the structural pattern and the basic formula inherent in Gen 4, but we do not take a stand concerning the chronological relationship between the two texts.

The Table of Nations consists of three main sections – Shem, Ham and Japheth. As we have already made clear, the threefold division was conventional. Consequently, the nuclear document was also cast in the shape of threefold division: *שם, חם, יפת*.

The critical question is: did the author of the original text of the Table apply the socio-cultural principle of classification?

The method that we shall follow is to trace the unique features of each group and to find its peculiar elements. The rationale of this method is that the items can be grouped together if they have a peculiar feature in common.

The point of departure is the group of Shem. With regard to Shem it is explicitly said: *שם – אבי כל בני עבר* (v. 21).

Now *אבי כל, אבי כל* reminds us promptly of the list in Gen 4, the sons of Lamech. The scribe uses the same formula we have clearly found in Gen 4. This, in and of itself, leads us to the possibility that the proto-text of the Table, divided mankind into three branches of human culture, attaching to

n. 24), 149–154 and bibliography there; H. S. Kvanvig, The Mesopotamian Background of the Henoch Figure, Roots of Apocalyptic Vol. 1, 1983, 208f.

³² A. I. Baumgarten, The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos, 1981, 168–212; J. Ebach, Weltentstehung und Kulturentwicklung bei Philo von Byblos, BWANT 108, 1979, passim and the tables on pages 492–495. For the common folklore pattern of twin culture-heroes, which may reflect »the dual structure of a given society, or the co-existence in a given area of two different types of inhabitants e. g., herdsmen and agriculturalists, see Gaster, Myth, Legend and Customs in the Old Testament, 1969, 163.

³³ On the various traditions about Hephaistos see Ebach, op. cit. (above n. 32) index, s. v.

³⁴ The Oxford Classical Dictionary 1949, 734. For Aminos and Magos cf. Cain and Abel, and see Ebach, op. cit. (above n. 32), 214–216.

each cultural branch a founder or an ancestor — אבי כל. Shem is the father of all the sons of »Eber«. Eber is the *patros eponymus* of all the Hebrews. The Old Testament allusions to Hebrew/s — עבר, עברי — are extremely confused, and a matter of controversy and cannot be fully discussed here³⁵. In all likelihood, »bene Eber«, in this context has the sense of nomads, semi-nomads, those who are עוברים traverse a region, crossing (a boundary) or wandering from one place to another, which, in a sense, is in line with the pastoral nomadic life of Abraham. In the Septuaginta לאברהם העברי is translated τῷ πατρί. Abraham is the father of a multitude of nations, many of them nomad tribes which figure as offsprings of Hagar (see Gen 16,12–14; 25,16) and Keturah (see Gen 15,6) who inhabited the Syrian-Arabian desert and southern Sinai. Some of them, like Kedar, Nebaioth and Massa, are later on called Arabs³⁶.

The tribes of Israel believed that Abraham, their ancestor, was a wandering Aramaean (Dtn 16,5) and they linked their origin with the peoples in the east (like the Edomites and the Moabites) and not with the settled population in the west (the Canaanites)³⁷. We can adopt Frankfort's assertion that »the Hebrews, whatever their ancestry and historical antecedents, were tribal nomads«³⁸. The relationship of Eber to *habiru*-*pr* is beyond the scope of the present paper. It is a question that has received a voluminous discussion³⁹. Scholars generally agree that Habiru designates a socio-economic class, usually consisting of foreigners, outsiders and not an ethnic group⁴⁰. The possible equation of Habiru with Eber only lends support to the claim that Eber is a socio-economic and socio-cultural term, and not an ethnic one. A case in point is the well known phenomenon that a series of geographical and ethnic names happened to turn at a certain period in antiquity into conventional terms, designating certain human groups according to their mode of life, social characteristics or profession, such as *Amur-*

³⁵ See notes 39, 40.

³⁶ On the Arabian tribes in the book of Genesis see F. V. Winnett, *The Arabian Genealogies in the Book of Genesis*, apud H. T. Frank — W. L. Reed (eds.), *Translation and Understanding the Bible*, 1970, 171–196; I. Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs*, 1982, 231–240.

³⁷ See also Hos 12,10 »I will again make you to dwell in tents.«

³⁸ H. and H. A. Frankfort apud H. and H. A. Frankfort et al., *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, 1946, 371–372. See also G. E. Wright, *BA* 3 (1940), 29–32. Cf. the socio-political approach of N. K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of Religion of Liberated Israel*, 1979, who argues strenuously against the conventional view that Israel was a desert nomad or a pastoral nomad prior to the »settlement«.

³⁹ O. Loretz, *Habiru-Hebräer*, 1984, *BZAW* 160, and the bibliography on 276–299. On page 243 »Die Ableitung der Wörter habiru und 'ibri von 'br »überschreiten, vorüberziehen«, dürfte die bisher am meisten bevorzugte sein«.

⁴⁰ See n. 39 and the concluding article of J. Bottéro, *Les Habiru, les Nomades et les Sédentaires*, apud J. Silva Castillo (ed.), *Nomads and Sedentary Peoples*, (XXX International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa), 1981, 89–107.

ru, Aramaeans, *Sutu*, Arabs (*Aribi*), all designating various types of nomads⁴¹. »Canaanites« came to signify merchants⁴². Similarly, *bene Eber* may have been used, *inter alia*, to refer to nomads in general, just as *Amurru*, Aramaeans, *Sutu* and Arabs. The argument that Eber refers to nomads harmonizes with the theory of Diakonoff that Shem, the father of Eber, is none other than Seth, and the latter is none other than the Suti, a general term for Western Semitic shepherd tribes⁴³.

That *bene Eber* applies to nomads, and has a connotation of wandering, implicitly emerges, if not explicitly, from the text itself. The direct continuation of verse 21 is verse 25, as far as »Eber« is concerned⁴⁴. Most of the descendants of Eber are tribes, part of them dwelling in the Syro-Arabian desert and on the fringes of Palestine. The tribe of Havilah, for example, dwelt in southern Palestine, where King Saul smote the Amalekites (I Sam 15,7)⁴⁵. Admittedly, among the sons of Joktan there is a group of South Arabian tribes, like Hazarmaveth and Sheba. Modern research in South Arabia has shown that already at the beginning of the first millennium B. C. there was some sedentary population in South Arabia, with well organized kingdoms⁴⁶. Nevertheless, for our argument, the decisive problem is, how the author of the Biblical text conceived the sons of Joktan? He probably did not have personal or direct connections with, or knowledge of, the peoples and countries in South Arabia. He had probably heard of the South Arabian kingdoms due to the international trade with Arabia⁴⁷, but would have had better knowledge of the nomads on the borders of Palestine and Northern Arabia, who are designated as sons of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah and who led a bedouin life style. He considered all the tribes in the Arabian Peninsula, North and South, as one group, since all of them appeared from South and East, and all of them were engaged in the trade of the same products, and used the same means of transportation. For him, all

⁴¹ G. Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period*, 1966, 330ff.; I. M. Diakonoff, op. cit. (above n. 8), 19–20; M. Heltzer, *The Suteans*, 1981, 86, 95–99; N. Na'aman, *The Town of Irbid and the Relations of the 'Apiru and the Shosu*, *Göttinger Miszellen* 55 (1982), 27–33. For *Amurru* and *Sutu* as conventional designations for tent-dwellers in a relatively late period see CAD s.v. *kuštāru*, 601; J. N. Postgate *Nomads and Sedentaries in the Middle Assyrian Sources*, apud Silva-Castillo (ed.) op. cit. (above n. 40), 49.

⁴² Gibson, op. cit. (above n. 39), 219.

⁴³ Diakonoff, op. cit. (above n. 8), 23.

⁴⁴ Verse 24 »is an interpolation (based on 11:12–14) intended to harmonize J. with P« Skinner, *Genesis*, 219.

⁴⁵ In Gen 25,18 Havilah is connected with the tribes of Ishmael, the son of Keturah.

⁴⁶ Eph'al, op. cit. (above n. 36), 227–228.

⁴⁷ Cf. Cassuto, *Genesis II*, 194, according to whom the information concerning the northern peoples (i.e., the sons of Japheth) reached Israel through Phoenician merchants. Winnett claims that the scribe derived information about South Arabian tribes »from source, or sources, that was not always reliable« op. cit. (above n. 36), 196.

are tribes who dwell in the desert, parallel to the generalization in Jeremiah »and all the kings of Arabia that dwell in the desert« (Jer 25,24), and to the Assyrian inscriptions which described the nomad tribes as »remote Arabs who live in the desert«⁴⁸. Moreover, the disproportionate preoccupation with Arabian tribes, despite the fact that Abraham descended from Peleg and not from Joktan⁴⁹, only hint to the character which the author applied to the sons of Shem⁵⁰. It is remarkable that the sons of Eber are described as dwelling near Mount Qedem. Qedem (»East«) is mentioned in our text *only* in connection with Shem. This is by no accident whatsoever. The land of Qedem, mentioned also in Sinuhe story⁵¹, is located in the steppe, east of Palestine (Gen 25,6). The »Sons of Qedem« are usually mentioned in connection with the stories about conflicts between the sedentary population and nomads (e.g. Jud 6,5; 7,2)⁵².

The conclusion is that Eber, son of Shem, represents, in our text, the migrating segment in the world population, as distinct from the sedentary society. In Gen 10 Eber comprises various types and phases of nomadism, such as the so-called »Mari nomadism« (or »enclosed nomadism«) and full nomads in the wilderness, a type defined as »external nomadism«⁵³.

The parallel with Jabal is most instructive. We have the same formula and conception: Jabal is the father of all the tent dwellers and pastoral nomads. *יֹשֵׁב אוֹהֶל וּמִקְנָה* definitely means a nomad and corresponds with the akkadian »*ašibūte kultari*« (tent dwellers) as a designation for the nomad and pastoral tribes, those who dwell in the desert or on the fringes of the settled land⁵⁴. Thus, Jabal represents the nomadic segment of the population, and in this case, the pastoral nomads who lead a migratory herding life⁵⁵. Their main grazing zones are areas of steppeland between cultivated lands and the desert proper, where they either settled in some kind of semi-permanent camp or moved with their animals between summer and winter pastures. By the same token, Shem is the father of all *bene Eber* which denote, as we have demonstrated, nomadic tribes.

The similarity in words, structure and principle of division between Shem and Jabal leads to the possibility of structural isomorphism of the

⁴⁸ F. Malbran-Labat, *Le Nomadisme à l'Epoque Néo-assyrienne*, apud Silva-Castillo, op. cit. (above n. 40), 64–65.

⁴⁹ Simons, op. cit. (above n. 16), 168.

⁵⁰ The possible identification of יִקְטָן with יִקְשָׁן, the son of Keturah, buttresses our argument that the Biblical author applied a nomadic mode of life to Joktan and his descendants. On this identification see Westermann, *Genesis*, 702, and his comment to 25,2–3, 484.

⁵¹ ANET, 19.

⁵² Cf. Gen 25,6 according to which the sons of Abraham, including the sons of Keturah, were sent away eastwards to אֶרֶץ קְדֵם.

⁵³ See the article of Rowton cited in n. 59.

⁵⁴ CAD s.v. *kuštāru*, 601 and references there.

⁵⁵ Skinner, *Genesis*, 118 »The whole Bedouin life is thus assigned to Jabal as its progenitor.«

original Table and Gen 4,20–22. In other words, the nuclear document, which also used the threefold division pattern, was formulated according to the stereotype of אֲבִי כָל, אֲבִי⁵⁶.

IV

The second component is Ham, who is known as «חָם אֲבִי כְנָעַן» (Gen 9,22). What section of world population did Ham represent in the original text?

Our conclusion concerning Shem, may serve as a starting point. If the division is governed by a socio-cultural principle and Shem represents the nomad tribes, then Ham represents the natural adversary of the nomads, the sedentary population living in villages, towns, cities, and organized in the framework of kingdoms. This possibility turns into probability if we take into consideration the following three points: 1) The animosity and hatred between Shem and Ham. 2) The antagonism and the traditional rivalry between nomads and the sedentary population⁵⁷. 3) The peculiar items in the list of Ham.

As for the first point, the enmity of Shem, who of course reflects the attitude of the Israelite Biblical author towards Ham, the father of Canaan, is epitomized in Gen 9,25–26: »Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren«. This curse provides the underpinning for the animosity against the Canaanites. On the other hand, the sons of Japheth are welcome in the tents of Shem⁵⁸.

There is a plethora of research regarding the second point, the contrast between nomads of various types and the sedentary population in ancient and modern times, since the problem of the interrelation between nomads and the sedentary world has been investigated both by historians and anthropologists⁵⁹. We shall not, of course, elaborate upon the variegated rela-

⁵⁶ For the suggested restoration see below, 30.

⁵⁷ »The contrast and rivalry of the two ways of life, of the desert and of the sown, goes through all Near Eastern history,« Th. Jacobsen, *JNES* 5 (1946), 147 n. 32. On »the mutual dislike between dwellers of the steppe and townspeople« see D. D. Edzard *Mesopotamian Nomads in the Third Millennium B. C.* apud Silva Castillo (ed.) op. cit. (above n. 40).

⁵⁸ Perhaps the mentioning of Japheth as the brother of Shem in v. 21 reflects the enmity of Shem towards Ham (Canaan). For another explanation, see Cassuto, *Genesis* II, 165.

⁵⁹ J. Silva Castillo (ed.) op. cit. (above n. 40); J.-R. Kupper, *Le rôle des nomades dans l'histoire de la Mésopotamie ancienne*, *JESHO* 2 (1959), 113–127; M. Rowton, *Enclosed Nomadism*, *JESHO* 17 (1974), 1–30; id., *Urban Autonomy in a Nomadic Environment*, *JNES* 32 (1973), 201–215; id., *Autonomy and Nomadism in Western Asia*, *Orientalia* NS 42 (1974), 257–258; id., *Economic and Political Factors in Ancient Mesopotamia*, apud Silva-Castillo, op. cit. (above n. 40), 25–36; S. Pastner, *Ideological Aspects of Nomad-Sedentary Contact: A Case from Southern Baluchistan*, *Anthropological Quarterly*, 44 (1971), 173–183; For the works of G. V. Childe and R. M. Adams see A. J. Jawad, *The*

tions between nomads and settlers, between tribe and state, but will limit ourselves to findings which bear directly on the issue in question. The nomad-sedentary contrast is documented in the Biblical and extrabiblical material. First and foremost is the story of Cain and Abel, known also as »Cain-Abel Motif«. This literary episode, attributed to the primeval history of civilization, is an expression of the dispute between the pastoral nomad (or shepherd) and the cultivator⁶⁰. On the other hand, the curse upon Cain »a restless wanderer shall you be on earth« (Gen 4,12) reflects the attitude of a settler towards the mode of life of the nomads. The narrative about the rape of Dinah by Shechem, the son of Hamor, and the massacre committed by the two sons of Jacob, may well serve as an example of the hostility between urban populations and pastoral nomads. Fortresses and citadels were built up because of the continuous need to defend the cities and farms against invaders from the desert⁶¹. The punishment foretold by the prophet Ezekiel for the kingdoms of Transjordan that stretched along the borders of the great desert is that בני קדם, the nomad tribes, will conquer and possess the land⁶².

The nomad-sedentary contrast is possibly reflected in the prohibition of drinking wine, since wine is typical to sedentary life⁶³. And thus we read

Advent of the Era of Township in Northern Mesopotamia, 1965; M. Harris, *Culture, People, Nations*, 1975; O. Lattimar, *Studies in Frontier History*, 1962, esp. 415–439; P. W. English, *Urbanites, Peasants and Nomads: The Middle Eastern Ecological Trilogy*, *Journal of Geography* 66 (1967), 54–59; R. Mac Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society*, 1965. W. Irons and N. Dyson-Hudson (eds.), *Perspective on Nomadism*, 1972. J. Sapin, *La géographie humaine de la Syrie-Palestine au deuxième millénaire avant J. C.*, *JESHO* 15 (1982), 1–49; L. K. Prag, *Ancient and Modern Pastoral Migration in the Levant*, *Levant* 17 (1985), 81–88.

⁶⁰ S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, 1944, 49–51. On the Cain-Abel motif as an expression of the rivalry of professions in which the protagonists are represented as a »tiller of the ground« and »a keeper of the sheep« see TH. H. Gaster, op. cit. (above n. 32), 53–55.

⁶¹ A. J. Jawad, op. cit. (above n. 59), 71–72. See e.g., the data-formula for the fourth year of Šu-Sin »Year when Šu-Sin king of Ur built the wall (or fortress) of MAR.TU (called) *Mu-ri-iq Ti-id-ni-im* (i.e., which holds back Tidnum).« Gibson, op. cit. (above n. 39), 223. On the limes of Ur against the Amorites see P. Michalowski, *History as Charter*, *JAOS* 103 (1983), 244. The city of Ashur was under »constant threat of intrusion of Nomads as raiders or settlers.« M. T. Larsen, *The Old Assyrian City-State and its Colonies*, 1976, 27.

⁶² On the desert which was »conceived of as the dwelling place of hostile powers« by the settled population see H. Halder, *The Desert in the Sumerian-Accadian and West-Semitic Religion* (Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift, 1950: 3), 1950, 11, 50, 66–70, and there also on the desert as the opposite of the cultivated earth (Pederson).

⁶³ The pastoral nomads did not practice viniculture. Drinking wine was considered as evil by the Rechabites (Jer 35,7–9). See C. U. Wolf, *IDB III*, 559–560; C. Seltman, *Wine in Ancient World*, 1957, 19, 150. The prohibition in the Qur'an of drinking wine is »directly aimed at ancient Arabian standards of behaviour« – J. Schacht *Law and Justice in The Cambridge History of Islam*, 1970, vol. 2., 542.

in Gen 9,20: »and Noah began to be a husbandman⁶⁴ and he planted a vineyard«. In Gen 43,22, we are told that the Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews. This matter concerns a social rather than a national distinction and stands in conformity with verse 46,34 according to which »all shepherds are abhorrent to Egyptians«.

The rivalry between these two modes of life form a favorite topic in the literature of the Ancient Near East. Examples: the myth which includes the dispute between Enten and Emesh, sons of Enlil, two cultural divine heroes, one typifying the farmer, the other the shepherd⁶⁵. Another myth is the so-called »The Wooing of Inanna« (known also as »Enkimtu and Dumuzi«) which deals with the merits and virtues of shepherd vis-a-vis farmer⁶⁶. Another variation of the Cain-Abel motif in Near Eastern mythology is the myth about Lahar, the cattle god, and Ashnan, the grain goddess⁶⁷. It is not fortuitous that the Cain-Abel motif is found in mythology since the characteristic feature of mythological thought is that it builds up structured sets based on *binary oppositions* (or: »structure of opposites«) typical to »the savage mind« to use the terminology of Lévi-Strauss⁶⁸. Thus, in light of the dichotomizing character of mythological literature, it is only natural to find the traditional rivalry and the dichotomy between pastoral nomads and sedentary, between settled and non-settled groups as a motif in mythological stories⁶⁹.

The famous Sumerian hymn relating to the god Amurru vividly illustrates the attitude and prejudices of the sedentary folk towards the mode of life of the nomadic Amorites who are called *lu-kur* (strangers/enemies)⁷⁰.

⁶⁴ We follow the conventional translation »husbandman« Ackermann, »contrary to the translation »The master of the earth« suggested by Cassuto, op. cit. (above n. 11), 159–160. Gen 3,17 in the light of Gen 2,5; 3,23; 4,11–12 obviously denotes to cultivating the earth. On the stylistic connection between ויחל and ויטע see Weimar, op. cit. (above n. 9), 146 n. 138.

⁶⁵ Kramer, op. cit. (above n. 60), 49–51; Th. Jacobsen, *The Cosmos as a State*, apud Frankfort op. cit. (above n. 38), 166.

⁶⁶ Kramer, op. cit. (above n. 60), 101–103; Jacobsen, op. cit. (above n. 38), 166–167.

⁶⁷ Kramer, op. cit., (above n. 60), 53–54; 72–73.

⁶⁸ C. Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage*, 1962 and there on the binary oppositions as an universal cognitive process and as a typical element in the mythological literature; id., *Myth and Meaning*, 1978, 22–23; On the binary structure of the mythical stories see also E. R. Leach, *Genesis as Myth*, apud J. Middleton (ed.) *Myth and Cosmos*, 1967, 1–13.

⁶⁹ Th. Jacobsen op. cit. (above n. 65), 165–168. It is justified to use mythological tales as evidence of the rivalry between pastoral-nomads and settlers, as well as reflecting socio-political situations and attitudes, since myth »is not merely a story told but a reality lived ... it is a living reality, believed to have once happened in primeval times and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destinies« – B. Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*, 1948, 78.

⁷⁰ Edzard, op. cit. (above n. 57), 40–41. On »Living in tents« in Sumerian records with negative overtones and referring to Amorites and Subarians, see W. W. Hallo, apud G.

By the same token, the nomads considered their mobility as an advantage superior to sedentary existence. The conflict of the Hanean nomads and the local population, together with the revolt of the Jaminites against Zimri-Lim, are expressions of the pressure of nomads (called »bédouins« by G. Dossin) on settled communities and of the tension between nomads and settlers⁷¹. In ancient Egyptian literature, one can also find reflections of the negative attitude of the »civilized« Egyptian towards nomads (»Sand farers«) and semi-nomads⁷². The origin of enmity and conflict is probably the seasonal migration of the nomads from the arid steppes into the settled regions⁷³.

Nevertheless, that is only one side of the story. The other is interaction, co-existence and even symbiosis. The Mari archive discloses interaction between nomads and settled population, between the tribe and town. This interaction, especially accelerated under imperial control, is in some places the effect of the physical environment where agricultural land and pastoral land overlap. Great cities stand alongside nomads roaming the countryside⁷⁴. The fact is that »all types of nomadism are non autarkic and cannot therefore function in isolation«⁷⁵. The nomads cannot provide all the food, and cannot manufacture all the goods which they may need or want. To obtain these supplementary products they either have to resort to the use of force or to agree with the settled community on mutual trade. The economic interdependence led to peaceful relations between the two divergent socio-economic patterns, nomad and sedentary. The city of Sippar, for example, on the periphery of the urbanized region, served as a port of trade between the sheep-nomads of the desert and the inhabitants of the urbanized stretches along the Euphrates⁷⁶. The royal officials of Zimri-Lim made

van-Driel, Zikir Šumim (F. R. Kraus, Festschrift), 1982, 107 n. 26; For the negative attitude toward the nomads as reflected in the neo-assyrian appellations for the nomad tribes, see Malbran-Labat, op. cit. (above n. 54), 64–66.

⁷¹ See especially Kupper, op. cit. (above n. 59), who stresses the tension and conflicts which existed between the sedentary population and the pastoral nomads in Upper Mesopotamia; Rowton, his articles cited above n. 59. On *nawûm* with negative connotation from the point of view of the settled population, see P. Artzi, Encyclopaedia Biblica, V, 1968, 792 (Hebrew).

⁷² S. Herrmann, Israel in Egypt, 1973, 9–10.

⁷³ Wright, op. cit. (above n. 38); Sapin, op. cit. (above n. 59), 41–47.

⁷⁴ Rowton, op. cit. (above n. 59, Orientalia), 249; V. H. Matthews, Pastoral Nomadism in the Mari Kingdom, Cambridge 1978, 26–29, 83–101.

⁷⁵ A. M. Khazanov, Nomads and the Outside World, 1983, 198; Harris, op. cit. (above n. 59), 246–247; English, op. cit. (above n. 50). See also Sapin, op. cit. (above n. 59), on the »dimorphisme économique,« agriculture and pastoral (14).

⁷⁶ A. L. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization, 1964, 116; Michalowski, op. cit. (above n. 61), 243; Cf. »Sippar û *nawêšu*« »*nawûm ša Larsa*« See A. Malamat, Aspects of Tribal Societies in Mari and Israel, apud J.-R. Kupper (ed.) La civilisation de Mari, (XV RAI) 1967, 136.

efforts to establish peace between the Hanaean nomads and the local population, between shepherd-nomads and the farmers⁷⁷. The inherent tendency towards symbiosis is reflected in literary compositions in which the disputes end in a reconciliation rather than in murder⁷⁸. The settled population merged with the invading nomads on the one hand, and the nomads themselves passed through various levels of sedentarization on the other hand. The Amurru who were described in the Sumerian texts as leading a nomadic life, formed, later on, an important part of the settled population.

The traditional rivalry between the nomads and the settled population, and the tendency toward reciprocal relations have been documented in the written material of the Ancient Near East⁷⁹. Nevertheless, the contradiction between the two modes of life was more a matter of theoretical conceptions and emotion than empirical and real. The economic, legal and administrative texts dealing with everyday happenings and activities reflect mainly the real situation of interaction and symbiosis, whereas the literary texts which deal mainly with belief, ideas, perceptions and attitudes deviate (sometimes even invert) from socio-cultural reality and reflect the conceptual approach and emotional attitude of one kind of socio-cultural group toward the other⁸⁰. Our text in Gen 10 is a literary piece of composition. It was not written just to inform and record historical reality, but to represent a special conception of the author. Consequently, it is reasonable to maintain that if the hypothesis that Shem represents the migratory segment of mankind is correct, then it seems plausible that Ham represents the rival mode of life, the sedentary population⁸¹.

Here we come to the third point, the peculiar items in the list of Ham, a point which lends strong support to the above mentioned hypothesis.

The terms unique to the list of Ham are עיר (city, town) and מַמְלָכָה (kingdom, empire). The mention of celebrated cities like Uruk, Accad, Ashur, Calah, Nineveh, each having served as a major capital at one time or another, is a prominent feature in the list of Ham, especially in light of, and in contrast to, the tents and the unfortified seasonal dwelling of *bene Eber* (or *bene Kedem*). The mention of מַמְלָכָה (kingdom) denotes well organized state-societies in contrast to tribal and stateless societies so prominent in the list of Shem. Nimrod is the name of a hero, probably a king, whose domain, according to the text, included Babylonia and Assyria⁸².

⁷⁷ Rowton op. cit. (above n. 59, Orientalia).

⁷⁸ ANET, 41. K. Prag, op. cit. (above n. 59), 85f.

⁷⁹ Rowton, op. cit. (above n. 59).

⁸⁰ R. Murphy, The Dialectic of Social Life, 1971, 107–115; Michalowski, op. cit. (above n. 61), 245–246. The royal-historical inscriptions reflect the political factors which were very important in shaping the relations between countries and nomad-tribes.

⁸¹ Ham is a designation of Egypt in some poetical passages, e.g., Ps. 78,5; 10,23; 106,22.

⁸² Speiser, Genesis, 72.

His authority extended over the whole of Mesopotamia. Nimrod is probably connected with the idea of the first empire⁸³. The very words רִאשִׁית, חָחָל (v. 8, 10) point to the probability that the nuclear document dealt with the founders and the beginnings of various aspects of human civilization⁸⁴; Uruk, Babylonia and Accad are some of the earliest cities, in which the city-culture began⁸⁵.

It is my contention that only by a socio-economic and socio-cultural criteria could a scribe combine in one setting the kingdom of Babylonia and the great cities of Mesopotamia in the north with Egypt and Cush in the south. Accad and Egypt represent the great political organizations (states and empires) of the settled population. Egypt and Mesopotamia, with its techno-economic water control represent, par excellence, the settled and politically organized branch of civilization, in contrast to the nomads and their tribal confederations. Canaan, the son of Ham, joins perfectly with Egypt and Mesopotamia under the socio-cultural criterion, at least from the Biblical scribe's viewpoint⁸⁶. The »Canaanites« are the sedentary population of Palestine, dwelling in cities »which are great and walled up to heaven« (Dtn 1,28). Most of Canaan's sons are identical to the various city-states which existed in Canaan. Canaan is »a land of wheat and barley and vines« (see also Dtn 6,10–11). The story about the spies (Num 13) is very instructive: they brought from Canaan to the desert »a branch with one cluster of grapes and they carried it between two upon the staff« (v. 23). We have already noted that viniculture is typical sedentary civilization⁸⁷. The borders of the sons of Canaan, in the Table of Nations, are designated by two great and famous cities – Sidon in the north and Gaza in the south, in contrast to Mesha and Kedem as toponyms for the delineation of the territory of Eber, the son of Shem. The conjecture that derives the name of *ham* from *km* = black, with reference to the black soil of the Nile valley in contrast to the red soil (*dšrt*) which refers to the desert around⁸⁸, only adds weight to our contention that Ham represents the settled population.

The relation between Shem and Ham is, to a considerable degree, equivalent to the relation between Abel and Cain. Cain was עֹדֵב אֲדָמָה. It is

⁸³ Th. Jacobsen, »Early Political Development in Mesopotamia« ZA 52 (1957), 91.

⁸⁴ Cf. Gen 4,26.

⁸⁵ The mentioning of the cities in Babylonia (v. 10) before the cities in Ashur reflects an historical fact. See Westermann, Genesis, 61. Verse 9 is probably an interpolation since the direct continuation of verse 8 is verse 10.

⁸⁶ According to Westermann »Das es (i.e., Kanaan) zu Ham und nicht zu Sem gerechnet wird, ist wahrscheinlich in einer sehr alten Tradition begründet.« Genesis, 682. For the list in verses 15–18a see T. Ishida, The structure of the lists of Pre-Israelite Nations, Biblica 60(1979), 485–487.

⁸⁷ See above, 24.

⁸⁸ See Skinner, Genesis, 195, on the various interpretations of the name.

written that he (or his son Enoch) built a city (Gen 4,17)⁸⁹, and he was cursed. Nimrod, a descendant of Ham built a city, and Canaan, the son of Ham was cursed (Gen 9,25)⁹⁰.

To conclude the section of Ham, we can confidently say that Ham represents, in the genuine text, the agricultural-urban population and the organized states of the Ancient Near East, in contrast with the nomadic tribes and confederations of tribes represented by Shem. Consequently, we can restore the second and the middle element of the nuclear text – **חָם אָבִי כָל – יוֹשְׁבֵי עִיר וּמְמַלְכָּה**.

V

Thus far, two out of the three sections of the Table of Nations comply with an intelligible idea. One may reasonably ask, what section of population does Japheth represent?

Let us start with the unique feature in the paragraph about Japheth. The unique term in the list of Japheth is »אִי« (»אִיִּי הַגִּוִּיִּים«). The descendants of Japheth comprises various ethnic groups that were settled at the time in Anatolia, the Aegean region and beyond the horizon of Shem and Ham⁹¹. Most of the sons of Japheth represent the maritime nations⁹² (isles of the nations/Gentiles), those who dwell on islands and along the seashores⁹³. Thus Japheth designates, in general, the seafarers, the island and seashore dwellers⁹⁴, Tarshish, for example, is not just the name of a far away place across the sea, but has the connotation of land accessible only by ship. Hence אֲנִיּוֹת הַרְשִׁישׁ.

The suggested equation of Japheth with *Ιάπετος*⁹⁵, father of Prometheus, lends support to our argument that Japheth is the epitome of the island and seashore dwellers, representing those who practise the profession of seafaring and whose communication was mainly by sea. Consequently, it seems justified⁹⁶ to reconstruct the last link in the chain of Noah's sons – **יָפֶתְ אָבִי כָל אִיִּי הַגִּוִּיִּים**, which may duly be translated as »Japheth the father of all the isles (coastlands) of the nations.«

⁸⁹ Thus Cain, according to this tradition is the progenitor of the city life. See Skinner, Genesis 115, and the instructive remark of Hallo, JCS 23 (1970), 64, »this can only imply that he became the first builder of a city, i.e., that the building of cities began with him...«

⁹⁰ On the question why the curse was pronounced on Canaan and not on Ham see discussion in Cassuto, Genesis II, 153–155.

⁹¹ Cf. Jes 11,11, 66,19 »שְׁמֵנוּ אֶת שְׁמֵי« and see Westermann, Genesis, 680.

⁹² Following the translation of Speiser, Genesis, 66.

⁹³ אִי has also the meaning of coastland, seashore.

⁹⁴ »מֵאֵלֶּה« – refers to all of the sons of Japheth, the same case as in verses 20,31–32, in contrast to Westermann, Genesis, 679.

⁹⁵ See Skinner, Genesis, 195.

⁹⁶ See the remark of A. H. Sayce, The Tenth Chapter of Genesis, JBL 44 (1925), 197.

VI

By reducing the Table of Nations to its original features, we have substantially reached the same kind of formulaic division as Gen 4 which in essence divides mankind by a tripartite paradigm and according to a socio-cultural criterion thus:

Shem: the father of all the children of »bene Eber«

Ham: the father of all the dwellers of city and kingdom

Japheth: the father of all the isles of the Gentiles/Nations

The extant text of the Table of Nations goes back to the conventional archetype preserved in Gen 4. The original nuclear record, based on the socio-cultural criterion, was vulnerable to changes and had been obscured, in the course of a long editorial process by later scribes with their interpolations and alterations. There is no way to trace the various stages of accretion and revision through which the seed-text passed until it reached the form it has in Gen 10. It is clear that changes were made in each phase. Each scribe, at a particular stage of development in the tradition, revised, rearranged, incorporated and elaborated materials in line with his ethnographic and geographical knowledge, his conceptions and aims, using whatever criterion he chose to divide the nations into three groups. At each stage, the Table of Nations was enriched or diminished with names with the consequence that many changes do not fit into the author's original intention, thus obscuring the basic pattern and hampering our correct interpretation of the text⁹⁷. In Gen 10 only part of the archaic relics have been preserved. The author of Gen 10 mentions several criteria, since he was occupied with »numerical symmetry« and arithmetic (seven, twelve, seventy)⁹⁸ rather than with a leading principle and historical reality.

It is remarkable that in the first chapter of I Chronicles, a later version of the Table in Gen 10⁹⁹, there are no vestiges of the unique features of each group. The essential genuine elements of the core, which served as a cornerstone to the reconstruction of the embryonic text, were completely rejected in the later version of Chronicles. The greater the distance in time of the scribe from the original text, the less he was aware of the original form, structure and concept of the tripartite division of mankind¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁷ E.g., verses 16–18a as Deuteronomistic elaboration, see P. Weimar, op. cit. (above n. 64), 148–149.

⁹⁸ Cassuto, Genesis II, 175, 178–179 and cf. Dtn 32,8.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, 172–174.

¹⁰⁰ Thus, the scribe who added the paragraph 8–12 (J) to the nucleus was still aware of the original aim and meaning of the genealogy of Noah. The same with the secondary paragraph 26–30 (J). On the other hand, the including of Arabian tribes in v. 7, (P) as the sons of Cush, a descendant of Ham, or including Elam in the list of Shem is a late accretion from the hand of a scribe who was not cognizant of the meaning and aim of the original text.

Despite what has been said above regarding of the impossibility to reconstruct the various stages of development of the text, I take the risk in the following chart to delineate, in very broad terms, and not more than a sketch, the main stages in the process, aiming to illuminate graphically the main idea of this article.

Stage	Criterion		Notes
I	Socio-cultural	Nuc. Text	Cf. Gen 4,20–22
II	Various Criteria	J P	Two separate streams of traditions (J, P) employed various criteria but both derived from the nuclear texts.
III	Various Criteria	Gen 10	Juxtaposition of J and P and secondary elements.
IV		I Chr 1	An abridged version of Gen 10 negating any criteria.

The Plagues of Egypt: Ancient Tradition or Literary Invention?

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There is an opinion, widely held in the literature on Exodus, that the plagues narrative reflects an ancient tradition that predates the literary sources of the Pentateuch¹. It is said that at least in its essentials the story of the plagues goes back to oral tradition. Before examining this proposition, let me set out my view on the source problem without detailed argumentation. Here I follow M. Noth who is of the opinion that we have to do with only two sources in the plagues narrative, the Yahwist (J) and the Priestly (P)². The J account consists of a narrative of seven plagues: the Nile that

¹ A recent survey of the history of criticism on the plagues narrative may be found in S. Ö. Steingrímsson, *Vom Zeichen zur Geschichte. Eine literar- und formkritische Untersuchung von Ex 6,28–11,10*, 1979.

² M. Noth, *Exodus, A Commentary*, 1962, 62–84. My own division of sources differs in only a few minor points from Noth. The principal difference is that I do not regard P as an