notion of sin and restoring to it its pristine meaning of purification is that now it is possible to see this sacrifice against its true ancient Near Eastern setting. Israel was part of a cultic continuum which abounded in purifications both of persons and buildings, especially sanctuaries. The hattat, I aver, is the key which opens the door upon this background, but this story will have to be told separately 1).

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A NOTE ON JOSH. XIII 25

In the delineation of the inheritance of the tribe of Gad (Josh. xiii 25-28) we are told that the children of Gad were allotted: קְרִי יָדֵר הָנֵלֵקַע וְעַנְשֵׂי אֹרֶם בֶּן שֵׁמַע (and we find this version too in the ancient translations). This verse poses two problems, to which no generally accepted solution has been found. How is it that the verse says:

(a) “and all the cities of Gilead”, when “half of Gilead” had been allocated to the tribe of Manasseh (Josh. xiii 31)?

(b) “half the land of the children of Ammon”, when the children of Israel had been forbidden to inherit the land of Ammon (Deut. ii 19)? Moreover, in other verses delineating the allotments of the children of Israel east of Jordan, it is specifically stated that the land of Ammon was not captured by the children of Israel and that the inheritance of Gad extended only unto (יהי) the borders of Ammon. (Num. xxi 24; Deut. ii 18-19; iii 16; xii 2; Judg. xi 15). The words “and half the land of the children of Ammon” not only fails to correspond with the above explicit statement, but even contradicts verse 10 of the same chapter (Josh. xiii) which says: “unto (יהי) the border of the children of Ammon”. This inconsistency has been noted by several interpreters 2). The Sages had interpreted this verse to refer to that region of Ammon which was first captured by Sihon the Amorite and then taken from him by the children of Israel 3).


2) See A. B. EHRLICH’S pointed remarks “I could not understand how the verse could say this, when in the Bible, God is quoted as saying: “I shall not give the land of the children of Ammon to you for inheritance””. EHRLICH, Mikrā Kt-Phasilotu Vol. II, Berlin, 1900, p. 26 (Hebrew).

Some interpreters claim that the verse refers to the territorial expansion of Gad, (cf. “Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad”, Deut. xxxiii 20) at the expense of Ammon in the period of the Kings 1). M. Notth rejects this verse entirely and is convinced that it is a gloss based on a latter view according to which the inheritance of Gad extended eastward far beyond the boundary lines marked (according to Notth) by the “Grenzfixpunkte” (border-points) Heshbon—Ramat Hamizpeh—Betonim—Mahanaim 2).

In order to bring the verse into line with chapter xiii itself, as well as with all other passages on the subject, we can only assume that the original version must have been:

The change of position of the word יֶּֽהָה (“half”) and the addition of the word יָֽעַד (“unto”) can be simply explained. The omission of יָֽעַד by the scribe may be interpreted as an haplography following on the last syllable of the preceding word יְּהָה (“Gilead”).

“Unto יָֽעַד the land of Ammon” accords with “Unto the border of the land of Ammon” in verse 10. For יָֽעַד יְּהָה (“half of Gilead”) in place of יָֽעַד יְּהָה (“half of the land of the children of Ammon”) there is further evidence:

1) “And all the cities of half of Gilead” accords with “and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof” in the delineation of the land of Gad in Deut. iii 12.

2) “half of Gilead” is required in the verse under discussion, in view of verse 31 of the same chapter which states that Manasseh was allotted “half of Gilead” (which, in turn, accords with “the rest of Gilead” in Deut. iii 13.

3) The expression “half of Gilead” does not necessarily refer to the northern half of Gilead (the ‘Ajlân), but may also refer to the southern half of Gilead (el-Belqa, Josh. xii 2).

4) The proposed version removes the problem raised by the

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3) Alternatively This reading maintains the conjunction יָֽעַד at the head of the word יָֽעַד.