THE PRIESTLY IMAGE OF THE TABERNACLE

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1. The tabernacle which is conceived as the movable shrine of the tribes of Israel before their settlement in Canaan is the central phenomenon of P. According to the priestly legend, God himself showed its form with all its paraphernalia to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exod. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8). Its erection was the first act the Israelites undertook immediately after Moses descended the mountain. So enthusiastic were the Israelites that they continued to bring their offerings of materials for the construction of the tabernacle even after Bezalel and his aides had begun their work. So large was the contribution that Moses was forced to proclaim word throughout the camp to cease bringing offerings (Exod. 36:3–6). At the same time, so fascinating is the subject for the priestly writers themselves that not only do they describe the tabernacle in two lengthy parallel sections (Exod. chaps. 25–30, 35–39) but are prompted to recapitulate the list of its appurtenances time and again (Exod. 30:26–30; 31:7–11; 35:11–19; 39:33–41; 40:2–15, 18–33). Their tendency to indulge in technicalities and stereotyped repetitions has reached its furthest limits here. There is no doubt, however, that it was intensified in this case by the importance and appeal of the subject.

After all the expoundings made on this matter through the ages, it still deserves to be rounded off in a systematic exposition, which is the purpose of the present study.

I. The Form

2. Let us first sketch as briefly as possible the form of the tabernacle, since it is indispensable for our subsequent observations. In spite of the minute and repetitious descriptions outlined in P, some architectural details are puzzling. Various matters are not stated explicitly, but are left to be taken as obvious, or we have to infer them by deductive reasoning. We are confronted with a unique combination of long-winded description with skipping of various particulars. Nevertheless, the general form of the structure emerges quite clearly.¹

¹ Exegesis of the tabernacle’s form begins with Philo, De Vita Mosis ii, 71–148; Josephus, Antiquities iii, 6–7; and the talmudic sages. An ancient collection of talmudic material on this theme is the הָּרַיָּא דָּרָאָא הָדוֹסָא (hereafter referred to as
3. The basic components of which the tabernacle is constructed are the planks, gerashîm, stated in rows on three sides — north, west and south. The gerashîm are conceived as heavy wooden beams for the transportation of which there are “draught carts” harnessed to oxen (Num. 7:8). They are set in place side by side, close together, joined

Baraythah) printed in various editions, the latest being that of A. Jellinek, שדרות תנך, III (Leipzig, 1856; second printing, Jerusalem, 1938), pp. 144-54; H. Flesch (Hamburg, 1899); and M. Ish-Shalom (Friedmann) (Vienna, 1908). An English translation of the Baraythah is to be found in J. Barclay’s volume The Talmud (London, 1878), pp. 334-58. Out of the vast literature written on the theme down the ages, in addition to the ancient and modern commentaries on the text of Exodus itself, let us draw attention to the following Hebrew treatises: Joseph Shalit Richetti, עמודות במסנה (Mantua, 1676); Inmanuel Hay Ricchi, בר הספרי (Venice, 1716, and later editions); A. Z. Deglin, פרשת שמות, 3rd printing (Vilna, 1866; Russian and German translations are extant); Moshe Qatan,straש יב (Vilna, 1908), pp. 1-12. The most important works composed in the European languages, chiefly in the nineteenth century, including those of the architects K. Schick and J. Fergusson (both whose system with relation to the form of the tent we cannot accept) are indicated in the bibliographies at the end of the articles “Tabernacle” by A. R. S. Kennedy, Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible, IV, 1902; and I. Benzinger, Encyc. Biblica, IV, 1902. Later monographs on the form of the tabernacle seem to be of no particular importance. Of those let us mention only the following: E. M. Epstein, The Construction of the Tabernacle (Chicago, 1911); J. Strong, The Tabernacle of Israel in the Desert (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1952; Lithographic reproduction of a previous printing). Both contain bibliographical surveys of the subjects. See also G. Henton Davies, art. “Tabernacle,” Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, IV, (1962), cols. 498-506. On the form of the priestly garments may be added: J. Gabriel, Untersuchungen über das alttestamentliche Hohepriestertum (Wien, 1938), pp. 25-118. Other works, though they may be more recent in date of appearance, are mostly devoid of critical approach. A few publications on specific aspects are indicated further in the footnotes. Since the technical problems involved in the form of the tabernacle are rather complicated, we shall content ourselves with referring only to the solutions that appear most plausible. — The following abbreviations will be used for Bible translations: AT — American Translation, University of Chicago Press, 1931; EVV — English Versions; KJV — King James Version, 1611; NJPS — New translation, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962; RSV — Revised Standard Version, 1952; RV — Revised Version, 1881.

Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 659-61, was the first to express the interesting view that the gerashîm need not be understood as heavy beams but as thin wooden frames. His argument was based mainly on their weight. Many scholars and commentators have been attracted to this view which found its way into the latest English translations. But the fact that the gerashîm are said to have been transported on “draught carts” is by itself sufficient to invalidate this argument. Even if we accept the view of Rabbi Judah that the gerashîm were “at the bottom the thickness of a cubit, and at the top tapering to the thickness of a finger” (Shabbath, 98b), we must still admit that they were heavy, and yet the oxen could still move them. On the other hand, if they were conceived as thin and solid boards (so U. Cassuto, קראות ובש [Jerusalem, 1942], p. 249; cf. Josephus, Antiquities iii, 6, 3) the text would certainly have called them lubôth, as in the outer altar (Exod. 27:8).
by bars suspended along the width of the walls, each one of them being inserted with the aid of two tenons, ḫaddāth, into two sockets, 'adanim. The height of the tabernacle, being identical with the length of a plank, is thus ten cubits; the length of the tabernacle is thirty cubits and its breadth ten cubits (Exod. 26:15–30; 36:20–34). On the eastern side which is the entrance to the tabernacle there are no planks.

Over these three walls are spread the lower curtains (the tabernacle curtains). Each of these measures 28 x 4 cubits and there are ten in all. They are joined lengthwise in two sets, five to each set; the two sets are joined to each other by loops and clasps. Accordingly, the area of the two sets together comprises 28 x 40 cubits (Exod. 26:1–6; 36:8–13). It is not specified how these curtains are placed on the planks. But it appears likely that each curtain is supposed to be stretched lengthwise over the breadth of the tabernacle. The coupling line of the two sets probably falls twenty cubits from the door — that is, ten cubits from the western wall — and thus comes over the partition between the outer and inner sanctums (see Exod. 26:33). The walls are accordingly for most of their area also covered by these curtains.

Above these are placed the outer curtains (the tent curtains). There are eleven of them, in two sets of six and five, the measurements of each being 30 x 4 cubits (Exod. 26:7–13; 36:14–18). It seems likely that the extremities of the curtains — both those of the tabernacle and the tent — are secured by pegs, evidently with the help of cords. This is the proper function of the tabernacle's pegs and

3 For the technical details of the way the tenons are held in the sockets, see Baraytha, chap. i; Shabbath, 98b; Rashi, on Exod. 26:17.

4 The last two dimensions are to be deduced from the text. On the southern as well as the northern sides stand twenty planks, while the width of each is a cubit and a half. Six planks stand on the western side, making up nine cubits with the addition of two planks "for corners of the tabernacle at the rear," whose width apparently is somewhat smaller (or a part of whose width is taken up by the thickness of the adjoining walls; see Rashi on Exod. 26:23). The thickness of the planks is not referred to in the text — perhaps because this measurement is included in the breadth and length of the tabernacle itself.

5 The length of the lower curtains is not sufficient to cover the whole height of the northern and southern walls, so that at least one cubit below remains uncovered (the same is true of the western wall). But the outer curtains overhang them by one cubit both on the northern and southern sides, whilst the eleventh outer curtain (four cubits wide) allows for the creation of a bend over the entrance and the covering of the whole western wall. See Exod. 26:9, 12–13; Josephus, Antiquities iii, 6,4; Philo, De Vita Mosis, ii, 85–86; Rashi on Exod. 26:5. Evidently, the join of the loops and clasps between the two sets of the outer curtains does not dovetail with the parallel join in the lower curtains, but is a little eastward of it.
cords mentioned in various places almost incidentally (Exod. 27:19; 35:18; 38:20, 31; Num. 3:26, 37; 4:26 et al.). A covering of tanned rams' skins and skins of tehashim is placed over the tent curtains (Exod. 26:14; 36:19).

The inside of the tabernacle is divided into two: ten cubits of its length from the western wall constitute the inner sanctum, the holy of holies; the twenty cubits from there to the door are the outer sanctum, the holy place. The two sections are separated by the parokheth-veil which hangs by hooks on four pillars (Exod. 26:31–33; 36:35–36). In the holy of holies which is shaped like a cube (length, breadth and height all ten cubits) are placed the ark (Exod. 25:10–16; 37:1–5) and the ark-cover, kapporeth (Exod. 25:17–22; 37:6–9). The ark is shaped like a chest opening at the top and the kapporeth exactly fits over it as a covering. The ark and the kapporeth are conceived as fundamentally two distinct objects, although they are joined together. At the end of the kapporeth two cherubim are made: their wings outspread and their faces inclining downward, as if not daring to look at what is above them. Above their wings is the place where God meets and speaks with Moses.

Three articles of furniture stand in the outer sanctum in front of the parokheth-veil. By the northern wall (Exod. 40:22) stands the table (25:23–30; 37:10–16) and opposite it, by the southern wall (40:24) — the lampstand (25:31–40; 37:17–24). The altar of incense (30:1–10; 37:35–38) is located between these two, opposite the ark. Just as the parokheth-veil shuts off the inner sanctum, so there is an outer veil hung across the entrance into the tabernacle, “a screen for the entrance of the tent,” which shuts off the outer sanctum. The pillars of the latter are five in number (26:36–37; 36:37–38).

4. The enclosure of the tabernacle is marked by hangings stretched over pillars, 'amudim (Exod. 27:9–19; 38:9–20). Unlike the planks, each one of which is inserted into two sockets, the pillars, whether of the tabernacle veils or of the enclosure, are inserted each into one socket. This indicates that the planks are regarded as heavier and

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7 Their distinctness from each other may be demonstrated by various observations. Cf. my remarks in IEJ 9 (1959), pp. 32–34.
8 The measurements of the lampstand are not mentioned in the text. The Rabbis afforded it with exact specifications, fixing its overall height at eighteen handbreadths, which is about three cubits. See Menāloth, 28b; Rashi on Exod. 25:35; Maimonides, הלכות בית המקדש, iii, 10. See also Baraytha, chap. x.
Fig. 1: The plan of the tabernacle and the enclosure
Fig. 2: An alternative arrangement of the enclosure pillars (cf. note 11)
larger than the pillars. The height of the pillars of the enclosure is five cubits\(^9\) and they stand five cubits apart. Since twenty pillars are said to be posted on each side of the enclosure, north and south, its length measures one hundred cubits. Its width is fifty cubits, ten pillars being posted on its western side. On the eastern side the hangings are stretched on both flanks of the gate, fifteen cubits (and three pillars) to each flank. Over the gate itself hangs a screen of twenty cubits on four pillars.\(^{11}\) It appears that like the curtains of the tabernacle and tent, the hangings of the enclosure are also fastened by cords to pegs. The pegs and cords of the enclosure like those of the tabernacle are mentioned in a number of places (Exod. 27:19; 35:18; 38:20, 31; 39:40\(^{12}\) et al.; cf. sect. 3). On the other hand, the screen

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\(^9\) Since the pillars are apparently conceived as all of the same height, this should be the height of the pillars inside the tabernacle as well. Consequently the parokheih and the outer veils of the tabernacle do not reach the height of its roof. But that space above would be covered from the outside over the outer veil by the extra curtain remaining from the outer curtains of the tent (Exod. 26:9). Cf. above, note 5.

\(^{11}\) The number of pillars on each side of the enclosure creates a minor geometrical puzzle. If we assume, as indeed emerges from the text, that the space between each pillar is five cubits, and moreover, that the pillars start from the corners, the number of pillars traversing the length of the enclosure will be found to be 21 (or 19, without reckoning the corner pillars) and that traversing its width — 11 (or 9). See fig. 2. On the other hand, if we say that there should be exactly 20 pillars across the length of the enclosure and exactly 10 to the width, every corner pillar being counted twice (the total number of pillars on all four sides thus being 56), we shall find that the space between each pillar is not five cubits. Furthermore, the distances between the pillars of the enclosure lengthwise will be less than those across its width (100:19 as against 50:9). This point has puzzled many commentators. The solution would lie, in our opinion, in the system suggested in the Baraytha, chap. v. It explains that the pillars stand in the middle of each imaginary space of five cubits (100:20), whilst there are no pillars at all in the corners. This emerges from the Baraytha’s statement that the hanging was rolled on the pillar, like the sail of a ship': אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מラ פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מラ פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מラ פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מラ פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מラ פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מラ פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישה אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מラ פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אומצא חטלן ישא אומצא חטלן מ라 פ’� אomtxt]

\(^{12}\) The word שער, “its cords,” in this verse (though the pronominal suffix is masculine) refers to נחל, “the enclosure” (mostly a feminine noun) and not to תקר, “the screen” (a masculine noun), the change in gender of the same noun in the same verse being not unusual. Cf., e.g., Exod. 35:17 and Ibn-Ezra ad loc.
of the enclosure, like the parokheth-veil and the outer veil of the tabernacle, certainly hangs loosely and whoever enters lifts up its extremities.

It is not stated in what place inside the enclosure the tabernacle is located. But it may be said that the pillars of the outer veil of the tabernacle are presumed to stand on a line dissecting the court width-wise, the tabernacle continuing from there into the fifty cubits of the western section. There remain, therefore, from the western wall of the tabernacle to the west side of the court twenty cubits. It would appear that the same distance is maintained between the northern and southern sides of the enclosure and the corresponding walls of the tabernacle: fifty cubits the width of the enclosure minus ten, the width of the tabernacle, leaving forty; the latter is divided into two equal parts — twenty cubits on each side of the tabernacle.\(^\text{13}\)

In the fifty cubit square section in front of the tabernacle stands the outer altar (Exod. 27:1–8; 38:1–8).\(^\text{14}\) Between this and the tabernacle, we find the laver, filled with water for the priests to wash their hands and feet (30:17–21; 38:8).

5. What is common to most of the articles of furniture listed so far is that they have rings in which poles, baddîm, are inserted for the purpose of carrying them shoulder-wise. The lampstand is carried by means of a "carrying frame," môt (Num. 4:12). The kapporeth is not carried separately but always coupled with the ark. In the masoretic text it is not specified how the laver is to be carried, but from its shape ("hammered work" like the lampstand, cf. below, sect. 8) a môt would be indicated. This is explicitly stated in the LXX and Samaritan Versions of Num. 4:14.

Among the movable articles of furniture the ark is distinguished by the fact that its poles always remain in the rings, "they shall not be removed from it" (Exod. 25:15), even during the stage of encamp-

\(^{13}\) Cf. Philo, De Vita Mosis ii, 91–92; 'Eruvin, 23b; Baraytha, v; Rashi and Rashbam on Exod. 27:11, 18. Some continue on this note, and assume that the site of the outer altar would emerge exactly in the center of the eastern square, with the kapporeth and ark opposite in the center of the western square. See H. Holzinger, Exodus (Tübingen, 1900), p. 135. The Baraytha (ibid.) maintains, on the other hand, that "from the tabernacle to the altar there were ten cubits" only.

\(^{14}\) The altar of incense, the fire on which is small and not constant, has a "roof" (see Exod. 30:3 and the remarks of Rashi and Obadiah Sforno), whereas no "roof" is mentioned in the case of the outer altar. Thus it would basically consist of four walls filled with earth and gravel on which the fire is kindled. Indeed, it is called תַּלָּה יְתו, "hollow with boards" (Exod. 27:8), i.e., a framework of four sides without a roof or bottom.
ment. On the other hand, the poles of the table and the altars are placed in them only during transportation, and the same applies to the carrying frame of the lampstand (Num. 4:8, 10, 11, 14).

6. In addition to the appurtenances hitherto enumerated, the text mentions kellim, i.e., minor utensils attached to the major pieces of furniture (they are termed as הרש ילב, “utensils of officiation” in Num. 4:12; II Chron. 24:14; cf. Num. 3:31). So we find that a frequent allusion is made to “the table and its utensils,” “the lampstand and its utensils” and the like. The utensils of the table are bowls, ladles, jugs and jars (Exod. 31:8; 35:13; 37:16; 39:36). The utensils of the lampstand are tongs and also maḥlōth, lamps and the rest of the oil utensils (25:38–39; 37:23–24 et al.; Num 4:9–10). The utensils of the outer altar are: pails, scrapers, basins, forks, and again maḥlōth (Exod. 27:3; 38:3; 40:10 et al.; Num. 4:14). The utensils of the altar of incense are not specified by name. It is interesting to note that during the stage of journeying they are put on a special carrying frame (Num. 4:12), unlike the utensils pertaining to the table, lampstand and outer altar, which are packed with them. No utensils are attached to the ark and the kapporeth since they require none. All the utensils of service are sometimes lumped together under the phrase על כל כלי, “the utensils of holiness” (Num. 3:31; 4:15) since they are considered as holy as the major articles of furniture themselves.

We find that the text makes mention of still other kellim of the

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15 So it was in Solomon’s Temple too (I Kings 8:8). About the correspondence between the latter and the tabernacle, cf. my remarks in JBL 81 (1962), p. 15.

16 The words ירי ילב, “they shall put in its poles,” with reference to the ark (ibid. v. 6) apparently crept in here under the influence of subsequent verses, in which they recur verbatim. Cf. commentaries.

17 KJV, AT: snuffdishes; RSV: trays; NJPS: fire pans.

18 EVV mostly: fire pans.

19 From the context it is clear that the utensils of the altar of incense are meant here (as Rashi explains), though it is not actually specified to which appurtenance they belong. This mode of blurring the exact identity of a subject under an indefinite wording and leaving it to be understood by the reader is a common characteristic of P’s style. Frequently we are, however, able to pinpoint the character of the subject by means of an analogy or an examination of the context (cf., for instance, Lev. 4:2; 5:17; Num. 5:6; 15:23). The roof of the altar of incense, one cubit square, is apparently too tiny for its utensils to be placed thereon. In Exod. 30:27–28, on the other hand, the utensils of the altar of incense are not mentioned at all, though utensils of the table, lampstand and outer altar are—perhaps because in comparison with the latter the former are fewer in number. Cf. Ibn-Ezra’s commentary ad loc.
tabernacle and enclosure (Exod. 27:19; 31:7; 39:40; Num. 3:36; 4:26, 32) which are related only to workmanship. These include the hooks, clasps, pegs and perhaps the cords as well.

7. Three categories of appurtenances are thus integrated in the structure of the tabernacle: furniture (including all that is inside the tabernacle and in the enclosure); fabrics (including all the curtains, the veils, the hangings with the screen of the court); beams (including the planks, the pillars of the tabernacle and of the enclosure). During journeying the Kohathites carry the furniture (Num. 4:1–20), the Gershonites the fabrics (ibid. vv. 21–28), the Merarites the beams (ibid. vv. 29–33). At the same time, the furniture is treated with greater deference than the other categories. It is transported from place to place as it is, whereas the fabrics and beams are dismantled and folded during journeying. The furniture is carried by means of poles on the shoulder, whereas the fabrics and beams are loaded onto "draught carts" (Num. 7:7–8). The furniture is covered during journeying with cloths of blue and purple, and on top of these further coverings of tahash skins are placed, but no cloths nor coverings are mentioned in connection with the fabrics and beams. In the case of the furniture "pure gold" is mentioned, whereas just "gold" without any additional epithet is referred to in the context of the tabernacle's planks and pillars (see below, sect. 10). The furniture is indeed the essential constituent in the cult and cultic sanctity, whereas all the other objects serve merely as protective and separating accessories.

However, an order of importance and clear and meticulous gradation of holiness may be easily discerned even within every one of the three categories of appurtenances. There are many facets to this scale. Further, we shall examine how far it is reflected in the very technical elaboration of the various vessels and the very material out of which they are constructed.

II. The Material Gradation

8. First in importance amongst the furniture are the kapporeth and the ark on which it rests. According to the peculiar priestly conception that does not envisage any possibility of locating the ark outside the tabernacle, these two articles are not seen by the priests the whole of the year, actually not even by the high priest (cf. sect. 21). The poles are not removed from the ark even when it is placed in position inside (sect. 5). Only the ark and the kapporeth are covered during journeyings, first of all with the parokheth-veil itself (Num.
4:5). The ark is also differentiated from the other articles of furniture in that a cloth of "pure blue," כָלַל חַדְלֵל, is placed over it during journeyings (ibid. v. 6), whereas in the case of the other vessels the epithet "pure" is lacking from the cloth of blue.20

After these two we descend to the furniture of the outer sanctum, all of which pieces share the same degree of sanctity.21 Most of them are made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. Only the kapporeth and the lampstand, apparently as well as the various minor utensils, are made of single pieces of gold, by hammered-out workmanship, מַעַשֶּׁה. But this difference is dictated by mere technical considerations. The ancients were experienced in putting a metal overlay only on surfaces that were easily beaten out. In order to achieve delicate carvings and embellishments, such as those of the lampstand and cherubim, they were forced to take the metal itself and mould it to the shape required.22 Evidently the value of an article was determined mainly by its outer appearance. From this point of view it was not particularly material if it was hammered work or overlay.

Unlike the inner furniture, the articles in the court are of copper, that is, overlaid with copper (the outer altar), or constructed of hammered-out copper pieces (apparently the laver and its stand, the utensils of the outer altar and some other items). During journeyings a cloth of purple, which is considered slightly coarser and cheaper than blue (cf. sect. 9) is spread over the copper altar (Num. 4:13).

The laver and its stand are said to be prepared not from the copper of the offering brought for the erection of the tabernacle, but from the mirrors of the women "who served, ֹצִּיוֹת, at the entrance

20 The clothing of the ark is different in yet another way, in that the pure-blue wool comes on top, on the skin of tāhāsh, whilst in the other furniture, the covering of tāhāsh skin goes on top of the blue cloth. This detail has been noted already, e.g., by F. Delitzsch, in his introduction to S. I. Curtiss' The Levitical Priests (Edinburgh-Leipzig, 1877), p. xvi. We could, however, assume, as does Ibn-Ezra in his comment on Num. 4:6, that the wording of the verse is not precise and it can be explained in the same way as with the other vessels.

21 The table is differentiated here in that during journeyings it is covered by two cloths, one of blue and the other of crimson with its utensils placed between these two (Num. 4:7–8), whereas the other articles of furniture are covered by a cloth of blue only. But this difference seems to spring from a practical necessity only, since the utensils of the table are greater in number than those of the lampstand and altar of incense.

22 The cherubim in Solomon's Temple were not made of hammered work but only with overlay of gold (1 Kings 6:23–29). However, since they were enormous in size, their overlaying with gold was much easier. The lampstands were certainly even there made of hammered work.
of the tent of meetings” (Exod. 38:8). Indeed, these two are considered as the least important vessels, since they are not meant for ritual purposes. The washing done by the priests in them is regarded only as a preliminary to an act of cult, not as an actual part of the cultic ceremonial itself.

9. In order to clarify the gradation of importance between the various fabrics, it must be borne in mind that, on the one hand, the text distinguishes between three techniques of weaving in descending order: *hosheh* workmanship (Exod. 26:1 et al.), *rogem* workmanship (*ibid.*, v. 36 et al.) and *oreg* workmanship (39:22 et al.). On the other hand, three dyed wools are mentioned as ingredients in the work of weaving: blue, purple and crimson. There should be no doubt that the text lists these varieties in their order of importance. Blue is accordingly regarded as the most expensive, purple slightly less, crimson less still. In addition, a reference is made to goats’ hair (25:4 et al.) which is undyed, possessing its natural color only. As against the four kinds of wool, the text mentions the *shesh*, which is not wool but linen, apparently of fine quality.

Now the workmanships of *hosheh* and *rogem* are always mentioned only in connection with a mixture of all kinds of dyed wool with the linen. It serves as a deliberate feature of those appurtenances, since according to the conception embodied in the Bible any heterogenous mixture is taken as a hallmark of holiness. It is precisely for this reason that such a mixture, termed in the Bible as *kil’ayim*, was forbidden in all its possible manifestations in everyday life (Lev. 19:19; Deut. 22:9, 11). At the same time, it was assumed as a matter of course within the closed circle of priests. From the sacral-cultic point of view, the fabrics made of *kil’ayim*-mixture are thus superior to those made of one kind. It is difficult to determine the difference between *hosheh*
and *roqem* works. In any case, the former is more elaborate than and superior to the latter. In the context of *hoshev* workmanship cherubim usually occur. It seems likely, therefore, that this workmanship is mainly distinguished for containing figures, whereas *roqem* workmanship, though it also involves a mixture of colors and varieties, contains no figures.\(^{26}\) On the other hand, *'oreg* workmanship is only applied to a fabric made of one kind of material, whether dyed wool or linen. Accordingly, the ephod’s robe is of *'oreg* workmanship and woven from blue wool only (Exod. 28:31–32; 39:22). The priestly tunics are of *'oreg* workmanship and made of linen only (39:27). The *'oreg* work thus contains neither a multiplicity of colors nor figures.

Pre-eminent among the fabrics is, then, the *parokheth*-veil. This is made of a wool-linen mixture according to the *hoshev* workmanship, containing figures of cherubim (Exod. 26:31; 36:35). During journeys it serves as a covering for the *kapporeth* and the ark (Num. 4:5) and thus it is the only one of the fabrics carried by the Kohathites. In cultic ceremonies this veil sometimes serves as a kind of projection and “shadow” of the *kapporeth* behind it (Lev. 4:6, 17).

Afterwards come the tabernacle curtains. At first sight it would seem that they are of the same mixture as the *parokheth*-veil woven according to the same *hoshev* workmanship with figures of cherubim.

\(^{26}\) The talmudic sages depicted *hoshev* workmanship as a combination of threads interwoven in such a way that different figures emerge on the two sides of the fabric, whereas in *roqem* workmanship, which is taken as needlework, only one figure emerges on one side, or one and the same on both sides of the fabric. Cf. Baraytha, chap. iv; Yoma, 72b; J. T. Sheqalim, viii, 2 *et al.*; and Rashi on Exod. 26:1, 36. This conception has been accepted in essentials by English scholars and is mirrored in EJV. But we find the approach of German scholars in this case more plausible. They understand *roqem* workmanship, mostly, not as needlework but as a multicolored weave, a *Buntweberei*, in contrast to *hoshev* workmanship, which is a *Bildweberei*, i.e., a weave which represents figures or designs. Cf. A. R. S. Kennedy, art. “Weaving,” *Encyc. Biblica*, IV (1902), col. 5289; and the commentaries on Exodus. Indeed, from biblical allusions outside of P we can learn only this, that the *riqmah* fabric was multicolored (Judg. 5:30; cf. Ezek. 17:3) or that at least it was displayed along side of blue or purple or linen (*ibid.* 16:13; 27:7, 16, 24) — but no proof can be adduced from the evidence in any part of the Bible that this fabric included figures or designs. The meanings attached to this root in cognate languages offer no decisive evidence. Needlework was apparently forbidden according to P in the manufacture of the tabernacle fabrics for the same reason underlying the avoidance of any tear in Aaron’s robe (Exod. 28:32; cf. Josephus, *Antiquités*, iii, 6, 4), that is, out of considerations of respect. Quite a detailed discussion of the difference between *hoshev* and *roqem* workmanships can already be found in K. Ch. W. F. Bähr, *Symbolik des mosaischen Cultus*, I (Heidelberg, 1837), pp. 266–69. He decided in favor of the rabbinic explanation, which in its turn also underlies the LXX and was accepted by the early Christian exegetes.
(Exod. 26:1; 36:8). Nevertheless, neither their composition nor outward appearance are actually identical with that of the parokheth. For it may be noted that, while in the ingredients of the parokheth, blue yarn is mentioned first and linen at the end, in these curtains, conversely, the linen is mentioned first and the three kinds of wool only afterwards. Evidently this order of words which recurs punctiliously in the two parallel descriptions alludes to the method by which this wool-linen mixture is to be constituted, i.e., in what proportions the different materials are to be woven together. The parokheth is to be made up, in the main, of the varieties of wool with the linen added to its mixture only at the end. The reverse order is to be taken in the lower curtains. It may be said that just as the parokheth-veil, the most important of the fabrics, corresponds to the articles of furniture in the inner sanctum, so the tabernacle curtains may be taken as corresponding, in the scale of gradations, to the outer sanctum's furniture. They are, in essence, the fabrics associated with the sphere of this sanctum, though a part of them is spread over the holy of holies.

Another step down is formed by the outer veil of the tabernacle and the court's screen (Exod. 26:36; 27:16; 36:37; 38:18). These too are a mixed weave, the first ingredient mentioned this time being the blue wool, not the linen. However, their weave is according to the rogem workmanship with no figures of cherubim.

Next are the tent curtains which are made of undyed goats' hair only (26:7; 36:14). The text does not specify what materials their loops are made of, and it seems likely that not the dyes are meant, while in the case of the lower curtains, the loops are of blue wool (26:4; 36:11). The clasps of the tent's curtains are not gold, as in the lower curtains (26:6; 36:13), but copper (26:11; 36:18). Similarly the hangings of the court are not made of mixed stuff, but of linen only (27:9; 38:9). A covering of tanned rams' skins and skins of tehashím is placed on the upper curtains (26:14; 36:19). It cannot be

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27 See also below, sects. 13, 15 in connection with the ephod and Aaron's sash.

28 The rams' skins have to be tanned, whilst the skins of tehashím have, evidently, their natural color. What the tabash is, is difficult to determine. For etymological parallels see dictionaries; also F. M. Cross, Jr., "The Tabernacle," BA 10 (1947), p. 62, note 22. The late zoologist, I. Aharoni, in his article התש השים, Tarbiz 8 (1937), pp. 319–30, endeavored to identify it with Monodon monoceros, a one-horned animal of the Cetacea family, its habitat being between the 70th and 80th northern latitudes in the Red Sea. As against this, N. H. Tur-Sinai, יֲשֵׁי התש השים, Erets Israel, IV (1956) (=I. Ben Zvi Volume), pp. 215–216, tries to interpret התש as an archaic form of וה, he-goat, on the assumption that the enunciation of the guttural כ was slurred into a y sound.
ascertained which of these three is relatively the most inferior in worth: goats' hair, shesh-linen or skins of rams and tešhashim.39

10. At the top among the beams are the pillars of the parokheth-veil (Exod. 26:32; 36:36), and the tabernacle's planks (26:15–29; 36:20–34). These are overlaid with gold, together with the bars joining the planks. The hooks of the parokheth’s pillars and the rings of the bars, on the other hand, are made of solid pieces of gold, like hammered-out work (“hooks of gold,” “make their rings of gold,” no mention being made of overlay as in the other accessories). Again, it is only a technical necessity that forced the hooks and rings to be made of single pieces (cf. sect. 8). The sockets of both these pillars and the planks are cast of silver. Next come the pillars of the outer veil. These too are overlaid with gold, their hooks being likewise made of gold, but their sockets are cast of copper (Exod. 26:37; 36:38).

It should be pointed out that the text sometimes refers to הابة טהור, “pure gold” and at others, just to הבוהז, “gold” without the qualification, but the former phrase is strictly applied to the inner furniture alone (see Exod. 25:11, 17, 24, 31, 36, 38–39; 30:3; also in the parallel description in chap. 37). The phrase “pure gold” occurs in all these contexts, as a rule, at the beginning of the description of the particular piece of furniture. Presumably the priestly writer thereby indicates that all the gold used in that object is pure, thus precluding the necessity of repeating the epithet “pure” each time gold is referred to again. Note also the attributes המנורה והשלהן, “the pure lampstand” (31:8; 39:37; Lev. 24:4) and השלחן והזחור, “the pure table” (ibid. v. 6). In contrast to this, the phrase “pure gold” does not occur at all in connection with the tabernacle’s planks and pillars. In this respect they are regarded as slightly inferior to the inner articles of furniture.39

39 Each one of them serves a different purpose. Ezekiel mentions the shesh and taḥash both as examples of expensive products in relation to what common people were used to (Ezek. 16:10). From him, we infer that the first was used for wrapping up a headdress (in this meaning the verb כשָר is used there), while with the second it was “shod.” Similarly in the tabernacle the linen serves for hangings (with the priests for clothes), their wearing qualities being comparatively light; the skins, on the other hand, being more hardwearing, are placed on the roof, thus acting as a covering to the part most exposed to the elements.

36 Similarly, the epithet “pure,” טהור is employed with respect to the making of the incense of spices (Exod. 30:35; 37:29). It can likewise be seen how meticulous the text is in applying the epithet “pure,” טהור, with respect to the oil for lighting (Exod. 27:20; Lev. 24:2), the frankincense mixed in the incense of spices (Exod. 30:34) and the showbread (Lev. 24:7), the use of all of which is inside the taber-
We are not told what kind of wood the pillars of the enclosure are made of (Exod. 27:10–18; 38:9–19), but no other kind of timber than acacia wood is included in the offering (25:5; 35:24). We are not informed whether they are overlaid, but it would appear that they are not. Only their hooks and bands are made of silver, their sockets, however, being of copper like those of the pillars of the outer veil.

11. The basic premise of the above-mentioned technical and material gradations is that the more important the object, the more expensive and magnificent it has to be. Such a rule is ingrained in many cultures remote from each other—the higher an item is on the scale of sanctity, the greater the effect lavished by man on its embellishment. At the same time, two further principles are epitomised in those gradations.

The first is that of the eastern axis. All the entrances to the tabernacle face east. Moreover, the line traversing the inner sanctum eastward is superior to all the rest of the corners of the compass. The inner curtains are somewhat similar to the parokheth-veil. Nevertheless, the latter is superior to them, as we have seen, both in quality and in rank of holiness. The outer veil of the tabernacle ("the screen of the tent") made of a wool-linen mixture, is more elaborate and important than "the tent curtains." Similarly, the screen of the enclosure, made of that mixture, is more elaborate and important than the enclosure’s hangings. It should be emphasized that this does not imply the whole eastern side, but only that axis which enters from the east into the inner sanctum, i.e., only the screens of the entrances which face the ark and cherubim. Evidently an antiquated symbolism is embedded in this principle. It seems to hark back, like the concept of the sacredness of wool-linen mixture, to pre-biblical patterns, which in biblical times had already become a mere practice, kept only out of adherence to convention.

The second principle is that of the concentric circles. In the focal

nacle. No such mentioning is made in connection with materials used in the enclosure. Cf. in this respect my remark in VT 10 (1960), p. 123. Note further the stipulation for "complete blue" in the ark's cloth (sect. 8) as well as in the ephod's robe (sect. 14), and the application of "pure gold" to the over-garments of the high priest (sect. 14).

31 The plan of the Temple at Jerusalem was of course based on this same principle. Some parallel material from Egypt and Babylon is cited by F. I. Hollis, "The Sun-cult and the Temple at Jerusalem," Myth and Ritual, ed. S. H. Hooke (London, 1933), pp. 87–110, though the historical explanation given by him to the facts does not seem to be proper.
point we find the *kapporeth* with its cherubim, the holiness and value of an object progressively diminishing with its distance therefrom. The pillars of the enclosure are less elaborate than the tabernacle planks and pillars. Those of the outer veil are less elaborate than those of the *parokheth*-veil. Both the hangings of the enclosure and the outer curtains are less elaborate than the lower curtains of the tabernacle. The enclosure’s screen and the tabernacle’s outer veil are less elaborate than the *parokheth*-veil. And it goes without saying that the outer furniture is less elaborate than that inside.

Two, or rather three, concentric circles may be easily discerned: the inside of the tabernacle that divides into two, on the one hand, and the enclosure, on the other. The inside is made of gold, overlaid or solid; if a fabric is involved, it is a wool-linen mixture weave, according to the elaborate *hoshev* workmanship, adorned with figures of cherubim. The outside is made, for the most part, of copper, overlaid or solid; if a fabric is involved, it is woven of one kind of material (undyed wool or linen), or indeed of wool-linen mixture, but according to the simple *rogem* workmanship without any figures of cherubim. These two circles are not merely a matter of externals. They demarcate two gradated spheres, each of which contains its own distinct set of ritual acts and symbols.

III. The Priestly Vestments

12. To the tabernacle with its three categories of appurtenances, a detailed description of the special priestly vestments is added (Exod. chap. 28; 39:1–31). In the final resort, these are conceived as a fourth category of tabernacle appurtenances, with this difference, that they do not need to be carried by any of the Levitical clans. Their mode of preparation is similar to that of the fabrics except that in some of them, gold and precious stones are added to the wool-linen mixture. In all, eight garments are listed, four of which serve the high priest alone, the other four both him and the ordinary priests. The

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32 The sockets of the tabernacle’s planks that are of silver are evidently sunk in the ground.

33 The tabernacle’s pegs are made of copper (see sect. 3 and the references there) just like the pegs of the enclosure (sect. 4). However, according to their function and location they belong to the enclosure, though the tabernacle’s lower curtains are bound to some of them from the outside by means of the cords.

34 The inner set of ritual acts was the subject of my study in *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, VIII (Jerusalem, 1961), pp. 272–301.

35 The fact that the priestly vestments are eight in number has been noted already by the talmudic sages (Mishnah Yoma vii, 5). Shoes are not included among
ritual function for which each garment is designed will not be dealt with here. We shall limit ourselves to the technical-material aspect, in which two grades can already be detected, and note how they coalesce with the technical and material gradation of the tabernacle as a whole.

13. The most distinctive of the high priest’s exclusive garments is the ephod (Exod. 28:6–12; 39:2–7). Despite the detailed description given in the text, its actual form is still obscure in many essentials. It may be conjectured, however, that it is a sort of apron encircling the body from the loins downward. The apron is kept in position on the body by means of the תָּחָן, “shoulder-pieces” and also by the fact that it is girdled to the loins on its upper part, that part called the “ָּשֵּׁה of the ephod” (see Exod. 29:5; Lev. 8:7). It may be possible to fasten and untie this apron at the back of the wearer, since the text alludes to its mahbereth37 (Exod. 28:27; 39:20). This mahbereth, which appears from the context to be at the back of the wearer,38 should be regarded as something akin to the mahbereth (also hovereth) mentioned in the lower and outer curtains of the tabernacle (26:4–5, 10; 36:11–12, 17), that is, two ends of parallel curtains — in this case, of one rounded piece of cloth — that can be joined or knit to each other.39 If that is the case, we may assume that when the priest wishes to remove the apron from his waist, he does not need to lift it over his head or let it down under his feet, but can untie the “joining” at his back and take off the ephod from his front. The rounded shape of this garment is apparently preserved even when the priest takes it off, for it is quite heavy, as will be seen immediately.

The ephod is made of the sacred mixture — all kinds of wool with linen, hoshev workmanship, and from this aspect it seems to be similar to the parokheth-veil or the lower curtains. Nevertheless, it differs in some important details from the latter. First, no figures of cherubim

them, which serves to indicate that the priests officiated barefoot. Actually it was necessitated by the very staying in a holy place. Cf. Exod. 2:5; Josh. 5:16. See also the Rabbis’ remark in אַבּוֹר תַּשָּׁב, end of parashah 2.

37 KJV: coupling; RSV: joining; NJPS: seam.
38 לְעֹפָן (ibid.) would be “opposite to (rather than close to, or at) the joining.”
39 Note that in reference to the fastening of the ephod (not just to the shoulder pieces!) the text uses the verb רָבָג, “and it (i.e., the ephod) will be joined” (Exod. 28:7), “and it was joined” (39:4), which is cognate to חֲבֹרָה. This can serve as a further indication that the fastening is supposed to be made along that “seam.”
are mentioned, though it is made according to the hoshevet workmanship. Presumably there are really no figures of cherubim, but only designs of a general nature adorned thereon.\textsuperscript{40} Second, in the ephod gold is woven, in addition to the threads of wool and linen. What is more, gold becomes the predominant element, outstripping in quantity all the other elements woven into this fabric. This is indicated, above all, by the fact that in the list of materials used in the ephod, gold is mentioned first and only afterwards blue, purple, crimson stuff and linen. The punctilious word order betokens a sliding scale of preference in materials, just as in the case of the parokkhet-veil and lower curtains (cf. sect. 9). Furthermore, when the text wishes to explain how the gold was combined with the threads of wool and linen, it notes that gold sheets were “beaten out and cut into cords to work into the blue and into the purple and into the crimson stuff and into the fine twined linen” (Exod. 39:3). The repetition of the preposition “into,” \begin{vquote}אשונ,\end{vquote} seems to indicate that the gold cords are not assumed to be worked into the ready-made fabric, but are twisted at the very beginning with every individual thread of wool or linen, the ephod thus being prepared from these partly golden threads. Therefore, neither hammered-out work nor gold overlay is involved here, nor even golden embroidery. And yet the gold becomes the main element in this garment, producing its dominant color and constituting the principal part of its weight.\textsuperscript{42} It can thus be regarded

\textsuperscript{40} Perhaps these designs are not spread on the ephod as a whole but are confined to its upper part girdled round the thighs, thus accounting for the name of that part — hoshevet, cugate with the workmanship of hoshevet.

\textsuperscript{41} Not reflected in the AT, NJPS Versions.

\textsuperscript{42} The talmudic sages concluded that every thread in the ephod was indeed twisted with gold, but they further assumed (a point which has no basis in the text itself) that every single thread was twined of wool-linen mixture. In a midrashic strain they even inferred that every thread of single material was multiplied by six: \begin{vquote}אשונ ונקרא חמש פעמים,\end{vquote} In this way they propounded a very complicated method by which the ephod was prepared: one line of gold to six lines of blue wool, one line of gold to six lines of purple wool and the same with the crimson wool and linen — and all these four intertwined again as one thread. In all, each thread thus constitutes a fusion of 28 lines out of which 4 are gold, i. e., a seventh of the whole weave. Cf. Yoma, 71b–72a; Baraytha, chap. iv; Maimonides, \begin{vquote}הלכות צל מתקד,\end{vquote} iv, 5. According to our explanation the wool-linen mixture was not realized in every single thread, but in the fabric as a whole, the proportion of gold actually aggregating about half of the fabric. The inclusion of gold cords in a woven fabric should not surprise us. Something akin to this is possibly alluded to in Ps. 45:10 (cf. LXX: \begin{vquote}γυναικας διακριθον\end{vquote} and v. 14; Cant. 3:10. Examples of this mode of workmanship with a large proportion of gold or silver cords in the weave are known at least from the Hellenistic period; cf. Kennedy, \begin{vquote}op. cit.\end{vquote} (above, n. 26) and the references there.
in essence as a golden ephod and it is the very same ephod alluded to in non-Priestly sources, as I tried to demonstrate elsewhere.43

14. On the ephod, or strictly speaking, on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, above the “decorated band,” the high priest wears the breast-piece, Ḥoshen (Exod. 28:15–30; 39:8–21). It is a cross between a square plate and a hollow pouch. Its mode of manufacture is exactly the same as that of the ephod — gold combined with mixed fabric of wool and linen according to the Ḥoshen workmanship. Twelve precious stones are fixed on it. In contrast to the two lapis lazuli (or onyx stones) on the shoulder pieces of the ephod (28:9–11; 39:6–7), these twelve do not protrude from their background but are sunk into the body of the breast-piece; hence their name אבני מלואים (25:7), stones for setting.44 In each one of them the name of not more than a single tribe is engraved, as against six names engraved on each one of the ephod stones. This would indicate that they are conceived as smaller than those two. The breastpiece is attached to the ephod by means of three pairs of rings, two chains and two frames, all of them gold, as well as by means of a lace of blue.

Under the ephod the high priest wears the ephod’s robe (Exod. 28:31–35; 37:22–26) which is made according to the 'oreg workmanship, of woolen thread only, of “complete blue” (cf. sect. 8). Its ritual accessories are the golden bells attached to the skirts. Between each bell, a pomegranate is suspended, made of a mixture of dyed wools and linen.45

Another article of apparel restricted to the high priest is the golden diadem, ₿ייז, also nezer (Exod. 28:36–38; 39:30–31). Like the two stones of the ephod and the twelve of the breastpiece, it bears “seal engravings,” but whereas the stones are engraved with the

43 confiscated apparel, Tarbiz 24 (1955), pp. 380–91. In the non-Priestly ephod as well there is an allusion to purple and precious stones (of necklaces), in addition to the gold (Judg. 8:24–27).

44 The word “other” (before “stones for setting”) should be left out in the NJPS Version to this verse. The two halves of this verse correspond to each other: the lapis lazuli, or onyx stones, are destined for the ephod — that is, for its shoulder pieces — while the “stones for setting” are for the breastpiece only.

45 In MT the words רוחנ מ بتاريخ, “and fine twined linen,” in Exod. 28:33, are omitted; in 39:24 the word רוחנ alone occurs. There is no doubt that in both places the LXX and Samaritan Versions are correct in supplying the missing words. There is no hint in the text of the number of bells and pomegranates. The Rabbis and Church Fathers made this the subject of fanciful expositions. See the references in E. Nestle, “Die Zahl der Granatäpfel und Glöckchen am Kleid des Hohenpriesters,” ZAW 25 (1905), pp. 205–06; idem, “Zu den Glocken am Gewand des Hohenpriesters,” ibid. 32 (1912), p. 74.
names of the tribes of Israel, the diadem bears the tetragrammaton, or the words “Holy to YHWH.”

It is worth mentioning that the gold intertwined with the high priest’s garments is also mostly pure (cf. sect. 10). “Pure gold,” the diadem, is explicitly referred to in connection with the chains joining the breastpiece to the ephod (Exod. 28:14, 22; 39:15), with the bells (39:25), the diadem (28:36; 39:30) and according to LXX Version also the frames to which the chains are attached (28:13). The mentioning of “pure gold” in these cases only, may arise from a brief wording. But it is more likely to be prompted by the fact that the purity of the gold can only be evident when it is cast or at least used in a considerable concentration — not when it is cut into fine cords and woven in a fabric. Anyhow, the garments of the high priest are equivalent in this respect to the inner furniture, not to the planks and pillars.

15. The following are the garments which are essentially the same for both the high and the ordinary priests. All of them are made of shesh-linen except for the sash of the high priest.

The kethoneth, tunic, is made of ‘oreg workmanship (Exod. 39:27). In the case of Aaron it is “checkered” (Exod. 23:4), this ornamentation being absent from that of the ordinary priests (28:39, in contrast to v. 40).

The ‘avnet, sash, is girded round the loins over the tunic. Aaron’s is of rogem workmanship, whereas sashes without qualification are mentioned for the ordinary priests (Exod. 28:39–40). What this rogem workmanship consists of in the case of Aaron’s sash is indicated in the parallel description (39:29) — a mixture whose primary basis is linen, the various dyed wools added to it only in the last place. This shows that in composition Aaron’s sash is similar to the tabernacle’s lower curtains, in whose mixture linen is the primary basis as well, but in its preparatory technique (rogem, not hashev, workmanship) it equals the outer veil and the screen of the enclosure. Indeed, its

The Rabbis assumed that the diadem was engraved with the two words קֶשׁ־לִשְׁלֹן (Shabbath, 63b et al.). But according to the Hellenistic sources it was only the tetragrammaton which was inscribed. Cf. Josephus, Antiquities iii, 7,4; idem, Wars v, 5,7; Aristeas, 98; Philo, De Vita Mosis ii, 114,132.

This detail was noted by Ibn-Ezra in his commentary on Exod. 28:37: אַשְׁרֵי יִתֶּהֶדֶת הַמַּעֲשֶׁר בַּתְּחֵלָה, בַּתְּחֵלָה בַּתְּחֵלָה, שֵׁהָא מְשֻׁבֱצָה לִרְדוֹר. וַאֲגַנִּין עַל בַּתְּחֵלָה בַּתְּחֵלָה, בַּתְּחֵלָה בַּתְּחֵלָה; cf. also on v. 41.

Note the use of number in Exod. 39:27–29: the tunics and the linen breeches are mentioned in the plural, since these were shared by Aaron as well as his sons; the turban, on the other hand, and the sash, are referred to in the singular (AT
place is at the end of this series of fabrics, all of which are manufactured of wool-linen mixture, and yet certain differences are to be observed in them: the parokheth-veil is of hoshev workmanship in which the blue stuff comes first; the tabernacle's lower curtains are likewise of hoshev workmanship but there the linen comes first; in the outer veil and enclosure screen, the blue stuff comes first but they are of roqem workmanship; Aaron's sash, as against this, is also of roqem workmanship but the linen is its primary basis.

Head covering for Aaron is a miznefeth, turban, for the ordinary priests migba'ôth or pa'arêy migba'ôth, i.e., caps (Exod. 28:39-40; 39:28). The pe'ër, cap, is also taken as a sign of "dignity and adornment," as the text has it, and the common people certainly did not wear it in their everyday life (cf. Isa. 3:20; 61:3, 10; Ezek. 24:17). But the miznefeth is even superior to it. The pe'ër is mentioned in connection with a groom who adorns himself (Isa. 61:10), while the miznefeth with the king, being synonymous with 'atarah, crown (Ezek. 21:31; cf. Isa. 62:3).

Linen breeches "to cover their nakedness" are made for all the priests (Exod. 28:42; 39:28). Breeches too were not the usual attire in those times (see Exod. 20:26). Only the priests required them out of considerations of modesty, so as not to expose themselves (cf. Ezek. 44:18).

16. The four garments reserved exclusively for the high priest are not meant as a substitute for the last four, but are only added to these. At the same time, there is an all-important difference in quality between the four undergarments common to all the priests and the four overgarments retained for Aaron alone. The former are made entirely of linen material, like the enclosure hangings, apart from Aaron's sash, which is woven of linen-wool mixture. However, even this sole sash is of the "simplest" mixture, since linen makes up its primary basis and it is made according to roqem workmanship. It is thus lower down the scale than even the outer veil and the enclosure screen (above, sect. 15). The overgarments, by contrast, are made of gold (the bells and diadem) or linen-wool mixture (the pomegranates) or a combination of gold cords with a fabric of linen-wool mixture according to hoshev workmanship (the ephod and breastpiece)\(^9\) — all

and NJPS make it sashes, seemingly understanding אֲבֵנֵי here as a collective plural). The reason is that just as there was only one turban belonging to Aaron exclusively, so the sash mentioned here is unique and that of Aaron.

\(^9\) It appears to be presumed that even the pomegranates attached to the hem of the ephod's robe (cf. sect. 14), are intended to be made according to the hoshev
in correspondence with the tabernacle's inner appurtenances. While the undergarments common to all the priests are equivalent in material and workmanship to the enclosure, the overgarments may be equated with the tabernacle itself. This correlation is not merely a matter of externals. The technical-material equivalence serves as a concrete expression of an identity of inwardness and function, since the two gradated categories of vestments merge into the two gradated spheres of ritual.\textsuperscript{50}

17. It must be conceded that when the text speaks of the high priest's vestments it does not make the same distinction between his over- and undergarments that we made. All Aaron's eight garments are lumped together as one single whole and along with them are listed the four garments of his sons. There is a motivation for this classification as well, since, as we have noted, the undergarments of linen, except for the breeches, are somewhat different and more elaborate in the case of Aaron than those of the ordinary priests: a "checkered" tunic instead of an ordinary one, a sash of wool-linen mixture instead of an ordinary one, a turban instead of a cap.

Three phrases are employed to connote the groups of priestly garments: "the garments of serad\textsuperscript{51} for officiating in a holy place,"\textsuperscript{52}

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workmanship, only that in practice it is impossible to discern it. Apparently, only on large areas of fabric was it possible to make a distinction between hoskev and rogem workmanships, not on the small and rounded pomegranates. For this reason, in the case of the pomegranates, the workmanship is not even referred to. Regarding the function of the blue wool from which the ephod's robe is made, see below, sect. 22.

\textsuperscript{50} Cf. above, note 34.

\textsuperscript{51} KJV: of service (after the LXX, see further), so also NJPS (for other reasons); RV: finely wrought; AT: woven.

\textsuperscript{52} The word שירד, "in the holy place" in this clause does not necessarily connote the outer sanctum, as may appear at first sight, but any area of the priests' officiation — even the outer altar. In P's usage the word שירד does not serve as a definitive technical term. Thus, in the description of the Day of Atonement service it connotes nothing else than the inner sanctum (Lev. 16:2–3, 16, 20, 23); and the same is true of Ezek. 41:21, 23. In Lev. 10:4, 17 it implies a section of the enclosure (more precisely: that part of the enclosure which is the priests' sphere, i.e., the "holy place" inside the enclosure, cf. below, sect. 24). In Num. 28:7 it connotes the outer altar. Similarly haq-godesh may indicate in P's terminology all the articles of furniture, the sacred burden of the Kohathites (Num. 3:28; 4:15, 20; in 3:38 these are termed שירד) and even those sacred materials used in officiation inside the tabernacle and in the court, namely, the oil for the light, the incense of spices, the daily meal-offering and the anointing oil (Num. 3:32; cf. 4:16 and below, note 72). On the other hand, the phrase שירד שירד, "holy of holies," applied mostly to the inner sanctum, is likewise not a definitive term in P's own terminology. Thus
"the holy garments of Aaron the priest," "the garments of his sons for priestly service." The most puzzling is the first of these. The relevant root רָאָד does not occur elsewhere in biblical Hebrew and it is difficult to find its parallel in other Semitic languages.\footnote{53} If we wish, first of all, to arrive at the implication of the term רָאָד, we can only resolve that it comprises all the priestly vestments, both of Aaron and his sons. In other words, "the holy garments of Aaron" and "the garments of his sons" constitute two parts that are included under it. This connection admirably fits in with all the passages where these related phrases occur in consecutive order (Exod. 35:19; 39:1,\footnote{54} 41). Only in one place do we have a conjunctive waw in the middle: "And the garments of serad and the holy garments, etc." (31:10). But we shall not be far from the truth if we assert that in this single case the waw has crept in incidentally, especially as that passage is full of waws prefixed to the accusative particle 'eth. Regarding the etymology of serad, it is conceivably an ancient Semitic noun, which must have been associated in some way with ritual officiation.\footnote{55} For it is one of the basic premises of P that vestments

it may connote also the outer altar (Exod. 29:37; 40:10), the portion of the meal-offering consumed by male priests (Lev. 2:3, 10), the altar of gold (Exod. 30:10), its incense (ibid. v. 36), the tabernacle and all its paraphernalia (ibid. v. 29) and other similar objects. Even the yerem, a strictly devoted offering — a concept which has nothing to do with the circle of contagious holiness (concerning this cf. below, sect. 20) — is termed godesh godashim (Lev. 27:28), in the sense that it is not redeemable. The same is true of the godesh godashim mentioned in Ezek. 43:12; 45:3; 48:12.

\footnote{53} The Rabbis assumed these to be the garments of the high priest, thus conceiving them to be merely another appellation for the "holy garments of Aaron the priest." See B. T. Yoma, 72b; Ramban in his commentary to Exod. 31:10. The LXX which rendered it: στολαὶ λειτουργικαὶ sought to provide an explanation for a difficult word, or perhaps read רָאָד ירָב, "the garments of officiation" (as is found also in a number of Samaritan MSS) — but as a reading it certainly cannot be correct. Jewish mediaeval commentators (Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn-Ezra) maintained that these are the cloths of blue and purple, destined to cover the furniture during journeyings (sect. 22). The forced character of these explanations is obvious. Modern scholars have sought to connect this word with the Aramaic sered, plaiting (a hint of this is already discernible in Rashi and Rashbam), but this explanation is difficult as well.

\footnote{54} It is indubitable that the word רָאָד slipped from this verse (possibly through its graphic similarity to the preceding word רֶשֶׁת), since we hardly find any priestly garment that lacks this linen material. Therefore, it is impossible to assume, as some Jewish mediaeval commentators did (cf. the previous note), that the garments of serad were made up of the dyed wool only.

\footnote{55} No conclusive parallel has been found as yet. K. Galling (Exodus [Tübingen, 1939], p. 151) tries to connect it with the Akkadian serdu whose meaning is, in effect, "cords," "straps," and hardly has any connection with our serad. M. Held
specially designed for the purpose must be worn in order to perform ritual acts. The antiquated attribute _serad_ is applied, then, to the complex of these vestments.

The "holy garments" are the garments of Aaron the priest, as explicitly stated in the text (_loc. cit._; and 28:3-4; 29:29; 40:13). They comprise not only the four overgarments of gold and wool-linen mixture, but also the four undergarments of Aaron. "The garments of his sons" are the four linen garments of the ordinary priests. Aaron's garments are more important than the latter and are dedicated to a higher ritual purpose. It may, therefore, be said that the epithet "holy" does not actually separate them from the other priestly garments, which are also considered holy. It indicates only their _superior_ degree of holiness.

18. There are still another four vestments which Aaron wears once a year in order to enter the inner sanctum. They constitute a third category of priestly attire: in their form they resemble the four undergarments (breeches, tunic, sash and turban), except that they are made of _bad_, i. e., plain linen, not of the fine _shesh_ (Lev. 16:4). The talmudic sages maintained that these were white in color, which may well be the truth. Corresponding to these four, we find plain linen garments, which an _ordinary_ priest wears when ascending to the outer altar to remove the ashes (_ibid._ 6:3). It stands to reason that this group, too, is taken to comprehend approximately the same four garments, that is, breeches (which are actually referred to in the text), tunic, sash and cap.

The four plain linen vestments reflect a holiness transcending that of gold and wool-linen mixture, and the text finds it necessary to emphasize that "they are holy garments" (Lev. 16:4). Linen garments were regarded as specially holy in the Egyptian priesthood. Angels of the heavenly entourage are depicted in the Bible as clothed in linen (Ezek. 9:2-3, 11; 10:2; Dan. 10:5; 12:6-7). No wonder, therefore, that in P's conception the linen garments became a prerequisite of entry to the two focal points of cultic holiness of the tabernacle and enclosure: the inner sanctum and altar. These garments serve to indi-

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**Notes:**

15 In the first group of undergarments (sect. 15) only the breeches are made of _bad_ (Exod. 28:42). The words __shuffle_ in Exod. 39:28 seem to be duplicated from the following verse (_ibid._ v. 29).

57 Mishna Yoma iii, 6.
cate a kind of dialectical elevation into that sphere which is beyond even the material, contagious holiness characterizing the tabernacle and its accessories (cf. below, sect. 20).

IV. The Gradated Taboo

19. The articles of the tabernacle furniture and their immediate vicinity are regarded in P as taboo to all non-priests. Thus the tabernacle and most of the enclosure become a shut-off domain, inaccessible to all the common people. At the same time, there is a gradation in the taboo of the ritual circles. It begins with the enclosure and becomes progressively stricter the more one proceeds inside the tabernacle, as far as the area which is taboo even for the priests themselves. Unequivocal expression of this gradation is the fact that in P's system there exists a number of prohibitions, in ascending order, which serve to protect the holiness of the tabernacle and its paraphernalia. The priestly writers themselves, in spite of their tendency to indulge in detail and repetitions, do not explain anywhere in an orderly manner the nature of these prohibitions. They are referred to incidentally, in the course of a description of other matters, or understood by inference as a subject not requiring explicit mention. But there is no difficulty in outlining them, since the whole priestly regime is based on them.

The prohibitions are three in number: they appertain to touch, sight and approach. The validity of each of them varies with the ritual circles, and, moreover, it does not apply equally to all groups of sacral gradation which P distinguishes in the community of Israel (Priests, Levites, ordinary Israelites).

20. A non-priest may not touch any of the pieces of furniture of the tabernacle, even the most trivial. This prohibition suffices for creating a drastic and clear-cut cleavage between the realm of cult and the rest of the world, acting as a barrier round a most extreme degree of holiness. For all the pieces of furniture are endowed with a contagious holiness, that is transmittable from one object to another by touch.

The concept of contagious holiness is by no means restricted in the Bible to P,\(^8\) but its peculiar accentuation and exposition serve indeed as one of the characteristics of this source. It is conceived as

\(^8\) It is also known in non-Priestly sources, only that there it is applied to the ark alone. See, e. g., I Sam. 6:19-20; II Sam. 6:6-9.
almost a tangible holiness, material in quality, whose existence and activity can be sensorially perceived. Any person or object coming into contact with the altar (Exod. 29:37) or any one of the articles of furniture (30:29) becomes "holy," i.e., contracts the holiness and becomes consecrated like the tabernacle appurtenances themselves. At the opposite extreme there exists a tangible, contagious defilement. But contagious holiness has one advantage over the latter, that it cannot be removed from a person or object. It is possible to purify one who has contracted uncleanness since this substance may be thrust away, cleared out of the community into the desert. Contagious holiness, by contrast, is materialized in the very center of the camp, in the tabernacle, and we are told of no activity or rite by which it can be shed from a person or object. The only desirable thing is complete and prior abstention from all contact with this holiness. For whoever contracts it is liable to be inflicted with immediate death at the hands of heaven. Indeed, the Kohathites are explicitly admonished against touching the furniture lest they die (Num. 4:15). An object that has contracted holiness has to be treated just the same as the furniture of the tabernacle, so that it should not affect other objects. The fire pans of Korah and his company which had come into contact with the altar became holy like the altar itself, and henceforth it was impossible to remove this holiness from them. They were hammered out into "sheets as plating for the altar" (ibid. 17:3). In this way they also served as a reminder of sin and calamity, but their removal from the area of the tabernacle was unthinkable.

Only one group of people is permitted by the grace of God to come into contact with most of the tabernacle's appurtenances — these are the priests. When the need arose for hammering out the fire pans of Korah's company on the outer altar, it was Eleazar the son of Aaron who performed this, certainly with the assistance of other priests, not Levites (ibid. 17:2-5). And when the furniture has to be covered with cloths of blue and purple, it is the priests who perform this and only afterwards do the Kohathites come and lift up the burden (ibid. 4:5-15). And it goes without saying that the priests alone are permitted to perform any act of ritual in the vicinity of the furniture.

An indication of the contagious holiness ascribed to the tabernacle furniture is the fact that it is anointed with the holy oil (Exod. 30:22-29; 40:9-11; Lev. 8:10-11; Num. 7:1) regarding the outer altar

59 The purificatory rites of the shrine on the Day of Atonement (Lev. chap. 16) and of one suffering corpse defilement by the ashes of the red heifer (Num chap. 19) are based upon this notion.
alone: Exod. 29:36; Num. 7:10 et al.). But Aaron and his sons are also anointed with this oil (Exod. 28:41; 30:30; 40:13–15; Lev. 7:36). The anointing endues the priests and their vestments with the same holiness as that of the tabernacle. Henceforth the priests suffer no danger by coming into contact with the furniture, not because they have been rendered immune to the lethal impact of the contagious holiness but just because they have contracted it, as it were, from the very outset. Both they and their vestments together with the furniture have entered one common circle of sacredness. This serves to indicate that it is forbidden for a non-priest to come into contact even with the priests—that is, whilst they are anointed with the holy oil or officiate beside the furniture.

21. A non-priest is forbidden even to gaze upon any of the articles of furniture inside the tabernacle. In this respect, the inner furniture is distinguished from the outer: it is concealed behind curtains, cut off not only from physical contact but even from visual. The Kohathites are explicitly admonished not to look upon the furniture while it is being covered, lest they die (Num. 4:18–20). Obviously, this warning can apply only to the inner articles. This state of affairs, furthermore, takes it for granted that nobody but a priest is allowed to set foot inside the tabernacle. Indeed, post-Exilic pieces of evidence do not entertain such a possibility as regards the Temple. Talmudic sages, too, observed that access to the Temple is permitted only to the priests, adding, however, that “in the absence of priests, Levites may enter; in the absence of Levites, Israelites may enter, etc.”

The conception of P is much more rigid (and as we shall see, fatalistic, too): its prohibition on seeing the inner furniture by non-priests is categorical and applies even to the time of removal.

60 From this list of appurtenances the kapporeth is missing. Perhaps this is purely a scribal oversight. However, the opposite may be true too—namely, that the anointing begins from the ark downwards, whereas the grade of holiness of the kapporeth is higher than even that which is symbolized in the anointing oil. Cf. above, sect. 18.

61 See Nehemiah’s exclamation: “And what man such as I could go into the temple (בינה) and live? I will not go in” (Neh. 6:11). Also the story related of King Uzziah (II Chron. 26:16–21). Several passages in Chronicles might at first sight give the impression that the Levites were allowed to enter the Temple (II Chron. 23:6; 29:5, 15), but a closer examination can easily show that only the court is implied. In II Chron. 29:16 it is explicitly stated that only the priests entered inside the Temple while the Levites received from them the load which was flung out into the court.

62 See 'Eruvin, 105a; Maimonides, הלכות בית הביתור, vii, 23.
There is at least one article at which even the priests are forbidden to gaze — the kapporeth. The parokheth-veil conceals it from them and makes around it, as well as around the ark, a mysterious hiding-place. Only the high priest may enter there, and that on the Day of Atonement only, conducting for this purpose a special rite and even changing his garments (Lev. 16:4). In actual fact, even he does not see anything on that day: he is exhorted to put the incense on the glowing coals upon the fire pan so that the cloud may screen the kapporeth, in this way saving him from death (ibid. vv. 12–13).  
In the process, of course, the ark too becomes hidden from him.

22. Some of the contagious holiness is apparently attached, in P's system, also to the planks, inner fabrics and pillars during encampment.

The close proximity of these to the inner furniture gives rise to the possibility, at least, that the contagious holiness will spread to them. Indeed, the anointing with the holy oil is also performed on "the tabernacle" (Exod. 30:26; 40:9; Lev. 8:10; Num. 7:1), i.e., on "the tabernacle curtains," its planks and inner pillars. Similarly, in the Day of Atonement rite, the high priest sprinkles the blood of the sin-offerings on the whole inside of the tabernacle (Lev. 16:16–17, 20).  
What is more, the technical and material substance of these appurtenances (gold, wool-linen mixture, hoshev workmanship and embellishments of cherubim) which is closely akin to that of the inner furniture and the parokheth-veil, suggests that all these enjoy the same rank of sanctity. Therefore, it appears that in essence, these appurtenances are also forbidden to be seen or touched. In any case, the outer curtains actually hide them from outside.

The outer veil, which has a slightly lower rank than the inner curtains, is evidently only forbidden to be touched. This veil is equi-

63 It is incongruous to understand from the expressions used in Lev. 21:23 and Num. 18:7 that ordinary priests were primarily allowed to enter the inner sanctum (see, e.g., the Introductions to the OT by R. H. Pfeiffer, p. 261; and A. Bentzen, II, p. 39). The parokheth is simply referred in these two verses to Aaron alone, while the altar both to him and his sons. Cf. my comments in Scripta Hierosolymitana, VIII, pp. 274–75. Regarding Num. 18:7 see also further, sect. 23.

64 " Tent of meeting" mentioned here is only an alternative attribute connoting the tabernacle. As is known, in P these two attributes are interchangeable. The "tent of meeting" is not to be confused, of course, with the outer curtains which are frequently called "the tent curtains" (sects. 3, 9).

65 Not on "the tent curtains," which are the outer ones. The anointing is to be performed inside only.

66 In these verses too "tent of meeting" serves merely as an alternative appellation for "tabernacle." Cf. note 64.
valent in grade to the outer altar: its form (wool-linen mixture of *rogem* workmanship) is typical of the enclosure and a parallel to it is found in Aaron’s sash (sects. 9, 15). But the pillars of this veil that are overlaid with gold are hidden from outside though their bases are of copper like the appurtenances of the enclosure.67

However, these sacral niceties can be adhered to during encampment only. The objective necessity of dismantling and moving the tabernacle abolishes them. During the stage of journeying, nothing more than the minor degree of holiness can be attributed to these appurtenances. Contagious holiness is bound, in these circumstances, to the furniture (and the *parokheth-veil*) only.

During the stage of encampment, the outer curtains should demarcate in effect the limit of the contagious holiness. These curtains are made of undyed goats’ hair (sect. 9) and no taboo is attached to them as such. In P’s specific system, the wool which is not mixed with linen serves as an intervening material between the contagious holiness and the “profane” world. To prove this, we have simply to compare the outer curtains of the tabernacle with the cloths put on the pieces of furniture during journeyings. The latter too are of wool and differ from the outer curtains only in being dyed blue or purple (Num. 4:7–14). On these cloths too “a covering of skin of *taḥash*” (*ibid.*) is placed, just the same as on the outer curtains of the tabernacle (Exod. 26:14; 36:19).68 The curtains of goats’ hair do not form part of the tabernacle proper. They serve, as the text points out, only “for a tent over the tabernacle” (Exod. 26:7; 36:14). The cloths of blue and purple too are of the nature of small “tents” over the separate objects. During encampment, the larger curtained tent envelops the whole of the tabernacle. During journeying, its place is taken by the “tents” of blue encasing the inner articles of furniture separately, while the outer altar is encased in a “tent” of purple (against the prohibition of touch only). In this way is the taboo of the tabernacle adhered to during encampment, and the taboo of the furniture alone during journeying.

It should be added that the ephod robe too, which is of blue wool containing no admixture of linen (sect. 14) intervenes between the ephod with its breastpiece, both of which fit into the inner circle of

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67 Regarding the enclosure’s screen which is likewise made of wool-linen mixture according to the *rogem* workmanship, see below, sect. 24.

68 In the case of the blue and purple cloths, “a skin of *taḥash*” in the singular is mentioned, whereas the plural “skins of *teḥashkim*” is employed with reference to the outer curtains. This is because the latter are of much larger area. Added to these are the tanned rams’ skins (sect. 9)
the tabernacle, and the undergarments, which fit into the enclosure (sect. 16). Perhaps this is connected with the further fact that the anointing with the holy oil is frequently ascribed to the high priest alone (Lev. 6:13; 16:32; Num. 35:25). Similarly, the statement is made that the high priest’s special garments should be for him “to be anointed in them” (Exod. 29:29; cf. Lev. 21:10), and it is mainly he who is designated by the title “the anointed priest” (Lev. 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15), though in one place the regular priests too are dubbed as “the anointed priests” (Num. 3:3). Yet, the anointing of the high priest is more elaborate than that of the priests as a whole (contrast Exod. 29:7; Lev. 8:12 with Exod. 29:31; Lev. 8:30). This tallies with the fact that the rites inside the tabernacle are the exclusive prerogative of the high priest, and only during his officiating inside does he wear the garments of gold and wool-linen mixture.69

23. Non-Levites are forbidden to approach the furniture of the tabernacle and the outer altar. The Levites are explicitly permitted to come near the sacred furniture, as a special act of grace distinguishing them, in this matter, from ordinary Israelites (Num. 8:19; 16:9–10; 18:22–23). In virtue of this they are charged with “the work (بناء) of the tent of meeting,” i.e., its dismantling, transportation and reassembling in a new place of encampment (Num. 1:48–54; 4:3–15; 18:6). But this privilege of access is granted to them only whilst the sacred furniture is clothed. When its cloths are removed during encampment, the Levites are explicitly forbidden to come near (Num. 18:3). Thus no taboo is attached to the wool coverings themselves, since the Levites touch them and absorb none of the contagious holiness. Nevertheless, contact by the Israelites even with the wool coverings is inconceivable since it involves a violation of the prohibition of approach, which is absolute with respect to them.

The second function assigned to the Levites in P is also based on their privilege of access to the covered holy furniture: it is their task “to keep guard around” (הסנה משברו) the tabernacle and its appurtenances, that is, ensuring that no one else would approach them. This is essentially a passive function, involving their mere presence in the vicinity of the sacred paraphernalia. In contrast to “the work of the tent of meeting” which devolves on every Levite between the ages of thirty and fifty years (Num. 4:3, 23 et al.)71 the “guarding”

69 The arguments in favor of the last statement are brought in my aforementioned study (n. 63), pp. 280–82, 298–99.
70 EVV mostly: keep the charge of; NJPS: perform the duties of.
71 According to another account of P these are the ages of between twenty-
devolves upon every male member of the tribe from a month upwards (ibid. 3:14–39) and also from fifty years upwards (ibid. 8:25–26). During journeyings each one of the three Levitical clans "guards" those objects with whose carrying he is entrusted (Num. 3:25–26, 31, 36–37). During encampment, all the Levites "guard" the tabernacle as a whole (ibid. 1:50–53; 3:7–8; 18:3–5). Indeed the very encampment of the Levites around the tabernacle is perceived as a sort of "guarding." Similarly the priests too keep the "guard" of the holy furniture by their very encampment at the gate of the enclosure (ibid. 3:38). In this way access to the sacred paraphernalia is barred to all who are not permitted to draw near, that is to say, even to the Levites themselves during encampment. The oft-repeated warning in this context is: "And if יִהְיֶהוּ, an outsider, comes near, he shall be put to death" (Num. 1:51; 3:10, 38; 18:7). In P's usage, יִהְיֶהוּ implies nothing more than a non-priest; cf. the explicit statement: "גָּדוֹל, an outside person, who is not of the descendants of Aaron" (Num. 16:40). Also

five and fifty (Num. 8:24–25). Still other age limits are presupposed in this context by the Chronicler (1 Chron. 23:24–27; II Chron. 31:17; Ezra 3:8). See also I Chron. 23:3 and the references in E. L. Curtis, Chronicles, I.C.C. (1910), pp. 266–67.

In the account of the census of Levitical clans (Num. 3:14–39) the stages of encampment and journeying are pictured indiscriminately. Whenever the text specifies the families included in a particular Levitical clan and gives the total number of their males, it adds where they encamp and what the object of their "guard" is. However, this guarding is conceived while the Levites are on the move, for it is only then that any meaning can be attached to the specific charge of each one of the three Levitical clans. During encampment the Gershonites cannot "keep guard" over the fabrics, neither can the Merarites over the beams nor the Kohathites over the furniture. We cannot seriously accept the opinion of e. g. H. Holzinger (Numeri [Tübingen, 1903], p. 13) that this section assumes that "drei Leviten jedenfalls im Heiligtum aus– und eingehen." But when the text informs us at the end, in v. 38, of the place and guarding of the priests, it conceives only the stage of encampment. Note the difference in wording: "The families of the Gershonites shall encamp behind the tabernacle, to the west...and the object of the guard (珧) of the Gershonites etc." (ibid. vv. 23–25) The same stereotyped phraseology is applied to the Kohathites and Merarites (ibid. vv. 29–31, 35–36). With respect to the priests, however, the text assumes a different tone: "But those who are to encamp (תֵבִינָה), the word being adverssative) before the tabernacle on the east...are Moses and Aaron and his sons, keeping the guard (珧) of the holy furniture (רְפָאָם) etc.," the verbs being all in the participle (ibid. v. 38). For this guarding of the priests, in contradiction to that of the Levites, is pictured upon the background of an encampment only. When on the move the priests transport and guard, under the leadership of Eleazar, the holy items — יִהְיֶהוּ (ibid. 3:32), which in this case is to be understood as referring to the oil for lighting, the incense of spices, the regular meal-offering and oil of anointing (ibid. 4:16). Cf. above, note 52.
Exod. 29:33; 30:33; Lev. 12:10–12; Num. 18:4. It was not for nothing that the Israelites vented their anxiety on Moses after the plague which broke out in the wake of Korah’s uprising in such words as: “Lo, we perish! We are lost, we are all lost! Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the Lord’s tabernacle shall die. Are we doomed to perish?” (Num. 17:27–28). In response to this a new section (ibid. 18:1–7) is introduced, which is just a longer repetition of statements already made earlier (ibid. 3:5–10) and in which once more there is emphasized the role of the Levites as keepers of guard around the tabernacle and as a barrier between the priesthood and the people.

In this last section the priests as well are admonished to “guard” their own priesthood, שומרי האר mutating, “for all that concerns the altar and that is behind the parokheth,” כלל יר ועד במזבח התּאיר (Num. 18:7). What is implied in these words is not that the priests have to “attend to” their priesthood (RSV), or to “perform their priestly duties” (NJPS), but precisely the negative, prohibiting notion, that they have to be watchful not to ascend the altar without the special linen vestments (Lev. 6:3; cf. sect. 18) and not to enter behind the parokheth-veil. No one, of course, can supervise the adherence to these prohibitions except the priests themselves. This is how we have to understand also the abbreviated wording in the parallel section, if we accept the masoretic Version there: שומרי הכהנת, “and they shall guard their priesthood” (Num. 3:10) — Aaron and his sons shall guard, i.e., be cautious not to violate the prohibitions of, their priesthood “for all that concerns the altar and that is behind the parokheth.”

In LXX the last words occur in the actual text of Num. 3:10 as well.

24. Just as the prohibition of entry into the tabernacle is a natural consequence from that of gazing at the inner furniture (sect. 21), so a prohibition of entry to the enclosure is apt to result from the prohibition of approach. Indeed, such a prohibition is latent in P’s system, but it never achieved the form of an explicit “don’t.”

A number of unequivocal phenomena controvert, of course, the

³³ In the same way, באז, “strange fire” (Lev. 10:1; Num. 3:4; 26:61) is, according to P’s usage, fire that does not belong to the outer altar and באז, “strange incense” (Exod. 30:9) is that which does not belong to the altar of gold. The term באז circumscribes in P’s style the closed area of priests and priestly contagious holiness. For the significance of באז cf. L. A. Snijders, The meaning of בא in the OT (Leiden, 1935), pp. 124–45. Against Snijders (p. 138) it should be emphasized that in the Book of Numbers, too, the term בא connotes anyone who is not a priest, and not just one who is not a Levite. It is the guarding of the Levites which prevents any non-priest from approaching the tabernacle.
factual existence of any such prohibition: after, for instance, Nadab and Abihu met their death in the enclosure, the Levites drew near to them and bore them outside the camp (Lev. 10:4–5). Similarly, we find that מֹות מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, “at the entrance to the tent of meeting” is the place where a layman brings his sacrifices and lays his hands upon them (Lev. 1:3–4; 3:28 et al.). The phrase מַחֲלוֹת מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל in itself is rather vague and undefined and one still has to infer its exact location. Yet, at any rate, it cannot be outside the enclosure.

The enclosure actually includes two different areas: one of minor degree of holiness and one of stricter, contagious holiness. It stands to reason that the first is located between the gate and the altar; it is this area that is most referred to by the phrase “at the entrance to the tent of meeting.” In addition to the laying of the hands on sacrifices, here is the place where laymen slaughter peace-offerings (Lev. 3:2, 8, 13) and wave the breasts given to the priests as their portion (ibid. 7:29–30). In general, any “wave offering before the Lord” is waved here (cf. ibid. 14:11–12, 23–24; Num. 5:16–25; 6:10–20; 8:9–13). Furthermore, the people may cook here their peace offerings (ibid. 6:18) and, in certain cases, even assemble (Lev. 8:3–4; Num. 10:3; 16:19 et al.). The second area is evidently located between the altar and the tabernacle as well as at a close proximity to the altar, and is denominated as מקומן הקדוש, “a holy place.” There, on the northern side of the altar, the burnt-offerings and sin- and guilt-offerings are slaughtered (Lev. 1:11; 6:18; 7:2 et al.). The male priests partake in that area of the sin-, guilt- and meal-offerings (ibid. 6:9,74 19; 7:6; 10:12–13, 17–18; 24:9; Num. 18:10), and a garment on which any blood of a sin-offering is sprinkled is washed there (Lev. 6:20).75 In that area, “beside the altar,” the priest puts the ashes before he carries them out of the camp (ibid. v. 3). There should be, therefore, no doubt that this second area is out of bounds for both Israelites and Levites.76 But P does not prohibit the entry of Israelites beyond the gate of the enclosure as far as a certain distance from the altar.

74 In this verse the text reads: בֵּית הַצָּבָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ אֶלָּהּ וּמֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, “in a holy place, in the enclosure of the tent of meeting” (cf. also v. 19), but this should not be understood as in apposition, as if the whole enclosure is regarded as “a holy place,” but as a further localization: the holy place is somewhere inside the enclosure. Study and analogy should tell us where it is. Cf. Lev. 10:12.

75 Regarding the association of the sin-, guilt- and meal-offerings, according to P and the code of Ezek. chaps. 40–48, with the circle of contagious holiness and the special reason for it, see in my item עֵדֶן, Encyc. Migra'ith, IV, col. 40.

76 The area “between the porch and the altar” is pictured also in Joel ii, 17, as an exclusive priestly domain.
Nevertheless, in spite of these phenomena, it seems that P's system betrays an implicit tendency to regard the whole enclosure as the exclusive domain of the priests. A number of points are liable to indicate this:

(a) The actual existence of the enclosure with the partition of hangings encircling it. This enclosure is not one of those things which cannot be dispensed with, and it is certainly difficult to assume that in P's unique ideology it should serve merely for "architectural" ornamentation. Since we have already come across the prohibition of approaching the tabernacle and altar, as well as the concept of "holy place," it seems even more likely that there is a connection between the latter and the very existence of the partition of hangings. This partition may reflect, then, the desire to mark out the minimum distance in all directions, any contraction of which would constitute a violation of the prohibition of approaching the holy objects.

(b) As we have stated, the "guarding" of the tabernacle emerges out of the very encampment of the Levites and priests around its enclosure. Now, while the Levites encamp beyond the partition of hangings, the priests encamp and keep "guard" in front of the enclosure's gate (sect. 25). This fact too can serve to epitomize P's innate desire to regard the whole of the area within this gate as the priests' exclusive preserve.

(c) The enclosure's screen is of the very same weave as the outer veil of the tabernacle — a mixture of dyed wool with linen according to the *roqem* workmanship (sect. 9). In view of P's strict principles this would seem unlikely to be a mere accident. As we have emphasized, the material substance of each article is indicative of its place on the sliding scale of sacredness and prohibition. Hence this fact, too, may be regarded as an expression of that tendency embedded in P: just as the outer veil of the tabernacle shuts off the area, access to which is forbidden to the non-priests, so is the case with the enclosure's screen. These two domains are then differentiated merely by the fact that the former is governed by a taboo of sight, while the latter, by one of contact and approach only.

If the aforementioned tendency never reached the stage of conscious prohibition in P, this is, on the one hand, perhaps due to the fact that it was repressed by the objective necessity of moving the tabernacle from place to place (cf. sect. 22). On the other hand, there was at work here the indispensability of reserving a special area for the holiness of minor degree, on whose existence as well the proper maintenance of cult depends. Only in the visionary programme of Ezekiel, whose temple is encircled by two courts, did this tendency
fully materialize: the outer court became a sphere of minor holiness (Ezek. 44:3, 11–14; 46:21–24), the inner court, however, including the altar within it, was reserved for the contagious, priestly level of holiness (ibid. 42:13–14; 44:17–19; 46:1–3, 19–20).

25. In order to comprehend the exact nature of the three afore-mentioned prohibitions it should be added that their violation is not conditioned by the deliberateness or inadvertence of the action. This is one of the outstanding characteristics of the sphere of holiness, in general (and also of its opposite extreme — defilement), that the influence attributed to inner intentions is strictly limited. The reaction of these entities is impersonal, “blind,” and for the most part it is only the act itself that is noteworthy. At any rate, the three afore-mentioned prohibitions are so severe that any violation of them is bound, according to P, to bring in its wake immediate and fatal consequences. The verses speak in this context rather of an unnatural death than of a judicial death penalty. Fire going forth from the Lord devours Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:2) as well as the company of Korah (Num. 16:35). A plague which suddenly breaks out after the uprising of Korah kills off thousands of people at one swoop (ibid. 17:11–14). After that plague, the text warns that any undue approach to the tabernacle and altar would bring death and פָּרָה, “wrath” (ibid. 18:3–5), that probably implies that inadvertent violations are not taken into account. It appears that most of the warnings of death occurring in this context are to be similarly understood. Indeed Nadab and Abihu, at least, did not mean at all to rebel against the Lord and their transgression was an act of ignorance. In spite of this they immediately perished. After their death we have the Divine announcement to the effect that it is just among those who are permitted to come near to Him that He shows himself holy by fatal events, and in this way He is glorified before all the people. Aaron accepts this austere declaration in silence (Lev. 10:3).

77 In the case of Uzziah it was a leprosy that broke out upon his forehead immediately (II Chron. 26:19–21). Apparently the Chronicler, who in this respect bears the impact of P, was somewhat tied down by the historical events; otherwise, he would certainly have thought up a much more serious punishment for this king.

78 It was the putting of “strange fire” in their censers. Cf. above, note 73 and my remarks in VT 10 (1960), pp. 15, 21; also, regarding this point only, R. Gradwohl, “Das ‘fremde Feuer’ von Nadab und Abihu.” ZAW 75 (1963), pp. 289, 291
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