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ACTUALIZING ISRAEL EVERY MONTH: THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF *ḤŌDEŠ* RITUAL IN ISRAELITE AND JEWISH TRADITION (8th CENTURY BCE – 200 CE)

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
2007

VOLUME 1

BY

KILLIAN MCALEESE

DECLARATION

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SUMMARY

This dissertation focuses on the festival of the new moon (חֹדֶשׁ) in ancient Israel and Judah from approximately the eighth century BCE, through subsequent Jewish history to c. 200 CE. The social significance of the festival remains the principal concern throughout. Chapter 1 begins with an introductory examination and overview of biblical traditions regarding the creation and ordering of the heavenly luminaries by Yahweh and the subsequent implications for our understanding of his role in the ordering of time and calendars, particularly in relation to holy days and festivals, in the worldview of certain biblical authors. Following this the feast of the new moon and its calendrical context is briefly introduced. Previous scholarly work on the feast is also assessed, and finally, the overarching thesis of the work is introduced and the dissertation summarised. In Chapter 2 the theoretical background of the thesis is presented. The chapter presents the ideas of several scholars who have studied 'ritual' pertaining to various contexts. Particularly, the works of several scholars who have argued that ritual plays an important role in engendering social cohesion are examined. The role of symbols in ritual is also examined, and festivals, as understood from traditional contexts, are described as 'ritual constellations'. Chapter 3 examines the feast of חֹדֶשׁ in the context of sacrificial cult in broad historical perspective, beginning with a brief presentation of some ancient Near Eastern parallels, before proceeding to examine the feast from the eighth century BCE to the Roman period. Three main developments to the feast are noted which pertain to its socially cohesive role. It is noted that the feast is seen in many biblical texts to be the collective action of 'Israel' as it is conceived by the texts' authors. In Chapter 4 two aspects of the feast's observance are identified: participation in special meals and cessation of ordinary work. The view that feasting involved the creation and maintenance of social relationships is taken up and it is suggested that the cessation of work was a result of the encounter with the holiness of the day of the new moon. It is also noted that by the Hasmonaean period, new moon observance was seen as part of a paradigm of Jewish piety in certain circles. Chapter 5 examines evidence for the feast's observance in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The calendar traditions of *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* are introduced. Following this, evidence for the observance of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ in the Dead Sea Scrolls is examined. Two scholarly perspectives regarding calendars at Qumran are noted, and based on these perspectives three hypotheses regarding observance of the

feast are constructed and critiqued. Chapter 6 examines three Diaspora contexts: one in North Africa, and two in Asia Minor. The first is known from two Jewish inscriptions from the area of Cyrenaica where Jewish communal observance of new moons is evident. The latter two are known from New Testament epistles, wherein practices associated with new moons appear to cause controversy for early Christian writers. The final part of this chapter notes certain scholarship which has been referred to as 'the new perspective on Paul', and the notion that Judaism contemporary to Paul can be characterised as 'covenantal nomism'. It is noted that scholars have argued that certain Jewish practices around the turn of the era functioned as *focal points of distinctiveness* in relation to Jewish identity. It is argued that the new moon ritual can at times be considered such a focal point. In Chapter 7 four second century Christian sources are examined which refer to Jewish new moon ritual. It is argued that these writers, while to some extent engaging with actual contemporary Jewish practice, nevertheless were engaged in the construction of a Jewish 'other' in order to define emergent Christianity against that 'other'. In Chapter 8 evidence for the observance and significance of the new moon in the Mishnah is examined. The process by which the day of the new moon was declared and sanctified by the rabbinic court is presented. It is argued that this should be seen as a ritual process. Texts which appear to attest to deliberate interference in the process of sanctifying new moons are discussed. Special meals are again associated with the new moon. The liturgy associated with the festival and the festival's place in the symbolic world of the Mishnah's authors are considered. It is concluded that the feast of the new moon, as depicted in the Mishnah, played a centripetal role in Jewish society, but that this role may have been distorted or exaggerated by the rabbis in order to depict rabbinic authority at the centre of Jewish life. In the concluding section of the thesis it is suggested that the ritual associated with the new moon in ancient Judaism was embedded with a socially cohesive character by the invocation of local Jewish authority, but also through its symbolism, which allowed the feeling of interconnectedness engendered in its associated ritual to become attached to a broader shared, and to some extent variegated, conception of belonging and community than the immediate environment. It is suggested that this shared conception is Israel, and that Israel as a conceived community is actualised in the moment of ritual through this symbolic association.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AEHL	Negev, A. & S. Gibson (eds.) (2001) *Archaeological Encyclopaedia of the Holy Land*, New York, NY; London: Continuum.
AJ	*Antiquities of the Jews*
ANET	Pritchard, J. B. (1974) *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relation to the Old Testament*, Third Edition, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Apion	*Against Apion*
BCE	Before Common Era
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
BJ	*The Jewish War*
BT	Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
CD	*The Damascus Document*
CE	Common Era
CIG	*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*
Col.	Column
CTH	*Catalogue des Textes Hittites*
de Op. Mundi	*De Opificio Mundi*
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EBD	Myers, A. C. (ed.) (1987) *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Exeter: Paternoster Press.
Frg.	Fragment
GELNT	Thayer, J. H. (1892) *Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament, being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti*, Corrected Edition, New York, NY: Harper & Brothers.
Hist. Eccl.	*Historia Ecclesiastica*
IG	*Inscriptions Graecae*
KTU	*Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*
Lewis & Short	Lewis, C. T. & C. Short (1969) *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Liddell & Scott	Liddell, H. G. & R. Scott (1977) *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
LXX	Septuagint
M.	Mishnah
MS	Manuscript
MT	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible
Nat Hist	*Natural History*
NRSV	*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with Apocrypha*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers (1990).
OGI	*Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*
POxy	*The Oxyhynchus Papyri*
PT	Palestinian Talmud (*Talmud Yerushalmi*)
Q	Qumran (in reference to texts from Qumran)
RGELNT	Robinson, E. (1850) *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament*, New Edition, London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans.
RIH	Ras ibn Hani (excavation number)
Scorp.	*Scorpiace*
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*
Spec. Leg.	*Special Laws*
T.	Tosefta

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. THE CREATION AND ORDERING OF THE HEAVENLY LUMINARIES AND THE FIXED TIMES OF THE CULT

Norman Cohn observed that despite the numerous texts preserved in the Hebrew Bible, the early Israelite worldview is particularly difficult to reconstruct.[1] Nevertheless, the Hebrew Bible provides us with an abundance of statements about God, creation, the order of the cosmos, and the place of humanity and Israel in that cosmic order. Gershon Brin calls one collection of such statements, Genesis 1, "the official biblical version of the order of creation".[2] The author of this 'version' attributes the creation of the heavenly luminaries to God (אֱלֹהִים) on the fourth day (Genesis 1:1, 14-19). The sun, moon, and stars were created and given specific functions: to separate the day from the night, to be signs (אֹתֹת), to give light on the earth, separate light from darkness, to mark sacred seasons (מוֹעֲדִים), and to regulate years. Although light (אוֹר), and the distinction between the day and the night, in this account, had previously been created on the first day out of darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ) (Genesis 1:3-5), one function of the luminaries was, nevertheless, to *divide* the day from the night (Genesis 1:14-18). The day and the night are thus depicted as dependent on the luminaries for the maintenance of this division and order, despite the apparent pre-existence of this distinction. The luminaries were created with the particular purpose of regulating time in three senses: first, this simple distinction between day and night; secondly, for *sacred* seasons (מוֹעֲדִים); and thirdly with regard to the reckoning of years. A more exact rendering of the term (מוֹעֲדִים) in English is "appointed times", a designation which includes what can be referred to as 'festivals' or 'feasts'.[3] Among

---

[1] Cohn 2001: 129.

[2] Brin 2001: 155.

[3] The text of Genesis 1 has long been considered to originate from the Priestly tradition (P) (see, for example, Skinner 1910: 1; Speiser 1964: xxvi; Von Rad 1972: 46-67; Davidson 1973: 6; Westermann 1984: 80ff.). Many scholars have argued that the usage of מוֹעֲדִים by the writer of Genesis 1:14 is intended to convey a fixed point "designated within the stream of time", as Westermann put it (1984: 130), rather than a prolonged natural, or agricultural, season. Previously, John Skinner had argued that מוֹעֲדִים was used, especially in P "...always of a time conventionally agreed upon...or fixed by some circumstance"; in his view of the term, "The commonest application is to the *sacred seasons* of the ecclesiastical year, which are fixed by the moon" (Skinner 1910: 26). An example of this usage in the P tradition is Numbers 10:10. Outside of the priestly tradition, the Chronicler actually specifies three מוֹעֲדִים as "the festival of unleavened bread, the festival of weeks, and the festival of booths" (2 Chronicles 8:13). The term does not, however, consistently refer specifically to these three yearly appointed times throughout the Hebrew Bible, but is regularly used to describe festivals, or yearly festivals, in general (for example Ezra 3:5; Nehemiah 10:32-33; Psalm 104:19; Exodus 23:15). The term also seems, in some contexts, to refer not only to yearly festivals, but to all of the holy days throughout the year: sabbaths, new moons, and yearly feasts (cf. Isaiah 1:14; Hosea 2:11; Ezekiel 46:9; Hasel 1988: 42; *BDB* 417-18).

the luminaries created to carry out these functions and to regulate cultic times is the moon, or 'lesser lamp' (הַמָּאוֹר הַקָּטֹן) (Genesis 1:16). The luminaries and the 'appointed times' of the cult thus find their origin in creation in this account. The ritual times and their reckoning were considered to be part of a created order which preceded humanity.

In several texts of the Hebrew Bible, Yahweh is referred to as creator of the heavens.[4] Various biblical authors attribute the formation of heavenly objects, in different creation traditions, specifically to Yahweh. The author of Psalm 8, for example, describes Yahweh's creation of the moon (יָרֵחַ) as the work of his fingers:

כִּי־אֶרְאֶה שָׁמֶיךָ מַעֲשֵׂי אֶצְבְּעֹתֶיךָ יָרֵחַ וְכוֹכָבִים אֲשֶׁר כּוֹנָנְתָּה[5]

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you have established (Psalm 8:3; MT 8:4).[6]

The author of Psalm 136 also carries the tradition of Yahweh having created the moon (הַיָּרֵחַ):

לְעֹשֵׂה הַשָּׁמַיִם בִּתְבוּנָה	כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:
לְרֹקַע הָאָרֶץ עַל־הַמָּיִם	כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:
לְעֹשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים	כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:
אֶת־הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת בַּיּוֹם	כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:
אֶת־הַיָּרֵחַ וְכוֹכָבִים לְמֶמְשְׁלוֹת בַּלָּיְלָה	כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:[7]

...who by his understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever; who spread out the earth over the waters...who made the great lights...the sun to rule over the day...the moon and stars to rule over the night (Psalm 136:5-9).

---

[4] Notable, for example, in Isaiah 40-66 (42:5; 44:24; 45:5-8; 48:13; 51:13; 51: 16), and in the Psalms (for example Psalm 8:3; 96:5; 102:25; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3).

[5] Briggs & Briggs (1906: 67) suggested that שָׁמֶיךָ is a gloss; this does not affect the basic point.

[6] English translations of biblical texts are NRSV unless otherwise stated.

[7] *BHS* (vs. 9 n. a) recommends deletion of וְכוֹכָבִים. Briggs & Briggs (1907: 483, 484) suggested verses 8-9, specifying the great lights, are glosses. Later, Dahood disagreed with this deletion, and did not sustain Briggs & Briggs' association of 8-9 with a glossator (Dahood 1970: 266).

Yahweh, in these traditions, created the great luminaries (אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים), including the moon. The implications of these acts of creation on the ordering of time are again taken up in various biblical traditions. The above Psalm 136 repeats that these luminaries function in maintaining the distinction between day and night, particularly in association with Yahweh's "love" or "faithfulness" (חֶסֶד).[8]

According to Hudson, in the prophecies of Amos and Jeremiah "creation serves as a basis for their declaration for Yahweh's lordship".[9] Amos is clear that the creation of certain heavenly luminaries is attributed to Yahweh, as is the resultant distinction between day and night. He asserts that this creative activity is continuously manifested, such that not only did Yahweh create the luminaries, but also that he was continually responsible for their movements:

עֹשֵׂה כִימָה וּכְסִיל
וְהֹפֵךְ לַבֹּקֶר צַלְמָוֶת וְיוֹם לַיְלָה הֶחְשִׁיךְ

> The one who made Pleiades and Orion, and turns the deep darkness into morning, and darkens the day into night (Amos 5:8).

Yahweh created these two constellations,[10] and he is also continuously responsible for the cycle of days and nights.[11] Yahweh is often depicted specifically as the creator of the sun and of the moon, and while this creation has its origin, exhibited in certain traditions, as a creative act, the regular movements of the sun and of the moon are also a continuous manifestation of the ordering action of Yahweh; their movements are part of a "benevolent and life-sustaining order",[12] which is continual and repetitive, by "decrees" (חֻקֹּת):

---

[8] Eaton (2003: 452) describes the meaning of חֶסֶד as Yahweh's "faithfulness to his commitments in creation and covenant". חֶסֶד is a divine attribute in Genesis 24:27; Psalm 25:10; 40:11-12; and also often relates to keeping covenants in Micah 7:20; Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Kings 8:23 (cf. *BDB* 338-339).

[9] Hudson 1995: 7. Sweeney also makes this observation regarding the third speech cycle in Hosea (9:1-14:1), in which Yahweh is depicted as the creator deity, in his mastery and control over fertility and natural growth (Sweeney 2005: 178).

[10] Goldstein & Cooper (1990: 22-23) noted that the rising of these two constellations at opposing points in the year could be associated with particular seasons or months. Goldstein & Cooper take this "hymnic fragment" to refer to the creation and the flood in Judahite mythology.

[11] In this context Yahweh's creative role is also exhibited by the Prophet's claim that Yahweh controls the primeval waters (Amos 5:8).

[12] Levenson 1994: 12.

כֹּה אָמַר יהוה נֹתֵן שֶׁמֶשׁ לְאוֹר יוֹמָם
חֻקּוֹת יָרֵחַ וְכוֹכָבִים לְאוֹר לָיְלָה

> Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night (Jeremiah 31:35).

Here, the term חֻקּוֹת, meaning "decrees", things "cut in", or "prescribed", reveals this belief in a created order.[13] Another text, Psalm 148, also reflects a belief in this order, initiated by the command of Yahweh (הוּא צִוָּה וְנִבְרָאוּ), which continually maintains the luminaries' courses, and is itself manifested in their regular movements, also the result of a "decree" (חק) of Yahweh:

הַלְלוּהוּ שֶׁמֶשׁ וְיָרֵחַ הַלְלוּהוּ כָּל־כּוֹכְבֵי אוֹר׃
הַלְלוּהוּ שְׁמֵי הַשָּׁמָיִם וְהַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל הַשָּׁמָיִם׃
יְהַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יהוה כִּי הוּא צִוָּה וְנִבְרָאוּ׃
וַיַּעֲמִידֵם לָעַד לְעוֹלָם חָק־נָתַן וְלֹא יַעֲבוֹר׃[14]

> Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created. He established them for ever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed (Psalm 148:3-6).

An implication of the fixed cycles of the luminaries, as noted, is the ordering of time: the proper succession of days and nights, and the 'appointed times' of the cult, as exhibited in Genesis 1:14-18. Two more traditions assert this belief. The author of Psalm 104 declares:

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[13] The term חק, relating to things prescribed, is used in Job to describe the passing of time, in terms of days and months (Job 14:5). In the same text the author describes the "boundary" and "horizon" חק which God marked between light and darkness (אוֹר עִם חֹשֶׁךְ) on the face of the waters (Job 26:10). חק also refers to laws, or ordinances in general (for example Psalm 94:20). The term refers to order in a number of ways; whether social, or cosmic. These aspects of order (social and cosmic) are, in many traditions, seen as connected or united in the Israelite worldview. Salvador argues that this is exhibited particularly in Psalms of the wisdom tradition, such as Psalms 1; 19; 36; 37; 92, and 104 (Salvador 2005). In the context of Jeremiah 31:35, some commentators have emended חֻקּוֹת to חֹקֵק, "legislates, ordains" (cf. McKane 1996: 828-31; *BHS* vs. 35 n. b). The implication is nevertheless similar.

[14] *BHS* (vs. 6 n. a) suggests the amendment יַעֲבֹרוּ.

עָשָׂה יָרֵחַ לְמוֹעֲדִים שֶׁמֶשׁ יָדַע מְבוֹאוֹ[15]

> Who made the moon for seasons,
> The sun to know his time for going down (Psalm 104:19).[16]

In this tradition, the moon was created by Yahweh specifically to regulate the "appointed times" of the cult. Ben Sira, in the Hellenistic period, asserts the moon's importance in this temporal regulation of cultic life:

> Καὶ ἡ σελήνη ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς καιρὸν αὐτῆς,
> ἀνάδειξιν χρόνων καὶ σημεῖον αἰῶνος·
> ἀπὸ σελήνης σημεῖον ἑορτῆς,
> φωστὴρ μειούμενος ἐπὶ συντελείας.
>
> It is the moon that marks the changing seasons, governing the times, their everlasting sign. From the moon comes the sign for festal days, a light that wanes when it completes its course (Sirach 43:6-7).

In the Hebrew text of Ben Sira, there is a clear association between the moon and the מוֹעֲדִים, the "appointed times". לו מו[ע]ד וממנו חג is translated by Skehan and DiLella as "By it [comes] the sacred season and from it the pilgrimage feast".[17] "Sacred season" (מוֹעֵד), here, once again implies an "appointed time" in the cult.[18] This understanding is further evident for Ben Sira in the term's juxtaposition with חַג, "pilgrimage feast".[19]

Levenson observed that several biblical traditions, including the Flood narrative, "...attest to a view of creation in which God's ordering of reality is

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[15] *BHS* (vs. 19 n. a) and Briggs & Briggs (1907: 338) suggested amending MT עָשָׂה to the participle עֹשֶׂה.

[16] Briggs & Briggs (1907: 330) trans. As early as in the commentary of Briggs and Briggs, the composition of this Psalm was considered have taken place no earlier than the Hellenistic period (1907: 330-331). Since that time the Psalm in general has been seen by others as considerably earlier, perhaps even as early as the dedication of Solomon's Temple (Craigie 1974: 10-21). Eaton notices "striking similarities with Egyptian materials from the second millennium". He specifically refers to a hymn to the Aton (*ANET* 369ff.) (Eaton 2003: 362).

[17] Skehan & DiLella 1987: 488-89. The Hebrew text on which this translation is based is that of the Masada Scroll (Yadin 1965).

[18] This is similar to the usage in Exodus 23:15 to describe the festival of Unleavened Bread לְמוֹעֵד חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב ("At the appointed time in the month of Abib").

[19] Skehan & DiLella 1987: 488-89. For חַג as a pilgrimage feast, cf. Exodus 10:9; 23:14, 17.

irresistible, but not constant or inevitable".[20] Every ancient Near Eastern worldview, according to Cohn, shows awareness of instability of the order of the cosmos.[21] In the traditions already referred to, Yahweh maintains the luminaries in their fixed courses, and is responsible for the order which regulates them, an order which is fixed by decree (חק). In some traditions his potential to interrupt this creative activity or ordinance, such that he may choose to obscure the sun, or to darken the moon and stars, or indeed to stop their courses altogether, is taken up by the biblical authors. Particularly, prophetic traditions which refer to a "the day of the Lord" (יום־יהוה) exhibit this belief.[22] In this example expressed in Isaiah 13, the picture is one of ensuing chaos:

הִנֵּה יוֹם־יְהוָה בָּא אַכְזָרִי וְעֶבְרָה וַחֲרוֹן אָף
לָשׂוּם הָאָרֶץ לְשַׁמָּה וְחַטָּאֶיהָ יַשְׁמִיד מִמֶּנָּה׃
כִּי־כוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וּכְסִילֵיהֶם לֹא יָהֵלּוּ אוֹרָם
חָשַׁךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּצֵאתוֹ וְיָרֵחַ לֹא־יַגִּיהַ אוֹרוֹ׃

> See, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the earth a desolation, and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light (Isaiah 13:9-10).

Such descriptions, in Sweeney's view, "reveal YHWH's sovereignty to the entire world of creation".[23] The motif of the "day of the Lord" also appears in the book of Ezekiel, where the prophet describes Yahweh causing all of the luminaries, both the sun and the moon, and the stars as well, to darken:

שֶׁמֶשׁ בֶּעָנָן אֲכַסֶּנּוּ וְיָרֵחַ לֹא־יָאִיר אוֹרוֹ׃
כָּל־מְאוֹרֵי אוֹר בַּשָּׁמַיִם אַקְדִּירֵם עָלֶיךָ
וְנָתַתִּי חֹשֶׁךְ עַל־אַרְצְךָ נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יהוה׃[24]

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[20] Levenson 1994: 14. The example of the Flood Narrative is particularly concerned with the precariousness of creation as an ordering of the primeval waters.
[21] Cohn 2001: 3.
[22] "Day of the Lord" traditions can be found in Amos 5:18-20; 8:1-14; Isaiah 2:6-13; 13; 34; Ezekiel 32; Zephaniah 1:7-18; Obadiah 15; Joel 1:15; 2:1.
[23] Sweeney 2005: 48-49.
[24] *BHS* (vs. 8 n. a) suggests verse 8 is additional.

> I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. All the shining lights of the heavens I will darken above you, and put darkness on your land, says the Lord God (Ezekiel 32:7b-8).

The dominant theme of "darkness" (חֹשֶׁךְ), in both the heavens and on land, indicates an interruption by Yahweh of the order of the luminaries, or at least of their benefit to the readers of Ezekiel, and a reversal of Yahweh's creative activity; "darkness" is one of the few characteristics of the chaos out of which the world was created in Genesis 1:1-2. Indeed the first act of creation in the tradition of Genesis 1, the creation of light (1:3), provides a primary dichotomy between the created order and chaos, paralleled strongly by the themes of light and darkness, alluded to in Ezekiel here.[25] The traditions above exhibit a view that the luminaries may be *obscured* from those on earth, causing chaos and darkness. Yahweh's disordering capacity is not, however, always confined to a mere darkening of the luminaries. The Book of Amos contains the threat that the sun will set at noon (Amos 7:9); in this tradition, at least, the *order itself* can be brought into chaos by Yahweh, not just denied to those on earth, demonstrating his supreme control over the cosmos.

Yahweh's potential to cause darkness is not merely confined to the interruption of the luminaries' light or interference in their courses; by implication, these actions amount to the stoppage, or total disordering, of *time* in certain senses; the distinction between day and night would cease, and the מוֹעֲדִים could not be calculated. The luminaries were created to mark the sacred seasons (מוֹעֲדִים, 'festivals'), and the מוֹעֲדִים are thus part of Yahweh's continuous ordering action in creation.

Not only are the luminaries a significant aspect of creation, but so are the special times of the cult, which, in several traditions, were created prior to humanity. The luminaries were created to govern the cultic calendar, and as such the מוֹעֲדִים, the 'appointed times' of cultic life, find their origin in the very act of creation. A

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[25] The theme of creation is also strongly evident in other motifs from the same passage from Ezekiel (which is directed against Egypt). The pharaoh is depicted as a "dragon in the seas" (כַּתַּנִּים בַּיַּמִּים) (Ezekiel 32:2) in a struggle which he loses against Yahweh. Sweeney connects this struggle with "Leviathan" with other creation traditions, such as Psalm 74:12-17; 104: 7-9, and Job 38:8-11 (Sweeney 2005: 155).

relationship of reciprocity exists between God/Yahweh on the one hand, who through his faithfulness (חֶסֶד) maintains his created order (as in Psalm 136:5-9), and humanity on the other, or specifically Yahweh's people, who fulfil cultic obligations in these appointed times in order to please Yahweh, the one who has control over this order, and who could bring it into chaos at will. The cultic life of ancient Israel, exhibited in biblical traditions, originated from and was fundamentally linked to creation and order.[26] Life without cultic life was dark and chaotic, connected with that state which existed before creation.

For the ancient Israelite, experiencing the cult was experiencing order in creation and its maintenance, and this order was manifested not only in cultic time-punctuation, as seen in the above traditions, but also in the cultic locus, the 'sacred space' of ritual life.[27] In biblical traditions, Israel's time punctuation is clearly marked out by ritual activity, as a reflection of this worldview, and indeed as a constant mechanism by which the order that maintains creation is assured. Time punctuations which are enacted by the creator are sanctified on earth. The sabbath finds its ideological and theological roots in creation in the account of Genesis 1, and serves as a constant reminder of creation.[28] The fixed times of the cult, the מוֹעֲדִים, also, by the same account and many others, owe their origin to creation.

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[26] Many aspects of this worldview, of course, have several ancient Near Eastern parallels. For Egyptian and Mesopotamian parallels to Israelite conceptions of cosmos and order and their relationships with society and cultic life, see Cohn (2001: 3-56).

[27] Cohn argues that the Jerusalem Temple "was designed to represent the ordered world". He describes the Temple as "replete with cosmic symbolism", and whose functions included holding the forces of chaos, specifically primeval waters, at bay (Cohn 2001: 137).

[28] Indeed, Hunter takes up the argument that the text of Genesis 1 "is widely held to have a primarily cultic purpose, climaxing in the theology and celebration of the Sabbath" (Hunter 1999: 122). Part of this argument concerns the Hebrew term בָּרָא, which, in the view of several scholars, was closely associated with cult (for example Böhl 1913; Humbert 1947).

2. THE MONTH, THE NEW MOON, AND THE 'RITUAL CONSTELLATION' OF *ḤŌDEŠ*

Even a preliminary read of any of many parts of the Hebrew Bible should reveal that, in ancient Israel, the month was a fundamental division of time. As a temporal unit, it encompasses later Jewish tradition, not to mention countless other cultures around the world. In biblical and Jewish traditions, the month (חֹדֶשׁ, יֶרַח) is similar to the day (יוֹם), as Brin observes, in that "...both are designations for units of time based upon natural apperception".[29] Being a fundamental division of time in Israelite worldview, and based, it seems, on the movements of heavenly luminaries, it should not be surprising, then, that the month bore ritual significance in Israelite tradition and was significant for cultic life.

This thesis will focus on one specific cultic occasion: the monthly feast known throughout the Hebrew Bible as חֹדֶשׁ, רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ, or יוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ, the feast of the new moon.[30] As noted, several biblical traditions assert that Yahweh fixes and orders the course of the luminaries, and as such, orders the times which govern observance of the cult. Very little is known with any certainty about the calendar of Israel and Judah in pre-exilic times. The month, however, is usually thought to have been related directly to the moon: specifically, the lunation. It is likely that months were reckoned from the first illumination of the moon, in its thin crescent form, through the full moon on the 14th/15th day of the month, and finally ending when the phenomenon of the new crescent transforms the old month into a new one.[31] A lunar month which is based on the illumination of the moon's surface is often referred to as a 'synodic month', and lasts, on average, approximately 29.5 days.[32] Two synodic months, therefore, last approximately 59 days. Thus, in calendar terms, the lunar, synodic month lasts either 29 or 30 days. In ancient Israel and Judah, it is usually thought that

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[29] Brin 2001: 168.

[30] חֹדֶשׁ alone is the most common designation. The form רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ appears only twice in the Hebrew Bible (Numbers 10:10; 28:11); in both cases the plural form is used. The form יוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ is used in Ezekiel 46:1, where is it paired with יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת.

[31] Edelman 2005: 84. cf. Wacholder & Wacholder 1995: 1-40; Bickerman 1984: 63ff.; Herr 1976: 834; McKay 1972: 435-447; Schurer 1973: 588. For opposition to the 'lunar' hypothesis, see Jaubert 1953: 250-64; Zeitlin 1966: 28-45. Regarding the pre-exilic period it is particularly difficult to prove either the use of this kind of lunar calendrical system or an alternative method of time-reckoning. It is usually thought that a lunar type was employed.

[32] The mean duration of a lunar, 'synodic' month is 29 days 12 hours 44 minutes and 3 seconds (29.5306 days) (Schurer 1973: 588; Aveni 1990: 113).

the feast of the new moon (חֹדֶשׁ) marked the beginning of the natural cycle of the illumination of the moon's surface (as it is viewed from earth): the first appearance of the lunar crescent on the western horizon, at the beginning of every lunar month. In biblical traditions, חֹדֶשׁ, with its various associated rituals, reflects, among other things, the reciprocal relationship between Yahweh, as creator and maintainer of the order of the cosmos, and the people of Israel, who fulfil their obligations to Yahweh's cult in attempting to assure his maintenance of this order.

The Hebrew term חֹדֶשׁ can mean "month", or "new moon", depending on the context, and relates to the verb חָדַשׁ, meaning "to renew", "repair", or "restore".[33] The term has the adjectival form חָדָשׁ, meaning "new". חֹדֶשׁ finds its meaning as "month" in relation to the renewal of the approximately 29.5-day lunar month in the event of the new moon, the first appearance, or *renewal*, of the lunar crescent on the western horizon, after two or three days of obscuration.[34] The term has parallels in several Semitic languages: Ugaritic, Punic, Aramaic, Arabic, Ethiopic, Assyrian, and Sabean.[35] In reference to the feast of the new moon, there are three other forms of this term in ancient Hebrew, and another term which seems to directly parallel it. In two contexts in the MT the form יוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ "the day of the new moon" occurs.[36] The MT also contains two occurrences of the form רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ, usually translated "head/first/beginning of the month".[37] This form, while occurring only twice in the Hebrew Bible, subsequently became the standard way of referring to new moon observance. This process was gradual, however, and the term only became standard in later rabbinic times. In Numbers 28:11-15, the term רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ occurs parallel to the simpler form (חֹדֶשׁ), in reference to the same cultic event. Several texts from Qumran (examined in Chapter 5), such as 11QPs[a] 27, refer to ראש חודש, but contemporary texts such as *The Temple Scroll* (11QT) also employ the simpler form. Similarly, in

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[33] For an explanation of this verb and adjective, see Westermann 1971: 523-530. Westermann noted several associations of renewal which indicate a positive connotation of the verb in biblical tradition, such as the renewal of the Temple, altar, and allegiance to the kingdom (1971: 526). As such, we should also consider the translation "to restore" as faithful to the meaning of the Hebrew verb.

[34] Wagenaar (2005: 28-31; 2003: 3-24) suggests that the term חֹדֶשׁ may also occasionally imply an agricultural season. See Chapter 5, however, on the potentially divergent meaning of the term in texts from Qumran.

[35] See *BDB* 293-95.

[36] cf. 1 Samuel 20:34; Ezekiel 40:2; 46:1, 6. In the former instance, the term is used interchangeably with the simpler form, חֹדֶשׁ.

[37] cf. NRSV Numbers 10:10; 28:11; Gandz 1949: 260.

the Mishnah (c. 200 CE), both the רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ form and the simpler form, חֹדֶשׁ, equally designate days of the new moon (see Chapter 8). Occasionally, the form בְּאֶחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ ("on the first of the month") occurs, generally as a more neutral term referring to the first day of the month purely for dating purposes, although it does, nevertheless, refer coincidentally to the day of the new moon.[38] Finally, in *The Rule of the Community* (1QS), the form ברשית ירחים (X, 5) occurs, which seems to refer to the beginning of months (see Chapter 5). The feast will be referred to throughout the present work as חֹדֶשׁ, because this is the most common Hebrew term used. Moreover, this term occurs in the earliest texts (for example Isaiah 1:13-14), and indeed through to the later texts examined (for example *M. Rosh Hashshanah*), and as such, is the most consistent term used to refer to the feast.

Jewish tradition since rabbinic times has treated the term חֹדֶשׁ as referring to either a month, or the new moon, the time of the appearance of the lunar crescent (cf. Chapter 8). Since antiquity, חֹדֶשׁ has also been translated into terms approximating "month" or "new moon" in numerous languages. LXX variously translates חֹדֶשׁ as μήν (month) or νεομηνία/νουμηνία (new moon). When, in the MT, חֹדֶשׁ clearly refers to the *feast of the new moon*, LXX translators tend to reflect the ambivalence of the Hebrew term in their translation, sometimes using μήν to denote the feast, and sometimes νουμηνία.[39] The term νουμηνία occurs in numerous Greek texts from before the LXX and denotes the first day of a lunar month generally.[40] In certain contexts, however,[41] νουμηνία comes to denote the beginning of a month which does not necessarily correspond with an astronomical new moon at all. In such contexts we sometimes find Jews using the phrase νουμηνία κατὰ σελήνην, "the new moon according to the moon/lunar reckoning" (cf. Josephus *AJ* IV 78), for clarity, and to indicate the lunar nature of Jewish "new moons" as opposed to the beginnings of months in other calendars.[42] The Vulgate translates חֹדֶשׁ/νουμηνία as either *calenda*

[38] This is the case, for example, in Ezekiel 31:1, which bears the same basic formula as other dates referred to therein.
[39] See Dogniez 2006: 361-62; Caquot 1960: 1; Gandz 1949: 260.
[40] See *Liddell & Scott* 1183.
[41] This applies especially in reference to the Roman world from the mid-first century BCE onwards (cf. Stern 2002: 108ff.).
[42] Cf. also Philo, *Spec. Leg* II 41, for a similar clarification.

or *neomenia*, both of which refer to the first day of a month.[43] These two terms can be found in the same context relating the same feast, and are used synonymously.[44]

Towards the end of every lunation, there are approximately two or three days during which the moon, orbiting directly between the earth and the sun, is obscured from the earth. The mid-point of this period of obscuration is called the conjunction. The moment of the conjunction is calculated, not observed. In modern astronomy it is this point (the conjunction) which is referred to by the term 'new moon'.[45] Not so when referring to ancient astronomy. One or two days after the conjunction, the moon becomes visible from earth once again, after sunset, above the western horizon.[46] This is what is referred to, regarding ancient contexts, as the new moon.[47] The period of 2-3 days of the moon's obscuration brought to an end each lunar month in several ancient Near Eastern cultures.[48] Subsequently, each following month was reckoned to begin with the appearance of the thin lunar crescent once again above the western horizon. On either the evening ending the twenty-ninth day of the outgoing month, or that ending the thirtieth day of the outgoing month, this astronomical event would take place, and signal the beginning of the new month. Some time in the night after its first appearance, the new moon sets after the sun on the western horizon. It remains out of sight from earth until the following evening, when it appears again above the western horizon, slightly higher, and slightly bigger, and continues to wax until it is full on the $14^{th}/15^{th}$ day of the month, and then wanes for the rest of the month, to the final crescent before becoming obscured again.

Due to the variability of the length of an outgoing month (approx. 29.5 days must equal, in practical terms, either 29 or 30 days), a calendar based on observing the moon's reappearance in crescent form involved certain complications. In the absence of advance calculation of this event, there would always have been some

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[43] *Calendae/Kălendae* refers to the first day of a month, and occasionally also a whole month (cf. *Lewis & Short* 1022).
[44] Cf. for example, Vulgate Isaiah 1:13-14.
[45] McKay 1972: 439-41.
[46] This time variation depends upon the earthly co-ordinates of the viewer and the relative positions of the sun and moon at sunset (Stern 2001: 100). The 'synodical cycle' of the moon, the time it takes the moon to complete a single lunation from one conjunction to another, fluctuates between approximately 29 days 6 hours and 30 minutes, and 29 days and 20 hours (Stern 2001: 101).
[47] By modern definition, this is simply called 'first crescent' (McKay 1972: 439).
[48] VanderKam 1998: 16; Bickerman 1984: 62-63; 1980: 22; Herr 1976: 834.

uncertainty as to which evening the crescent would appear: that of the twenty-ninth day or that of the thirtieth day. Furthermore, the actual appearance of the new moon, at Mediterranean latitudes, was not necessarily easy to observe; it appears just after sunset, and at this point the moon itself is descending in the western sky. Moonset of the new crescent can follow sunset promptly, sometimes, at Mediterranean latitudes, as soon as half an hour after sunset.[49] In this situation, weather conditions can easily interfere with lunar reckoning. Clouds, for example, will obscure it; also, the light of the thin crescent can be very slight, and the bright western sky at sunset can render it difficult to pinpoint with the naked eye. The new moon's appearance was, and still is, a very difficult astronomical event to predict, at least to within an interval of any less than two days. [50] Thus, *viewing* the new moon in ancient Israel, as other parts of the Near East, was often crucial for the exact reckoning of months. If this was to be avoided, a conventional time at some point around its appearance would have to be agreed upon in advance. In fact, in different periods of Israel's history, until late antiquity, one can find evidence of both of these solutions being employed. These contexts will be explored as they arise.

The appearance of the new moon, in the worldview of biblical traditions, was a manifestation of Yahweh's ordering of creation (cf. Jeremiah 31:35) and the occasion was marked by significant ritual activity. The one or two days which followed, or were begun by, the appearance of the new moon exhibit a generally propitious quality in many biblical and extra-biblical traditions. Wacholder and Wacholder carried out a quantitative survey of dates referred to in the MT, in search of discernable patterns.[51] Based on the idea that, in all societies, psychological and practical factors result in certain numbers being particularly favoured and others less so, they show, by quantitative analysis, that month days 1, 10, 15, and 20 are dominant in the Pentateuch. In the MT as a whole, events occurring on the first day of the month are by far the most common (28.3% of all dates). Not only is the first day of the month commonly referred to in the MT, but the events that occur on the first days of months exhibit its particularly propitious quality: regular occurrences on these days include the reception of prophetic oracles (for example Ezekiel 26:1), gatherings

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[49] Stern 2001: 100.
[50] Stern points out that modern astronomers have not yet successfully established a theory of the criteria required in order to accurately predict the first appearance of the lunar crescent. (Stern 2001: 100).
[51] Wacholder & Wacholder 1995: 1-40.

of the people (Nehemiah 8:2), and various Temple/altar/Tabernacle dedications and consecrations (for example Exodus 40:1-17).[52] It should therefore be concluded that the first day of the month had a particularly sanctified quality. This, we shall certainly find, is overtly evident in the sacrifices which are prescribed for the first day of each month in the Jerusalem Temple (Numbers 28:11-15; Ezekiel 46:1-7) (see Chapter 3). It is not, therefore, surprising that in later Jewish texts, the proclamation of the new month, on the new moon day, was marked by the exclamation: מְקֻדָּשׁ, מְקֻדָּשׁ "It is hallowed! It is hallowed!" (*M. Roshshanah* 2:7)

The ritual that characterized חֹדֶשׁ in ancient Israelite and Jewish religion, in Israel-Palestine, seems to have been mainly focussed around two settings: (1) the public setting of the sanctuary, where a programme of sacrifices specific to the event was carried out on a monthly basis, and also where a public ritual gathering, or 'sanctuary convocation', took place (see Chapter 3); and (2) a more private setting in which special food consumption was the centre of activity (see Chapter 4). In the later Diaspora, as will be shown, public gathering also marked the feast in some contexts (see Chapter 6). These public and private spheres constituted the two main ritual loci which comprised the 'ritual constellation' of חֹדֶשׁ. The choice of 'ritual' as an analytical category in which to study the activity which took place on ancient חֹדֶשׁ is elaborated in Chapter 2. 'Constellation' may be used to describe חֹדֶשׁ as it alludes to the relationship of the various rites and ritual settings with one another, particularly in emphasizing the understanding that for חֹדֶשׁ, each ritual setting bore a relationship to the others, such that this matrix of symbols, practices, contexts, and disparate, Diaspora settings formed a whole unit; this might be referred to as a "festival". Like a constellation of stars, in which each star, as viewed from earth, is separate from the others while at the same time acting as an integral part of a larger formation, for whose unity all of the other stars are required, so חֹדֶשׁ, whilst occurring in various contexts, with several different rituals, formed a whole for ancient Israelite and Jewish society. This 'ritual constellation', like the sabbath, or any one of the yearly feasts, was a significant and consistent ritual unit in the religious life of Israel, Judah, Yehud, Judea, Jewish history, for centuries. As this ritual constellation was observed in the Jerusalem sanctuary, so it was also in Diaspora settings. It will be argued that

[52] For tables, see Wacholder & Wacholder 1995: 9-11, 12.

while there is a great deal unknown about the feast of חֹדֶשׁ, especially in contexts other than the Jerusalem Temple, or especially before the exile beginning in 587 BCE, we can nevertheless ascertain that the primary ideological focus of the feast, at least from early Second Temple times, was Yahweh and Israel, or Jews, *as a whole*. The symbolism of the feast referred strongly to the religious action of, and for, *all the people of Yahweh* (whether or not it involved, in reality, all the people of Yahweh, is another matter). The focus, in most cases, seems to have been the Jerusalem cult. The feast was, symbolically, a unified, collective action of all Israel.

3. STUDY OF THE FEAST OF THE NEW MOON IN CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIP

There will be reason to consult the works of many scholars throughout the present study, but for now a brief review of the works of scholars whose focus has been the feast of the new moon in particular is undertaken. Systematic study of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ is rare in modern scholarship. To date, there is no single complete volume dedicated to the study of its ancient observance.[53] Scholarly discourse on the feast is restricted to journal articles, single chapters within larger volumes, short passages in commentaries on the relevant ancient texts, or short sections in volumes dedicated to a broad coverage of ancient Israelite religion and life. As such, there are a number of small studies which have contributed to our understanding of the feast. As valuable as each contribution is, it is inherently problematic that the research has thus far been carried out in such a disparate manner. Studies have focussed on either limited aspects of the feast, such as its technical, astronomical reckoning in light of certain texts, or limited contexts, such as its early, or indeed late, observance during the period with which the present work is concerned. To date, there has been a particular lack of work which comprehensively covers the history of the feast from early 'biblical' times (*viz* from the earliest references to it from the ninth or eighth century BCE), to post-70 CE debates and reflections codified in the early rabbinic period.[54] Work that has been done, moreover, is limited in breadth of analysis, due to its brevity, and is usually outdated in several respects. There are several other articles which survey a variety of sources for the feast, but these tend to focus on limited aspects of it. As a result of these issues, there are problems with how ancient חֹדֶשׁ is understood in scholarship today; there are significant aspects of the feast regarding which there is no broad scholarly consensus and, problematically, very little debate.

The two most common interpretative disparities relate, first, to the status of the feast, especially in early times, as a 'heathen', or 'pagan', practice which sat uncomfortably with several Israelite and Judahite/Judean prophets, priests, and

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[53] There is, however, a small number of volumes dedicated to the study of the observance of a modern form of רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ by Jewish women's groups since the 1970s, which include some historical references (for example Berrin 1996). This modern tradition traces its roots back to the Talmudic period (later than the scope of the present study). In a passage in *Pirke DeRabbi Eliezer* (Chapter 45), the holiday of רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ is given to women as a reward for their refusal to give their jewellery for the construction of the Golden Calf (cf. Feldman 2003: 34).

[54] Cf. for example, Wilke 1951.

scribes, and secondly, with the manner in which the feast was reckoned, in an astronomical/calendrical sense. As will be discussed at several points in the present work, there is considerable disparity in relation to these and similar views and furthermore, as has been said, these disparate assumptions rarely 'meet' in discourse or debate. Thus inaccurate and outdated theories are sometimes uncritically perpetuated, and remain unchecked. Significantly, as will be pointed out, some of these discrepancies are contained in standard biblical commentaries. Particularly, it is commonly asserted in biblical commentaries that the feast of חֹדֶשׁ was associated with 'heathen' practices at certain stages of its development. This conclusion will be disputed as it is applied to the evidence at hand. Moreover, the concept of 'heathen', or 'pagan', constitutes an outdated analytical category, and is unhelpful in the study of ancient Israelite religion. This association appears to originate, in modern scholarship, with Wellhausen.[55]

Early Commentary

One of the earliest recorded contexts for discourse on the feast of the new moon and the technicalities of its reckoning and observance is the Mishnah (completed c. 200 CE).[56] This context, mainly tractate *Rosh Hashshanah*, is explored in Chapter 8. Tractate *Rosh Hashshanah* includes a discussion on the procedures of the court of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, and later rabbinic court, in their examination of witnesses of the new moon's appearance, and the subsequent *sanctification* of the day of the new moon. The chronological scope of the present work ends with a discussion on this source. A survey of the views represented in the Mishnah, especially *Rosh Hashshanah*, is necessary for any scholarly discussion of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ in earlier periods because, even though the Mishnah represents opinions and reflections of a later time than when the Temple stood and operated in Jerusalem, its tractates supply valuable information regarding the technical reckoning of the feast which is *otherwise unavailable* from these earlier sources. As such, the Mishnah provides the scholar of חֹדֶשׁ an opportunity and a challenge: an opportunity to engage with the information

[55] Wellhausen 1994: 112ff. While Wellhausen is the earliest modern scholar to be referred to here, the tradition of חֹדֶשׁ having a 'pagan' association precedes him. This previous tradition takes a rather different form, however, and involves certain patristic authors condemning Jewish worship as including worship of the moon. These traditions cannot, however, be considered part of the critical historical study of the feast; they mainly involve early Christian polemic against Jewish contemporaries (cf. Chapter 7).

[56] cf. Neusner 1980: 177; 1991: 1.

therein, and a challenge to assess the text's historical reliability. An analysis of this text is also fundamental to the present study because, directly or indirectly, the information presented therein informs the views of many of the scholars encountered, even scholars whose focus is earlier than the time of the Mishnah's completion.[57]

The Mishnah is also important in the history of scholarly discourse on חֹדֶשׁ due to the work's general impact on the Jewish religion.[58] Particularly, the divisions of tractates represented in the Mishnah have been continuously perpetuated for intricate commentary for centuries since its final codification. These tractates, which are preserved for commentary in the Tosefta, the Jerusalem Talmud, and the Babylonian Talmud, have maintained a continuous authoritative status, and have continued to be a source of great influence and further scholarly discourse. The commentaries in the Tosefta and Talmud contain rabbinic discussion of specific points requiring clarity, and do not constitute a systematic presentation of the feast, either from a broad historical perspective or from their specific contexts.[59] Later scholars of the Middle Ages, such as Maimonides (1138-1204 CE), also continued the process of commenting on the texts, and in the case of Maimonides, he even sees fit to dedicate a discourse on *The Sanctification of the New Moon.*[60] It should be said, though, that while Maimonides bears a continued relevance to Jewish thought,[61] his study of the new moon largely deals with its development during the period from rabbinic times onwards. The feast of חֹדֶשׁ developed considerably from late antiquity to the Middle Ages, and much of Maimonides' discussion is focussed on this period.[62] He undertakes little historical investigation into the feast previous to this rabbinic development.

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[57] Cf. for example, the general articles on Jewish calendars in Schurer 1973; Herr 1976: 834-864; Bickerman 1984: 60-69.
[58] cf. Neusner 1991.
[59] As Hezser observes, even rabbinic literature as a whole cannot be seen to represent Judaism, as such (Hezser 2005: 352).
[60] Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah: H. Qiddush ha-Ḥodesh*; cf. Davidson 2005: 247-52.
[61] cf. Seeskin 2005: 1-9.
[62] For brief overviews of this subsequent history see Elbogin 1993: 103-05; Idelsohn 1995: 158-61; Knobel 1983: 101.

Julius Wellhausen

Like several traditions in modern scholarship on the Hebrew Bible, we begin here with Julius Wellhausen.[63] According to Goldstein and Cooper, Wellhausen's reconstruction of the history of "sacred feasts" may have been his most influential contribution to scholarship of ancient Israel.[64] Since Wellhausen, it has been established in modern scholarship that the feast of the new moon was a constant element in Israelite religion.[65] The *lunar feasts*, he asserted, could safely be considered as older than annual or harvest festivals.[66] Wellhausen encountered a problem with חֹדֶשׁ, one which is encountered here, and by several others referred to herein: festival codes, sometimes referred to as 'cultic calendars' present a problematic picture of the early history of Israelite/Judahite חֹדֶשׁ. The feast is ignored by certain pentateuchal enumerations of feasts (Exodus 23:14-17, 34:18-23, Leviticus 23, and Deuteronomy 16:1-17), but is prescribed with extensive sacrificial offerings in Numbers 28:11-15 (which many commentators view as a later source).[67] Thus, there appears to be preserved a selection of *early* festival codes which do not prescribe חֹדֶשׁ any place in the ritual life of Israel, and one *late* code which prescribes the feast with a very prominent role in the cult. This disparity in the sources will be addressed in Chapter 3 of the present work, but below, the two possible explanations which Wellhausen offered are noted.

This same problem persistently presents itself to commentators of the relevant biblical texts, and occasionally in entries to Bible-related dictionaries and encyclopaedas. To quote Martin Noth, for example, in his *Old Testament Library* commentary on Numbers: "The prominence given to the days of the new moon by extremely large sacrifices (28:11-15) is remarkable".[68] John Sturdy, in reference to the passage in his *Cambridge Bible Commentary*, stated that "A sharp increase in quantities offered can be seen".[69] In the *International Critical Commentary* on

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[63] The present work is concerned with Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*. This was first published in 1878.
[64] Goldstein & Cooper 1990: 19; cf. Wellhausen 1994: 83-120.
[65] Caquot 1960: 2.
[66] Wellhausen 1994: 113.
[67] Wellhausen 1994: 113.
[68] Noth 1968: 222. Originally in the series: *Das Alte Testament Deutsch* (1966).
[69] Sturdy 1976: 202. This view, in particular, will be contested here, because there are, as regularly observed no earlier pentateuchal enumerations of sacrificial quantities with which to compare those in Numbers!

Numbers from 1903, Gray had suggested that the feast was "intentionally ignored by the early lawgivers",[70] while Binns, in his 1927 *Westminster Commentary*, admitted that "The reason for this ignoring of a great festival by the earlier legislation is a little hard to understand".[71]

One of Wellhausen's suggested solutions, which has endured in some works to the present day, was that חֹדֶשׁ may have sat uncomfortably with biblical authors of a certain period (*viz* the period of the composition of the earlier festal codes), because of 'heathenish' superstitions associated with it.[72] A second solution suggested by Wellhausen was that the sabbath, once considered a lunar festival, and occurring at the full moon, absorbed older חֹדֶשׁ ritual into it, and thus, in the merging of the two feasts, only the sabbath was referred to for some time thereafter.[73] (Note, however, the apparent 're-emergence' of חֹדֶשׁ in the Persian period.)[74] The latter suggestion has not generally found acceptance in scholarship, because of persistent references to חֹדֶשׁ in the Hebrew Bible, seemingly throughout the period concerned, and secondly, the idea that the sabbath occurred at the full moon every month, remains vigorously contested.[75] The uncertain nature of each of these solutions is suggested by their difference from one another. Wellhausen searched for a reason why חֹדֶשׁ is not mentioned in certain festival codes, and only one of these reasons involves a postulated 'pagan' significance to the feast; upon its inception, this idea was speculative at best.

The 'heathenish' explanation, however, has been referred to as "*classique depuis Wellhausen*".[76] It can be found in many of the standard works and commentaries on relevant texts. In the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, in 1902, Immanuel Benzinger, for example, suggested that to the new moon, "...all sorts of superstitions

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[70] Gray 1912: 410.
[71] Binns 1927: 194.
[72] Wellhausen 1994: 113. This idea might be viewed in the context of Wellhausen's concern to "...extrapolate a process of ongoing denaturation in the ancient Israelite calendar", based on "an increasing tendency to provide historical explanations for the celebration of festivals" (Wagenaar 2005: 2).
[73] Wellhausen 1994: 113-114.
[74] This, in Wellhausen's view, might be attributed to the new moon's role in the reckoning of yearly festivals at this time (1994: 113).
[75] cf. Giem 1988; Hallo 1977: 1-13.
[76] Caquot 1960: 4. My emphasis.

could most readily be connected."[77] According to Gray, חֹדֶשׁ "...possibly as a popular feast was associated with heathen practices";[78] Cooke's *International Critical Commentary* on Ezekiel includes the observation: "The earlier codes JE, D, H ignore the celebration of the new moon...perhaps because it was associated with heathen practices".[79] Wolff, in his 1965 (*Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament*) commentary on Hosea, postulated that חֹדֶשׁ may have been associated with sexual rituals (ἱερὸς γάμος, "sacred marriage").[80] Wellhausen's *suggestion* has had a significant impact on subsequent scholarly discourse. Furthermore, this solution remains to a large part speculative, and, as should be clear from the above quotation, those who perpetuate this argument do so only with an admitted measure of uncertainty. An opposing view is found in the *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, for example, that: "The focus of the day was the offering of thanksgiving to Yahweh rather than adulation of the moon itself".[81]

The issue remains unresolved, and interest in חֹדֶשׁ has not generally been sustained in recent times. Thus, in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, for example, there is no entry at all for "New Moon": the reader is referred therein to "Calendars", wherein the feast is not dealt with or described in any detail.

Solomon Gandz

Solomon Gandz published a series of three articles on the Hebrew calendar, two of which concern us here. His first article[82] explores and problematizes several key Hebrew and Aramaic terms which relate to the calendar in biblical, extra-biblical, and post-biblical sources. Gandz's main focus was the rabbinic calendar as it evolved from the time of the Mishnah onwards. The article focuses on the technical language used to describe new moons in rabbinic and subsequent literature, and contains very little investigation into the manner in which the feast was celebrated, or indeed its social significance. Several of Gandz's observations on calendrical terminology, however, are quite pertinent to the present topic. He rightly observed "Considerable

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[77] Benzinger 1902: 3402.
[78] Gray 1912: 410.
[79] Cooke 1936: 509.
[80] Wolff 1974: 38.
[81] *EBD* 761.
[82] Gandz 1949: 259-80.

confusion and perplexity" in relation to some aspects of the Jewish calendar, particularly in terminology. This includes the term which referred variously to the new moon, the month, and the feast of the new moon:

> The term חדש, which originally had the meaning "the shining, glittering new moon", was later used to designate the festival of the new moon day, as well as the whole month, namely the lunation, the life time of each newly born moon.[83]

In reference to the potentially ambiguous nature of the terminology, and the biblical writers' response to it, he argued,

> To avoid this ambiguity two new terms were coined for the new moon day, to wit, יום החדש, "the day of the new moon," and ראש חדש, "the beginning, or the first day, of the month."[84]

Gandz's second article, in two parts,[85] is more pertinent to the present work, as here he focussed on the new moon in particular. He continued to show great interest in the technicalities of calendar reckoning, and the technical terms associated with it. Again, though, he did not demonstrate a corresponding interest in the type and form of ritual, or the social aspects of the feast. The technical aspect of the new moon which he is most concerned with here is the succession of *two* new moon days at the beginning of particular months. Thus, while this work forms an important contribution to the study of the feast, particularly its two-day succession, it does not constitute an attempt to explore all aspects of the feast. The earliest evidence for this two-day succession of the feast in an Israelite context, Gandz suggested, is the reference in 1 Samuel 20 to Saul's two-day new moon feast.[86] Usefully, Gandz referred to the observance of new moon days in other Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures. As well as brief reference to ethnographic analogues from the area of Lake Victoria in Africa, Gandz observed that the Egyptians observed a succession of two new moon days as early as 1900 BCE,[87] as did the Aryans of ancient India, and he also referred to Greek terms for

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[83] Gandz 1949: 260.
[84] Gandz 1949: 260.
[85] Gandz 1949a: 157-72; 1950: 251-277.
[86] Gandz 1949a: 161. Saul, he argued, "prior to 1000 B.C.E., was in the habit of observing two new moon days"; cf. Chapter 4.
[87] Gandz 1949a: 163.

the days of the new moon from the time of Homer and Hesiod.[88] These examples, however, were cited mainly for technical comparison, as they all appear to have involved two days of special observances, and Gandz did not elaborate much on social or ritual aspects of the parallels.

Gandz exhibited a tendency towards reading 'heathen' associations at certain points in the history of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ. Commenting on the small number of usages of the term יוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ in the Hebrew Bible, Gandz suggested,

> In later times this term must have become offensive as a pagan survival; it reminded one of the worship of a heavenly body, of a day dedicated to the new moon. Therefore, the harmless term ראש חדש was preferred, which simply specified the first day of the month.[89]

Gandz did not necessarily argue that there was anything *fundamentally* pagan about חֹדֶשׁ observance, however, merely that there may have been discomfort towards certain terminology at certain times. There are, however, a number of problems with Gandz's conclusion here. First, the term רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ occurs twice only in the entire Hebrew Bible: Numbers 10:10 and Numbers 28:11-15.[90] In the latter instance it is clearly used interchangeably with חֹדֶשׁ alone to refer to the same cultic event. Secondly, there are also only two contexts in the Hebrew Bible in which the term יוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ is used: 1 Samuel 20:34 and Ezekiel 40:2; 46:1, 6. In 1 Samuel 20 this usage also occurs interchangeably with חֹדֶשׁ alone, again referring to the same feast. Furthermore, in Ezekiel 46:1, the term יוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ is used alongside יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת. Because of the similarity of expression for each holy day in Ezekiel, it would be better to conclude that the form is a result of the Hebrew style of the author of this part of Ezekiel. From the above points, it is suggested that the most common designation for the feast in the Hebrew Bible is חֹדֶשׁ, and variations of this are uncommon. There is certainly not enough evidence to argue that יוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ was offensive, or was considered to have 'pagan' associations. Finally, this suggestion might also be refuted

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[88] Gandz 1949a: 164.
[89] Gandz 1949a: 260.
[90] It does, however, appear a number of times in the literature of Qumran and the Mishnah (as does חֹדֶשׁ), and only from this period onwards becomes the standard term referring to the feast.

by observing that a later text, *The Rule of the Community* (1QS), from Qumran, uses the form ימי חודש (see Chapter 5).

Gandz's contribution in this series of articles mainly concerns the calendar from the rabbinic period onwards, and most of his study of terminology focuses on rabbinic terms. Nevertheless his contribution to the study of the new moon in the periods preceding the composition of rabbinic literature is important, because he is one of the only scholars to have explored the two-day sequence of חֹדֶשׁ for this early period.

Fritz Wilke

Fritz Wilke's article on the new moon in Israelite and Jewish traditions[91] considers a range of sources from several periods. Wilke, like Gandz, attempted to provide context for the study of the feast in ancient Israel by referring briefly to several parallel practices from different cultures, both contemporary and historical.[92] From earliest Israel, according to Wilke, חֹדֶשׁ observance was directly connected to the appearance of the lunar crescent.[93] While Wilke noted the lack of cultic *regulations* with regard to חֹדֶשׁ in the pre-exilic period, he did refer to several traditions which attest to observance of various kinds in this early period, including a tradition of rest, or abstention from ordinary work.[94] The main features of the feast, which Wilke argued, characterised it over a long period in Israel's history were special meals, rest from work, Temple gatherings, horn blasts, mountain fires, and liturgical rejoicing calls.[95]

Wilke also referred to a problem which is continuously encountered in the present work: חֹדֶשׁ fails to receive a mention in several passages which pertain to the regulation of the cult. The new moon, he argued, was intentionally ignored.[96] This he viewed as part of the tension between *Sippenfeier*, "kinship celebration", and "state cult". Ultimately, also, this should be viewed in light of the rise of monotheism,

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[91] Wilke 1951: 171-83.
[92] Wilke 1951: 171-73.
[93] Wilke 1951: 171.
[94] Wilke 1951: 173.
[95] Wilke 1951: 175.
[96] Wilke 1951: 175-76.

whose protagonists, he suggested, may well have wished for the total elimination of חֹדֶשׁ ritual, whose connection with the moon may well have recalled the common veneration of the moon by other peoples.[97] For this reason, Wilke suggested that in the late pre-exilic Jerusalem Temple, only one new moon a year may have been observed, but from the time of Ezekiel onwards, each new moon received special sacrifice.[98] The reason for the feast's prominence after the Exile, according to Wilke, may have been its close connection with the reckoning of the important yearly festivals.[99] Wilke continued to refer to several sources from the time of Nehemiah, through the Hasmonaean period, and into Roman times, noting that from the time of Nehemiah, the ⅓ shekel tax was paid in partial support of the offerings for new moon in the Temple, and that the new moon, in certain contexts, could be viewed as a propitious time, and was, in certain circles, also seen as having coincided with many important moments in the "salvation history".[100] Wilke also surveyed evidence from the Mishnah and Talmud, and indeed the feast's history into later Jewish tradition.[101]

Wilke's article thus presents the development of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ from pre-exilic times to the Persian period: in early times the feast was mainly a popular celebration (although with associated temple gatherings),[102] observed in a family context, and was connected with the cycles of nature.[103] When the cult was centralised, and experienced monotheistic reform, חֹדֶשׁ fell out of favour, to some extent, or was regarded with suspicion (ultimately Wilke exhibits a tendency to accept Wellhausen's suggestion here). After the Exile, however, the feast once again rose to importance, in the Temple *and* at a popular level, due to the moon's importance in reckoning Israel's calendar. The most important assertion in Wilke's article, supported by his survey of the sources, is that חֹדֶשׁ must be understood as having been a consistent part of Israelite and Jewish culture for millennia, experiencing a virtually

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[97] Wilke 1951: 176.
[98] I will argue against this position in Chapter 3. However, he did *not* suggest here that only one new moon per year generally was observed in pre-exilic Israel and Judah; only that for a time at the end of the monarchic period, special sacrifices *in Jerusalem* were only carried out on one new moon each year (that of the seventh month).
[99] Wilke 1951: 176.
[100] Wilke 1951: 177. The association of the new moon with the "salvation history" is taken up herein in Chapter 5.
[101] Wilke 1951: 177-82.
[102] Wilke 1951: 174.
[103] cf. Wilke 1951: 174-75.

uninterrupted significance in ritual life. It should also be understood as having been a constellation of practices which had certain commonalities with the practices of Israel's neighbours (indeed, Wilke portrays חֹדֶשׁ as replete with recurring universal significance).[104] Due to the brevity of his article, there are various areas of evidence which Wilke failed to comment on (such as certain Diaspora contexts, and Qumran),[105] and others which he did not examine in any detail, and this led to some conclusions which remain uncertain. Among these is the notion that the feast experienced a phase of being deemed problematic or uncomfortable in the minds of certain biblical authors (the suggestion of Wellhausen).

André Caquot

In an article published in 1960, André Caquot made several remarks on the history of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ, and highlighted a suggestion regarding the earlier history of the feast, which has not, ultimately, been taken up by other scholars. Like Solomon Gandz previously, Caquot acknowledged the ambivalence of the term חֹדֶשׁ, but this time with added reference to LXX translation:

> La tradition juive ne laisse mettre en doute le moment choisi: c'est celui qui marque le début du mois juif et que nous appelons « nouvelle lune ». C'est pourquoi les Septante traduisent l'hébreu *ḥōdeš* tantôt par μήν, tantôt par νεομηνία.[106]

Caquot suggested that the feast of חֹדֶשׁ as known from most of the sources, actually owed its origin to the time of the composition of Ezekiel 45:17,[107] and that after that time it was a consistent part of Jewish cultic life. The problem with חֹדֶשׁ which Caquot addressed is a familiar one and relates mainly to the period of the monarchies of Israel and Judah:

> Cependant, le silence des codes législatifs anciens pose un problème: alors que la célébration du sabbat hebdomadaire et des trois grandes fêtes annuelles y est ordonnée, la

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[104] Wilke 1951: 171.
[105] Note, of course, the date of Wilke's publication (1951); he would not have had ample opportunity to examine most of the relevant Qumran texts.
[106] Caquot 1960: 1.
[107] Caquot 1960: 1.

> néoménie n'est l'objet d'aucune allusion, ni positive, ni négative, dans les quatre recueils des lois antérieurs a la législation « sacerdotal » et post-exilique des Nombres.[108]

Caquot addressed the same problem that Wellhausen and Wilke identified: how is the inconsistency of the biblical witness to the feast of חֹדֶשׁ to be explained? Caquot acknowledged Wellhausen's two solutions, but accepts neither.[109] Rather he took up a suggested reading of Psalm 81:4, following N. H. Snaith,[110] and proposed that in pre-exilic times, the term חֹדֶשׁ had a different meaning altogether from its later sense: the term referred, in pre-exilic texts, not to the new moon at all, but to the *full* moon, especially the full moon of אֵתָנִים, that of the New Year.[111] This, he concluded, implied that there was no new moon feast during the period of the Israelite monarchies as such, and that reference to חֹדֶשׁ which dated from that era should be read in connection with the main yearly festivals, and not the repetitive new moon.[112] He also proposed that a Mesopotamian influence led ultimately to Judah's adoption of a calendar which was reckoned from the appearance of the new moon.[113] Caquot did not, however, present convincing proof of these arguments, and admitted that his was a suggestion only, pending further investigation.[114]

This reading has not been taken up or proven by scholars subsequent to Caquot. Moreover, when sources for חֹדֶשׁ which are generally considered to originate from pre-exilic times are examined, the citations display certain features which suggest that חֹדֶשׁ was, after all, a monthly feast in pre-exilic times. Caquot's article nevertheless makes some important contributions to the study. First, he recognised the important calendrical function of the moon in ancient Israel, and stressed that just because certain feasts coincided with certain of its phases, one should be cautious about ascribing them to,

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[108] Caquot 1960: 2.
[109] Caquot 1960: 4.
[110] Snaith 1947: 81ff.
[111] Caquot 1960: 8. This was argued also on the basis of Deuteronomy 16:1 and 1 Samuel 20.
[112] Caquot 1960: 17.
[113] Caquot 1960: 18.
[114] Caquot 1960: 9.

> ...une quelconque « religion lunaire » primitive, héritage du « désert » ou emprunt à la Mésopotamie.[115]

Rather, he argued, one should observe that the moon was a convenient time-piece in the ancient world.[116] Secondly, it is also significant that Caquot displayed dissatisfaction with the solutions proposed by Wellhausen to the problems of the new moon's history; these problems remained unresolved.

William W. Hallo

Hallo's 1977 article attempts to emphasise the contrast between Israel, whose calendar, he argued, is largely organised around the sabbath, and Mesopotamian culture, in which the lunar cycle was all important:

> ...the cultic calendar of ancient Mesopotamia, like its civil calendar, was largely tied to the phases of the moon, and not at all to the week... in Israel, the cultic calendar was only minimally connected to the lunar phases, whereas the sabbatical cycle was all-important.[117]

In attempting to demonstrate this, Hallo focused on new moons and sabbaths, and explored evidence previously cited for both in Ancient Near Eastern texts. Much of his argument concerns the sabbath. He argued that the sabbath should not, as sometimes had been argued, be considered to have, at any stage in Israel's history, occurred coincident with the full moon, but strictly on a seven-day cycle, distinct from the lunation. He argued, furthermore, that the sabbath should to a large extent be considered *in opposition* to the new moon:

> Finally, the importance of the Sabbath must be seen in the context of the continuing deemphasis of the lunar festivals. Moon worship flourished wherever Mesopotamian culture spread, and even after its demise it survived in places like Harran. But in Israel it failed to gain a foothold; the full moon was not worshipped, the quarters were not

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[115] Caquot 1960: 17. He has, however, suggested that the *new* moon as a feast owes its origin, to some extent, to Mesopotamia (1960: 18).

[116] He may go too far in this assertion, however. Although the moon appears to have had a universal calendrical significance in the Ancient Near East, we should not, even in a potentially monotheistic context, exclude the idea that the moon itself remained replete with cosmic symbolism.

[117] Hallo 1977: 3-4.

> specially observed, and even the new moon was ultimately relegated to the status of a half holiday.[118]

Certain elements of this assertion appear to be correct: the strict seven-day sabbath cycle is convincingly argued to have been a special feature of Israelite culture, distinct from Mesopotamian parallels; the new moon, also, did experience an eventual relegation. Problems abound with his overall theory, however. The 'relegation' of the new moon to which Hallo refers is its possible decline in importance in rabbinic sources in the aftermath of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE (cf. Chapter 8). This decline seems to have been a very gradual process, and there is little evidence that this had begun before 70 CE. The opposite, in fact, is the case: there is abundant evidence of the new moon's importance around, and after, the turn of the era. This 'relegation' must therefore be understood in the context of Judaism in late antiquity, and should not be seen to represent a fundamental conflict between Israel and the rest of the Near East. There is no period in Israel's history, moreover, when the utilization of a lunar-based calendar to reckon festivals can be *decisively* disproved. In fact, apart from the sabbath, it appears that, in *almost* every Israelite or Jewish context, all of the festivals are reckoned mainly according to lunar calendation.[119] Furthermore, the lunar basis of a calendar does not imply moon-worship, necessarily. In this case, it appears, Hallo reads too much into the evidence in his attempt to contrast the culture of Israel with her ancient Near Eastern neighbours:

> Here, then, two of the great contrasts between biblical Israel and its Near Eastern matrix meet: sabbatical cycles versus lunar calendars, and divine versus royal authority.[120]

Apart from very limited Jewish contexts (*viz The Book of Jubilees* and some literature from Qumran), the sabbatical cycle existed and was employed alongside the lunar cycles. Hallo's placing them in conflict is inappropriate. It may well be argued that the sabbath was a distinctive practice in ancient Israel, but it should not be seen as conflicting fundamentally with the lunar calendar; rather, one complemented the other, as is the case with the Jewish calendar today.

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[118] Hallo 1977: 16.
[119] There are, of course, some exceptions to this.
[120] Hallo 1977: 17.

Paul Giem

Although the focus of Giem's 1981 article is ultimately quite narrow (the exact meaning of σαββάτων in Colossians 2:16), his article nevertheless is as concerned with the new moon as it is with the sabbath. Giem explored a number of references to Jewish new moons in the Hebrew Bible, Apocrypha, LXX, and Qumran. Thus, his article is actually among the more comprehensive studies of חֹדֶשׁ presented here. In attempting to understand the meaning of σαββάτων in Colossians 2:16, Giem surveyed Biblical and Jewish sources which contain the approximate formula: "festival…new moon…sabbath", in order to discern more precisely its implication in Colossians (this context is examined in Chapter 6).[121] He concluded that this "slogan" pointed mainly to the sacrificial cult in Jerusalem, and particularly the *offerings* which were to be sacrificed on those days:

> But the weight of evidence indicates that what Paul actually had reference to was the sacrifices on the seventh-day sabbath prescribed in Numbers 28:9-10, which pointed forward to Christ and are no longer binding on the Christian since his death. The phrase "a festival or a new moon or a sabbath" appears to have been a catchphrase tied to the sacrificial system, and referred to the offerings at the times designated. Whatever else Paul may have had in mind in making his statement in Col 2:16, his primary meaning in that text is that the sacrificial system pointed forward to Christ and is therefore no longer necessary now that Christ has come.[122]

This relationship between the sacrificial cult and a community living in Colossae in Asia Minor, in light of this, might well be most pointedly represented in the Temple tax, Giem observed. Thus, the issue at stake may have been the payment of that tax by local Jews and Christians for the upkeep of the sacrificial system for *festivals*, *new moons* and *sabbaths*.[123] While Giem's focus remained on this New Testament context, he rightly noted that the term חֹדֶשׁ most commonly occurs in the same context as 'sabbath' and 'festivals'. This combination occurs from quite an early date, and, as will later be argued, this creates a problem for the argument, after Wellhausen, that חֹדֶשׁ experienced a period of disrepute in the history of the cult. This combination

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[121] Giem 1981: 198.
[122] Giem 1981: 210.
[123] Giem 1981: 207 n. 17.

of terms which Giem surveyed rather suggests that חֹדֶשׁ retained a central place in the cult.

Gerhard F. Hasel

In his 1988 article,[124] Hasel attempted a close reading of Isaiah 1, Hosea 2, and Amos 8, followed by study of several Near Eastern texts referring to *arḫum* and *šab/pattu*. He argued, like Hallo, that the sabbath as we know it on its strict 7-day cycle is an Israelite phenomenon, and that, in pre-exilic times (or specifically in the eighth century BCE), the Israelite and Judahite sabbath did not, therefore, coincide with the full moon. Like Hallo, Hasel argued that the sabbath was a distinctive feature of Israelite culture in the eighth century BCE,[125] but unlike the former, Hasel did not contrast Israel's monthly rhythm to her sabbatical one. Rather he viewed both as integral to Israelite and Judahite cultic life:

> As regards Israel, however, it may be safely concluded that the "new moon" is a monthly day of celebration in preexilic Israel in which sacrifices were brought usually at the sanctuary/temple.[126]

In analysing three texts which he claimed were genuine oracles of the eighth century BCE, Hasel made a useful contribution to the study of the feast. As opposed to the arguments of Caquot (that in early times, חֹדֶשׁ may not have been observed more than one month a year in a sanctuary setting), Hasel's reading suggests that we should consider חֹדֶשׁ as a monthly, temple-orientated celebration in eighth-century Israel and Judah. This, he argued could be understood from the manner in which the term חֹדֶשׁ occurred in these prophetic works: lists of festivals, in these works, exhibit a tendency to refer to cultic events in terms of *an order of increasing frequency* of their occurrence in the sanctuaries. On Hosea 2:11 (13 MT), for example, Hasel stated:

> The term ḥodeš, "new moon", evidently (as also noted above) refers to monthly festivals. Thus a sequence emerges: Yearly feasts followed by monthly festivals. The sequence is

[124] Hasel 1988: 37-64.
[125] Hasel 1988: 51.
[126] Hasel 1988: 39.

> one of increasing frequency of celebrating feasts: "feasts (yearly), new moon (monthly) and sabbaths (weekly)".[127]

This sequence, Hasel observed, can be read into passages with the formula "festivals…new moons…sabbaths" in Isaiah 1:13, Hosea 2:11 (13 MT), and, to some extent, Amos 8:5. Hasel also argued, on the basis of several texts, that the term מוֹעֵד seemed to "…include collectively all yearly, monthly, and weekly celebrations and festivities".[128] The article is, nevertheless, focussed on the sabbath, and mainly its observance in the eighth century BCE.

T. C. G. Thornton

Thornton published a short note on "Jewish New Moon Festivals" in 1989, in which evidence largely from the first two centuries CE is very briefly discussed, with a focus on two New Testament citations (Galatians 4:10; Colossians 2:16).[129] Thornton noted that the beginning of the Jewish month, during this period, was determined by the empirical sighting of the new moon, and argued that the new moon festival was distinctive among the Jewish holy days in that its occurrence depended upon this sighting.[130] While his analysis is brief, he made several interesting points. When referring to the process of examining witnesses to the new moon by the calendar authorities in Jerusalem and in the rabbinic Beth Din, referred to in the Mishnah (cf. Chapter 8), he stated that Diaspora communities: "…must…have relied on their own sightings of the new moon to determine the start of each month, and its New Moon festival".[131] He thus presented the idea that, in calendrical matters, and particularly in relation to new moons, Diaspora communities had a certain measure of autonomy from the Palestinian authorities. This critical reading is somewhat at odds with the Mishnaic presentation of an ideal single calendar authority, and will emerge as an important point in Chapter 8 of the present work. Furthermore, Thornton argued that sighting the new moon's appearance was a practice which occurred throughout the Jewish Diaspora, and could explain certain ambiguous New Testament passages: Galatians 4:10; Colossians 2:16. In the latter passage (examined in Chapter 6 of the

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[127] Hasel 1988: 42.
[128] Hasel 1988: 42.
[129] Thornton 1989: 97-100.
[130] Thornton 1989: 97-98.
[131] Thornton 1989: 98.

present work), the readers/hearers of the epistle are warned not to let anyone judge them regarding, among other things, new moons. In relation to this instruction and a related one in Galatians 4:10, Thornton argued:

> ...Christians at Colossae may be envisaged as being criticised, among other things, for their failure to keep the Jewish calendar and to watch out for the new moons which marked the start of each Jewish month. Similarly in Gal. 4:10... [Paul] may be referring not only to the observance of the Jewish calendar, but to the practice of observing the sky for the appearance of the new moon.[132]

Thornton also cited other evidence for this Jewish practice including Mishnah tractate *Rosh Hashshanah*, the *Kerygma of Peter*, and the *Epistle to Diognetus* (the latter two sources are examined in Chapter 7 of the present work). Regarding the practice of watching the skies for the appearance of the new moon, he suggested:

> But around New Testament times, when in many areas of the Roman Empire the use of various forms of solar calendars (which could relate easily to the Julian calendar) was becoming increasingly prevalent, the older form of the Jewish calendar with its lunar basis and regular needs for empirical observation and confirmation of new moons may have been one of the fascinating features that Judaism presented to the non-Jewish and astronomically minded world.[133]

He thus presented the Jewish new moon festival as a notable, and distinctively Jewish, practice in the Diaspora in the first two centuries CE.

Bernard R. Goldstein and Alan Cooper

In an article published in 1990,[134] Goldstein and Cooper discussed Wellhausen's reconstruction of the history of the festal calendars of Israel and Judah, and offered some new perspectives on how the calendars of the northern and southern monarchies and their relation to one another might be viewed. While their article is only minimally concerned with the feast of חֹדֶשׁ itself, its authors offer a distinctive theory. In terms of the social reality of the feast, the main insight gained from this work is the suggestion that חֹדֶשׁ, in the northern kingdom, like the sabbath, may have been a

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[132] Thornton 1989: 99.
[133] Thornton 1989: 100.
[134] Goldstein & Cooper 1990.

family celebration, as opposed to a public occasion.[135] The rest of their insights concern the technical, astronomical reckoning of חֹדֶשׁ in the two kingdoms. The calendars of both kingdoms, in their view, reckon the feast at the beginning of the lunar month.[136] Accepting the standard divisions of the Documentary Hypothesis,[137] Goldstein and Cooper argue that the northern traditions evidence a calendar which reckoned חֹדֶשׁ (and the beginning of the month) as occurring with the appearance of the new lunar crescent, while the authors of the southern traditions observed חֹדֶשׁ, like the beginning of the month in the Egyptian cultic calendar, from the day following the *last visibility* of the old moon (about two days before the new moon).[138] Goldstein and Cooper thus postulate a different day for חֹדֶשׁ in the northern and southern kingdoms.

In constructing a history of the Israelite calendar, Goldstein and Cooper suggested that at some point *before* the destruction of the northern kingdom in c. 721 BCE, the northern practice (observing חֹדֶשׁ at the appearance of the new crescent) had been brought into practice in the south. Hezekiah, they suggest, sought to restore the older Judean tradition, but his attempt was thwarted, first, due to the fact the northern tradition had been circulating for about 70 years, and secondly, because the northern practice resembled the Babylonian custom, and his elites were "...in thrall to Babylonian culture".[139] As such they may have wished to maintain the northern custom because of this similarity. Although interesting, much of this theory is speculative, and has not generally been sustained; the distinction between northern and southern חֹדֶשׁ has subsequently been described as "unwarranted".[140] Their theory is also based almost entirely on the division of sources of the Documentary Hypothesis, and considering the growing concern with the reliability of the Documentary Hypothesis, more caution should be exercised.[141] Nevertheless they presented a nuanced approach to the history of the feast, and particularly to its

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[135] Goldstein & Cooper 1990: 21.
[136] Goldstein & Cooper 1990: 20, 22.
[137] cf. Goldstein & Cooper 1990: 19-20.
[138] Goldstein & Cooper 1990: 20, 22. The authors were of the opinion that the Elohist and Deuteronomist represented the northern tradition, while the Yahwist and Priestly writers represented the southern one. The Egyptian cultic calendar was a lunar one, while the civil calendar there was solar. The time between the old and new crescents is referred to as the "interlunium" (cf. Van der Toorn 1996: 213).
[139] Goldstein & Cooper 1990: 30.
[140] Wagenaar 2005: 145.
[141] E. Nicholson, for example, states that from the 1970s until recently "...one major study after another...has rejected the main claims of the Documentary Theory" (Nicholson 1998: 95-96).

relationship with the Babylonia calendar. While the impact of Mesopotamian culture on Judah and the Levant at this time does deserve note, Goldstein and Cooper nevertheless offered a way to interpret this dynamic without having to crudely postulate *influence* as the introduction of unprecedented practices, previously unfamiliar to Judahites, and *alien* to their culture.

Heather A. McKay

McKay, in her 1991 chapter,[142] compared biblical evidence for the new moon and that for the sabbath. The work is focussed mainly on the sabbath and its development. McKay's coverage of the new moon was brief; she listed several practices associated with it, such as sacrifice, trumpet blowing, and eating.[143] Interestingly, she argued on the basis of the actual descriptions of worship activity (as opposed to passages on *resting* on the sabbath), that, "...compared with the Sabbath, new moon had a greater importance in the minds of some biblical authors".[144] McKay, in attempting to chart the growth in importance of the sabbath as opposed to the new moon, studied, as others have, the two and three-name sequences of terms for feasts (for example, "new moon...sabbath", or "sabbath...new moon...appointed feast") in various texts; in her view, "...there is no evidence that the Sabbath dominated the religious scene".[145] She did, however, consider some of the key texts in isolation from one another: the author of Numbers 28, for example, "...reveres the new moon a great deal more than the Sabbath", whereas the new moon, in reference to authors and compilers of Leviticus 23, "...was of no importance to them".[146] This apparent lack of importance seems an abrupt and unduly strong reading given the complexity of the relationship between these and other texts,[147] and on the sole basis of the new moon's absence from Leviticus 23 (cf. Chapter 3). McKay noted, at least, that it appeared that by the time of Philo of Alexandria, the sabbath was more important than the new moon.[148] She also admitted:

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[142] McKay 1991: 12-27.
[143] McKay 1991: 16.
[144] McKay 1991: 17.
[145] McKay 1991: 18.
[146] McKay 1991: 19.
[147] See Levine 2000:46ff. for an introduction to the complex relationship between Numbers 28-29 and Leviticus 23.
[148] McKay 1991: 21. See chapter 3.

> Whether the new moon had priority over the Sabbath at any time or place in Israel's history cannot easily be uncovered – nor can it be totally ruled out.[149]

Othmar Keel

Half of a monograph by Othmar Keel is dedicated to the subject of the new moon and Yahweh.[150] This study is concerned with iconography for the most part, with very little critical assessment of literary evidence for חֹדֶשׁ (six pages), most of the evidence from the Hebrew Bible is cited only, and rarely quoted or analysed. Almost nothing is said about the ritual reality of חֹדֶשׁ except that it was observed in families as well as in public, and was a day of rest.[151] For the most part, Keel examines iconography of the cult of the moon god *Sin* of Harran in northern Syria, specifically "the lunar emblem of Harran".[152] Although Keel is successful in demonstrating the spread of this iconography with the western expansion of Assyria between the tenth and the seventh centuries BCE, he admits that "...little evidence can be gained with regard to the question which aspects of the moon or the moon god were considered important".[153] Keel also suggests that there is evidence that the Israelite feast of חֹדֶשׁ was observed before any Assyrian presence in the region.[154] He proceeds then to argue that Assyrian expansion caused a *flourishing* cult of astral deities in the Levant in the seventh century, and that this "stimulated" the "cult of the new moon" in Israel.[155] What this 'stimulation' involved is extremely vague, and difficult to demonstrate decisively, since it cannot be demonstrated that, previously, this "cult" (if it can be so-called) needed any stimulating at all; חֹדֶשׁ had, by Keel's admission, had its place since "time immemorial".[156] The particular effect of the encroaching Assyrian empire on חֹדֶשׁ observance is quite obscure in light of this.

In several ways, Keel's short narrative of the history of חֹדֶשׁ in ancient Israel and Judah is similar to the presentation by Wilke: Keel valorises the supposedly problematic side of the feast (what others have referred to as 'pagan') as 'nature

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[149] McKay 1991: 22.
[150] This half of Keel's 1998 monograph is an enlarged version of a chapter of another monograph (Keel 1994: 135-202).
[151] Keel 1998: 105.
[152] Keel 1998: 62.
[153] Keel 1998: 70.
[154] Keel 1998: 102.
[155] Keel 1998: 108.
[156] Keel 1998: 108.

celebration'. In this analysis, his own modern values are brought to bear on the ancient evidence:

> The new moon celebration remained to a large extent a pure 'nature' celebration. This should not be considered in a negative sense. That would be against the interest of an age like ours, which strives to find anew its roots in the life cycles of the cosmos. Such a striving already existed in exilic times. The arbitrariness of historical events and foundations was overcome by the transformation of arbitrary historical events into events of creation. In this way the Priestly Code placed the origin of the sabbath right at the beginning of the world, waiting to be discovered by the Israelites in their wanderings in the desert. Other exilic and post-exilic texts transformed the exodus into the cosmic battle against the sterile sea (cf., e.g., Isa. 51.9-11; Ps. 114). In the context of 'cosmization' of the 'salvation history' the cult of the new moon was consciously given place.[157]

Included in the problems with Keel's suggestion is the notion that "cozmization" was something which was *preceded* by the "arbitrary" historical associations of the festivals. Furthermore, the notion of the cosmization of historical association is here a moot point in relation to חֹדֶשׁ in particular, because even if this theory of "cozmization" is proven, it does not imply that, previous to its occurrence, the Israelite worldview was not abundant with cosmic beliefs. The notion of cosmization here implies only an alignment between certain historical traditions and a pre-existing cosmic disposition. It appears that at all stages of Israel's history, as far as we can study it, cosmic beliefs were present in her worldview.[158] We cannot, therefore, isolate a period, using this criterion, which would have provided a more or less tolerant environment for the practice of חֹדֶשׁ.

Keel's idea of חֹדֶשׁ being a 'pure nature celebration' is also problematic. He quotes Philo of Alexandria in support of this, the latter author emphasising the universal, naturalistic, value of the moon, and reasons why the feast of the new moon is observed, such as its positive effects on rivers and crops. Keel notes that out of Philo's reasons for observing the feast, "...there is not a single 'historical' one".[159] Keel does not, however, remind the reader of Philo's tendency for allegorical

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[157] Keel 1998: 108-09.
[158] See Cohn 2001: 132ff. for review of apparently early Israelite texts which bear abundant 'cosmic' significance. Cohn observes: "Cosmos, in the sense of an all embracing, all-pervading order, was taken for granted in the Ancient Near East..." (Cohn 2001: 3).
[159] Keel 1998: 108.

interpretation, and fails to take this factor into account.[160] Despite these problems, Keel, like Goldstein and Cooper, presents a nuanced approach to the history of the feast, suggesting an examination of the cultural and religious climate of the southern Levant in general, and one which transcends the crude simplicity viewing 'native' traditions in opposition to 'alien' ones, but rather how the proximity of one might stimulate the other in some way. Keel's answer to this question is that the *flourishing* of astral cults, particularly that of the moon god, stimulated an eventual growth in importance of חֹדֶשׁ, even if the contexts of these remained largely separate.

Sacha Stern

Sacha Stern dedicates a chapter of his monograph on the Jewish calendar to the new moon.[161] This chapter mainly concerns the technical side of its reckoning, and is not itself a social study, at least in relation to the period of interest for the present work (although the overarching aim of his monograph is certainly social in focus). There are two valuable contributions that Stern makes, however. First, he provides a useful explanation of the relevant astronomy. This includes the logistical aspect of various ways in which the new moon can be observed or reckoned.[162] Another important contribution which Stern makes in this work is his fresh assessment of certain pieces of evidence which demonstrate that Jews, in certain periods (particularly c. 130 BCE – the second century CE), utilised a calendar in which the beginning of the month was reckoned by sighting the first appearance of the lunar crescent (the new moon).[163] Most of the focus of this chapter is the period later than the one concerned with here, and Stern, in this work, is not particularly interested in חֹדֶשׁ as a feast. He does, nevertheless, provide some unique technical insights. Regarding the social significance of the feast, Stern comments that new moons may, in Diaspora contexts, have been a fundamental feature of any community wishing to identify itself as Jewish.[164]

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[160] See Boyarin 1994: 19ff. for a brief introduction to allegorical interpretation in Philo's works.
[161] Stern 2001: 99-154.
[162] Stern 2001: 99-113.
[163] Stern 2001: 113-122.
[164] Stern 2001: 26.

Jan A. Wagenaar

In a recent monograph dedicated to the study of the Israelite festival calendar,[165] Jan A. Wagenaar has reason to make some suggestions which concern the feast of חֹדֶשׁ. Regarding the technical reckoning of the feast, he presents an updated version of that suggested by Goldstein and Cooper (above). The latter authors suggested that there originally existed a distinction between northern, Israelite חֹדֶשׁ and southern, Judahite חֹדֶשׁ, and a subsequent development of this, in that the northern practice of observing the feast at the appearance eventually replaced the Judahite one of observing the feast with the final visibility of the moon (the days before the new moon).[166] Wagenaar rather suggests that this north-south distinction is unwarranted, and that Goldstein and Cooper's division represents a gradual development of calendrical practice for the biblical authors.[167] He refers to this process as "the late pre-exilic adoption of the Babylonian calendar".[168] The practice of חֹדֶשׁ observance after the last visibility of the *old* moon, in his view, was replaced, generally, by the Babylonian practice of observing the feast after the new moon. Like Gandz previously, Wagenaar addresses the variety of ways in which the term חֹדֶשׁ is construed in the Hebrew Bible. He argues that רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ (which occurs in Numbers 10:10; 28:11-15) is a late term, and suggests that its use may reflect the change referred to above, such that, in pre-exilic times, חֹדֶשׁ referred to the "days of obscuration following the disappearance of the old moon in the morning sky", and that after the method of reckoning was changed to coincide with the moon's reappearance, the term רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ was used to avoid confusion.[169] The same problem emerges as when considering Gandz's view of this change: there are only two instances of this term in MT, and thus the idea remains uncertain.

Wagenaar also contributes to the discussion on ritual practice on the feast of חֹדֶשׁ. As Fritz Wilke had argued, one of the consistent and enduring features of חֹדֶשׁ observance was the blowing of trumpets to greet the arrival of the new moon.

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[165] Wagenaar 2005.
[166] Cf. also Van der Toorn 1996: 216-18.
[167] Wagenaar 2003: 145.
[168] Wagenaar 2003: 145.
[169] Wagenaar 2005: 151.

Wagenaar, however, disputes this, and claims that this association is a late one, attached to the feast at some point in the Persian period. He suggests,

> The use of trumpets on all the new moons and the festivals may well be a later extrapolation of the command to blow the horn on the first day of the seventh month/the festivals in the first and seventh months.[170]

Avi Shveka

In his recent study of Ostracon 7 from Arad, Shveka argues that the text provides evidence for the observance of חֹדֶשׁ in the 7th/6th century BCE.[171] Particularly, Shveka argues that the letter provides archaeological testimony to the tradition of cessation of work and trading on new moons at the end of the period of the Judean monarchy (cf. Chapter 4 for an exploration of this tradition):

> According to this understanding, the ostracon does indeed constitute evidence that a cessation of work on the new moon day was practiced in the biblical period. This evidence is in total agreement with what we know from the Bible. In fact, the actual (contrary to juridical) testimonies in the Bible for cessation of work on the new moon carry almost as much weight as the testimonies for the cessation of work on the Sabbath. The verses that deal with this topic all refer to it accidentally, which makes their testimony all the more reliable. The fact that חֹדֶשׁ and שַׁבָּת are frequently mentioned in the Bible in the same breath, or in parallelism, also bears witness. From different sources we learn that also in the Second Temple period a cessation of work on the new moon day was customary. According to our proposal we may reconfirm on solid ground the opinion that until now was accepted without any real basis: Namely, that the archaeological evidence of Arad ostracon no. 7 should be added to these testimonies.[172]

Shveka conducts a detailed study of the text of the ostracon, and contextualises his argument by reference to a number of texts from the Hebrew Bible. His unique contribution to the study of חֹדֶשׁ observance, based on this study, is that with the tradition of a cessation of work on new moons, there was also a priestly duty to oversee or 'police' this cessation. Shveka argues that particularly in a military context close to a priestly one, this is likely to have been the case. He draws on near

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[170] Wagenaar 2005: 127.

[171] The significance of Ostracon 7 for the study of חֹדֶשׁ had been noted by other scholars previously, such as Loewenstamm (1992: 131-35), but had not been so systematically contextualised in biblical traditions.

[172] Shveka 2005: 67-68.

contemporary biblical texts to demonstrate a similar association of priestly duty on the sabbath:

> There is no doubt, though, that even in Ezekiel's time the priests strove, at least to some extent, to fulfil their roles, including supervision over the keeping of the Sabbath (and the new moon day). If our proposal is correct, Arad letter no.7 is reliable evidence to their efforts in this domain, as well as to the limits of these efforts' effectiveness.[173]

Summary

From examination of the above scholarship, it is clear that there are numerous problems with how חֹדֶשׁ is viewed in modern scholarship. Most of these problems relate to the period of the monarchies of Israel and Judah. For example, the method of reckoning חֹדֶשׁ is particularly obscure, and explanations provided vary from coincidence with the full moon once a year (Caquot), reckoning from the disappearance of the *old* moon (Wagenaar), by sighting the new moon (the standard view), or a regional variation between the old moon and the new moon in Judah and Israel respectively (Goldstein and Cooper). Scholars have also been in a constant predicament regarding the fickle and uncertain place of חֹדֶשׁ in Israelite religion. We have seen that the feast's absence from certain pentateuchal codes has led many scholars to perpetuate the Wellhausian postulation that חֹדֶשׁ was associated with 'pagan' superstitions. As well as these problems in the scholarship, we shall also inevitably encounter significant difficulties which are inherent in the surviving texts, especially regarding the early period.

Even regarding the Second Temple period, during which the feast of חֹדֶשׁ is more clearly attested, some scholars (for example, Hallo) show a tendency to disregard the feast as being of minimal importance, and essentially something which is more akin to the religion of Mesopotamia, sitting uncomfortably at best in the symmetry of Judean sabbatical cycles. Despite such views, however, many other scholars are more inclined to accept the central place which the new moon had in the religious life of Judaism from early post-exilic times onwards. These works, as noted,

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[173] Shveka 2005: 70.

are generally restricted to limited contexts, and as yet there is insufficient systematic study of the history of חֹדֶשׁ, either before the exile or after it.

One of the major problems encountered relates to the precise method of calendar reckoning used in pre-exilic Israel and Judah. As already stated, it is usually thought that their cultic calendars were governed by a luni-solar system: a solar/agricultural year, normally divided by twelve lunations, except during leap years, which were divided by thirteen lunations (approximately every three years). The present work is primarily concerned with the social and ideological side of חֹדֶשׁ as a cultic festival, rather than its technical calendrical side. Because of this, several issues relating to calendars will not receive as much attention as they have in other works specifically related to Jewish calendars. Herein, the traditional interpretation that the feast was reckoned according to the first crescent's appearance (hence the standard translation "new moon") is accepted for the present. While this issue shall not be the focus of the present study, there will be reason to address it occasionally.

4. THESIS AND OVERVIEW: *ACTUALIZING ISRAEL* AT THE NEW MOON

It has been noted by a number of scholars that in several contexts, particularly in the Jewish Diaspora, חֹדֶשׁ was an essential feature of Jewish religious life. More than this, however, the ritual constellation emerges as a distinctive feature of Jewish life, which characterised Jewish communities, and perhaps set them apart from their Gentile neighbours. When speaking of *setting apart*, this is not necessarily understood to mean 'opt-out', 'exclude', or 'alienate'. חֹדֶשׁ emerges at times as a *distinction* by which Jewish communities were identified. It formed part of the matrix of processes and symbols which allowed Jews to continuously return to their religious identity, and which also constituted one of the many theatres for Jewish participation in Diaspora life. חֹדֶשׁ (or any Jewish ritual occasion) is not, therefore, viewed as necessarily exclusory in nature, but rather a special Jewish form of *interaction*: the feast played a socially cohesive role within Jewish communities, but also occasionally constituted a theatre for forming social bonds with individuals and groups outside of the community, but on a community level. On חֹדֶשׁ, the interaction which took place often considered the Jews as a whole, either locally or internationally, as the main actor. As such, we hear in first century BCE Berenike in Cyrenaica, for example, that the *politeuma* of the Jews honoured Roman officials on new moon. The body which acted on this date is clearly thought to represent, at least symbolically, the *whole* Jewish community there (cf. Chapter 6). *Internally*, however, it appears that the actor or broad entity which fulfils חֹדֶשׁ ritual requirements is often 'Israel'. While חֹדֶשׁ involved the strengthening of community bonds at a local level, the symbols and referents of the feast, the ideological participants and referents of the ritual, were on a special, more elusive plain: that of 'Israel', the people of Yahweh.

We will discover that the feast, with its practice, worldview, and participants, was embedded with a socially cohesive character. The observance of חֹדֶשׁ brought people together, caused them to express and acknowledge the bonds which united them, and reinvigorated those bonds. חֹדֶשׁ was an intense actualisation of 'Israel' for centuries. Israel has always been a tricky entity to define. Do we mean a kingdom, a scholarly construct, or an idealistic biblical entity?[174] The world of modern scholarship is not the only context in which difficulties have been encountered in

[174] For a now well cited investigation into this difficulty, see Davies 1992.

defining 'Israel'. Surely it was a challenge to maintain an Israelite identity after the destruction of that kingdom in c. 721 BCE. Centuries later, we are told, Ezra threw himself to the ground before the Temple in despair because the people of the small province to which he had returned did not fulfil the appropriate criteria which defined his Israel. Not only that, but *other* people had, previous to Ezra's arrival, shown great enthusiasm towards acknowledging Yahweh and the returnees, and these people had been rejected in their efforts. Later still, in the Christian era, more people again masqueraded as 'Israel', possessing Israel's scriptures, but fulfilling *none* of what had for some surely been the most central criteria for defining that community. Israel, from a broad historical point of view, is an entity with a long history of development; a 'people' for whom fortunes changed so many times that a physical description of the people and its culture which applies to one period might be unrecognisable to the Israel of another era. Israel is also an entity which, in the wake of 721 BCE, does not even necessarily constitute a constant and tangible social or political reality; we hear of Jews/Judeans, but many are not necessarily (outside of the Hebrew Bible) referred to as 'Israelites'.

It is not suggested, however, that Israel was not an entity which achieved concrete expression. 'Israel' endured centuries of oppression and political turmoil, only to survive and thrive, with all the more conviction regarding her traditions and constitution. In uniting these two seemingly conflicting perspectives, it is suggested that Israel was an enduring *concept* which found constant expression in the traditions of those who considered themselves to constitute Yahweh's people. It will be found that 'Israel' as a fixed social entity exists largely in the world of literature and ideology. In practice, however, Israel was *not* a non-entity. Israel existed concretely in her practical expression, in the world where ideology and society fix together so intensely and so expressively: the world of ritual. Throughout this thesis, the history of Israelite/Judahite/Judean/Jewish חֹדֶשׁ will be studied, as it played a role in this process of not only defining, but *actualising* Israel. It is accepted that more secure results emerge from post-exilic times, but where possible, a study of the feast in earlier times is attempted as well. חֹדֶשׁ was by no means alone in this endeavour to actualise an ideological community as a practical entity. There is an almost infinite number of formations which together form and express any individual's identity. The

focus here is on חֹדֶשׁ in the part it plays in this process in the expression and actualisation of an Israel which was ever changing. At times also, as a secondary function in this process, the feast was a *node of identity discourse*: its centrality to Jewish life drew comments and engagement from inside and outside of Jewish communities, particularly in relation to inter-cultural engagements. חֹדֶשׁ is chosen because of its role is these processes, its long history, and its relative neglect in modern scholarship. When the feast, as it is known from Second Temple times is examined, we find that *Israel* is the entity which observes the feast, even if the various participants go away as Jews, Jerusalemites, Hellenes, Romans, or any other collective tradition which they might have encountered in their lives and felt attached to. While it is understood that individuals in the ancient past had a flexible concept of group identity, which was usually composite, involving membership of, or orientation towards, various horizons and social formations (family, clan, village, city, class, gender, kingdom, 'nation', 'race') in the present work we will often find ourselves studying 'Israel' because during the various rites associated with חֹדֶשׁ, Israel is often the entity which comes into concrete expression. We shall encounter a symbolic world as much as a real one, but these two worlds can not always easily be separated, or even be considered as essentially separable. It seems to have been in the context of ritual that their connection was particularly emphasised, but it is ultimately accepted that as a concept, Israel, and thus also Israelite identity, could be carried out into other social contexts.

Throughout this thesis a reconstruction of the history of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ is undertaken. The main characteristics of the feast, the various contexts, and the developments which this ritual constellation experienced are examined. In this the focus will be on the socially cohesive role of the feast: how the feast functioned in the expression and maintenance of mutual bonds and a sense of community in several contexts. To that end, in Chapter 2, the ideas of certain scholars whose work has focussed on the socially cohesive function of ritual are examined. It has often been argued that ritual, in general, plays not only a socially cohesive role in many societies, but also a symbolic function, in the expression of membership to, or orientation towards, particular groups or conceptualisations of groups. Chapter 2, therefore,

includes a study of ritual, and particularly the role of the symbolic in ritual, in this socially cohesive function.

Chapter 3 examines the feast of חֹדֶשׁ in the context of sacrificial cult, in broad historical perspective. Identification of the earliest references to Israelite or Judahite חֹדֶשׁ is attempted, and its development in the sacrificial cult until the Temple's destruction in 70 CE is examined. Three main developments to the feast are noted which, in particular, pertain to its socially cohesive role, and attest to what is loosely referred to as an increasing 'national'-type consciousness which was attached to the feast by the biblical writers.[175] First, the addition of a sin-offering of the people, a sin-offering to atone for the inadvertent sins of 'Israel' *as a whole*, suggests that, ideologically, the sacrificer, the entity which acts towards Yahweh at the new moon, is perceived to be *the whole people*.[176] Secondly, the introduction of a ritual trumpet blast at each new moon, to enshrine the authority of the priests by associating their authority with a distant past in the desert, and serve as a mnemonic device to ensure Yahweh's acceptance of Israel's sacrifices is noted. Finally, the introduction, under Nehemiah, of the ⅓ shekel tax is said to have paid for, among other things, new moon offerings. In this, a concrete expression of the 'national'-type consciousness attached to the feast is noted, as is the feast's potential to involve the participation of Jews a great distance from Jerusalem.

Chapter 4 examines particular ways in which חֹדֶשׁ was observed by people at large, at a popular level. In this examination, two themes are identified: participation in 'special food consumption events' (feasting), and cessation of ordinary work. The significant social role of feasting, particularly its role in "the creation and maintenance

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[175] The term 'national' is not here intended to suggest strong similarity to *modern* nationalism, or nation-states. Certain scholars of ancient Judaism do, however, assert that this comparison can indeed be made, for example Mendels (1992), and more recently Goodblatt (2006), the latter asserting that our theoretical definition of modern nationalism can be applied quite successfully to definitions of Jewish identity from antiquity (Goodblatt 2006: 1-27). This understanding of ancient Judaism is opposed be Horsley (2002: 87-108). Other scholars dealing with ancient Judaism have used the term 'nationalism' somewhat more loosely, for example Gruen (1998). Here, the term is used to to refer not to the modern kind of nationalism, but rather more broadly to the concept of a large corporate entity which transcends the immediate bonds of locality. The term is chosen here because it is asserted that alternative terms such as 'community' do not adequately describe this understanding.

[176] I realise, of course, that this was the *whole people* of Israel as constructed by the biblical writers and as such is most likely somewhat exclusory, to some extent.

of important social relationships",[177] is noted. The two themes examined are traced from early times to the Hellenistic period, by which time both of them were seen as facets of Jewish life as it is lived out in a proper manner, free from the constraints of foreign governance.

In Chapter 5 a number of texts from Qumran which pertain to the observance of חֹדֶשׁ by their authors are examined. Two calendar traditions which have a bearing on our understanding of חֹדֶשׁ observance by the Qumran *Yahad*, and particularly the analysis of how this practice may have affected the interactions of members of that community with the Temple in Jerusalem, and with other Jews, are examined. While this chapter will encounter particular methodological difficulties, it presents an occasion to assess the potentially divisive role of ritual and the calendars that governed it, in late Second Temple times.

Chapter 6 examines three Diaspora contexts: one in North Africa, and two in Asia Minor, in which חֹדֶשׁ ritual plays a central role in community definition, and community interaction. Certain distinctions in the significance of the feast between contexts are encountered. Particularly, in Berenike in North Africa, חֹדֶשׁ ritual forms an integral part of the Jewish community's cohesion, self expression, and interaction with others at a community level. In both contexts in Asia Minor, which are identified through New Testament epistles, a more fractious role for the feast is evident: it was, with several other aspects of Jewish ritual, the cause of some division and controversy both within the emergent Christian movement, and in the interaction between certain early Christians and other Jewish groups.

Chapters 7 and 8 relate the feast's role in community definition in the second century CE, in Chapter 7 from the Christian perspective, and in 8 from a Jewish (Rabbinic) one. Four second century Christian authors are examined in Chapter 7. The recurring concern of these authors was to define, characterise, and justify Christian life and identity, specifically in relation to religious belief and practice. In doing so each of them defines Christianity in contradistinction to their Jewish contemporaries. Each author constructs a normative set of Jewish traits as a tool against which to

[177] cf. Hayden 2001: 30.

contrast their new community, and in doing so, each focuses on a small outline, or "thumbnail sketch"[178] of Jewish ritual life. Included in each construction are special new moon observances.

In Chapter 8 evidence for חֹדֶשׁ observance in the near contemporary tractates of the Mishnah is examined. Particularly, the potentially centripetal role that new moon reckoning and observance had for Jewish communities is taken up. While not presenting a great deal of information on the actual *festive* aspect of the feast, *Mishnah Rosh Hashshanah* presents a picture of Judaism which was focussed on Jerusalem, whose calendar invoked consensus, and therefore authority, at each new moon. We also see, here, a retrospective on the feast's role in the Jerusalem Temple, written largely in the aftermath of its destruction, and witness the continued orientation towards Jerusalem and the Temple, despite the inaccessibility of either in a physical sense. Some changes occurred at this time which would finally result in a decline in the significance of חֹדֶשׁ, but also to enshrine the feast in later Jewish liturgical life.

[178] cf. Lieu 1996: 190.

Chapter 2

The Socially Cohesive Role of Ritual and the Representation of 'Group' Membership

INTRODUCTION

The feast of חֹדֶשׁ in ancient Israel, Judah, and later Judaism was constituted by a constellation of rites and symbols which occurred in various related social contexts. The festival was calendrically repetitive and based around approximately one or two days, a monthly punctuation of life whose characteristics were effected in the cult and in a wider sphere also. חֹדֶשׁ involved the orchestration of a significant portion of society in various roles which will be examined particularly in Chapters 3 and 4. חֹדֶשׁ might be described in modern terms as a religious holiday, a special day that was *holy*. The holiness of that day is reflected in this pattern of ritual behaviour evident from the ancient sources. In order to engage with this behaviour and its meaning in ancient contexts, a brief excursus on some of the modern scholarship of what is referred to as "Ritual Studies"[1] is presented. Therefore, while the terminology most frequently employed to refer to חֹדֶשׁ and similar ritual occasions generally includes terms such as 'holiday', 'feast', and 'festival', such designations are considered here to equate to a 'ritual constellation'. Ritual Studies is characterised by its interdisciplinary quality. Of interest here are mainly sociological and anthropological works. This chapter will begin with a presentation of some of the most influential studies on the role of ritual in the creation and maintenance of social cohesion. Also, a discussion of the meaning and employment of the term 'symbol', and the role of the symbolic in ritual, is carried out. This chapter will explore the idea that ritual action is both a symbol and also that it creates and revolves around fixed cultural and ritual symbols, all of which are given strong emotive qualities by their regular inclusion in, and thier association with, ritual processes. As such, it is possible that a ritual constellation, a 'holiday', 'feast', or 'festival', can function in the actualisation of the society as it is conceptualised in ideology.

[1] cf. Bell 1992: 3.

RITUAL, RITUAL CONSTELLATIONS, AND SOCIAL COHESION

According to Edward Muir, "All societies sustain themselves and represent their most cherished ideals through rituals",[2] and there are many examples of this sustenance and representation. Calendrically repetitive constellations of rites, 'festivals', can pertain to, maintain, and express social cohesion and group identity: family, clan, social, cultural, religious, national, and ethnic identities.[3]

The Serbian orthodox festival of Krsna Slava has been described by one observer as "the symbol of national and religious identity for the Serbs", which "encapsulates Serbian dual identity that is an ethnic and religious identity".[4] Chinese New Year, in the setting of contemporary Toronto, is viewed by another observer as engendering social cohesion; it is an occasion when community members "...publicly remember, enact and re-enact their social identity".[5] In such Diaspora contexts, Chinese festivals are also important occasions for "displaying ethnic culture in contrast to 'host' culture".[6] Chinese festivals, then, display concerns with *internal* social cohesion, and also with community-definition vis-à-vis the 'other'. Indeed, as a set of *activities*, revolving around ritual activity in several contexts, Chinese festivals are also seen by one scholar as "ethnic *symbols*".[7]

The ritual constellations, in the above examples, display two broad functions: creating internal social cohesion, and, the extension of this, representing belonging to

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[2] Muir 2005: 269.

[3] By 'group-identity' I refer generally to the feeling and expression of belonging of an individual to a larger collective, whether a family, clan, village, city, tribe, ethnic-group, or nation. I will attempt as much as possible to specify which one of these is intended when the context arises. Identity invariably involves self-designation, as well as designation by 'others'. As such it is intersubjective (cf. Stevenson 2006: 277). It is acknowledged that an individual has various group 'identities', as such, in that the group-identity of a person shifts between different horizons, whether racial, national, or religious, etc. The term 'horizon' is not meant to downplay the social reality of the group/collective tradition, but rather to think about it from the point of view of an individual. Cf. Esler (1998: 40ff.), who explains the concept of 'social-identity': different identifications (as I have called 'horizons'), are derived from belonging to groups, for example nationality, gender, ethnicity, occupation, or sports teams (Esler 1998: 43).

[4] Popadic 1999: 1, 7. My emphasis. This festival is connected with what might be called the "ethno-religious identity" which proliferates in the modern Balkan States. Religion, according to Duijzings, "is a major factor in the process of identification in the Balkans" (Duijzings 2000: 157). This is the case to such an extent that celebration by *Croats* of the Slava, the above "symbol" of the Serbs, has led some Serbs to claim on this basis that such Croats are actually "Serbs who have forgotten their original Serb identity" (Duijzings 2000: 44).

[5] Chan 2001: 3.

[6] Christiansen 2003: 125.

[7] Christiansen 2003: 125. My emphasis. Other "symbols" Christiansen refers to are food culture, calligraphy, and music.

the society which the festival refers to, whether this involves the participation of 'others', and thereby representing membership to these 'others', or whether this representation simply relates to members of the same society. How do we understand the relationship between certain special patterns of behaviour of such ritual constellations, and group identity in its various forms? In order to address the relationship between social cohesion and ritual constellations, religious feasts, or festivals, an examination of some several theories on *ritual* as characteristically *group* behaviour is undertaken.[8] What are often referred to as 'festivals' or 'holidays' can be described as regularly occurring constellations of rites pertaining to a large group, on a fixed cycle. The anthropologist Victor Turner referred to these as "calendrical rites", which, in his view, "...almost always refer to large groups and quite often embrace whole societies".[9] חֹדֶשׁ is understood here as a calendrical rite in the above sense.

'Holidays', or traditional religious 'feasts' or 'festivals' are constituted by ritual behaviour, and as such, 'ritual' is the primary analytical category through which an understanding of Israelite חֹדֶשׁ is sought. There have been extensive analyses on ritual theory which pertain particularly to the identification and classification of ritual behaviour across human societies, and universal definitions of 'ritual' have subsequently become problematic in the face of divergent ritual studies.[10] Due to the limited concern of the present study (חֹדֶשׁ in biblical and post-biblical times) a universal definition of 'ritual' is not sought, nor is ritual systematically problematized as a cross-cultural analytical concept. Some definitions, however, are pertinent.

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[8] I have chosen 'ritual' as the most appropriate analytical category in which to understand the ancient חֹדֶשׁ and I have described it as a 'festival'. However, I acknowledge that the term 'festival' can be understood differently, for example in modern Urban Studies. In the latter field, use of the term 'festival' differs from my own because it is often used to describe an event which, rather that being a 'ritual constellation', does not necessarily involve ritual as its main activity. I am not generally concerned herein with purely urban festivals in post-industrial societies (for example a Jazz festival) (cf., for example, Jeong and Almeida 2004: 641). While the study of *ritual* behaviour does not preclude the activity of post-industrial persons, I shall attempt to confine my discussion to human behaviour towards perceived 'traditional' constellations of rituals. The example of modern Chinese Diaspora festivals can often be seen as involving much post-industrial innovation, but there remains the inclusion of traditional elements and of symbols, and a *perception* of the activity as traditional (Christiansen 2003: 125-6). When referring to 'festivals' herein, I do *not* imply the purely post-industrial type, but always a *ritual* occasion.

[9] Turner 1995: 168-9. The other main group of rites delineated in Turner's work, in which his main interest lies, is that of "Life-crisis rites" (Turner 1995: 168), similar to what scholars following Van Gennep referred to as "rites of passage" (Van Gennep 1960).

[10] See Bell 1992 for a critical analysis the term 'ritual' and its employment and the problems it has encountered in several scholarly fields. In a recent work, Gruenwald (2003: 5) avoids an *overarching* theory of rituals, because of the specificity of any given ritual in context.

To begin with a broad definition, I will adopt a rather general understanding of ritual as a "formalized, collective, institutionalized kind of repetitive",[11] or as "structured forms of human behaviour".[12] A repetitive feature of ritual, however, should not be confused with mere habit, routine, or "empty convention".[13] Gorman put his understanding more systematically in his work which is specifically concerned with ritual and the Hebrew Bible. He also incorporated what, for many scholars, is the most important definitional element in the identification of ritual, and what sets ritual apart as a separate category of human experience: the symbolic.[14] For Gorman, 'ritual' referred to:

> ...a complex performance of symbolic acts, characterized by its formality, order, and sequence, which tends to take place in specific situations, and has as its central goals the regulation of the social order.[15]

Another feature which sets ritual apart as an analytical category is its *collective* aspect. Ritual serves to refer to a 'group',[16] even if only a perceived one, in one way or another, whether implicitly or explicitly, because it is always collective in some way. As Rothenbuhler put it:

> By most definitions, ritual is not something individuals do only for individual purpose in purely individualistic ways. Rituals can, of course, be performed in private, but there is

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[11] Muir 2005: 3.
[12] Gruenwald 2003: 3.
[13] cf. Rothenbuhler 1999: 28-31.
[14] For Rothenbuhler, for example, it is "the purpose of symbolically effecting the serious life" that separates rituals, on the one hand, from habitual or routine action, on the other (Rothenbuhler 1998: 28). Van Gennep saw symbols as functioning in the transformation of status in the rite of passage (cf. Faubion 2006: 526). For Victor Turner, the symbol was the smallest unit of ritual which still retained properties of ritual behaviour (1967: 19). Durkheim also saw symbols as central to collective worship in the form of the totem (1971: 218-222).
[15] Gorman 1990: 19. Gorman's definition does not refer to the "Sacred", which will be discussed presently.
[16] When I refer to a 'group', I do not necessarily understand this to imply a culturally coherent and organisationally discrete social entity. A large 'group', such as a nation, an 'ethnic' group, or a 'religion' (for example in the modern sense) does not have to be coherent to be conceived by its members as an autonomous entity, or to constitute a social and psychological reality. By the middle of the tenth century, for example, Islam is not regarded to have constituted a strict political entity, but Muslims of that time are nevertheless described as having "*felt* themselves citizens of a vast community" (Ezzati 2002: 1, my emphasis). It is ideology and sentiment, rather than strict organisational discreteness, which constitutes this community. I therefore understand such large 'groups' as *collective traditions* rather than actual *concrete* communities.

> always something socially structured about them: language and other sign systems, tradition, systems of morality.[17]

The performance of ritual is therefore "a social act".[18] It is either performed by a group, or mediated to the individual through the norms and traditions of the larger group or collective tradition, and subsequently refers back to those norms and to that group/collective tradition in some way. The structure, symbols, and action of ritual, being mediated by the group, regularly refer back to the structure of the group.[19] In Rothenbuhler's words:

> The forms of ritual action constitute symbols that have among their referents the social relations, orders, and institutions of the society in which the ritual is performed.[20]

This is reminiscent of the *symbolic* nature of Serbian Krsna Slava, or of Chinese New Year being conceptualized as an *ethnic symbol* as was noted; they involve *action* that seems to constitute *symbol*,[21] and that action occurs around other symbols. The inclusion of the symbolic leads to the observation that ritual is often held to be something like a *performance*, *communication*, an *expression*, *representation*, or *reminder*: ritual *relates meaning* of some kind.[22] A ritual constellation, or festival, on this basis, is viewed both as a constellation of rites and a constellation of symbols. This chapter examines both of these aspects, their roles in ritual, and their implications.

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[17] Rothenbuhler 1998: 13. Despite Rothenbuhler's cautions about the confusion of "routine" with "ritual", he still states that what is often referred to as the daily "ritual" of personal facial and body preparation (which might be seen as habit rather than ritual) consists of "collectively structured actions that embody cultural codes, even though they are done individually and in private" (1998: 13). The activity of the high priest in the Jewish Temple on Yom Kippur, for example, constitutes individual ritual action, to some extent, but it is certainly communally mediated action concerning an entire society.

[18] Gorman 1990: 14.

[19] Even in the case of innovation of new ritual forms, this relationship remains, as, Kertzer argues, the innovating party creates these forms "largely out of a stockpile of pre-existing symbols" (Kertzer 1988: 10).

[20] Rothenbuhler 1998: 14. The central role of symbols in ritual will be examined shortly.

[21] Cf. Gruenwald (2003: 1, 3 n. 4), 6, however, who argues that while ritual helps to create or maintain symbols, and that rituals are symbolic forms in their own right, "...they do not translate symbols into actions". Gruenwald states that his position on ritual is not commonly held in religious studies (2003: x).

[22] Ritual is usually held to give expression to previously held ideas and symbols (*viz* translate *ideas* into *actions*). Gruenwald (2003: 2) argues that the human mind is the direct source of ritual behaviour.

'The Citizen and the Stranger' in the Thought of Fustel de Coulanges

Catherine Bell, in reflecting on the scholarly "conversation" which she refers to as "Ritual Studies", has observed that,

> Whether it is defined in terms of features of 'enthusiasm' (fostering groupism) or 'formalism' (fostering the repetition of the traditional), ritual is consistently depicted as a mechanistically discrete and paradigmatic means of sociocultural integration, appropriation, or transformation.[23]

Regarding ritual as a means of "sociocultural integration", I will turn briefly to the work of the early sociologist of religion, Fustel de Coulanges. Written in the 1860s, Fustel de Coulanges' work *La cité antique* discussed the place of religion in the ancient city. This work established, claims Miller, "what was to be the dominant theme of the relationship between the individual and the city in the ancient world for more than a century" in modern scholarship.[24] In Fustel de Coulanges' discussion, he argued that the main types of grouping in the society of an ancient city, even the family group, were primarily *religious* groupings, defined not by blood but by ritual participation:

> The members of the ancient family were united by something more powerful than birth, affection, or physical strength; this was the religion of the sacred fire, and of dead ancestors...The ancient family was a religious, rather than a natural association.[25]

Fustel de Coulanges emphasised the connection between participation in religious rituals and the citizenship of those individuals; their membership of their society and their group identity. Participation in public rites indicated membership to that public, and conversely lack of participation was tantamount to the official reneging of that membership. For Fustel de Coulanges, this was not only a withdrawal

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[23] Bell 1992: 16.

[24] Miller 1996: ii. This is, according to Miller, extended to modern political theory. While attempting to critically appreciate some of the ideas of Fustel de Coulanges here, I should point out that it is not specifically his reconstruction of ancient life that is the concern of this work, but rather his ideas on the role ritual played in human societies, and how this influenced later thought. As such, F. de C.'s ancient source citations are not evaluated, but rather his ideas which he propounds from these.

[25] Fustel de Coulanges 1969: 111. He was able to play down the "natural" association of the family by recourse to Greek and Roman law, stating, for example, that "the sister did not bear the same relation to the family as the brother; that the emancipated son and the married daughter ceased completely to form a part of the family" (1969: 111).

from regular public life; it was also accompanied by the loss of the appropriate civil and political rights, amounting to that citizen's becoming a "stranger" ("étranger").[26] He cited examples including practices in ancient Sparta and Rome. In Rome, participation in the ritual of lustration was instrumental in the maintenance of one's citizenship:

> At Rome, it was necessary to have been present at the lustration, in order to enjoy political rights. The man who had not taken part in this – that is to say, who had not joined in the common prayer and the sacrifice – lost his citizenship until the next lustration.[27]

Likewise at Sparta, one had to attend the public meal, which he described as,

> ...the principal ceremony of the national worship [*culte national*]. Now, at Sparta, one who did not join in these, even if it was not his fault, ceased at once to be counted among the citizens.[28]

Thus, participation in the ancient city's religious rituals was the principal criterion for membership of that city's community, *viz* citizenship, and it was from this participation that all of one's civil and political rights were derived. As a corollary, then, religion not only indicated one's membership of the city, but also indicated lack thereof. For Fustel de Coulanges, religious rites generated and pertained to the primary dichotomy between "The Citizen and the Stranger": "Thus religion established between the citizen and the stranger a profound and ineffaceable distinction".[29] As such a Spartan was no longer able to call himself "Spartan", or indeed act as a Spartan, if he did not participate in *Spartan* ritual.[30] The group identity of the city's citizen body was a religious identity, which was characterised and expressed by the worship of the gods of that city, and a belief in their resultant

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[26] Fustel de Coulanges 1969: 117 (in French: 1920: 226ff.).
[27] Fustel de Coulanges 1969: 117. It is the assertion here that citizenship can *only* be renewed at the next lustration that connects nominal and practical membership to this community so explicitly with the ritual in question.
[28] Fustel de Coulanges 1969: 117 (in French: 1920: 226-27).
[29] Fustel de Coulanges 1969: 117-118.
[30] This understanding follows logically from F. de C.'s assertion that there was no separation between the individual and the relevant structures of society. They were "inseparably linked and indistinguishable. In other words, the public and the private spheres were collapsed" (Miller 1996: ii.).

protection of the citizen; the stranger, observes Fustel de Coulanges, could not invoke those gods.[31]

This argument is quite straightforward, and was the basis for his assertion that, socially, religious practices were more important than beliefs, and they were, as Bell put it, "integral to the social dimension of religion".[32] Fustel de Coulanges studied religion as a particular aspect of society, as "a category of human experience", and explored its role as such.[33] His innovation was his development of a thematic analysis; a social history. Ritual had a bearing on membership to a group, and therefore the definition of the group and the members' identity. These assertions were influential on the works of several other writers, including W. Robertson Smith,[34] but in Bell's view, the perspective of Fustel de Coulanges, that ritual was *integral to the social dimensions of religion*, received its fullest formulation by his student, Emile Durkheim.[35]

Durkheim, 'Collective Effervescence', and the Totem

In his discussion of Australian aboriginal ritual,[36] Durkheim elaborated the theory that ritual, or "cultus", "...played a dynamic and necessary role in social integration and consolidation".[37] This view, by David Kertzer's assessment, had become "the most influential theory of social cohesion, emphasizing the key role played by ritual

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[31] Fustel de Coulanges 1969: 117. It should be stated that evidence from the ancient world, particularly the later Roman empire, suggests alternative understandings regarding, for example, participation in the Imperial cult, but for the moment assessment of F. de C.'s ideas about ritual *in general* and their impact, not his specific reconstruction of certain ancient societies, is the concern of the present study.

[32] Bell 1992: 15. This view, that religion comprised of "acts and observances" and not "dogma or formulated theology" is exhibited in the work of Robertson Smith (cf. Mayes 1989: 30-31). It was with the rise of Christianity, according to Fustel de Coulanges, that "belief regained its empire over the soul", when religious sentiment "assumed a higher and less material expression"' (Fustel de Coulanges 1969: 122).

[33] Bell 1992: 15. The "institutional history" of Fustel de Coulanges has had a strong relationship with schools of sociological thought, such as the later 'Annales' school of French historians, due to its significant departure from classical "event orientated history" (cf. Piran 1979). Through his influence on Robertson Smith and Durkheim, Fustel de Coulanges ultimately influenced the structural-functionalist tradition in sociology (cf. Mayes 1989: 27-35, 78-117).

[34] In Robertson Smith's evolutionistic view, the earliest form of community was a religious one, united by ritual of communion sacrifice, which took precedence over belief or dogma (see Mayes 1989: 30-31). Mayes discussed the relationship between these thinkers and their works, and their subsequent influence of Emile Durkheim. He pointed out that Robertson Smith was influenced by Fustel de Coulanges (Mayes 1989: 143 n. 3).

[35] Bell 1992: 15; Durkheim 1971. Durkheim's relevant work here is *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, originally published in French in 1912.

[36] Durkheim, like Mircea Eliade subsequently (Eliade 1995 [1958]), quotes the work of the early anthropologists B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen carried out in central Australia (1899).

[37] Bell 1992: 15.

in producing and maintaining solidarity".[38] Fustel de Coulanges had argued that the religious practices of the ancient city were essential criteria for membership to that community, and to smaller groups within the citizenry, such as the family and clan. Durkheim developed the idea by examining the processes of the rituals themselves, and their effects on the participants in the ritual, the *mood*, and the consequent socially binding effects on the participants. Particularly, Durkheim described what he called "milieux sociaux effervescents", or "collective effervescence".[39] This "effervescence" was associated by Durkheim with the "hyper-excitation", the "super-excitation", of the religious life,[40] as contrasted with the mundane of everyday existence. He described this from the perspective of the individual participant, who responded to the various stimuli of the ritual:

> Feeling himself dominated and carried away by some sort of an external power which makes him think and act differently than in normal times, he naturally has the impression of being himself no longer.[41]

This altered state is essentially the religious life, the Sacred, which Durkheim contrasted with the Profane.[42] The above introduces what is Durkheim's famous binary separation of things into *sacred* and *profane* in his analysis of religious life.[43]

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[38] Kertzer 1988: 61. 'Solidarity' is usually thought to express a sense of belongingness that individuals feel towards one another: a feeling of mutuality or interconnectedness that characterises social behaviour and interaction (cf. Barbalet 2006: 602). Durkheim described two types of solidarity: mechanical and organic (for explanations of these see Crow 2002: 18-23; Mayes 1989: 28-30). Durkheim did not, however, expressly link either of these types of solidarity to his subsequent work on 'totemic' ritual which is discussed herein (cf. however, Mayes 1989: 32 who suggested that Durkheim's definition of religion "as a social fact and in terms of its social function" implies an identification with "the content of the collective consciousness of a society characterised by mechanical solidarity"). Several scholars subsequent to Durkheim adopted aspects of his thought and related ritual to solidarity, but not to either of the two types (mechanical or organic): rather to a more general understanding of solidarity (for example, Kertzer, above, and Peter Berger 1990: 51). As such, when 'solidarity' is referred to herein, the nature and structure of the society implied by Durkheim's two types of solidarity are *not* understood or implied. When I refer to 'solidarity', I refer to a general sentiment or *feeling* which ties the individual or group to *either* a specific grouping *or* a more abstract conception of a collective, such as ancient 'Israel'. It is understood that a 'group' does not have to be coherent or organisationally and structurally discrete for an individual to feel tied to it. The presence of a broad conception of a social entity is enough for the possibility for a person to feel solidarity towards others connected to it.

[39] Durkheim 1971: 218 (in French: 1968: 313).

[40] Durkheim 1971: 219 (in French: 1968: 313).

[41] Durkheim 1971: 218.

[42] Durkheim 1971: 218.

[43] The assertion that "the Sacred" is born out of the "collective effervescence" of ritual is important for Durkheim's understanding of the dichotomy of Sacred and Profane (Durkheim 1971: 218). This understanding is adopted and developed by Roy Rappaport, who argues that "religion's major conceptual and experiential constituents, the sacred, the numinous, the occult and the divine, and their

Towards a definition of ritual, Durkheim presents the understanding that ritual is "action regarding the sacred"; according to Rothenbuhler, this observation is "a key part in any definition of the Durkheimian tradition".[44] Durkheim argued that in the experience of altered state in the context of "cultus" (the rituals which produce the effect of "collective effervescence") "the collective life has been able to attain its greatest intensity and efficacy".[45] "Collective effervescence" refers to a kind of *mood* of communal excitation in response to stimuli in ritual. In the case of Australian ritual, Durkheim refers to processions, dances, songs, and torchlight, culminating in a "general mêlée".[46] Scholars have adopted this focus on the mood of ritual, and it has continually been given prominence in many ethnographic accounts of ritual, and subsequent theories. This focus has not remained only on an atmosphere of "super excitation" and ecstasy, but has been adapted to include several types of ritual mood.[47] Scholars were subsequently able to adopt and adapt Durkheim's ideas and discuss the role of mood in ritual without confining their analysis to situations of frenzy and ecstasy.[48]

In describing Australian aboriginal life, Durkheim stresses the extreme oscillation between sacred and profane habits:

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integration into the Holy, are creations of ritual". As such, concepts such as "sanctity" are *products* of ritual, and not *vice versa* (Rappaport 1999: 3).

[44] Rothenbuhler 1998: 23.

[45] Durkheim 1971: 219.

[46] Durkheim 1971: 218.

[47] Kertzer referred more generally to the "arousal of emotions" in response to "physiological stimuli" (Kertzer 1988: 10). According to Muir, "A satisfactory definition of the word "ritual" must take account to this process of emotional response" (Muir 2005: 2). Rothenbuhler calls the role of *mood* in ritual "the serious life" (1998: 28). Humphry and Laidlaw, in their study of Jain ritual, dedicate a chapter to "The Evocation of Mood" in which "the celebrant becomes absorbed in the act", and refer to this dialectic between celebrant and act in terms of "culturally patterned emotions" (Humphry & Laidlaw 1994: 227-246, 261). "Collective effervescence" also finds some parallel in Victor Turner's concept of *communitas*; initiates in a liminal stage of ritual confront one another as equals, free from the usual structure and hierarchy of society (Turner 1995: 96). According to Clifford Geertz also, mood is one of two types of dispositions induced by religious activities (the other is movitation). Moods can be, is his view, what people sometimes "...lump together under such covering terms as 'reverential', 'solemn', or 'worshipful'." (Geertz 1966: 10-11). Bell refers to this mood feature of ritual as "enthusiasm" (Bell 1992: 16).

[48] This is not to say that ecstatic experience, such as prophetic ecstasy in ancient Israel, is no longer considered an important category of experience in the study of ritual; only that it is not necessary to postulate ecstatic or near-ecstatic experience in order to deem the *mood* of the ritual an analytical category. Less intense 'moods' are also relevant.

> ...there is no people among whom the great solemnities are not more or less periodic; but in Australia, on the contrary, apart from the celebrations of the clan and tribe, the time is nearly all filled with lay and profane occupations.[49]

This dichotomy between sacred time, and profane time may well be *over* emphasised by Durkheim in his assertion that one rarely penetrates the other, but his analysis nevertheless provides us with a useful model for understanding how periodic ritual behaviour, such as the ritual observance of new moon days in ancient Israel, might have a continued bearing on life in the mundane, *profane* sphere. Although he admits to the observance of taboos and to the existence of beliefs regarding totemic animals, which carry through this mundane period of apparent ritual *inactivity*, he argued that "there are no ceremonies of any importance," in that period.[50] Ceremonies of importance, "take place only in the midst of assembled groups".[51] The religious life and social life, in this view, therefore oscillate together against the profane. Ritual occurs in the context of the group, and communal life is characterised by ritual. In Durkheim's words, "This puts clearly into evidence the bond uniting them to one another".[52]

In Durkheim's analysis, the social, collective life, and the religious, ritual, and *sacred* are simultaneous; the actively religious (*viz* the *ritual*) largely occurs in the context of the social:

> By concentrating itself almost entirely in certain determined moments, the collective life has been able to attain its greatest intensity and efficacy, and consequently to give men a more active sentiment of the double life they lead and of the double nature in which they participate.[53]

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[49] Durkheim 1971: 219.

[50] One wonders what the late nineteenth century anthropologists' definition of "importance" was in this respect (Durkheim quotes Spencer & Gillen 1899). One also wonders how interested they were in the "lay and profane habits", particularly those carried out in unbearable Australian temperatures. It is pertinent to observe the point Humphry and Laidlaw make about ethnographic accounts: that "Rituals are good things to do fieldwork on" (Humphry & Laidlaw 1994: 73), and thus potentially attract the ethnographer's attention more than "profane habits" might. This does not particularly affect Durkheim's overall point, but the *extreme* dichotomy between sacred and profane habits may be an excessive judgement here.

[51] Durkheim 1971: 219.

[52] Durkheim 1971: 219.

[53] Durkheim 1971: 219. It has been commented by Pickering, following Mary Douglas, that the extension of the relationship between the "social" and the "religious" worlds into an argument that the individual is profane and the group is sacred is misguided, and an over simplification of Durkheim's theory (Pickering 1984: 123; cf. Douglas 1975: xiii).

Durkheim's key to understanding ritual as an important process in the collective life lies in his theory regarding the 'totem'. It is through the totem that the social cohesion created in the ritual, sacred sphere could spill over into the profane daily life. The totem was the shape of a particular plant or animal and served as a "clan" symbol; "this animal or plant has given its name to the clan and serves it as emblem".[54] The clan, in Durkheim's argument, was the principal grouping of Australian aboriginal society. It was characterised by a perceived blood-tie and bond of kinship, although its members were not necessarily related at all; they were in the clan merely "...because they are collectively designated by the same word".[55] In explanation of the process by which a totem became a symbol for a particular clan, Durkheim stated that,

> ...it is a well-known law that the sentiments aroused in us by something spontaneously attach themselves to the symbol which represents them. For us, black is the sign of mourning...This transference of sentiments comes simply from the fact that the idea of a thing and the idea of its symbol are closely united in our minds; the result is that the emotions provoked by the one extend contagiously to the other.[56]

The totem, as symbol of the clan, therefore had the quality that more recent writers referred to as *condensed meaning*.[57] The idea of condensed meaning is quite simple. A symbol, be it a gesture, picture, plant, building, represents something which is more complex and multi-faceted. The symbol exists because it is easily seen, borne in mind, and comprehended, whereas what it represents is not. A modern nation state and its flag is a classic, if contrived, example of this. Durkheim explained:

> ...this contagion, which takes place in every place to a certain degree, is much more complete and more marked when the symbol is something simple, definite and easily representable, while the thing itself, owing to its dimensions, the number of its parts and the complexity of their arrangement, is difficult to hold in the mind.[58]

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[54] Durkheim 1971: 219.
[55] Durkheim 1971: 102.
[56] Durkheim 1971: 219. This view of the totem exhibits some of Durkheim's scholarly debts to Robertson Smith, who described the sacrificing and eating of the totemic animal as a central rite in all religions at a certain stage of development (cf. Mayes 1989: 30-31).
[57] See, for example, Turner 1967: 28. This is explained further below.
[58] Durkheim 1971: 219-220.

The social integration of the clan, which was otherwise widely dispersed, both geographically, and socially among other clans, and occupied with 'profane' activities, was effected by the ritual because of the dominating presence of the clan totem everywhere in the physical context of the ritual. The 'collective effervescence' created in the ritual is characterised by the ever present totem, as symbol of the clan. Combined with the feelings associated with this collective effervescence, the presence of the totem implements the socially integrative and cohesive character of the ritual for the clan group:

> Now the totem is the flag of the clan. It is therefore natural that the impressions aroused by the clan in individual minds – impressions of dependence and of increased vitality – should fix themselves to the idea of the totem rather than that of the clan: for the clan is too complex a reality to be represented clearly in all its complex unity by such rudimentary intelligences. More than that, the primitive does not even see that these impressions come to him from the group...he must connect these sensations to some external object as their cause. Now what does he see about him? On every side those things which appeal to his senses and strike his imagination are the numerous images of the totem.[59]

Essentially, the point is that in response to the physiological stimuli of ritual, the emotions of dependence and increased vitality[60] and loss of self in the presence of the Sacred, attach themselves to either ever-present or regularly occurring formations in the context of ritual.

By arguing this point, Durkheim provided a theoretical and anecdotal basis for the idea that a ritual, by its inevitable group context, and its equally inevitable involvement of a symbol of that group, served to create and regularly maintain a group's cohesion, and become integral to the identity of its members through its symbolic representation. Importantly, the sentiments, relationships, and feeling of dependency expressed in the loss of self and communal integration, and "collective effervescence", around the totem survive beyond the ritual, into the profane sphere. This is done precisely in the reproduction of the totem:

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[59] Durkheim 1971: 220.
[60] Durkheim 1971: 220.

> Placed thus in the centre of the scene, it becomes representative. The sentiments experienced fix themselves upon it, for it is the only concrete object upon which they can fix themselves. It continues to bring them to mind and to evoke them even after the assembly has dissolved, for it survives the assembly, being carved upon instruments of the cult, upon the sides of rocks, upon bucklers, etc. By it, the emotions experienced are perpetually experienced and revived.[61]

Muir describes Durkheim's above distinction between the sacred and the profane as the "touchstone of modern analysis of ritual".[62] Durkheim's classification of sacred and profane, however, has been seen by several scholars as unreliable, especially as applied as a universal. Different societies, after all, have very different ideas about what is sacred, in both sacred action and sacred realm.[63] Rothenbuhler, however, states that despite this, many have recognised "structural similarities across human cultures and situations in action toward the sacred".[64] Durkheim's analysis of Australian ritual, despite containing certain outdated assumptions about the development of the role of the sacred in societies, and a rather condescending and "evolutionistic" attitude towards the "primitive", nevertheless provides us with a useful analytical and comparative tool.[65]

Durkheim's theory, built on some of the social-historical ideas of Fustel de Coulanges, advanced an explanation as to how ritual mechanistically has a binding effect on members of a society by creating a feeling of mutual dependency through the mood of "collective effervescence". This effect is conceptualised and carried through to the everyday life through the totem; the symbol of the society under examination. Thus, participants in the ritual feel bound not only to those individuals immediately around them, but also to a more complex conception of society: the clan

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[61] Durkheim 1971: 221.
[62] Muir 2005: 3.
[63] See Rothenbuhler 1998: 23.
[64] Rothenbuhler 1998: 23. I stress at this point that the "sacred" in ancient Israel, while permeating many areas of life, was also often very clearly defined, both physically (architecturally), and verbally, and hence in the surviving texts that refer to it.
[65] One of the main drawbacks in Durkheim's work is his adoption of the "evolutionistic" approach to society adopted by W. Robertson Smith. Smith argued that every society passed through a "totemic" stage in its progression to a more advanced religious life. This view is rooted in the idea of certain societies being "primitive", that this primitive stage is equivalent to an earlier stage in the world's supposedly more "advanced" cultures, because all cultures go through a similar evolutionary process (cf. Mayes 1989: 30-31), such that certain contemporary, late nineteenth and twentieth-century cultures were described, even as late as in the work of Mircea Eliade, as "archaic" (Eliade 1995 [1958]: 4), when compared with contemporary Western societies in this way.

as represented by the totem. Two aspects of ritual in Durkheim's discussion emerge. The first is the creation of *internal* cohesion, such that the effect of "collective effervescence" brings those ritual participants into a feeling of vitality and mutual dependency. The second is the inevitable definition of the group vis-à-vis 'others'. This happens through the totem; a simple formation through which "collective effervescence" carries through to everyday life, through which, subsequently, the particular social allegiance could be conceptualised and physically represented. If allegiance is expressed through the totem, then it is divergence in totemic representations through which differing clan identities are represented against each other.[66]

Peter Berger: The 'Reminding' Role of Ritual in 'World-Maintenance'

According to Peter Berger, "The sociology of religion has been able to show in numerous instances the intimate relationship between religion and social solidarity".[67] Berger sees social solidarity as something which has to be maintained by every human society in the face of chaos. Chaos, in his understanding, is the encounter with disordering forces in human existence, particularly the conscious encounter with death.[68] In the face of such disorder, Berger argued that every society involves a *world-building* and *world-maintaining* exercise. Humans, he observed, are inherently, biologically disadvantaged such that whereas most animals are born into a natural habitat and environment, humans have no natural 'world':

> There is a mouse-world, a dog-world, a horse-world, and so forth. By contrast, man's instinctual structure at birth is both underspecialized and undirected toward a species specific environment. There is no man-world in the above sense.[69]

This problem, in Berger's view, resulted in the creation of 'culture':

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[66] cf. Durkheim 1971: 233.

[67] Berger 1990: 51. Berger's work on the sociology of religion, *The Sacred Canopy*, was first published in 1967. This work has also been published under the title, *The Social Reality of Religion* (1969). It was not intended by Berger to be a systematic sociology of religion, but rather an application of the ideas of his previous work (with Thomas Luckmann), *The Social Construction of Reality* (cf. Berger 1990: vi).

[68] Berger 1990: 51.

[69] Berger 1990: 5. As such, Berger referred to the human organism as "unfinished".

> Biologically deprived of a man-world, he constructs a human world. This world, of course, is culture. Its fundamental purpose is to provide the firm structures for human life that are lacking biologically.[70]

Thus, Berger introduces society as a world-building exercise, which is collective.[71] This kind of world building is not confined to material benefits: it is to a great extent a "sense-making" process.[72] Berger also argued that socially constructed worlds are inherently precarious and unstable, due to "the human facts of self-interest and stupidity"; as much as worlds need to be 'built', they constantly need to be *maintained.*[73] Part of this world-maintenance is the process of "legitimation", *viz* "socially objective 'knowledge' that serves to explain and justify the social order".[74] Included in this category is "religious legitimation", which "...interprets the order of society in terms of an all-embracing, sacred order of the universe".[75] Religious legitimation is not, according to Berger, the only kind of legitimation, nor indeed is religion necessarily the main constituent of legitimation; rather, religion has been "the historically most widespread and effective instrumentality of legitimation".[76]

Among the causes of the inherent precariousness of the socially constructed world, in Berger's view, is the human weakness of *forgetfulness*. People forget reality-defining affirmations, and respective legitimations. This is where ritual plays a part in Berger's model. Ritual functions as an institutionalised *reminder*: it reminds people of the definition of constructed social reality, and of the respective legitimations. In Berger's words:

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[70] Berger 1990: 6. In relation to this, Berger viewed culture (*vis* the world building activity of humans), as a "direct consequence of man's biological constitution", not something biologically extraneous.
[71] Berger 1990: 7.
[72] cf. Dillon 2006: 36. Culture, as seen by Berger, is "the totality of man's products". In this he understood that some "products" were material and others were not. Major non-material products, according to Berger, are language, and on the basis of language "a towering edifice of symbols" (Berger 1990: 6). Berger located his view of culture in contemporary American cultural anthropology (1990: 188 n. 8).
[73] Berger 1990: 6, 29ff.
[74] Berger 1990: 29. This is an idea which comes from Berger's previous work with Luckmann (1966), whereby society becomes an objective fact "through the typifications of habitualized actions and through language". Legitimation is an explanatory and justifying process for the objectified society (cf. Dixon 1968: 40).
[75] Berger 1990: 39.
[76] Berger 1990: 32. Put differenty by Klausner, religion "...gives social institutions ontological status" (Klausner 1968: 194).

> Religious ritual has been a crucial instrument in the process of "reminding." Again and again it "makes present" to those who participate in it the fundamental reality definitions and their appropriate legitimations.[77]

Ritual and mythology, in Berger's view, are closely related. The "action" of ritual consists of what is *done* and what is *said*. What is *said* constitutes mythology, or religious ideation: this is the content of beliefs, the religious legitimations:

> The performances of the ritual are closely linked to the reiteration of the sacred formulas that "make present" once more the names and deeds of the gods. Another way of putting it is to say that religious ideation is grounded in religious activity…[78]

Thus, ritual functions to present participants with an institutionalised reminder of the legitimating aspect of world-maintenance. This occurs to prevent the society from descending into chaos and anomy.[79] Social solidarity, for Berger, therefore has its intimate relationship with religion.[80] An implication of this understanding takes us a step forward. The constructed 'world' which is being maintained, Berger argued, is precarious and prone to drift towards chaos as a result of human weakness, as has been noted. The world, as well as its legitimating structure, is not, therefore, something which exists *per se*, especially if legitimating aspects of it are *forgettable*. In fact, Berger, following Maurice Halbwachs, suggested that society is, in essence, a memory:[81]

> Both religious acts and religious legitimations, ritual and mythology… *together* serve to "recall" the traditional meanings embodied in the culture and its major institutions. They restore ever again the continuity between the present moment and the social tradition, placing the experiences of the individual and the various groups of the society in the context of a history (fictitious or not) that transcends them all. It has been rightly said that

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[77] Berger 1990: 40.
[78] Berger 1990: 40. Cf. Gruenwald (2003: 5), however, who believes that theology and ideology belong to the periphery of ritual.
[79] Berger 1990: 39-41.
[80] cf. Berger 1990: 51. Berger views religion as "a sacred symbolic universe of meaning which is a constant in human experience", but which does not need to be expressed by a "church" or centralised institution (Dixon 1968: 42; cf. Beger 1990: 175-77)
[81] Berger 1990: 41; cf. Halbwachs 1952: 296 (first published 1925). Halbwachs argued that memory, even an individual's memory, is socially structured.

> society, in its essence, is a memory. It may be added that, through most of human history, this memory has been a religious one.[82]

If it is accepted that society is a memory, then an institutionalised reminder must, to some extent, have a reifying quality, such that the society, as it is conceived by some at least, is *actualised* in the context of ritual. As Berger noted, the individual or the various 'groups' were placed within a continuity of social tradition. It will be argued that ancient Jews, for example, were often placed within *Israel* in a similar way. Israel is a social tradition which is often legitimated with ritual and mythology. It is also a conception which is associated with an accumulation of social memory. Thus, for example, when individuals or 'groups' attended a ritual gathering in the Jerusalem Temple, they restored continuity between that moment and the social tradition which transcended them. In many cases, this tradition was the narrative of the ongoing relationship with Yahweh: the history of *Israel*. That is not to say that this was confined to those moments of intense ritual activity, but it would seem that they were certainly focal points of such a process. It is within a symbolic universe of human design, Dillon notes, that Berger sees religion facilitating the plausibility of sense-making processes, and thus the enhancement of social integration.[83]

Victor Turner and the Ritual Symbol

A Symbol, according to Mary Le Cron Foster, is a 'thing' which exists in space and time, and which 'represents'. For her, a symbol has materiality: it is experienced through the senses. A symbol represents meaning, but the meaning is not just about the symbol itself, it is also about "cultural processes and relationships". This meaning is *not* a 'thing' in the same sense that the symbol is.[84] If one thinks of a kiss, one may well see it as having a potentially huge variety of symbolic meanings, including especially love, affection, friendship, or indeed a variety of different types of

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[82] Berger 1990: 40-41.

[83] Dillon 2006: 36. The sections of Berger's work referred to herein are from the theoretical part of his book. The latter part of the work contains an empirical application of that theory to the modern secularization (cf. Dixon 1968: 40).

[84] Foster 1994: 366. Because of the symbol's complexity of meaning and multiplicity of referents, Stephen Happel suggests that it is at one end of a spectrum of human communicative devices, whereas simple 'signs' are at the other. Symbols are "polyvalent images of psychological, moral, and religious values" (Happel 1987: 997).

loyalty.[85] But to say that a kiss is merely symbolic of these conceptions and their associated sentiments, in the sense of *deceit* or *substitution*, fails to understand the kiss, because a kiss itself *is* affection in certain cases. If the example of the kiss is used to think about performing a symbolic act, it is evident that it is not necessarily deceitful; it is a real act. The kiss can, in many cases, be seen as a symbol for a conception; love, affection, allegiance, respect, 'brotherhood', or even betrayal; but, as a symbol, it is also to a certain extent *equated* with its associated conception. Thus the symbolic can be understood. The understanding that is adopted here is that of Clifford Geertz: the employment of a form, anything from a gesture to an object, as a general *vehicle for a more complex conception.*[86] The conception in question need not be a concrete reality in a physical sense; it may be the worship of a deity, or alliance or friendship between individuals. The point is that the conception is a reality in the social world of the symbol, in a way that a conception like "friendship" is clearly a social reality in our society. It is not, therefore, meaningful to consider the symbol simply as "substitute" for a conception. Again, a national flag is a typical example of a symbol in modern times.[87] In this latter case, the *conception* is a large community of interconnected individuals relating to a territory; a conception, indeed, which some have described as "imagined".[88]

A central feature of the Australian ritual just described was the totem. It is evident that the totem was a *symbol*, both of the clan, and of a deity, or at least a concept similar to what we today refer to as a deity. Many scholars have developed several of Durkheim's ideas, and specifically the function and meaning of "symbols" in ritual have been elaborated. Geertz regarded a symbol as "any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception – the conception is the symbol's 'meaning'".[89] Victor Turner in the 1960s elaborated on this understanding as it pertained particularly to symbols in ritual.[90] He stated,

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[85] Cf. Harvey 2005: 6, who describes the kiss as embedded "...in a range of social contexts and symbolic codes".
[86] Geertz 1966: 5.
[87] This example was also used several times by Durkheim when discussing the totem (Durkheim 1971: 220, 228)
[88] cf. Anderson 1991.
[89] Geertz 1966: 5.
[90] Turner 1967; 1995.

> The symbol is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behaviour; it is the ultimate unit of specific structure in a ritual context.[91]

The symbol as 'thing' can thus be anything; a plant, a gesture, a person, a flag, a building, a relationship, an event. Turner argued that ritual symbols have three main properties:

1. "Condensation"; such that "many things and actions are represented in a single formation."[92] An example of this is the condensed meaning of Durkheim's "totem", which is invariably a simple formation, but what it represents – the clan – is a much more complicated concept involving a whole history and matrix of relationships; "things and actions".
2. Turner also described a dominant symbol as a "*unification of disparate significata*".[93]
3. Dominant ritual symbols also contain a "*polarization of meaning*". At one pole, according to Turner, is a "cluster of *significata* that refer to components of the moral and social orders", and at the other a predominant reference to "natural and physiological phenomena and processes".[94] Bell referred to these as "ideological" and "sensory" poles respectively.[95] Turner explained the relationship between these two poles by arguing that the symbol "brings the ethical and jural norms of society into close contact with strong emotional stimuli".[96]

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[91] Turner 1967: 19. Following Turner's point, Gorman put the role of the symbol in ritual simply: "The basic building blocks of ritual performance are symbols, so that ritual action is always symbolic action" (Gorman 1990: 22).
[92] Turner 1967: 28.
[93] Turner 1967: 28. This property relates to a point which Geertz made about symbols: "they are extrinsic sources of information…they lie outside the boundaries of the individual organism as such in that intersubjective world of common understandings" (Geertz 1966: 6). Geertz contrasts symbols with DNA, for example, because genes are "models *for*" things in nature, whereas symbols have an "intrinsic double aspect: they give meaning…to social and psychological reality both by shaping *themselves to it* and by shaping *it to themselves*" (Geertz 1966: 6; my emphasis). The *disparate significata* (Turner) which ritual symbols unify are accounted for by this intersubjectivity of the symbol.
[94] Turner 1967: 3.
[95] Bell 1992: 184.
[96] Turner 1967: 30.

These three properties allow the ritual symbol to act as the "smallest 'mechanism' of the transformation and integration of ritual".[97] Viewed particularly with points 1 and 2 in mind ("condensation" and "unification..."), ritual symbols can be ambiguous in meaning.[98] According to Bell, "even the basic symbols of a community's ritual life, can be very unclear to participants or interpreted by them in very dissimilar ways".[99] This potential disparity, however, is not engendered by the symbol. Rather, it is the symbol itself that turns the natural disparity of beliefs regarding its complex significance and referents into a cohesion of behaviour around it and towards it. A diversity of beliefs might find itself converted into a unity of behaviour due to the ritual symbol. In a Christian community, the theological significance of the crucifixion is very unlikely to be comprehended in exactly the same way by each member, due to the complicated doctrine that relates to it. And yet the crucifix is a unifying symbol. Regarding Turner's third property of ritual symbols, the *polarization of meaning* contained in the symbol facilitates the "naturalization of political and ideological values". Again, the crucifix serves as an example of this polarization. On one pole are the ideological, theological, Christian norms; on the other pole, strong, emotive, and naturalistic concepts of human experience, such as suffering and death. As such, it has been argued that the purpose of ritual symbolism is to create "sociocultural solidarity",[100] by powerfully relating the political and ideological norms (laws/rules of conduct/morality) which order a society, with powerful universal themes.

Ritual symbols, as well as having *condensation* of meaning, have the property of being *effective*: "The symbols of ritual are seriously effective. Above and beyond the ordinary ways that language gets things done, the symbols of ritual are

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[97] Bell 1992: 184. This understanding, or *employment*, of the term "symbol" in anthropology differs from that of some earlier scholars, such as Max Weber, who viewed the symbolic as a significant stage of development in religious thought and practice, whereby "naturalism" was supplanted with "far reaching consequences". Symbols, as seen by Weber, were used in religion "instead of real things" (Weber 1963 [1922]: 7). Turner's view of the symbol is a development of the Durkheimian 'totem'. Weber, Parsons observed, did not develop his insight into the role of the symbolic as Durkheim did (Parsons 1963: xxviii).

[98] "Ambiguity" is a property of the ritual symbol developed by David Kertzer (1988: 11), explained below. Indeed, Foster argued that for the ethnographer, a symbol's meaning can also be grasped inductively by observing the symbol's many social uses in different contexts (Foster 1994: 366). It is *ambiguous* because the *disparity of significata.*

[99] Bell 1992: 183.

[100] Bell 1992: 184.

powerful".[101] This power and effectiveness can easily be illustrated by the traumatic effect that the desecration or destruction of such symbols can have on members of a society.[102] The power of symbols, Kertzer argued, comes in part from "a history of cognitive and emotional associations".[103] The flag of a nation-state and the crucifix have been cited here as examples of symbols, but these are only two obvious examples. Numerous types of formations can become symbols, such as plants (for example a thistle or a shamrock), or gestures (for example a handshake, a "peace"/"Victory" sign, or again, a type of kiss). Words and phrases, or even relatively "mundane" utterances can, if spoken in a particular language in a particular context (for example Latin, Gaelic, Hebrew), have symbolic significance. The symbolic is part of the social construction of reality and, according to Mary Douglas, "it is impossible to have social relations without symbolic acts".[104]

David Kertzer and the Symbolic Representation of Group Membership

Kertzer took up some of Durkheim's ideas regarding the socially cohesive role of ritual and applied them to the context of modern political groups, emphasising the role of the symbolic in the ritual process.[105] The two aspects of Durkheim's thought on ritual, internal cohesion through "collective effervescence" (mood) and representation of the society through the "totem" (symbol), were developed by Kertzer. His understanding of solidarity is clear:

> Do people everywhere tend to feel a oneness with those around them and, if so, how is this feeling of solidarity produced and maintained?[106]

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[101] Rothenbuhler 1998: 16.

[102] The burning of a national flag *symbolises* an attack of some kind, whether physical, written, or verbal, on a nation, a system, or a government, but a major element in this symbolic process can also be the perception of the action as constituting an *actual attack* as well. This was interpreted, for example, by Major General Patrick Brady, Chairman of the Citizens Flag Alliance, when, commenting on flag-burning protestors, he described flag-burning as "violent conduct" (cf. Welch 2000: 79). This kind of action thus represents the quality of the symbolic as the employment of forms as vehicles for more complex conceptions, while to some extent being equated with those conceptions as well.

[103] Kertzer 1988: 92. Emotional associations with ritual symbols, in Kertzer's view, develop from childhood memories, "feelings of past solidarity", and "the way in which they have been used to define one's own identity and one's understanding of the world" (1988: 92-93). One should recall Durkheim's view on the association of "collective effervescence" and the totem (Durkheim 1971: 221) in this regard.

[104] Douglas 2003: 63; also cited in Kertzer 1988: 12. Indeed, Douglas' understanding of a "ritual" is as a "symbolic act".

[105] Kertzer 1988.

[106] Kertzer 1988: 61.

A sensory or psychological idea of group membership and identity is evident. The phrase "feeling of solidarity" is a reasonable starting point, because such membership often goes above and beyond structural and practical considerations or blood ties (whether real or merely perceived). While several ways of designating large groups of human beings, including what is referred to as 'ethnic' identity, relate to ideas of kinship, blood ties, or shared history, in reality such ties may often be best described as a mere perception rather than actual blood relationship.[107] This feeling does, nevertheless, create and constitute a social reality for the individual in its perception, especially when the perceived allegiance or orientation towards the entity is shared by others.

As an analytical tool, Kertzer employed Durkheim's ritual model. What for Durkheim was the "sacred", Kertzer also feels can be defined as the *collective*:

> For Durkheim, worship of a god is the symbolic means by which people worship their own society, their own mutual dependency. Thus, the sacred ultimately refers not to a supernatural entity, but rather to people's emotionally charged interdependence, their societal arrangements.[108] What is important about rituals, then, is not that they deal with supernatural beings, but rather that they provide a powerful way in which people's social dependence can be expressed.[109]

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[107] For example, "ethnic" identity, according to Jones, is "that aspect of a person's self-*conceptualization* which results from identification with a broad group in opposition to others" (Jones 1997: xiii; my emphasis). The point is that due to the conceptual nature of several kinds of group identity, they are often transcendent of mere "community" as it applies to occupying a shared living space. To some extent, this realisation comes from Geertz's assertion that the primordial-type attachments of members of a society to one another stem "from the 'givens' – or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed 'givens' – of social existence" (Geertz 1963: 105-157). The observation that these 'givens' are assumed implies that they are primarily *perceptions* and not *actual* givens. As such, therefore, larger groups, such as ethnic groups and nations, are largely conceptual. Ritual, according to Kertzer's remark, can produce and maintain such a concept. This feeling or conceptualisation, however, is clearly socially structured, and does not constitute a transient feeling like a thought or a whim. More recently, Brubaker *et al* also argue that social entities constitute epistemological rather than ontological realities: in relation to such categories as 'race', or 'nation' they argue that "...they are not things in the world but *perspectives on* the world" (Brubaker *et al* 2004: 45, my emphasis). I wish to express my gratitude to Dermot Nestor for bringing some of these works to my attention.

[108] It should be added that these "societal arrangements" are seen from the point of view of the ritual participant in this analysis, and are therefore intersubjective and ultimately *perceived*, rather than necessarily real.

[109] Kertzer 1988: 9. Kertzer does not confuse Durkheim's "Sacred" with mere social activity. He rather understands the Sacred as a manifestation of the symbolic conception of the society. Ritual, therefore, is not mere "coming together", but a symbolic process.

This view of ritual is of a symbolic social process that is fundamentally linked to a group or collective tradition. Ritual is mediated by the group, and refers back to the group; it is "symbolic behaviour that is socially standardized and repetitive".[110] This understanding retains the "symbolic" and the "social", and sees them combined in ritual in a process concerned with the production and maintenance of the feeling of solidarity that ties individuals to it through the expression of social dependence (similar to "collective effervescence"). As with Durkheim's idea, the feelings of connectedness are not simply between the individuals present, but also towards the conception of the larger group through its symbolic representation. The role of *mood* holds an important place in the construction of solidarity through ritual in Kertzer's thought:

> Participation in ritual involves physiological stimuli, the arousal of emotions; ritual works through the senses to structure our sense of reality and our understanding of the world around us.[111]

Kertzer also dealt with the role of the symbol in ritual, and the three properties of the ritual symbol as understood by Victor Turner have had a significant bearing on his thought. He also suggested three similar properties: "condensation of meaning, multivocality, and ambiguity."[112] The former two are directly related to Turner's properties of "condensation" and "*unification of disparate significata*".[113] For Kertzer, the property of potential multivocality is "especially important in the use of ritual to build political solidarity in the absence of consensus".[114] By this he meant that the ritual symbol can create social cohesion in a context of disparate opinions and beliefs. "Condensation" refers to the interaction between the various differing meanings of the multivocality as it occurs in the symbol.[115] A symbol, therefore, has a unifying quality, which has the potential to transcend opinions, beliefs, and indeed the symbol's various interpretations. Kertzer's third property, "ambiguity", is implied from Turner's understanding of the symbol, but differs from the latter's "polarization

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[110] Kertzer 1988: 9. For Kertzer, it is the "symbolization" that makes an action a ritual, because, as Turner and Gorman also asserted (Turner 1967: 19; Gorman 1990: 22), symbols are the content of a ritual, without which any standardised, repetitive action is "an example of habit or custom and not ritual" (Kertzer 1988: 9, 11).
[111] Kertzer 1988: 10.
[112] Kertzer 1988: 11.
[113] cf. Turner 1967: 28.
[114] Kertzer 1988: 11. Political solidarity, however, will not be a major concern of the present work.
[115] Kertzer 1988: 11.

of meaning".[116] Ambiguity, for Kertzer, is a straightforward property: symbols, as several other scholars have also observed, "have no precise meaning" and hence the above property of potential multivocality; *unification of disparate significata.*[117]

Referring loosely to "organizations",[118] Kertzer argues that symbols are fundamental to any notion of social coherence:

> No organization...can exist without symbolic representation, for organizations can be "seen" only through their associated symbols. Indeed, people tend to think of organizations as physical units, part of the material world. Ritual is one of the important means by which these views of organizations are constructed and through which people are linked to them.[119]

The idea of the "organization" being "seen" exclusively through symbolic representation is a development of Durkheim's understanding of the role of the "totem": it is "something simple" which represents something else, the "organization" or the "clan", which "owing to its dimensions, the number of its parts and the complexity of their arrangement, is difficult to hold in the mind".[120] This also relates to Geertz's understanding of the symbol as a vehicle for a conception.[121] As a corollary to the fact that organisations can only be seen symbolically, Kertzer argued similarly that the expression of a person's allegiance or belonging must be symbolic:

> Since organizations themselves can only be represented symbolically, it follows that a person's allegiance to an organization can be expressed only through symbolism.[122]

Thus, he argued that the relationship between the individual and the organisation is objectified through symbolism, and that ritual played a major role in this process.[123]

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[116] cf. Turner 1967: 3.

[117] Even if a symbol has a more specific or limited range of meanings, even if this is dogmatically codified, there is still an inherent disparity in symbols in that each individual engagement with a symbol may result in a slightly different meaning, even if these meanings are similar.

[118] Kertzer's discussion is focussed on political groups, but not exclusively so. The general term "organization", in his work refers to ethnic, national, or religious groups as well, like the Tallensi in West Africa (cf. Fortes 1987), which he refers to (Kertzer 1988: 18).

[119] Kertzer 1988: 15-16.

[120] Durkheim 1971: 219-220.

[121] cf. Geertz 1966: 5.

[122] Kertzer 1988: 16. This is similar to Durkheim's thought, and indeed Durkheim states: "It is by uttering the same cry, pronouncing the same word, or performing the same gesture in regard to some object that they become and feel themselves to be in unison" (1971: 230).

Although Kertzer's work is an astute look at modern North American politics, there are certain weaknesses when applying it to ritual in ancient or traditional societies. For example, he probably places too much emphasis on the idea that ritual and ritual symbols function in displaying 'membership', particularly to non-members of the 'organisation'. There are various aspects of Jewish ritual which indeed are socially structured and certainly refer back to the norms and the symbolic world of the larger society, but which are not especially concerned with *display*.[124] Also, assuming the existence of a discrete 'organisation' may also be problematic when reconstructing Judaism at the turn of the era, for example.

Nevertheless there are two points which we can take up from Kertzer's discussion here, and both are somewhat related to Durkheim's ideas, as well as to Turner's theory of symbols. First, it is reasonable to assume that ritual can engender social cohesion for those present through the arousal of emotions by physiological stimuli, the structuring of reality, and ultimately the expression of interdependence. Secondly, regarding the symbolic aspect of ritual, whether one views ritual as *constituting* symbolic acts (like Kertzer), or merely involving other symbols in its process,[125] Kertzer's suggestion that an "organisation" can only be "seen" symbolically is essentially true, particularly when regarding a whole society, and at that, when we consider that society, group, or collective tradition is largely a *perspective on* the world, rather than a *thing in* the world.[126] Moreover, it is possible to depart from Kertzer's reference to "organisations" and think about social entities in general. A notable and commonly recognised property of a symbol is the potential multiplicity of its meanings, its inter-subjectivity,[127] and therefore its representation of many things and actions in a single formation.[128] It can be postulated, therefore, that ritual creates social cohesion for those present in the stimulation of a feeling of interconnectedness, but also, through its associated symbols, a feeling of connectedness and interdependence to a much larger society, and one less tangible in

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[123] Kertzer 1988: 16.
[124] While ritual bathing, for example, could well involve the presence of other individuals, it did not necessarily have the symbolic representation of group membership to non-members as its goal.
[125] For example, Gruenwald 2003: x.
[126] cf. Brubaker *et al* 2004: 45.
[127] cf. Geertz 1966: 6
[128] cf. Turner 1967: 28.

the immediate context of the ritual. Furthermore, considering that the larger social entity is represented only symbolically, it exists in the conceptual world of the participants. This does not suggest that the social entity, whether a nation-state (for example America), a global religious community (for example Islam), or an ethnic group (for example Kurdish people), does not have some relationship with reality, or does not receive concrete expression. The perceived community is a shared epistemological reality of a large number of individuals, which owing to its complexity, as Durkheim argued, is "difficult to hold in the mind".[129] As this entity, the epistemological reality, can be represented symbolically, so a person's feeling of belonging to that entity can be strengthened if the ritual is symbolically orientated towards the entity. Finally, it is also reasonable to suggest, in light of this, that varying conceptions of the entity may exist among those who perceive themselves, and are perceived by others, as belonging to it. If one thinks about Jews at the turn of the era, it is reasonable, then, that even though some Jews were culturally and physically quite removed from others, and indeed perceived the Jewish world, or even 'Israel', in differing ways, it is still possible to study the *notion* of Judaism as a whole, at least ideologically. One can also postulate that it was ritual that maintained Jewish identity in the midst of this multifaceted social entity.

[129] Durkheim 1971: 220.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has sought to investigate some of the ways in which scholars understand ritual and its role in the creation of social cohesion, particularly in answer to the question as to how calendrically repetitive ritual constellations relate to and foster group identity. Fustel de Coulanges asserted the central role ritual played in the definition of several groupings of ancient societies, particularly the citizenry and the family. Durkheim presented a theory of how this was achieved through the various stimuli of ritual which resulted in the creation of "collective effervescence", and a feeling of dependence. A major development which Durkheim introduced into the discourse of ritual studies was his evaluation of the role of the "totem", which laid an important template for the subsequent scholarly understanding of the ritual symbol. This understanding received what is now a classic treatment by the anthropologist Victor Turner, who elaborated the three properties of the ritual symbol. Peter Berger argued that culture was a human product, society was essentially a memory, and that rituals were institutionalised reminders which recalled legitimating aspects of culture, and "made present" those aspects. Some of the main strands of the aforementioned works were more recently taken up by David Kertzer. He asserted that ritual creates a feeling of solidarity, and particularly that ritual symbols, due to their resultant emotive status, are employed as symbolic representations of group membership. This follows from his observation that large groups can only be "seen" through symbolic representation.

It has been argued repeatedly by many scholars that ritual is a set of symbolic acts. Gorman, for example, stated that ritual is a "complex performance of symbolic acts",[130] while Rothenbuhler argues that "forms of ritual action *constitute* symbols".[131] Kertzer argues from a similar perspective: ritual is "symbolic behaviour".[132] If what are often referred to as religious "holidays", "feasts", or "festivals" are, as has been argued, ritual constellations, and, as such necessarily also constellations of symbols then potentially any one or more of the symbols from such a constellation can be employed in the symbolic representation of group membership.

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[130] Gorman 1990: 19.
[131] Rothenbuhler 1998: 14. My emphasis.
[132] Kertzer 1988: 9.

In the coming chapters it will be suggested that the festival of חֹדֶשׁ was embedded with a socially cohesive strategy, and that it was similar to what Turner referred to as a "calendrical rite": it was on a fixed cycle, referred to a large group, and embraced a whole society.[133] The symbols as 'things' which were associated with the feast will not be as easily observed as their referents. Their referents, however, included Yahweh, the cosmos, and particularly, the concept of 'Israel' as the people of Yahweh. It is argued that in the context of ritual Jews were placed in continuity with the tradition of Israel which transcended the immediate moment.[134] חֹדֶשׁ, it is suggested, involved the symbolic *actualisation* of Israel.

[133] Turner 1995: 168-69.
[134] cf. Berger 1990: 40-41.

Chapter 3

Ḥōdeš Ritual and the Sacrificial Cult (c. 800 BCE – 70 CE)

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the sources for the ritual traditions associated with חֹדֶשׁ in the central shrine contexts in Israel and Judah and post-exilic Yehud and Judea are assessed. Part 1 attempts to encompass sources which ante-date the Persian period and argues for the importance of חֹדֶשׁ in monarchic Israel and Judah. It will be found in Part 2 that the most reliable details regarding the feast relate to post-exilic times. The characteristic features of חֹדֶשׁ in the sacrificial cult, animal and grain offerings, and a ritual gathering, or 'sanctuary convocation', are nevertheless traced back to early times. This chapter will begin with a brief discussion of the ritual aspect of the moon and calendars in the ancient Near East, followed by a presentation of the details of חֹדֶשׁ which are found in the eighth-century prophets Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah (Part 1). Then examined are texts from the neo-Babylonian and Persian periods which prescribe the ritual in more detail (Part 2). Following this, a number of texts are noted which suggest the sustained importance of חֹדֶשׁ in the sacrificial cult through Hellenistic and Roman times, up to the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE (Parts 3 and 4). The biblical traditions associated with the observance of the new moon, and their relationship with one another, and to actual cult practice at the sanctuaries, are evaluated.

The emergent picture of new moon observance is one of what was referred to previously as a *calendrically repetitive ritual constellation*, reminiscent of Victor Turner's category of "calendar rites".[1] חֹדֶשׁ involved sacrifices of some significance. It was a calendrically repetitive constellation of rites, on a *fixed cycle*, in various ritual contexts, which *referred to a large group* and *embraced a whole society*.[2] Whether this describes the practical reality of חֹדֶשׁ or not, it will be demonstrated that such an understanding was central to the ideology of the feast since the early Persian period at the latest.

Several ritual details are prescribed and alluded to in the biblical texts, and many of these would have constituted powerful physiological stimuli, as well as ideological focal points. There were sacrifices and burnt offerings on the altar in front

[1] Turner 1995: 168-69.
[2] Turner 1995: 168-69.

of the Temple, accompanied by the liturgical singing of the Levites and the sounding of a trumpet. The king, or governor of Yehud, took up a prescribed position, and at the periphery the people also bowed down in worship in the outer court of the Temple-complex, orientated towards the altar and the Temple. The sights, smells, and sounds of the surrounding ritual would have created a multi-sensory experience, contributing significantly to the mood of the event. חֹדֶשׁ ritual in the Temple-complex would most likely have elicited strong emotional reactions, due to these repetitive stimuli, and several other major features of the ritual: the presence of Yahweh was at the centre of activity involving the high priest, priests, Levites, musicians, the king or Persian governor, and the people. The spectacle was one of fire, smoke, various layers of sounds, from chanting, horns, musicians, animals, to burning, stereotyped ritual gesture, and the belief of being before Yahweh and in the midst of his people, cut off architecturally from the outside world.

Ritual, specifically the ritual constellation of חֹדֶשׁ, is seen herein as having a socially cohesive character. In particular, sacrificial ritual has been seen to embody this character for certain scholars. Robertson-Smith, for example, envisaged all societies to pass through a totemic stage during which the community was united by its common sacrifice, which took precedence over belief or dogma.[3] Wellhausen, too, argued that "...the sacrifice brought into connection the members of the family, the associates of a corporation, the soldiers of the army, and, generally speaking, the constituents of any permanent or temporary society".[4] More recently, Gruenwald argues that in sacrifice the wholeness of a community can be preserved and expressed in ritual terms.[5] In this chapter, the sacrificial aspect of חֹדֶשׁ is the focus of discussion. The chapter will take the form of a broad historical overview, assessing the sources for the observance of חֹדֶשׁ through several centuries. According to S. L. Cook,

> Sociological and anthropological study suggests that religious change and alterations in ritual practices often accompany the development of a traditional society over time.[6]

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[3] cf. Mayes 1989: 143 n. 3.
[4] Wellhausen 1994: 74.
[5] Gruenwald 2003: 205-06.
[6] Cook 1999: 148.

Three important developments in the feast's celebration, particularly pertaining to its sacrificial aspect, will be emphasised. These can be viewed against the backdrop of the development of the sacrificial cult as a whole, and reflect a *growing 'national' consciousness* attached to חֹדֶשׁ.[7] These are (1) the introduction of a 'sin-offering of the people' at new moons, which was intended to expiate the inadvertent sins of the whole nation in advance of the other חֹדֶשׁ offerings, and (2) the association of trumpet blasts at the Temple with new moons. These blasts were intended to play a socially cohesive role in the assertion of priestly authority, and the association of this authority with the wanderings in the desert in the Book of Numbers. Finally, (3) the imposition of the regularised ⅓ shekel tax for the payment of the regular offerings of the sacrificial cult, from the time of Nehemiah, is noted. It is argued here that these three developments are reflections of the growing 'national' character of חֹדֶשׁ in Second Temple times, and that they evidence the widespread significance of the feast in Judean society and the Diaspora; these characteristics were to remain a part of its celebration until 70 CE.

[7] As already stated in Chapter 1, use of the term 'national' here is not intended to imply the projection of the model of modern nationalism which originates from the eighteenth century. Cf. Pearce & Jones 1998: 22-23 on the danger of this projection.

1. THE NEW MOON IN EARLY ISRAEL AND JUDAH AND SOME NEAR EASTERN PARALLELS

In this section, the early history of the association of ritual activity with particular points in the lunation in the ancient Near East is noted. Following this, what appear to be the earliest references to the feast of חֹדֶשׁ in the sacrificial cults of Israel and in Judah are examined: those of the eighth century BCE oracles of Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos.[8] It will be demonstrated that, at least according to these three prophetic texts, חֹדֶשׁ emerges as one of the principal festivals in the cults of Israel and Judah, and was celebrated with sacrifices and associated ritual assemblies. This suggests that in the early period, חֹדֶשׁ may have been a festival which was mainly constituted by ritual which occurred in a *centralised*, or 'public', shrine setting.[9] This is argued in opposition to the suggestion of some scholars that חֹדֶשׁ was principally a 'popular' or 'family' festival, and that it only became important in a sacrificial setting in the neo-Babylonian or Persian period.[10] It is suggested here, first, that the recurrent reference to feast in the three texts examined, as well as, secondly, the precedent of similar events in earlier Near Eastern contexts, supports the conclusion that the observance of חֹדֶשׁ was an early practice in Israel and Judah. While this conclusion regarding the eighth century BCE must remain tentative, it is asserted that the argument that the feast, in early times, was a 'popular' or family one, in contrast to central shrine festivals, is unfounded.

The Moon, the Month, and the Cult in the Ancient Near East: Some Parallels

The month was a fundamental division of time throughout the ancient Near East. Calendars that broke the year up with lunar months were most often used.[11] Yearly

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[8] There are other references to חֹדֶשׁ in this early period, or indeed earlier, in 1 Samuel 20 and 2 Kings 4:23. These are examined in Chapter 4.

[9] While the term 'centralised', or 'certralisation', when used in Biblical Studies, often refers to the centrlisation of cult practices to the Jerusalem sanctuary traditionally associated with Deuteronomy, this is not the term's intended meaning in the present work. I rather use the term 'centralised' in a more general sense, to describe public institutions and practices which were of widespread significance and were focussed on sanctuaries rather than domestic contexts. As such, a *central* location in a region, a town, or perhaps even a village is implied, rather than the exclusivity of Jerusalem worship.

[10] See, for example, Wilke 1951: 174-75; Caquot 1960: 17; Goldstein & Cooper 1990: 21.

[11] See Chapter 1; Edelman 2005: 82ff.; Herr 1976: 834. The exceptions to this were the Egyptian civil calendar, which was solar, and used alongside Egypt's lunar/luni-solar cultic calendar, and the calendar of the *Book of Jubilees* (see VanderKam 1998: 15-16, 27-33, and Chapter 5, herein). This picture of dominant lunar calendars is largely accurate when applied to the period broadly encompassing the emergence of Israel and Judah to a century before the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70CE, but must be qualified with the fact that from the Roman period to late antiquity in the Near East, at least

cycles were reckoned using what is described as a 'luni-solar' system. Put simply, the fundamentals of this type of calendar system are: "days, lunations, and year".[12] As Rochberg explains, "The three basic intervals that structured the calendar were the solar year, the lunar month, and the solar day".[13] Whilst the moon is employed as a reference for fixing months, the movements of the earth in relation to the sun or stars[14] are indispensable for the synchronisation of such a calendar with the agricultural seasons.[15] The use of the moon to reckon months is thought to be of pre-historic origin;[16] in the Near East, the practice is first attested to in Sumerian texts.[17]

Many ancient Near Eastern cultures observed various kinds of rituals in association with the moon's phases, and particularly with the appearance of the lunar crescent each month.[18] As early as the Ur III period, king Šugli of Ur (c. 2089 BCE) is said to have run from Ur to Nippur, and back again, in order to celebrate the *eššeššu* festivals (lunar festivals) of both cities.[19] During this period, offerings and other supplies are attested for rituals associated with various points in the lunation, from several Mesopotamian cities. Included in these, Hallo notes, are cakes, oil, beer, cattle, and special garments; practices attested to include animal sacrifice and ritual ablutions.[20] The Old Babylonian *Atra-hasīs Epic* also refers to ritual associated with points in the lunation:

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two other time-keeping schemes emerged which did not require the moon's phases as a point of reference: the Roman Julian calendar (see Stern 2002: 110ff.), and later the Sasanian calendar from the third to the seventh century CE in Iran (see Bickerman 1983: 778-791).

[12] Bickerman 1983: 778.

[13] Rochberg 1995: 1931.

[14] The stars are also inevitably involved in the calendar as they are quite easy to observe, and reckon the solar year, and hence the agricultural cycles, quite precisely. In fact, the stellar year – the interval between the heliacal risings (annual first-rising) of particular stars – is approximately 20 minutes shorter than the solar year (cf. Horowitz 1996: 38 n. 8).

[15] Because the total length on twelve lunations is, on average, 354 days (approximately11.25 days short of the true solar year), a thirteenth lunar month has to be occasionally intercalated to any luni-solar calendar. This must be done approximately every three years. Sophisticated techniques were developed over time to solve this problem: notably the 'Metonic Cycle', thought to originate in Mesopotamia, involved the insertion of seven additional lunations over the course of nineteen years (see Bickerman 1984: 63).

[16] see Feldman 2004: 36-38.

[17] Del Olmo Lete 2004: 25 n. 48; cf. Sauren 1970: 11-29. According to Bickerman it was due to fiscal needs that an organised luni-solar system was developed in Sumer, where records from 2400 BCE refer to occasional intercalation of months to keep the barley harvest in line with its traditional month (Bickerman 1980: 22).

[18] As Wise argued, "Time was holy. Its proper measure was a religious act..." (Wise 1994: 231).

[19] Cylinders of Gudea of Lagash, Cylinder Aii 23; Hallo 1977: 5.

[20] Hallo 1977: 6-7.

206 On the first, seventh, and fifteenth day of the month
207 I will make a purifying bath (BM 92608).[21]

In this case the god Enki addresses the "great gods", who undergo ritual bathing on these days.[22]

At Emmar, a yearly new moon (*HIDAŠU*) festival was held in honour of the god Dagan.[23] At Ugarit, several rituals and sacrifices are known to have taken place on new moon days. In the month on *riš yn* ("first wine"), the new moon is to be marked by an offering to the supreme god *Ilu*:

1. In the month of *riš yn* (the first wine), on the day of the new moon,
2. a grape cluster will be cut for *Ilu* as a peace offering[24]
(KTU 1.41; 1.87, lines 1-2)

Del Olmo Lete suggests that the rite prescribed took place in the temple of *Ilu*.[25] The same text also describes a sacrifice to the goddess Astart:

And on the day of the new moon (they shall offer): two rams to *'Attartu* (KTU 1.41; 1.87, lines 48-49).

Regarding these and others details, del Olmo Lete states, "Full moon and new moon appear to be decisive dates in the parameter of 'time'..."[26] It can be seen clearly that this temporal structure bore significance in cultic life. This is further evidenced in another text prescribing ritual for a month whose name is not extant.[27] On this new moon, offerings are also to be presented to *Ba'latu-Bahatīma*, "The Lady of the Palace", and the *'Ināšu-Ilīma*, which may refer to dead ancestors.[28] Indeed, the celebration of a new moon festival is also mentioned in Ugaritic Epic, wherein the

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[21] Translation from Lambert & Millard 1969: 56-57 (cf. Hasel 1988: 45). Lambert & Millard suggested that the Akkadian *Atra-hasīs Epic* was first written down c. 1600 BCE (1969: 14).
[22] cf. Hasel 1988: 45.
[23] cf. Fleming 1995: 57-63.
[24] For the transcribed text and translation see del Olmo Lete 2004: 107.
[25] Del Olmo Lete 2004: 122. Del Olmo Lete associates the "firstfruits" festival of this month with *Ilu* as a fertility deity (2004: 106, 112).
[26] Del Olmo Lete 2004: 106.
[27] Text and translation from Pardee 2002: 37-38.
[28] Pardee 2002: 36.

new moon is associated with two 'horns' (*viz* the visible crescent).[29] Another Ugaritic text (RIH 78/14) reports various omens associated with the first appearance of the crescent, at the time of the new moon, indicating the association of the feast with this astronomical event.[30]

From this brief examination it is clear that phases of the moon and the time of the new moon were marked by cultic activity from a very early period in the ancient Near East, in both Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine. It is evident, moreover, that throughout the Near East in this long period, this type of occasion was associated with a variety of deities and other entities. When approaching Israelite/biblical traditions, it is *not* suggested that they are necessarily equated with any of the ancient Near Eastern traditions quoted above. What many of these traditions have in common, however, is their monthly division of time, and their ritual observance of such times, typically involving sacrifice. This would seem to have been a response to a common belief that the time of the new moon's appearance was a holy, or particularly propitious, time.

The New Moon in the Works of Three Eighth Century Prophets

Regarding Israel and Judah, the texts which survive in the Hebrew Bible also attest to the celebration of a festival on the new moon. During the reign of Saul, for example, we read that a feast was held at the table of the king (1 Samuel 20; see Chapter 4). Here, four passages are examined from three prophetic books which are often referred to by commentators when arguing for the great antiquity of the observance of חֹדֶשׁ in monarchic Israel and Judah.[31] The eighth century BCE prophets Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah give us small but significant details of חֹדֶשׁ and its importance in public contexts. By 'public' I refer to ritual within northern and southern shrine-complexes; sacrifice with ritual assembly. Other features of חֹדֶשׁ observance, based on the evidence of these texts, may have included the cessation of work of new moon days.

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[29] KTU 1.18 IV 9-10 is translated as, "Until the moon is new with on [his left] ho[rn] and on his right horn" (Wyatt 1998: 282-83); cf. del Olmo Lete 2004: 233.

[30] Pardee 2002: 143.

[31] Hasel 1988; DeVaux (1965: 470) cited Hosea 2:11 and Isaiah 1:13-14 as evidence that the observance of חֹדֶשׁ in ancient Israel was "a very ancient one". Keel also includes these references, along with citations from 1 Samuel 20, as evidence for the observance of חֹדֶשׁ *before* the seventh century (Keel 1998: 104-05). cf. Wilke 1951: 174. Regarding the antiquity of the feast, it has even been suggested that the general term for praising, הלל, actually derives from a term referring to a lunar feast, possibly the new moon, and as such may have originally been associated with celebrating the time of new moon (cf. Wilke 1951: 175).

Reference to חֹדֶשׁ occurs alongside sabbath, and מוֹעֲדִים, 'appointed times', in four out of five of the references. Most notable in the eighth century-prophets, though, is the inclusion of חֹדֶשׁ in the common, and sometimes vigorous, condemnation of cult practices in both northern Israel and Judah.

Regarding prophetic literature, a common view which emerges is that the result of the immoral activity of an individual, a group, even society in general, was that the sacrifice offered had become corrupted, and inappropriate for Yahweh, and was thus condemned by the prophets. An oracle in Jeremiah, for example, reads:

עֹלוֹתֵיכֶם לֹא לְרָצוֹן וְזִבְחֵיכֶם לֹא־עָרְבוּ לִי׃

> Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor are your sacrifices pleasing to me (Jeremiah 6:20).

The reasons for this corruption vary from one text to another, from social injustice to apostasy. In the case of Jeremiah 6:20, the reason for Yahweh's displeasure with these offerings is given in the preceding verse:

כִּי עַל־דְּבָרַי לֹא הִקְשִׁיבוּ וְתוֹרָתִי וַיִּמְאֲסוּ־בָהּ׃

> ...because they have not given heed to my words; as for my teaching [*torah*], they have rejected it (Jeremiah 6:19).[32]

In relation to this tendency, Klawans observes that:

> ...passages condemning the cult and giving priority to righteousness over sacrifice appear throughout the prophetic corpus, attributed to figures who could be described as either central or peripheral, from various periods of Israelite history, from the north and south.[33]

While scholars in the past asserted that these passages present a view within prophetic circles that the sacrificial cult, as a mode of worship, was rejected by the prophets in a

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[32] Indeed the issue of social injustice is at the fore in this section of Jeremiah, and is closely linked to the sacrificial cult: "For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely" (Jeremiah 6:13).

[33] Klawans 2006: 79. Klawans cites Jeremiah 6:20 as another example of this theme.

"priest verses prophet" dichotomy,[34] the view more prevalent in recent times is that sacrifice was fundamental to Israelite religion, and that it was only in situations of corruption that sacrifice was condemned.[35] This latter view reflects a statement in Proverbs 15:

זֶבַח רְשָׁעִים תּוֹעֲבַת יהוה

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 15:8).

It is this critique of sacrificial ritual that is the prevailing context for the three eighth-century prophets' oracles concerning the observance of חֹדֶשׁ. חֹדֶשׁ in each case is referred to alongside the other feasts, and in two examples, at the heart of the critique. Reference to חֹדֶשׁ in this context does not point to the fundamental inappropriateness of its rituals for the sacrificial cults of Israel or Judah. Rather, it should be seen as an integral aspect of the cult; it is not treated any differently than the sabbath or the yearly festivals.

Amos

The book of Amos, according to Shalom Paul, "...constitutes the earliest collection of oracles that have been preserved as an independent literary work".[36] The prophet was active sometime during the reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel (789-748 BCE) and Uzziah of Judah (785-733 BCE), and probably before 745 BCE.[37] The figure Amos, from Tekoa (Amos 1:1), is described as being of Judahite origin. Much material in the oracles attributed to him is directed against the kingdom of Israel. Amos 8:4-5a contains a uniquely clear reference to חֹדֶשׁ and its association with a cessation of trading:

שִׁמְעוּ־זֹאת הַשֹּׁאֲפִים אֶבְיוֹן וְלַשְׁבִּית עֲנִיֵּי־אָרֶץ׃

[34] This view, whilst having roots in the Patristic period (cf. Commodian, *Liber Instructionum* 1. 40. 3-4), is associated, in modern times, with Wellhausen. Discussions on this strand of thought and its association with a nineteenth-century Protestant reading of the prophetic texts is included in Klawans 2006: 75-100; Wilson 1980: 1-10. Lindblom also discussed the relationship of prophets with the Temple cult (Lindblom 1962: 206-210).

[35] Klawans 2006: 75-100; Soggin 2001: 84; DeVaux 1965: 454-456. Some scholars retain the view that there may have been a prophetic minority who deemed the sacrificial system as a redundant method of worship, for example, Barton 1995: 51-53.

[36] Paul 1991: 1.

[37] Paul 1991: 1.

לֵאמֹר מָתַי יַעֲבֹר הַחֹדֶשׁ וְנַשְׁבִּירָה שֶׁבֶר וְהַשַּׁבָּת וְנִפְתְּחָה־בָּר

> Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land saying, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain;[38] and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale?" (Amos 8:4-5)

Amos' attitude to the correct observance of חֹדֶשׁ here is one of reverence, evidenced by his condemnation of the grain merchants and their disdain towards it as an obstacle to attaining wealth, as with their view of the sabbath. This reverence is not contrary to his overall critique of the abuse of the sacrificial cult, and his apparent rejection of cult practices (for example Amos 5:5). The two views are reconciled by Hammershaimb:

> ...although elsewhere he [Amos] directs hard words at the feasts and cult of the people, in this context he only wishes to impress on them that while otherwise they lay undue weight on the feasts, when they get in the way of the exploitation of the poor, they regard them as a nuisance.[39]

Andersen and Freedman also noted the absence in Amos of any disapproval levelled at the observance of חֹדֶשׁ in particular, rather pointing out the author's condemnation of addressees' motivation for their worship in the cult: greed, behind a façade of religiosity, culminating in a desire to violate the restrictions of religious observance. In Amos' critique, "priests and profiteers were hand in glove".[40] In other parts of the text (for example Amos 5:5, 21), Amos displays a view also evident in Isaiah and Hosea, an apparent rejection of all cultic life in Israel. This, of course, must be qualified with the realisation that for him *true* Yahweh worship involves a working cult with due attention to social justice; the prophet seems to advocate the view that a corrupt Israel produced corrupt sacrifice which was unfit for Yahweh.

Paul pointed out the importance of this quotation from Amos (8:4-5a) as an indication of the domestic side of חֹדֶשׁ observance. It provided, in his opinion, a "rare glimpse into the religious practice of northern Israel during the mid-eighth century",

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[38] LXX lacks a translation of שֶׁבֶר, "grain"; cf. *BHS* vs. 5, n. b.
[39] Hammershaimb 1970: 122.
[40] Andersen & Freedman 1989: 805-06, 814.

and he stated: "on the new moon and sabbath, work actually ceased and trade stopped".[41] According to Keel, also, the extract illuminates the aspect of rest associated with חֹדֶשׁ; business activities, at least, are frowned upon.[42] Clearly, a cessation of work and trade, at least of some kind,[43] is presumed for the days referred to. This association can also be ascertained from other texts (see Chapter 4) but, according to Paul, "...it is clearly cited only here".[44] This glimpse is given weight by another observation. Möller notes that Amos, in several instances, is presented interacting with his audience, and the above interaction with the grain merchants is one such example.[45] Importantly, Möller's suggestion is based on Hoffman's argument that popular clichés are employed as a rhetorical device as the basis for disputes in the text, as relating to חֹדֶשׁ, for example.[46] If this argument can be sustained, as other examples of the polemical character of Amos' sayings would seem to suggest, then the above reference to חֹדֶשׁ being an obstacle to trade can be deemed as a cliché for the context of the author, and, perhaps by extension, eighth-century northern Israel. If חֹדֶשׁ can be shown to have been referred to by cliché, this may well indicate the new moon's widespread significance.[47]

Andersen and Freedman did not, in their analysis of this section of Amos, find any difficulty in arguing for the integrity of the text of Amos 8:4-5a, describing the two clauses in verse 5a quoted above as "exactly parallel in form and structure, and combinatory and or complementary in context and meaning".[48] The opening words מָתַי יַעֲבֹר apply to both clauses, to new moon and sabbath, to both feasts "passing". As examined in isolation, therefore, this part of the oracle does not raise any immediate difficulties.

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[41] Paul 1991: 257.
[42] Keel 1998: 105; Van der Toorn 1996: 213.
[43] At the very least, following the suggestion of Andersen and Freedman, trading by some cult officials stopped due to their duties in the cult (1989: 805).
[44] Paul 1991: 258. Loewenstamm (1992: 131-135) found supporting evidence for the cessation of work, on the occasion of the new moon, in the text of Ostracon 7 from Arad (see Chapter 4). A transcription of the Hebrew text is published in Davies 1991: 14.
[45] Möller 2003: 147. The other explicit instances are referred to in 2:12; 4:1; 6:13; 7:10, 11, 16; 8:14; 9:10.
[46] Hoffman 1989: 180-81.
[47] It should be pointed out that the disdainful merchants are actually described, in the text, as fulfilling the ritual requirements of חֹדֶשׁ. The ritual *is* interrupting their trading, after all. It is their *attitude* of complaint for the observance that Amos abhors.
[48] Andersen and Freedman 1989: 692.

As for the wider context in the book, this extract forms part of a series of oracles (Amos 8:4-14) between the fourth and fifth visions of the text. Scholars in the past have used form and redaction criticism to argue for up to six layers of text variously dated from the time of the prophet himself, to some time in the fourth or third century BCE.[49] More recently, however, commentators have employed more caution and tend to doubt the reliability of these techniques for such a short text. In the words of Möller:

> While the 'dissidents' do not necessarily doubt the legitimacy of redaction criticism as such, many feel that its adherents have played their hand too confidently and have come up with questionable results...[50]

The tendency of some scholars now is to associate much of the work with the context of the prophet himself, apart from some obvious insertions concerning later events.[51] This surely cannot be a definitive conclusion, however, as, in the words of Andersen and Freedman, "there is no surefire technique for distinguishing authentic Amos materials from the additions of later scribes".[52] Andersen and Freedman, at least, compile a comprehensive list of sections of Amos whose authenticity is commonly doubted, and this list does not include 8:4-5a;[53] the reference to חֹדֶשׁ does not raise particular difficulties.[54] With the tendency of many scholars recently to find the eighth century or shortly after the most rewarding context to interpret the compiled sayings of Amos, and since the verses of particular interest here have not proven problematic in commentaries on the book, the information in 8:4-5a might tentatively be viewed as closely associated with the eighth-century context of the prophet. In support of this suggestion one should note that in the eighth-century prophets' writings, their *most common* feature is criticism of cult practices. The above

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[49] See Paul 1991: 5-6 for a detailed discussion.
[50] Möller 2003: 108.
[51] See, for example, Paul 1991. Amos' oracles probably date to before 745 BCE, according to Paul, because they "make no reference to the dramatic reversal in domestic political affairs after the death of Jeroboam II, nor is there any indication of the westward territorial expansion of Assyria under the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III" (Paul 1991: 1).
[52] Andersen & Freedman 1989: 141.
[53] Andersen & Freedman 1989: 142.
[54] According to Andersen and Freedman, difficulties have arisen from the wording of verses 5b-6 (not quoted) since Wellhausen, specifically relating to the speaker; it has been argued variously that the wording of 5b implies the speech therein is uttered by the Merchants, and also that it is uttered by Amos (1989: 143).

condemnation of the merchants in Amos fits well into this context. Amos thus appears to provide one of the earliest biblical references to the observance of חֹדֶשׁ.[55]

Isaiah

The association of חֹדֶשׁ with the sacrificial cult is made more directly in Isaiah 1. The time period referred to in the book of Isaiah spans the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah (Isaiah 1:1); c. 783-687,[56] the prophet himself having lived some time between 750 and 700 BCE.[57] Our second commonly cited text in support of the early observance of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ is Isaiah 1:12-14. It occurs as part of an attack on cultic life, this time that of Judah:

כִּי תָבֹאוּ לֵרָאוֹת פָּנָי
מִי־בִקֵּשׁ זֹאת מִיֶּדְכֶם רְמֹס חֲצֵרָי׃
לֹא תוֹסִיפוּ הָבִיא מִנְחַת־שָׁוְא קְטֹרֶת תּוֹעֵבָה הִיא לִי
חֹדֶשׁ וְשַׁבָּת קְרֹא מִקְרָא לֹא־אוּכַל אָוֶן וַעֲצָרָה׃
חָדְשֵׁיכֶם וּמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם שָׂנְאָה נַפְשִׁי

> When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and calling of convocation – I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates (Isaiah 1:12-14).[58]

The context for this reference to the new moon is an overall condemnation of cultic life in Judah, and it is overtly clear in this context that חֹדֶשׁ is associated with the sacrificial cult. The absolute corruption of the cult is clear: *all* of the holy days are considered corrupt, as are the various ways in which Yahweh can be worshipped in the public cult: with offerings, incense, and convocation. מִנְחַת־שָׁוְא ("ineffective offering/offering of emptiness/vanity"[59]) and "incense/smoke of sacrifice is

[55] Harper suggested that this is the earliest allusion to the sabbath, also, in prophetic literature (Harper 1905: 178).
[56] Childs 2001: 11. The heading containing this information (1:1), however, was probably added by the final redactor, and refers to the entire book as it is preserved today (Kaiser 1972: 1).
[57] Barton 1995: 13.
[58] "Breath" or "spirit" is a more literal translation of נפשׁ here than "soul".
[59] See *BDB* 996.

abomination to me" [60] emphasise the total corruption of Yahweh's sacrificial cult: מִנְחָה is most probably used here as a term for sacrifice or offering in a broad sense.[61] The listing of חֹדֶשׁ, sabbath, and "calling of convocation" lends further category and temporality to this corruption and subsequent condemnation of the cult as a whole, throughout the entire liturgical year. This continues the theme of the surrounding verses (Isaiah 1:10-17). The cult practices of Judah are systematically condemned.

Blenkinsopp argues that Isaiah, like his near contemporaries Amos and Micah, demonstrates a negative attitude towards animal sacrifice (Amos 5:22; Micah 6:6-7), "no doubt because it could be so easily exploited to the advantage of Temple personnel".[62] In this case one would assume that this disapproval is what provokes his triple attack on חֹדֶשׁ, sabbath, and yearly festivals. Blenkinsopp is largely correct: clearly Isaiah attacked cult practices, but it is difficult to specify that animal sacrifice was particularly condemned over other practices, because several types of ritual action are referred to.[63] "What is condemned", asserts Herbert, "is worship in which ethical conduct is not included".[64] Indeed, this is referred to in verse 13: אָוֶן וַעֲצָרָה, "trouble/wickedness and assembly".[65] The condemnation is accompanied by a call for social justice:

לִמְדוּ הֵיטֵב דִּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט

Learn to do good; seek justice… (Isaiah 1:17).

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[60] תּוֹעֵבָה refers to various "abominations" throughout the Hebrew Bible, including idolatry (Isaiah 41:24; Jeremiah 2:7; Deuteronomy 13:15; 17:4; Malachi 2:11), unclean food (Deuteronomy 14:3), and unchastity (Leviticus 18:22). See *BDB* 1072-3.

[61] See Anderson 1987: 27-34; Gray (1912: 20) stated that מִנְחָה "is here used in the widest sense of any offerings made to the deity, whether vegetables or animals".

[62] Blenkinsopp 2000: 184.

[63] מִנְחָה, after all, is usually either a general term for any kind of offering, or specifically a *cereal* offering, notably in P (*BDB* 585). In fact, the former, general, sense is read from Isaiah 1:13 in *BDB*. Anderson discusses these two senses, as well as the general meaning of "gift", in the Hebrew Bible, and parallel Semitic usage, including cognates in Phoenician, Ugaritic, and Arabic (Anderson 1987: 27-34).

[64] Herbert 1973: 29.

[65] The term אָוֶן refers to "trouble", or "sorrow", as well as several kinds of iniquity, including "wickedness" (Job 22:15), "evil-doing" (Job 31:3), iniquity of thought (Proverbs 6:8), and idolatry (Hosea 12:12) (*BDB* 19-20).

The reference to קְרֹא מִקְרָא is reminiscent of the tradition in Exodus 23:15, 17 that all adult males should appear at the sanctuary three times a year, and as such, may refer to yearly festivals here.[66] Despite this, Levine suggests that the context also points to a public side of new moon observance, and that a similar 'sanctuary convocation' applied to חֹדֶשׁ in the eighth century.[67] The structure of the oracle suggests this, through its repetition of several terms suggesting convocation throughout the verses, and the order of the subjects dealt with. The first two lines refer to a general appearance before Yahweh: a "trampling" (רְמֹס) of Yahweh's courts:[68] "When you come before me [see my face]", and "Trample my courts". It may be instructive to divide this section of the oracle into three parts; this first part referring generally to coming before Yahweh with offerings, the second part generally to the activity of the priests and sacrifice, and the third part a specification of the *events* of the activities referred to. Stated another way: verse 12 refers to a gathering in Yahweh's courts, verse 13a refers to two broad kinds of offering to Yahweh (מִנְחַה and incense), and verse 13b specifies the times/feasts in which these activities take place: sabbaths, new moons, קְרֹא מִקְרָא. Again, when these cultic occasions are specified, the line immediately following this repeats the reference to convocations, with a summary of the overall message of the oracle: "I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity" (אָוֶן וַעֲצָרָה). The implication of "restraint" in עֲצָרָה may also suggest a cessation of works on the days mentioned.[69] It appears that it is the *assemblies* which are the subject of the oracle, while in places, the activities associated with the assembly, and the occasions for the assembly, are specified. חֹדֶשׁ, in this oracle, appears to be an occasion for such an assembly. It will be seen in the next section that evidence for חֹדֶשׁ assemblies is clearer concerning the early Persian period, but this practice should be considered as plausibly attested for a much earlier context.

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[66] Blenkinsopp 2000: 184. Exodus 23:14 refers to three yearly festivals. This association in early texts remains uncertain. Jenson, in relation to P argues that מוֹעֲדִים and מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ are very closely associated in meaning, although the former, he argues, is a wider category (Jenson 1992: 186-87). מוֹעֲדִים, in the context of Isaiah 1:13, may parallel קְרֹא מִקְרָא in verse 14.

[67] Levine 2000: 405. Hasel (1988: 39) suggested that the term "...refers comprehensively to all festivals which include the monthly new moon and the weekly sabbath..."

[68] *BHS* notes the proposition to emend רְמֹס to רוֹמְסֵי (vs. 12 n. b). חצר is commonly used in later texts to describe the courts of Yahweh's temple, including the three major sanctuary traditions: the Tabernacle, the Temple descriptions in 1 Kings, and Ezekiel's Temple vision (see Exodus 38:9; 1 Kings 7:9; Ezekiel 40:17).

[69] Clements 1980: 33.

In this part of Isaiah 1, חֹדֶשׁ is referred to alongside sabbath, a common pairing, and both are condemned, along with the "appointed times" in the same context. While this reference gives scanty details of new moon observance beyond sacrifice and convocation, it can be gathered from the strength of the condemnation and the inclusion of the new moon in the broad list that it was indeed an important cultic occasion at this time, and the common prophetic condemnation of inappropriate sacrifice provides the context for these comments on חֹדֶשׁ. Also, the inclusion of חֹדֶשׁ in a list of Judah's festivals, comprising of the new moon, sabbath, and the "appointed festivals" (מוֹעֲדִים, Isaiah 1:14), is the first example shown here of what is the classic formula for referring to Israel's special cultic times throughout the year.

When approaching the book of Isaiah in its final state it is difficult to accurately date specific excerpts from a body of several combined texts that has clearly gone through several stages of redaction over a period spanning the eighth century BCE through what is likely well into the Hellenistic age.[70] Certain commentators nevertheless have confidently dated the oracle above to a very early period; Hasel, for example, noted a "prevailing opinion" among several scholars that it belongs to, "...the early period of Isaiah's ministry before the Syro-Ephraimitic War, 734-32 B.C."[71] However, the structure of chapters 1 and 2 of Isaiah raises difficulties: Isaiah 2 contains a separate introduction to what seems to be a larger body of text. Isaiah 1 also contains an introduction to the work as whole. One would seem to be made redundant by the other. This structural arrangement may suggest that the material in Chapter 1 was added to the book at a later date by the text's final redactor. This is generally accepted.[72] A certain late date for the composition of the material between the two introductions, however, has not been sustained. Barton described Isaiah 1 as an "Introductory Collection of Oracles from Various Periods",[73] verses 10-15 of which come from a period possibly as early as before 730 BCE, indicated by the

[70] Blenkinsopp (2000: 85) concludes that the "...attempt to impose a kind of unity of the entire book by means of the literary technique of inclusio was the last of many efforts at giving the vast amount of heterogeneous material in the book some semblance of coherence and unity". He views this final procedure "...in the context of book production in the Hellenistic period".
[71] Hasel 1988: 53. Hasel referred here, among others, to Soggin 1980; Rendtorff 1983; Koch 1982.
[72] For example, Childs 2001: 11; Blenkinsopp 2000: 175; Clements 1980: 29; Kaiser 1972: 1.
[73] Barton 1995: 16.

prosperity of Jerusalem which is described therein.[74] Joseph Blenkinsopp argues not for the *certain* eighth century origin of this oracle, but rather points out that "There is no reason why this critique of state cult, which has nothing in common with Deuteronomistic or Asaphite theology…could not have originated in eighth century BCE Judah".[75] This conclusion is drawn by Blenkinsopp based on the above reasons, including the disapproval of cult practices, corroborated in the texts of Amos, Hosea, and Micah.[76] Goulder, however, based on parallels with Psalm 50 (of Asaph), suggests that the context for Isaiah 1:2-26 is the period of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (701 BCE), still very early.[77] It is therefore suggested here that Isaiah 1:12-14 may evidence the observance of חֹדֶשׁ as a central feature of the sacrificial cult in Judah and probably an occasion for worship of Yahweh by 'sanctuary convocation', from an early period – possibly as early as the eighth century BCE.

Hosea

The book of Hosea refers to the eighth century observance of חֹדֶשׁ in northern Israel. Hosea's career is purported to have begun in the years of Jeroboam II and continued towards the end of the northern kingdom (c. 750-722 BCE), and the events of that period are reflected throughout the text.[78] Hosea 2 condemns the corruption of Israel's festivals by their association with Baal:

וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי כָּל־מְשׂוֹשָׂהּ חַגָּהּ חָדְשָׁהּ וְשַׁבַּתָּהּ וְכֹל מוֹעֲדָהּ׃

> I will put an end to all her mirth, her festivals, her new moons, her sabbaths, and all her appointed festivals (Hosea 2:11; 2:13 MT).

Like Isaiah, Amos, and Micah, the text of Hosea demonstrates a negative attitude to his contemporary sacrificial cult. In this case the sacrificial cult in its totality is clearly the subject, very similar to the instance in Isaiah 1. The above verse, with its temporal

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[74] Barton 1995: 25-6.

[75] Blenkinsopp 2000: 184. The figure Asaph is referred to in various Psalms and in the book of Chronicles. The Psalms of Asaph, Goulder argued, form a unified collection, and were composed in Bethel in the 720s BCE (Goulder 1996: 190). See, however, Goulder 2006: 13ff. on parallels with Psalm 50, also of Asaph. Goulder argues that Psalm 50 dates to "roughly the same period as Isaiah" (2006: 13).

[76] See, also, Goulder 2006: 13ff. who notices congruence between this section of Isaiah and Psalm 50, a psalm of Asaph.

[77] Goulder 2006: 15.

[78] cf. Mays 1969: 3.

categories, leaves no room for exceptions. *All* of Israel's festivals and holy days have been corrupted, and are threatened with annulment by Yahweh. The prophetic theme of condemnation of cultic life is predominant once again. In the case of Hosea, perceived religious apostasy is at the heart of the problem.[79] Israel is described as the faithless wife of Yahweh (Hosea 2:1-5), revelling in prosperity (2:8). Since the faithless wife causes her cultic occasions to "...provide an opportunity to earn her bonus from her lovers",[80] then חֹדֶשׁ, along with sabbath and other occasions, may have become associated with one of these lovers: Baal (Hosea 2:8, 13). According to Macintosh, "Naturally, Yahweh finds all this totally abhorrent and loathsome. All the state's religious observances were tainted by idolatry, and in them he was confused with the Baals (see v. 18)".[81] These cultic occasions, which, in the mind of the author are traditionally *Yahweh's*, are being shared with Baal, and thus Yahweh's cult is corrupted. Again, חֹדֶשׁ is listed alongside sabbath, מוֹעֲדִים, and here חַג also. It appears that all of the festivals and holy days of the northern shrines fall under this sweeping condemnation. The former "her festivals", is rendered in the singular in MT as חַגָּהּ, while the second is כֹּל מוֹעֲדָהּ. While all of the occasions quoted are presented in the singular, they should not be considered one-off occasions; rather, they are regular, repetitive occasions referred to in the collective singular.[82] Here, it should also be concluded that חֹדֶשׁ is not in and of itself the object of Hosea's disapproval, but it is considered, like the sabbath and all the מוֹעֲדִים, to be tarnished, while essentially integral to Israel's liturgical calendar; the feminine suffix after all, refers to Israel. Francis Landy argued this point:

> If the sabbath is Yhwh's sacred day, its abolition – together with festivals, new moons, and assemblies – withdraws God from his part in time. His disavowal is motivated or emphasised by its becoming 'her sabbath', 'her new moon', alienated from Yhwh; through annulling it, ironically he reclaims it.[83]

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[79] Cf. Cook, who posits transition and conflict from a lineage-based, to a state-based ritual system (including a focus of fertility rituals), as the source of Hosea's condemnation (Cook 1999).
[80] Macintosh 1997: 62.
[81] Macintosh 1997: 62.
[82] Hasel 1988: 41.
[83] Landy 1995: 43.

Wolff argued that it is Yahweh's removal of the natural resource of arable land, threatened in the surrounding verses, that causes the festivals to cease,[84] and also emphasises the all-encompassing condemnation of all of the ritual practices of the liturgical calendar. This absolute condemnation of Israel's entire sacrificial cult, in its current state, is compounded by the use of the third person feminine suffix to describe feasts which are actually Yahweh's. To assume that there is exclusive criticism of חֹדֶשׁ entirely misunderstands the context,[85] and the integral nature of חֹדֶשׁ to the sacrificial cult of Yahweh.

Hosea 5:7 is seen by Keel to contain a unique reference to חֹדֶשׁ in the Hebrew Bible; it describes the new moon as an active agent of destruction, rather than merely an occasion:

בַּיהוָה בָּגָדוּ כִּי־בָנִים זָרִים יָלָדוּ
עַתָּה יֹאכְלֵם חֹדֶשׁ אֶת־חֶלְקֵיהֶם׃

> They have dealt faithlessly with the Lord; for they have borne illegitimate children. Now the new moon shall devour them along with their fields (Hosea 5:7).

In the words of Keel, "Hosea 5:7 seems to be aware of a tradition of a bellicose new moon known in north Syria in the eighth and seventh centuries".[86] Keel's assertion is unconvincing for two reasons. First, there is no indication that this text relates to north Syria in any way – Israel is the subject of the passage.[87] Secondly, Keel argues that חֹדֶשׁ is a 'cult of the new moon', and this is misleading.[88] At least from the point of view of the three prophetic books examined here, the rituals of חֹדֶשׁ were centred on Yahweh (in Yahweh's courts). חֹדֶשׁ cannot be equated with worshipping the moon very easily. Even regarding other ancient Near Eastern contexts, it can at best be said

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[84] Wolff 1974: 38.
[85] Wolff (1974: 38), in relation to Hosea 2:11, suggested that חֹדֶשׁ may have included "special sexual rituals", and may have been the time of ἱερὸς γάμος ("sacred marriage" rites), but there is clearly nothing in this verse to support his hypothesis regarding חֹדֶשׁ over any other festival. Cf. Albertz 1994: 172-73 for a critique of this hypothesis.
[86] Keel 1998: 105.
[87] North Syria is significant for Keel because his argument above relates the iconography of *Šin* of Harran in north Syria, which regularly presents *Šin* as a bellicose deity associated with, or symbolised by, a crescent moon (Keel 1998).
[88] Keel 1998: 104.

that lunar deities were *sometimes* connected with ritual observance at certain points of the lunation, in some way, but there are many contexts where other deities were the main focus, as has been seen.[89] Similar associations for early Israel cannot, of course, be ruled out, but it must be understood that, for this context, and in relation to any specific Israelite feast, חֹדֶשׁ, or otherwise, an association with a lunar deity is conjecture only.

The wording of the above verse (Hosea 5:7) has presented difficulties to several commentators. Some amend חֹדֶשׁ to הֶחָסִיל, allowing the reading, "grasshopper shall devour…" following LXX.[90] Many versions and commentators, however, do not sustain the amendment. After Andersen and Freedman, Landy treated חֹדֶשׁ in this verse as adverbial, rather than the subject.[91] With this retention of the *lectio difficilior*, Yahweh is the one who devours: "Now he will eat their property at the new moon".[92] According to Landy, the reference to חֹדֶשׁ adds urgency and some irony:

> The new moon, as a sacred day, would normally be a profitable one; it is turned into an eclipse, the end of the old order…It is especially portentous, since the lunar cycle is short; disaster apparently is imminent.[93]

In Chapter 4, the subject of eating on חֹדֶשׁ is returned to, where it is concluded that this association was integral to the event.

As stated above, the career of the figure Hosea is located somewhere in the years between 750 and 722 BCE. The majority of the text of Hosea, according to Mays, with the exception of two narratives (1:2-9 and 3:1-5), is composed of sayings

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[89] I refer to Ugarit, where there is evidence for ritual associated with the new moon in the sacrificial cult, and also for several lunar deities, but these lunar deities do not emerge as the main focus of Ugaritic *ym hdt*; other deities and entities are worshipped on this occasion (del Olmo Lete 2004: 25).

[90] Wolff, for example, deemed חֹדֶשׁ improbable here because of the questionable meaning of the term in this context and the double object of the verb יֹאכְלֵם (Wolff 1974: 95). Regarding the "illegitimate children", Brown argued: "Baal-worship is a breach of Israel's marriage-contract, and a generation has grown up who are strangers to Jahveh" (Brown 1932: 51).

[91] Landy 1995: 71; Andersen & Freedman 1980: 396-98. The latter authors pointed out that there is a notable focus on the symbolism of 'eating' throughout Hosea, such as when people "eat" their judges in Hosea 7:7 (1980: 396)

[92] Andersen & Freedman 1980: 380.

[93] Landy 1995: 71. Landy observed that, "Similar instance that the old festival rhythms of new moons and festivals will cease is found in [Hosea] 2.13 and Amos 8.5" (Landy 1995: 71)

prepared for oral delivery, and is considered one of the most difficult prophetic texts to interpret, due to a peculiar state of preservation. Macintosh presents the argument, prevalent today, that interpretive difficulties result form modern (and indeed ancient) commentators' unfamiliarity with Hosea's northern Israelite dialect.[94] The two texts examined here, however, are not grouped among the more difficult sections of Hosea,[95] nor are they associated with the two narrative sections thought to be insertions. Macintosh sees the northern dialect of the work as evidence for the book being a "literary endeavour", not in its preservation as a work of literature, but rather its form, style, and language being largely conceived of, as a whole: a literary work in the literary language of the North.[96] If this is accurate, then it can be concluded that our above passages date to some time before the fall of Samaria 722/1 BCE. The preservation of Hosea's oracles, Albertz argued, was the result of the movement of a "Hosea group" which sought refuge in Judah, shortly after the sayings were compiled.[97] Again, the corroborative nature of similar references to the new moon and its predominance in the cults of Israel and Judah, in Amos and Isaiah respectively, compel one to further entertain the possibility that the oracles studied above can be associated with a context close to the eighth century.

The Origin and Transmission of the Traditions

It should ultimately be accepted that we will not be able to reach any certainty regarding the dates of the passages quoted herein. The clear congruence between the messages of the texts examined cannot be ignored. A *maximalist* reading would have us associate these oracles with the prophets whose name they bear, or at least, with a contemporary school, or movement, surrounding each traditional author. A context for the cessation of the sacrificial cult might be sought in the destruction of the northern kingdom in c. 721 BCE, whether its eve or its aftermath, or perhaps Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (c. 701 BCE). It is possible to view the texts examined as part of the

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[94] Macintosh 1997: liii. Hosea, he argues, is the only northern prophet whose own words have come down to us. Although the issue of Hosea's language is complicated, it would seem, according to Macintosh, that the book of Hosea was probably "more or less complete" before the fall of Samaria, and that its language is not dissimilar to that of Judah and Jerusalem before Standard Biblical Hebrew (1997: lv). Cf. Cook 1999: 155, who envisages Hosea at Samaria. Van Selms described Hosea as "the only scriptural prophet who not only was of north-Israelitic descent, but also in his work addressed himself emphatically to north-Israelitic hearers" (Van Selms 1964-5: 100).

[95] Mays 1969: 5.

[96] Macintosh 1997: lxvi.

[97] Albertz 1992: 175.

subsequent prophetic reflection on the changed state of affairs after 721 BCE. After 721, one can plausibly postulate that the role of some prophets must have included explaining the destruction wrought on the north, and Judah's changed situation in light of this.[98] One should also acknowledge an exilic (587-539 BCE) and post-exilic context and its relevance for these texts, however. These prophetic texts must have had some social role in explaining the destruction after 587 BCE.[99] It is probable that we owe their *survival* and *transmission* partly to the destruction wrought under Nebuchadnezzar, and its aftermath. Older traditions, in such a context, may well have been drawn upon in order to shed light on a situation of disaster.[100] Regarding such a context, moreover, it is reasonable to suggest that *older* traditions would have carried weight of authority in explaining an adverse situation; it is quite plausible that, in the aftermath of 587 BCE, those suffering disaster may well have initially consulted an existing stock of tradition, *before* producing new material, to explain new circumstances.[101] The transmission of the three instances wherein חֹדֶשׁ is mentioned, it is suggested here, should be ascribed to this process of reflection. The texts therefore plausibly pre-date 587 BCE. It may also be suggested that the common attribution of traditions regarding the sacrificial cult and חֹדֶשׁ to eighth-century figures in three separate cases supports an early dating of each case. Certainty is probably beyond our reach. In reconstructing a process through which these traditions may have been transmitted, a pre-existing belief in a connection between ethical behaviour and proper sacrifice was drawn upon to explain the initial Assyrian destruction in 721 BCE. Whether social injustice or apostasy was considered the cause, the belief appears to have been that the entire sacrificial system was corrupted; it was then completely destroyed, so it must have been seen as corrupt. This may have led southern prophets to deliver oracles with a similar message against Judah, warning Judahites of the possibility of the same fate. This allows one to view the eighth century as a decisive moment in the process of the creation of the above traditions. This does not rule out a pre-721 date for the above texts. Regarding the references to

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[98] This is contrary to the view of Albertz (1994: 165ff.), who suggested that traditions may have been preserved because they were not initially received well.

[99] cf. Clements 1980: 7.

[100] Cf. Trotter 2001: 38; Trotter's study specifically argues for the existence of the text of Hosea by the early Persian period Yehud, between 539 and 516 BCE. See Auld 2004: 71-97, however, who notes the caution that while many scholars view much of the relevant material as old, it is possible, also, to postulate a post-exilic origin for much of this material, such as Amos and Isaiah 1-39.

[101] This process, Clements suggested, began, in the case of Isaiah, in reaction to major events during the prophet's own lifetime (Clements 1980: 3-4).

חֹדֶשׁ, the context of the reference within each prophetic work has been examined, and major difficulties in specific reference to the feast have not been found. In fact, in each case, the central message of the work as a whole seems well represented by its inclusion of the new moon.

Four passages which have been considered to be some of the earliest references to חֹדֶשׁ in the Hebrew Bible have been noted. It is important, at this point, to note that, especially in the cases of Isaiah and Hosea, חֹדֶשׁ is by no means an exclusively 'family' or 'clan' orientated festival. In appears fundamentally linked to the practice of the sacrificial cult in a central shrine context. Furthermore, the contexts of Isaiah and Hosea suggest that חֹדֶשׁ was a public event which pertained to a large group, Israel, as a whole (in Hosea), or Judah (Isaiah), not to specific families, clans[102] or more obscure contexts. Central cult practice was based primarily around sacrifice within the northern and southern sanctuaries, accompanied by a ritual assembly, or 'sanctuary convocation'. There is also strong indication from Amos that a cessation of work was associated with new moon days at this time, perhaps to facilitate participation in the various ritual observances.

[102] See Chapter 4. I do not intend to rule out a family or clan aspect of חֹדֶשׁ; I simply exclude the idea that such a context exclusively constituted the festival.

2. *ḤŌDEŠ* AND THE SACRIFICIAL CULT IN JERUSALEM

In this section references to the new moon in the sacrificial codes of Ezekiel 46:1-6 and Numbers 28:11-15 are examined, and considered in relation to older 'festival-codes' which do not refer to חֹדֶשׁ, and then evidence for the use of wind instruments in association with חֹדֶשׁ sacrifices is examined. It will be concluded that חֹדֶשׁ, from the early Persian period, bore 'national'-type character: it ideologically pertained to the people of 'Israel' *as a whole*.[103]

The eighth-century prophets indicate that חֹדֶשׁ was probably a significant festival in the sacrificial cults of the time. Extant Hebrew texts describing and prescribing the ritual and sacrifice in any detail, however, were written at a considerably later time. These texts, examined in this section, provide details regarding sacrificial commodities and their quantities, and illuminate certain other details (Ezekiel 46 and Numbers 28-29). Here, one detects a *general continuity* with what is known of חֹדֶשׁ from earlier times: sacrifice and ritual assembly. A problem which is encountered, however, one which was first addressed by Wellhausen (see Chapter 1), is explaining the silence of certain pentateuchal enumerations of festivals regarding חֹדֶשׁ. This appears, as some would have it, to present a 'gap' in the history of the feast.[104] חֹדֶשׁ is mentioned by the eighth-century prophets (and other evidently early texts discussed in Chapter 4); it *does not* appear in Exodus, Leviticus or Deuteronomy (in earlier festival codes). *Later*, חֹדֶשׁ is prescribed considerable offerings, at the time of Ezekiel and Numbers 28-29, in a manner which suggests broad continuity with the picture from earlier prophetic citation. What happened to חֹדֶשׁ in the intervening period? Why are Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy silent regarding the feast? I will address this problem by noting the specific issues of each text involved, before suggesting an explanation.

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[103] In this section, the nature of the evidence dictates that, while we seek to determine the practised reality of the feast, it will ultimately be the *ideological* reality which we encounter foremost. As such, I refer to 'Israel' above, because Israel is the *ideological* entity which offers חֹדֶשׁ sacrifices to Yahweh in this period, even if it was the priests and people of Yehud who translated these ideas into praxis.

[104] See, for example, McKay 1991: 19; Wilke 1951: 175-76; Gray 1912: 410.

Regarding the Persian period, in this section, and in the next section (Part 3) of this chapter, it will be noted that certain changes which affected the sacrificial cult as a whole appear to have had a large impact on the significance of חֹדֶשׁ in Second Temple times. In particular, two significant changes reflect what may be described as an increasingly 'national' character of the feast in the Persian period: the introduction of a sin-offering which effected atonement for the whole people of Israel, and the introduction, under Nehemiah, of the ⅓ shekel tax which was to be paid for every adult male each year for the running of the sanctuary, including new moons (in Part 4). Both of these changes, it is argued, evidence that, by the Persian period, חֹדֶשׁ sacrifices pertained to the religious identity of the entire community. These developments evidence the belief that the sacrifices of חֹדֶשׁ were presented on behalf of every member of Israel; they were paid for by every family, and they effected atonement for the whole people.

The importance of חֹדֶשׁ in the sacrificial cult is most evident in the lists of prescribed sacrifices in Ezekiel 46:1-7 and Numbers 28:11-15. These prescriptions are the most accurate measure of the new moon's significance due to their comparability with other festivals in the same context. In both cases חֹדֶשׁ is treated alongside sabbath and yearly festivals, and prescribed ritual and sacrifice is detailed in each. As seen above, these special events constitute and encompass Judah's liturgical calendar. In each context, therefore, we are given a deliberate and quantifiable index to the importance of חֹדֶשׁ in relation to other events on the calendar. The case of Ezekiel 45-46 presents certain difficulties due to some textual corruption, but Numbers 28-29 is significantly clearer.[105] Each prescription contains a *sacrificial index* to the significance, or perhaps level of *holiness* or *sanctification*, of each event: sacrifice was one of the modes of worship of Yahweh *par excellence*,[106] and the quantity of sacrificial goods allotted to a particular day is the most basic indicator of that day's importance in the cult. It is possible in Numbers 28-29 to compare חֹדֶשׁ to the

[105] cf. Wagenaar 2005: 101. Ezekiel 46:1-7 is actually quite clear regarding ritual with respect to sabbath and חֹדֶשׁ. It is rather in relation to the yearly festivals that some problems are encountered. It appears that the calendar therein omits certain festivals.

[106] It is understood that other forms of worship and communication with Yahweh, and probably other gods, were practised within and away from the Jerusalem temple, but it is the centralised worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem that is presented to us in these texts. See Anderson 1987: 14ff. on Israelite and Canaanite sacrifice.

author's entire repertoire of events on the cultic calendar, and in Ezekiel, to compare it to the sabbath, Passover/Unleavened, and Tabernacles.

חֹדֶשׁ in Ezekiel's Vision of a Future Temple (Ezekiel 40-48)

In his oracles against the foreign nations, Ezekiel appears to deliver four out of seven oracles on new moon days (Ezekiel 25-32).[107] Aside from drawing from this that such days held a propitious quality and a heightened sanctity, it should also be considered that the delivery of such oracles on חֹדֶשׁ indicates that the day may have provided an appropriate social, and public, setting.[108] The vision of an ideal Temple-cult in Ezekiel 40-48 provides a picture of the kind of public context which can be considered one possibility for this sort of activity. It is evidently a fantastical picture, but it is also uniquely vivid.

The text of Ezekiel 40-48 is known for its detailed description of a Temple-complex that is considered to represent an ideal, future sanctuary in a restored land.[109] The exactitude of some of the detail therein is such that any reconstruction of the Temple and its complex in Jerusalem will bear this description in mind to some extent, despite its idealised nature. Figure 1 is a typical example of a ground-plan reconstructed on the basis of this text.[110] Details of a working cult and personnel are also included in Ezekiel's description, and חֹדֶשׁ ritual appears prominently. As seen in Chapter 1, certain scholars who have studied חֹדֶשׁ view this section of Ezekiel as the first systematic presentation of ritual associated with the feast, or even see this context as the origin of the feast, as we know it.[111] For this reason, the post-exilic history of חֹדֶשׁ will begin with a discussion of Ezekiel. While it is not certain that this text, or the section of it that deals with the new moon, is earlier than Numbers 28-29,[112] they

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[107] Ezekiel 26:1; 29:17; 31:1; 32:1; cf. Keel 1998: 105.

[108] It is not agreed upon as to whether or not Ezekiel himself was the originator of these dates (see, for example, Greenberg 1997; Freedy and Redford 1970: 485).

[109] cf. Kohn 2002: 33; Smith 1987: 49; Greenberg 1983: 4; Eichrodt 1970: 542.

[110] It may be beneficial to occasionally view this plan of Ezekiel's Temple while reading this description.

[111] Caquot 1960: 1; Wilke 1951: 176. Soggin entertains the possibility that the prophetic texts may bear some reliability, but states that Ezekiel is "...the only relatively certain starting point" (Soggin 2001: 136).

[112] Cf., for example, Haran 1979: 66ff. who argued that the two codes are unaware of one another.

will nevertheless be described in chronological sequence, with Ezekiel 45-46 being treated as the earlier of the two codes.[113]

In the introduction to this vision, it is clear that what is described is an idealistic picture. The subsequent chapters describe "visions of God" (מַרְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים), that Ezekiel experienced while "supernaturally transported to Jerusalem"[114] from exile in Babylonia (Ezekiel 40:1-2).[115] The text in its final form is therefore clear that the Temple subsequently described is a Temple which does not exist outside of this vision. Indeed, Jerusalem, or Zion, is not even mentioned by name.[116] It cannot, therefore, immediately be assumed that everything that is described in this section of Ezekiel forms a ritual prescription that was actually fully employed in the Jerusalem cult. It rather seems to be a kind of ideal constitution intended for use in a future, restored temple-cult.[117] In fact, the text itself is explicit in respect to that purpose. Nevertheless, it provides a reasonable amount of detail regarding this Temple, including several features of new moon ritual. In doing so, the text almost certainly reflects *some* actual Temple practice, at least along broad lines, and numerous features described, with parallels in other texts, demonstrate this. The plan is of two courts: an inner court and an outer court. Each is surrounded and accessed by three gates. The tripartite structure of the Temple is at the back of the inner court, and a four horned altar is in front of the Temple. Although the sanctuary is utopian in Ezekiel, all of these basic features have secure parallels in biblical, extra-biblical, and archaeological records.[118]

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[113] Kohn, for example, notes that Ezekiel 40-48 has been seen since Wellhausen as "...the first thoroughgoing literary effort to record the ritual of the Jerusalem cult" (Kohn 2002: 13); cf. Wellhausen 1994: 59; Eichrodt 1970: 576.

[114] McKeating 1995: 99.

[115] This date, represented by two formulae, corresponds to 573 BCE (McKeating 1995: 36). This date is given both in reference to the final Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6 BCE, and also in reference to the first 'exile' starting from 597 BCE (Ezekiel 46:1).

[116] Most commentators agree that Zion is the implied location, despite certain mythic elements which do not correspond with that location, such as a river flowing from threshold of the sanctuary to the east (Ezekiel 47:1-5). Levenson explored the parallels between the descriptions in Ezekiel 40-48 and traditions about Zion, Eden, and Mount Sinai and Abarim (Levenson 1976: 5-54). See Wagenaar 2005: 121 who suggests that the sources for the Temple dimensions in Ezekiel 40-42 may have been a Yahwistic temple in Babylonia.

[117] cf. McKeating 1995: 103-04.

[118] Gittlen 2002 includes introductions to some of these parallels. Particularly relevant are the contributions by Bloch-Smith (2002: 83-94) on arrangement of sacred space in the sanctuary, and Gitin (2002: 95-124) on the history and significance of the four-horned altar. See Hurowitz 1992 for a more detailed study of biblical and Near Eastern texts on temple-building traditions. Josephus' descriptions

The long and exact description of the Temple-complex allows one to spatially locate ritual, and gives an important three-dimensional view of חֹדֶשׁ in an ideal sacrificial cult. As Jonathan Z. Smith stated, "Ezekiel 40-48 is an endeavour in mapping the social configurations of an ideal cultic place".[119] The text bears clear continuity with the traditions of sacrifice and convocation on new moons, evidenced in the eighth-century prophets, but here much more detail is given. Ezekiel 46 is also the only text outside of the Pentateuch, indeed the *only* text apart from the ritual code of Numbers 28-29, which includes attempts to systematically prescribe sacrifices in specific quantities of goods and animals to be offered at the sanctuary, for a series of four different feasts.[120] Ezekiel 46:1-7 is therefore the only systematic prescription of regular חֹדֶשׁ sacrifices apart from that of Numbers 28.

Ezekiel 46:1-7 presents a ritual sequence which is applicable, with certain noted variations, to both the sabbath and חֹדֶשׁ.[121] The חֹדֶשׁ sacrifices listed in Ezekiel 46 are prefaced by certain details of the adjacent 'sanctuary convocation' to take place involving the people, and the נָשִׂיא ('prince'). The ritual sequence is introduced by a description of the east gate of the inner court.[122] Here the gate clearly functions to distinguish times of intense cultic activity, when it is opened, from ordinary times, when the gate is closed. The east gate is opened on new moons:

כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה שַׁעַר הֶחָצֵר הַפְּנִימִית הַפֹּנֶה קָדִים יִהְיֶה סָגוּר שֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה
וּבְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת יִפָּתֵחַ וּבְיוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ יִפָּתֵחַ׃

> Thus says the Lord God: The gate of the inner court that faces east shall remain closed on the six working days; but on the sabbath day it shall be opened and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened (Ezekiel 46:1).

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of Herod the Great's Temple-complex (*AJ* XV 412-423; *BJ* V184-227) also bear several parallels in overall spatial arrangement.

[119] Smith 1987: 48.

[120] These are the sabbath, new moon, Passover/Unleavened Bread, and Tabernacles. Passover and Unleavened Bread appear to be treated here as a single, seven-day festival (Ezekiel 45:21-24), unlike in Numbers 28:16-25. Daily offerings are also prescribed in Ezekiel 46:13-15, although Wagenaar suggests this may be a late addition to the text, due to their absence from the superscription in Ezekiel 45:16-17 (Wagenaar 2005: 108 n. 26).

[121] This prescribed sequence also appears to be applicable to yearly festivals, although this relationship is not quite as clear.

[122] This subject of this gate is taken up from earlier discussion in Ezekiel 45:21-25.

The oracular introductory formula (verse 1) introduces the new subject.[123] The day of the new moon here translates בְּיוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ, the context and wording clearly indicating a single day of the month for the particular ritual constellation to take place in. Because Yahweh is described as entering by the outer and inner gateways which face east, Cooke argued that "A special sanctity belonged to both gateways" and that "special observances" were attached to them.[124] Thus the opening of the inner gate on the days of sabbath and the new moon emphasises the special nature of those days in Ezekiel's sanctuary. The opened gate indicates or symbolises a heightened sanctity, in that Yahweh is more accessible to the people; the inner gate though which Yahweh's glory entered is opened before the *worshippers*, but *not* the *outer* eastern gate which faces the outside world. It might be drawn from this that the special sanctity attached to the holy day is to some extent limited in its application to the outside world in this account.[125]

Before the sacrifices are prescribed, the positions of the נָשִׂיא and the people are taken up. The נָשִׂיא is described as entering by the vestibule of the gate (דֶּרֶךְ אוּלָם הַשַּׁעַר). After he enters, he takes his stand "by the post of the gate" (עָמַד עַל־מְזוּזַת הַשַּׁעַר) (Ezekiel 46:2). There are three gates which enter onto the inner court. The gate which the נָשִׂיא occupies for the duration of the sacrifices is the one which opens to the east, as seen above, with special sanctity attached. This is best described as the 'front' gate to the inner court. If one were to enter through this gate, one would supposedly see the steps leading up to the altar immediately ahead. Also, one would be facing, by this orientation, directly towards the Holy of Holies (which, of course, would be out of sight); one could draw an imaginary line from the east-facing gate into the outer court, through this eastern gate to the inner court in which the נָשִׂיא takes up position (opened only on special days in the cult), through the altar, through the Temple to the Holy of Holies. In Smith's view: "It is along this central spine or

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[123] Wevers 1969: 329. The subject of the נָשִׂיא, the people, and the priests, specifically in association with the inner gate on holy days, is here introduced. Wevers observed that the *outer* gate facing east was perpetually closed, but the inner one was opened on these and other special occasions, which are listed in verse 12: the freewill offerings of the נָשִׂיא (1969: 329).

[124] Cooke 1936: 508.

[125] Smith estimated the thickness of the wall at approximately ten feet (1987: 49). Foreigners, we are told, are not permitted to enter this worshipping area (outer court) (Ezekiel 46:7, 9).

axis that all of the sacred transactions of the Temple occur".[126] Yahweh's glory (כְּבוֹד) is described as re-entering the Temple through this gate in Ezekiel 43:1-4.

As the priests offer חֹדֶשׁ sacrifices on the altar in the centre of the inner court, the נָשִׂיא is described bowing down, or "worshipping" (הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה), on the threshold of the gateway (עַל־מִפְתַּן הַשַּׁעַר).[127] He thus remains just outside the inner court, in full view of it, and faces the altar.[128] Next, the text describes the "people of the land" (עַם־הָאָרֶץ), again worshipping, or bowing down (הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ) at the entrance of the same gate on sabbaths and new moons (Ezekiel 46:4).[129] Thus, the priests have exclusive access to the inner court and the altar at its centre.[130] While neither the people nor the נָשִׂיא enter the inner court at all, the נָשִׂיא occupies a liminal zone between the outer and inner courts, within the gateway which is opened on holy days. The people remain in the outer court. Both parties are oriented towards the altar and the Holy of Holies, and both (perhaps) are able to look through the eastern gateway and see the activity of the priests at the altar, although this view, by the description of the gateway, would have been somewhat obscured from the outside, prompting Tuell to describe the נָשִׂיא as "the sole witness of the sacrificial act" (aside from priests).[131] This eastern gateway to the inner court is then closed in the evening (Ezekiel 46:2), and remains closed until the next special cultic occasion.

Here, at least, is a window onto the public side of the observance of חֹדֶשׁ in the Temple-complex involving a ritual assembly, which appears to refer to a similar

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[126] Smith 1987: 60. Along this line, all of the grades of holiness, from outside world to holy of holies, are represented.

[127] The *Hithpa'lēl* of שָׁחָה is translated as "bow down, prostrate oneself", describing variously bowing down before superiors in a gesture of homage, for example a monarch, angel, gods, including but not always Yahweh (see *BDB* 1005). A more vivid description of this gesture occurs in 1 Samuel 20:41: "David…prostrated himself [Hb. "fell"] with his face to the ground. He bowed [וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ] three times."

[128] Cf. Cooke (1936: 508), who described the position of the נָשִׂיא: "whence he can see all that is going on at the altar, without setting foot in the inner court".

[129] עַם־הָאָרֶץ here almost certainly refers to the people of 'Israel'/Judah, due to their participation in Yahwistic ritual. The implication of that title should not to be confused with the use of עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ to describe non-Jews (for example Nehemiah 10:31), the latter referring to different *peoples*, while Israel conceived of as a single *people*. Eichrodt argued that the term in Ezekiel, here, is technical of cultic terminology, and is used to refer to *lay* people in general, as opposed to priests and Levites, while the old meaning was "full citizens of Israel" (Eichrodt 1970: 574).

[130] The altar at the centre of the court is also described in Exodus 40:6, 1 Kings 8:64, and several other texts referred to herein.

[131] Tuell 1992: 108.

tradition of worship by 'sanctuary convocation' on new moons as that referred to in Isaiah 1. The above details are important as the only systematic treatment of the new moon outside of the 'Ritual Code' of Numbers 28-29, about to be examined. Importantly, the description in Ezekiel includes the active participation of three parties. The נָשִׂיא retains a liminal location between the outer court and the inner court, on the threshold of the gateway to the inner court, where he bows down in a ritual gesture of worship, with the steps leading up to the altar in view in front of him. The priests carry out the sacrifices described above at the altar, in the centre of the inner court, and the people (עַם־הָאָרֶץ) take the furthest position from the sacrifices, and also bow down and worship; their role in the ritual is peripheral but active, and remains important as evidenced by their prescribed location. The role of the prince, or generally, "ruler" (נָשִׂיא), may reflect the role previously taken by the Davidic king, perhaps given a different title for a post-exilic context. This, however, is uncertain.[132]

The priests provide the focus of the ritual, and offer whole burnt-offerings and fellowship offerings:

וְעָשׂוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־עוֹלָתוֹ וְאֶת־שְׁלָמָיו[133]

Ezekiel 46:6-7 presents a list of offerings to be provided by the נָשִׂיא for the altar in the inner court at which the priests sacrifice on new moon days:

וּבְיוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ פַּר בֶּן בָּקָר תְּמִימִם וְשֵׁשֶׁת כְּבָשִׂם וָאַיִל תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ: וְאֵיפָה לַפָּר וְאֵיפָה לָאַיִל יַעֲשֶׂה מִנְחָה וְלַכְּבָשִׂים כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּשִּׂיג יָדוֹ וְשֶׁמֶן הִין לָאֵפָה:

On the day of the new moon (he shall offer) a young bull without blemish, and six lambs and a ram, which shall be without blemish; as a grain offering he shall provide an ephah

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[132] Ezekiel 24:25 describes David in the same vocabulary, as נָשִׂיא over Israel. McKeating argued that the term נָשִׂיא may have referred to a "native Israelite governor of non-royal status" (McKeating 1995: 108). Levenson placed scholarly opinions on the meaning of נָשִׂיא in this context into two categories: those who argue that the נָשִׂיא is the king, and those who argue that this lexical peculiarity indicates Ezekiel's abandonment of hope in the restoration of a Davidic monarch, and essentially *discontinues* the office of מֶלֶךְ (Levenson 1976: 57-73). In either case it seems likely that the role of the נָשִׂיא either modifies, or replaces, the role of the traditional monarch in this ritual account. Tuell argued that the נָשִׂיא in this case is the governor of Yehud (Tuell 1992: 116-117). Cf. Smith 1987, who argued that the role of the king is deliberately marginalised in this account.

[133] The role of the Levites in the procedure is obscure. See Anderson 1987: 49-51 on שלמים offerings.

> with the bull and an ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he wishes, together with a hin of oil with each ephah (Ezekiel 46:6-7).[134]

The נָשִׂיא was responsible for the provision of the sacrifices in this scheme, with contributions from all of the people of Israel.[135] בְּיוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ again indicates the day of the new moon. One bull (פַּר בֶּן בָּקָר), six lambs (כְּבָשִׂם), and a ram (אַיִל) for Ezekiel's חֹדֶשׁ amount to one bull and one lamb *less* than חֹדֶשׁ as prescribed in Numbers 28, as will be seen. For the grain offering (מִנְחָה), the amount is left unspecified for each lamb, therefore the overall amount can only be estimated as 2< *'êphāh*s (46< litres).[136] This conversion to metric measures is approximate only, and is quoted here for comparative purposes.[137] The amount of oil is not entirely specified, as 1 *hîn* is to be offered with each *'êphāh*, totalling 2< *hîn*s (7.6< litres). There is no drink offering referred to, as there is in Numbers 28:14. It will be seen that the sacrificial provisions here, while similar, are slightly less in quantity, and are certainly less regulated, than in Numbers 28.[138] Regarding the other main festivals and their provisions, the offerings for sabbaths are six lambs and a ram, considerably more than the sabbath offerings prescribed in Numbers 28.

In the sacrificial code of Ezekiel 45-46, the new moon is of greater significance than the sabbath in its sacrificial allocation by the addition of the bull, which is lacking for the sabbath. Considerably more animals and respective grain offerings are sacrificed at Unleavened Bread in Ezekiel 45:21-25, than in Numbers 28-29, while the amount in Ezekiel is less for Tabernacles than in Numbers. In

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[134] For a table of these quantities, see Appendix 1. Brackets are added to the NRSV translation by the present author. The translation of מִנְחָה as "grain offering" here is clear due to its being referred to in *'êphāh*s, which is a common measure for solids such as flour, meal, barley, and roasted corn (DeVaux 1965: 199; cf. Anderson 1987: 27ff).

[135] cf. Eichrodt 1970: 576. The code in Ezekiel 40-48 envisaged the people of Israel providing agricultural produce for the sanctuary (Ezekiel 45:13-17). This may either reflect early practice, or simply a more utopian image of the sanctuary.

[136] Perhaps less than 1 *'êphāh* per lamb should be presumed.

[137] For Hebrew measures of capacity, see DeVaux 1965: 199-203; *AEHL* 537-40, where measures are presented relative to one another. The NRSV presents an approximate conversion to metric measures. Dry measures: 1 *se'āh* = 3.33 *'ōmers* = 7.7 litres; 1 *'êphāh* = 3 *se'āhs* = 23.0 litres. Liquid measures: 1 *hîn* = 3 *qabhs* = 3.8 litres. *AEHL* converts approximately to imperial measurements. Both conversions are based on actual measuring vessels found in excavations.

[138] Noth's observation that Numbers 28-29 was most probably a later text is due, amongst other reasons, to its presupposing cereal and drink offerings (Noth 1968: 219). Clearly, in this text from Ezekiel, drink offerings are completely absent while quantities of grain offerings are at the discretion of the reader/priest; they are, it seems, not yet codified.

Ezekiel 45, each of the two yearly ritual constellations prescribed therein, for each of their seven days, is allotted seven bulls and seven rams, and an *'êphāh* of grain and a *hîn* of oil for each bull and each ram, totalling approximately 14 *'êphāh*s (322 litres) of grain and 14 *hîn*s (53.2 litres) of oil. Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles are prescribed with a considerably larger provision than the weekly and monthly holy days: six more bulls, six more rams, and a goat as a sin-offering, for each day of each yearly festival.[139]

Following the list of sabbath and new moon sacrifices in Ezekiel 46, further detail is added on the public observance of חֹדֶשׁ and sabbaths regarding the role of the נָשִׂיא:

וּבְבוֹא הַנָּשִׂיא דֶּרֶךְ אוּלָם הַשַּׁעַר יָבוֹא וּבְדַרְכּוֹ יֵצֵא׃

> When the prince enters [on *ḥōdeš*], he shall come in by the vestibule of the gate, and he shall go out by the same way (Ezekiel 46:8).

The implication is that the נָשִׂיא enters the east-facing gateway of the inner court, but must not set foot in the inner court itself, and leaves by the same way he entered.[140] He thus remains in the liminal space of the gateway between the outer and inner courts for the duration of the sacrifice. Following this detail, the text prescribes the entry and exit of the "people of the land" at "appointed times" (מוֹעֲדִים) which in this context appears to include חֹדֶשׁ:[141]

וּבְבוֹא עַם־הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי יהוה בַּמּוֹעֲדִים הַבָּא דֶּרֶךְ־שַׁעַר צָפוֹן לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת יֵצֵא דֶּרֶךְ־שַׁעַר נֶגֶב וְהַבָּא דֶּרֶךְ־שַׁעַר נֶגֶב יֵצֵא דֶּרֶךְ־שַׁעַר צָפוֹנָה לֹא יָשׁוּב דֶּרֶךְ הַשַּׁעַר אֲשֶׁר־בָּא בּוֹ כִּי נֹכְחוֹ יֵצֵאוּ׃

> And when the people of the land come before the Lord to worship at the appointed times, whoever enters by the north gate to worship shall go out by the south gate; and whoever

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[139] Daily offerings of one lamb per day are also prescribes in Ezekiel 46:13. This is one lamb less than the daily prescription in Numbers 28:3-5.
[140] Cooke 1936: 509.
[141] That מוֹעֲדִים can be used as a general term or all festivals and holy days in this context has been argued by Hasel (1988: 42).

> enters by the south gate shall go out by the north gate. No one is to return through the gate by which he entered, but each is to go out the opposite gate (Ezekiel 46:9).[142]

Based on the sacrificial provisions referred to in the above text, it is clear that despite these detailed ritual prescriptions, חֹדֶשׁ along with the sabbath was a cultic occasion of secondary importance after the yearly festivals, at least within this ideal Temple-complex. Cooke described the new moon and sabbath in this text as the "lesser holy days".[143] Within that secondary category חֹדֶשׁ still enjoyed a more elevated importance than the sabbath by the addition of a bull to the sacrificial animals. The yearly festivals of the first and seventh months hold the highest sacrificial import in equal measure. It should be noted that in the sacrificial code of Ezekiel 45-46, חֹדֶשׁ observance does not include the offering of a goat in expiation for sin, as it does in the code of Numbers 28-29. Finally, the code in Ezekiel appears to envisage the נָשִׂיא bearing responsibility for providing the sacrificial commodities. This is in contrast to other (possibly later) contexts.

Eichrodt dated the "reliable" statements in the book of Ezekiel to between 594 and 571 BCE.[144] Nevertheless, much of the material in the book is secondary.[145] In its final form, the book of Ezekiel has a familiar threefold structure, judgement on Judah and Jerusalem, oracles against foreign nations, and a message of restoration.[146] Many commentators, however, have treated chapters 40-48 as a separate section unto itself, due to its overall unity of theme in describing a vision of the restored community and its cult.[147] Are we then to view chapters 40-48 as a later addition to the book?[148] Such a conclusion would over-simplify the material, and there remain in this section "radically contradictory traditions"[149] which nevertheless form a unified overall

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[142] In relation to this passage, Cooke stated: "The worshippers would arrive in crowds, and to secure some kind of order each person is told to pass straight through the outer court, pausing, of course, to worship at the inner E. gateway" (Cooke 1936: 509).
[143] Cooke 1936: 509.
[144] Eichrodt 1970: 1.
[145] Wevers 1969: 22.
[146] McKeating 1995: 15. The three sections correspond to chapters 1-24, 25-32, and 33-48.
[147] Eichrodt, for example, described 40-48 as "a part separated from the rest so as to form a self-contained whole" (Eichrodt 1970: 530).
[148] cf. Wevers 1969: 295-96. Cooke, however, argued that the section describing restoration reaches a "fitting climax" to chapters 34, 36, and 37 (Cooke 1936: xxv).
[149] Levenson 1976: 161. These differences lie in the description of the priesthood in the overall description of the Temple-complex (Ezekiel 40:44-46), and the priesthood as described in regulations governing the Temple, particularly in Ezekiel 44:6-14 (Tuell 1992: 175).

description. It may be best, as in McKeating's view, to regard the original text of this section of the book as having been "filled out and expanded" with the exact dimensions and laws that it retained in its final form.[150] Cooke had argued for an exilic context for the final composition of this section.[151] Tuell argued that there were two stages to the text: the original "Temple Vision", and the "Law of the Temple", the latter having been added to the former in a "single, purposive redaction" which occurred in the early Persian period, possibly during the reign of Darius I (522-486).[152] More recently, McKeating described the theology of the book of Ezekiel as a whole as "rooted very specifically indeed in the precise situation of the exilic and early post-exilic period".[153] Ezekiel 40-48 is, at least, exilic or perhaps later, and most agree that the text was largely completed by the early Persian period at the latest.

It may be telling that the description in Ezekiel contains an overall instruction, specified in 43:10-12, to build the Temple-complex described "at some unspecified date in the future".[154] Numbers 28-29, as will be shown, is more likely to have been written and regarded as the authoritative tradition which governed the sacrificial cult of the restored sanctuary, and in the next section, the ritual prescriptions for חֹדֶשׁ therein will be examined.

חֹדֶשׁ in Numbers 28

Numbers 28 is unique is the Pentateuch as the only passage in which exact sacrificial quantities for חֹדֶשׁ are prescribed. Indeed, the 'Ritual Code' of Numbers 28-29 is the only text in the entire Pentateuch which attempts a systematic prescription of offerings in their precise quantities for *any* of the festivals or holy days of Israel/Judah. This code is not only more precise overall in its prescriptions, but also more comprehensive than Ezekiel 40-48. Numbers 28-29 forms a series of prescriptions for the offerings and sacrifices representing all of the time punctuations in the yearly liturgical calendar, together representing the totality of the year in the

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[150] McKeating 1995: 101.
[151] Cooke 1936: xxvi. Cooke argued that the section contains legislative proposals which "stand midway" between D and the P; Numbers 28 is regarded as a late addition to P.
[152] Tuell 1992: 18, cf. 1-14.
[153] McKeating 1995: 60. Mein has treated the material in Ezekiel 40-48 as "an 'exilic' phenomenon" (Mein 2001: 143).
[154] Hurowitz 1992: 138.

sacrificial cult, from the daily offerings (Numbers 28:1-8), to the yearly ritual constellations (Numbers 28:16-29:40).

It is notable that several commentators have admitted surprise at the "considerable" amount of prescribed offerings for this feast in Numbers 28, especially in the context of the other feasts.[155] The provision of sacrificial animals and other goods for the day of the new moon is similar to, or greater than, a single day of some of the major yearly festivals:

> וּבְרָאשֵׁי חָדְשֵׁיכֶם תַּקְרִיבוּ עֹלָה לַיהוה פָּרִים בְּנֵי־בָקָר שְׁנַיִם וְאַיִל אֶחָד כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם : וּשְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בְלוּלָה בַשָּׁמֶן לַפָּר הָאֶחָד וּשְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בְלוּלָה בַשָּׁמֶן לָאַיִל הָאֶחָד: וְעִשָּׂרוֹן עִשָּׂרוֹן סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בְלוּלָה בַשָּׁמֶן לַכֶּבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד עֹלָה רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ אִשֶּׁה לַיהוה: וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם חֲצִי הַהִין יִהְיֶה לַפָּר וּשְׁלִישִׁת הַהִין לָאַיִל וּרְבִיעִת הַהִין לַכֶּבֶשׂ יָיִן זֹאת עֹלַת חֹדֶשׁ בְּחָדְשׁוֹ לְחָדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה: וּשְׂעִיר עִזִּים אֶחָד לְחַטָּאת לַיהוה עַל עֹלַת הַתָּמִיד יֵעָשֶׂה וְנִסְכּוֹ:

> At the beginnings of your months you shall offer a burnt offering to the Lord: two young bulls, one ram, seven males lambs a year old without blemish; also three-tenths of an ephah of choice flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; and two-tenths of choice flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for every lamb – a burnt-offering of pleasing odour, an offering by fire to the Lord. Their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth of a hin for a lamb. This is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year.[156] And there shall be one male goat for a sin offering to the Lord; it shall be offered in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering (Numbers 28:11-15).[157]

Here, "the beginning of your months" is the translation of רָאשֵׁי חָדְשֵׁיכֶם.[158] This designation for the new moon is equivalent to the simple and more common designation of חֹדֶשׁ alone; this is clear from the above text's repetition of the term in verse 14, where the preceding offerings are associated with this event. The quantities

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[155] cf. Snaith 1967: 315; Keel 1998: 107. Noth (1968: 222) described the allocation of sacrificial goods and animals to this ritual constellation as "remarkable".

[156] חֹדֶשׁ בְּחָדְשׁוֹ can be translated approximately as "month in its month" or "new moon in its month". Wagenaar notes the parallel with שַׁבַּת בְּשַׁבַּתּוֹ in verse 10 and suggests that this style is probably simply intended to indicate events that occur at regular intervals (Wagenaar 2005: 208).

[157] For a table of these quantities, see Appendix 1.

[158] Elsewhere in the MT, as observed by Levine, this exact designation for the new moon occurs only in Numbers 10:10 (Levine 2000: 377).

of sacrificial animals here are as follows: two young bulls (פָּרִים בְּנֵי־בָקָר), one ram (אַיִל), and seven male lambs (כְּבָשִׂים). This amounts to an increase of one bull and one lamb from the prescription in Ezekiel 46. The total amount of flour (סֹלֶת), mixed with oil amounts to 1.5 *'êphāh*s (34.5 litres) for each new moon.[159] The amount of wine, by the same approximation, was 3.8 *hîn*s (14.44 litres). The amount of oil for the grain offering is not specified in the above quotation, but based on that of the daily offerings in Numbers 28:5, was 3.75 *hîn*s (14.25 litres).[160]

The ritual offerings for חֹדֶשׁ prescribed in Numbers 28, as observed by Levine, are "considerably more elaborate than the *tāmîd* [daily offering][161] or the Sabbath offering".[162] The specific provision of sacrificial animals for each of the seven days of Unleavened Bread, according to Numbers 28:16-25, is exactly the same as for the day of חֹדֶשׁ. The provision of fine flour mixed with oil is also exactly the same: 34.5 litres. There is no drink offering specifically allotted to Passover. The implication of this is that, unlike in Ezekiel 45-46, the day of חֹדֶשׁ is approximately equal in significance to a single day of Unleavened Bread. For the festival of Weeks, the animal provision is also exactly the same as that of חֹדֶשׁ, and the quantity of fine flour is identical: 1.5 *'êphāh*s/approximately 34.5 litres. Again, this implies that sacrificially, the new moon is of a similar import in the sanctuary to the feast of Weeks. For the feast of Trumpets, the animal allocation is similar, but with one less bull, and, therefore, a smaller proportional grain offering. This is, however, to be carried out on the first day of the seventh month, and is therefore a new moon. The total offerings for חֹדֶשׁ of the seventh month exceed a normal new moon by one bull and seven lambs. Therefore the regular חֹדֶשׁ offerings are supplemented with these (Numbers 29:6). The sacrificial provisions for the Day of Atonement are the same as those of the Feast of Trumpets: one bull and his respective grain offering less than those of חֹדֶשׁ (Numbers 29:7-11), although, of course, an extra goat is offered on that day for atonement in a separate ritual. The festival of Tabernacles is allotted

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[159] Wagenaar (2005: 203) prefers to translate סֹלֶת as "semolina".

[160] The only specification for the amount of oil to be mixed with the grain offering is here, where one fourth of a *hîn* of beaten oil is to be offered with one tenth of an *'êphāh* of fine flour (Numbers 28:5).

[161] The regular daily offerings, according to this passage of Numbers, were two lambs, 4.6 litres of flour, and 0.95 litres of "fermented drink" (נֶסֶךְ שֵׁכָר) (Numbers 28: 3-7).

[162] Levine 2000: 376.

considerably more sacrificial animals than any of the other ritual constellations: seventy-one bulls are to be offered over the course of eight days.

The Sin-Offering in Numbers 28

It has been noted that חֹדֶשׁ experienced a certain elevation in status between the Ezekiel 46 and Numbers 28 by the addition of a goat for sin-offering in the latter code. The addition of a male goat as sin-offering was, according to Snaith, "...a survival of the *taboo* nature of the days of the new moon when demons were supposed to be active in the darkness".[163] There is, however, no evidence in this text to support such an assertion. Conversely, one finds a male goat offered as an additional sin-offering associated with Passover, the festival of Weeks, the festival of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, and each of the eight days of Tabernacles (Numbers 28-29). The goat sin-offering, moreover, is prescribed in Ezekiel 45 for the yearly festivals, but not for חֹדֶשׁ. In light of this, the idea that this offering, in relation to חֹדֶשׁ, implies the same sort of taboo specifically associated with the moon and demons, should be rejected. חֹדֶשׁ is the first in the list of festivals in Numbers 28-29 to be prescribed a sin-offering, which indicates the festival's close relationship in status with the yearly festivals. The sabbath is not prescribed a sin-offering. This represents an elevation in the significance of חֹדֶשׁ in the cult from the prescriptions in Ezekiel, where a male goat as a sin-offering is prescribed for the yearly festivals, but not for חֹדֶשׁ (Ezekiel 45:24-25). The addition of a sin-offering to חֹדֶשׁ is one of the significant changes that affected the feast in the early Persian period. This addition to חֹדֶשׁ, ideologically, seems to express a heightened intensity in the connection between Israel as the collective body which offers the sacrifices on חֹדֶשׁ, and Yahweh who receives them. This sin-offering, according to Levine, differed from the usual priestly ones in that its purpose was not to expiate the sanctuary of sin and impurity in advance of a sacrifice; rather it was a "sin-offering of the people", to purify them as the collective sacrificing party.[164] Levine suggests,

> ...it would seem that this sacrifice...served to ensure that the people remained on good terms with their God...The *ḥaṭṭā't* of the people merely expiated inadvertent offences that might have encumbered the human-divine relationship, thereby detracting from the

[163] Snaith 1967: 315.
[164] Levine 2000: 406.

> efficacy of the celebrations. God would not have been amenable to answering a call of a people whose offences had not been expiated.[165]

The male goat was seen to expiate the inadvertent sins of Israel *as a whole* in order that their sacrifices on חֹדֶשׁ and yearly festivals should not be compromised by any accumulated sin; this ensured the closeness between Israel and Yahweh on new moons and yearly feasts. In effect, the addition of the sin-offering to חֹדֶשׁ ritual implied that at each new moon, the status of Israel as the people of Yahweh was continuously assured. This detail brings some focus on חֹדֶשׁ as an occasion for the maintenance of Israel's 'national' and religious identity. First, this was not a feature of the weekly sabbath; the sabbath had its own significance in this ongoing process. Secondly, חֹדֶשׁ as a monthly feast was by far the most regular occasion on which this effect of atonement and assurance took place. This sin-offering, apparently added in the early Persian period, brings חֹדֶשׁ into focus as an important feature of Jewish identity and its ongoing maintenance. The status of the *whole nation* as it was conceived as Yahweh's people was assured every month as part of the festival. As Levine states:

> In a word, the sin-offering of the people squared the people with their God…[166]

As will be observed, the increasingly 'national'-type character of חֹדֶשׁ is expressed even more concretely in the regulated payment of the ⅓ shekel tax for this, and other offerings (Nehemiah 10:34). The tradition of a sin-offering of the people at חֹדֶשׁ was to last until the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, and would be reflected on later still.[167]

Noth dated the compilation in Numbers 28-29 to the post-exilic period on account of the text's presupposition of other exilic or post-exilic codes, such as Leviticus 1-7 and the "Holiness Code", particularly its calendar in Leviticus 23. This led Noth to the conclusion that the text in Numbers 28 and 29 was one of the most recent additions to the Pentateuch, a later supplement of the P source (Ps), perhaps

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[165] Levine 2000: 46.
[166] Levine 2000: 407.
[167] See below, and Chapter 8 for the significance of the monthly sin-offering in the Mishnah.

added in the fifth century BCE.[168] This approximate date has been accepted by other scholars.[169] According to Noth, this section of Numbers "is to be thought of, from a literary point of view, as an appendix to the pentateuchal narrative";[170] it is considered to date to the early Persian period, although that is not to exclude continuity with earlier traditions.[171]

חֹדֶשׁ from Ezekiel to Numbers: A Summary

It can be seen from the above that the sacrificial provisions for חֹדֶשׁ in Numbers 28 are indeed "considerable", in that the only ritual constellation which includes particular days which significantly exceed new moon days in their amount of prescribed offerings is Tabernacles. The changes which חֹדֶשׁ experienced from the time of Ezekiel 45-46 to Numbers 28-29 can be summed up as follows:[172]

- The sacrificial status of חֹדֶשׁ in the cult has increased by one bull, one ram, and the addition of a sin-offering (goat), elevating the day of the new moon, sacrificially, from a 'secondary' holy day, to the same, or higher, level of sanctity as a single day in some of the yearly ritual constellations. This elevation must be qualified by a crucial observation: one of the two yearly festivals prescribed in Ezekiel (Passover/Unleavened Bread), has *fallen* considerably in its allotment of goods and animals. Therefore, while, sacrificially, חֹדֶשׁ has ultimately only experienced a slight increase in sacrificial provisions, its overall status has improved largely due to the *decreased* intensity of sacrifice on Passover/Unleavened Bread, from Ezekiel to Numbers.

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[168] Noth 1968: 219; see Wenham 1997: 68-75 for a discussion on the hypothetical sources of Numbers in general.

[169] Sturdy (1976: 200) and Keel (1998: 107) also supported this conclusion. Noth compared the treatment of cereal and drink offerings in Numbers 28-29 with that those in Numbers 15:1-16. "What is demanded in the latter passage as something new" he argues, "is here [Numbers 28-29] presupposed as an effective regulation" (Noth 1968: 219). This governs my view on the dating of the passage in Ezekiel (46:6-7) which also prescribes sacrifices for new moons, but without provision for drink offerings. Regarding this late dating of the code of Numbers 28-29, Levine cites certain changes, "sequential developments in the modes and structure of public worship", to further support it. These include the two-phased תָּמִיד offering (morning and evening) and the daily grain offering of the High Priest (designated as תָּמִיד). Ezekiel, he observes, knows only one daily burnt offering, and is thus closer to earlier traditions (Levine 2000: 48).

[170] Noth 1968: 219. The passage, as observed by Noth here, is included *after* the intimation of the death of Moses in the narrative (Numbers 27:12-14).

[171] cf. Levine 2000: 47-51.

[172] The actual time-frame for this process of change is very difficult to estimate, as both date to the early Persian period, but prove difficult to date more closely.

- In Numbers, חֹדֶשׁ is, sacrificially, considerably more significant than the sabbath in the same text. While this, again, is due to a *slight* increase in overall sacrificial allotments for חֹדֶשׁ, it is also due to the fact that the sabbath itself has experienced a *considerable decrease* in significance in the sanctuary context: six lambs and a ram in Ezekiel 46:4-5, to just two lambs in Numbers 28:9-10.
- In Numbers 28, חֹדֶשׁ, like all of the other cultic events, is prescribed with exact quantities for *all* of the offerings including grain offerings. In Ezekiel, the respective grain offering and oil to be offered with each lamb is left at the discretion of the priest. Numbers 28 thus forms a more precise prescription than that in Ezekiel 46.
- Numbers 28-29 adds quantities of drink offerings to all of the events prescribed, from daily to yearly sacrifices, including for חֹדֶשׁ. Quantities for drink offerings are absent from prescriptions in Ezekiel 45-46.
- Both the codes of Ezekiel 40-48 and Numbers 28-29 envisage sacrifices to be offered by, or on behalf of, Israel, in *communal* effort. Ezekiel envisages the contribution of the people to consist of agricultural produce. Numbers 28:1 has Yahweh command the Israelites to present offerings at appointed times, but does, in the code, not specify the manner or form in which this is to be done.

Summary

From the prescription in Ezekiel to that in Numbers, חֹדֶשׁ, out of all of the festivals and holy days described therein, is the most consistent ritual constellation, retaining a *similar* sacrificial allocation from one text to the other, despite the changes noted. The other occasions, with the exception of daily offerings, all change dramatically from one text and the next. חֹדֶשׁ experiences only a slight increase in comparison to the changes of the others.

Before proceeding to address a major problem with the history of חֹדֶשׁ, two outstanding issues need to be addressed. Two significant details are absent from Numbers 28 regarding חֹדֶשׁ: (1) mention of a cessation of work, and (2) reference to

convocation at the sanctuary on new moon days.[173] A tradition of rest on חֹדֶשׁ was encountered in the oracles of Amos, and possibly also Isaiah (Part 1 of the present chapter). For the yearly festivals, the author of Numbers 28-29 specifies a cessation of "regular work" (כָּל־מְלֶאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ) (for example Numbers 28:18; 29:1) on specific days of the festival. Does the lack of a similar injunction in relation to the new moon imply that this cessation was not associated with חֹדֶשׁ? Crucially, it is neither specified in relation to the sabbath here, so this issue cannot be resolved by this text. At least it can be said, therefore, that Numbers 28-29 does not evidence the decline of this tradition.

In relation to the second issue, חֹדֶשׁ is not given the status of מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ 'sanctuary convocation' in Numbers 28-29, perhaps implying that there was no strict requirement for congregation on new moons, as there was for the other ritual occasions (save the sabbath and daily offerings).[174] In this respect חֹדֶשׁ is not legislated with a requirement for the people at large to participate in their rituals. This is the one major difference between new moon days and yearly festivals. The yearly festivals, in the scheme of Numbers 28-29, would appear to have been of greater significance in the Temple-complex than days of חֹדֶשׁ. Does this represent the one *decline* that חֹדֶשׁ experienced in its status since the compilation of Ezekiel 46, where sanctuary convocation is prescribed in elaborate detail? Perhaps not. The absence of legislation for convocation on חֹדֶשׁ here does not imply that new moon observance no longer involved visiting the Temple. There appears, from an early period, to have been a distinction between the חַג, *pilgrimage* festival, and other holy days (as seen, for example, in Hosea 2:11; 2:13 MT). It is surely safe to assume that a pilgrimage-type festival would result in a larger crowd, and this does not preclude assemblies on other occasions. Assembly of some kind seems to characterise Israelite sacrifice throughout its history. The status of מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ, associated with the yearly festivals, is probably intended as a formal "calling" to the sanctuary, and reflects pilgrimage-type gatherings. Thus, the distinction between the yearly festivals, of מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ status, and חֹדֶשׁ, with a gathering, but without the same import, seems to have been a very old

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[173] cf. Levine 2000: 405.
[174] Levine 2000: 405. Numbers 28-9 indicates that מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ applies to Passover (Numbers 28:18), Weeks (28:26), Trumpets (29:1), Day of Atonement (29:7), and Tabernacles (29:12).

one. One cannot, therefore, posit a decline in the importance of חֹדֶשׁ in this respect, but rather continuity with older practice.

Moreover, popular worship of Yahweh by sanctuary convocation in the Temple-complex on new moons is explicit in several post-exilic biblical traditions; this feature of the festival remains consistent into later times. Not the least of these traditions is in the Book of Isaiah, where an oracle declares:

וְהָיָה מִדֵּי־חֹדֶשׁ בְּחָדְשׁוֹ וּמִדֵּי שַׁבָּת בְּשַׁבַּתּוֹ
יָבוֹא כָל־בָּשָׂר לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְפָנַי אָמַר יהוה׃

> From new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me… (Isaiah 66:23).

This almost certainly refers to the same activity of "worshipping" as the description in Ezekiel 46, as the vocabulary is the same. הִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת describes worshipping in an active, prescribed sense, specifically as "bowing down", a common Near Eastern expression of devotion and loyalty.[175] Blenkinsopp's translation of this verse from Isaiah into English ("And each month at the new moon, and each week on the sabbath")[176] further emphasises this association of a specific kind of "worshipping" at the Temple with these specific days: the day of חֹדֶשׁ, and the sabbath day. The author of Numbers 28-29, as will be seen in the next section, was not especially concerned with the movements of ordinary Israelites, but rather with the priests, and this may be one reason for the omission of regulations for popular observance of new moon days.

Trumpets and חֹדֶשׁ

In reference to the public side of חֹדֶשׁ, two texts in the Hebrew Bible refer to the blowing of wind instruments. Psalm 81 indicates that the שׁוֹפָר is to be blasted on חֹדֶשׁ:

תִּקְעוּ בַחֹדֶשׁ שׁוֹפָר בַּכֵּסֶה לְיוֹם חַגֵּנוּ׃

[175] Elkanah, Samuel's father, is described as doing the same activity: travelling to the sanctuary at Shiloh to sacrifice and "to worship" (לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת), although new moon days are not specified here (1 Samuel 1:3).
[176] Blenkinsopp 2003: 309.

כִּי חֹק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא מִשְׁפָּט לֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב׃

> Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our festal day. For it is a statute for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob (Psalm 81:3-4; 81:4-5 MT).

This Psalm contains one of a small number of clear references in the Hebrew Bible to the *full* moon (כֵּסֶה).[177] The juxtaposition of new and full moon has led some commentators to suggest that חֹדֶשׁ, in this context, may not refer to all of the new moons throughout the year, but to one (that of the seventh month). This is conceivable partly due to the fact that this new moon, in Leviticus 23:24 and Numbers 29:1, is prescribed with a horn blast.[178] Furthermore, the full moon might signify either Passover or Tabernacles.[179] Dahood described Psalm 81 as "A composite liturgy of North Israelite…origin".[180] Briggs and Briggs also referred to the Psalm as such, but particularly relevant for the present study is their analysis of the two trimeter pentastichs (verses 2-6b), part of which contains the above association of the שׁוֹפָר with the new moon. They argued that in verses 2-6a is a call to Passover, which dates to the late Persian or early Hellenistic period.[181] Clements observed that at the Sinai Theophany (Exodus 19:13), the horn heralded the presence of Yahweh with his people and summoned them to worship.[182] It cannot be shown conclusively that each new moon of the year is intended by חֹדֶשׁ here, but the next text gives a somewhat clearer picture, although not specifically concerning the שׁוֹפָר.

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[177] Cf. Proverbs 7:19-20, where full moon is referred to as a temporal reference: "he will not come home until full moon" (Proverbs 17:20). This is, of course, providing that the sabbath, in the pre-exilic period, does not refer to the full moon, an issue which has been rejected by several scholars, including Hallo (1977).

[178] cf. Weiser 1962: 553. Briggs & Briggs, in relation to this Psalm, suggested that the new moons of the months of Passover and Tabernacles (1 and 7) were especially sacred (1907: 210).

[179] Dahood 1968: 264. These are the two yearly festivals which coincide with the full moons (cf. Numbers 28-9). The full moon occurs on day 14/15 of the lunar month, if reckoning begins with first crescent (new moon). Briggs and Briggs pointed out that Jewish tradition favoured interpreting Tabernacles as the event in question, although these authors favoured Passover for the original composition (Briggs and Briggs 1907: 211). Goulder argued that "full moon", like "Christmas" in modern vernacular, can refer to a day, a week, or a season variously. On this basis he argued that the full moon, here, refers to a week: Tabernacles (1996: 150). The paucity of clear references in the Hebrew Bible to the full moon makes this interpretation difficult to sustain.

[180] Dahood 1968: 263. He based the northern origin of the Psalm on the reference to Joseph in verse 6 (7 MT) (cf. Rogerson and McKay 1977: 161). See Goulder 1996: 190 for an eighth century northern provenance.

[181] Briggs and Briggs 1907: 210.

[182] Clements 1972: 117. "When the horn was blown", according to Clements, "the people were permitted to go up to the mountain, because they would by then have prepared themselves fully for the occasion". The Sinai Theophany, in his view, thus echoed normal temple practice (1972: 117).

Numbers 10:10 describes the blasting of "trumpets" on new moons. Therein, חֹדֶשׁ, as in several instances above, is given a similar ritual prescription as the yearly festivals. Again, it can be seen that the new moon retains a certain status in common with yearly festivals which the sabbath does not seem to share:

וּבְיוֹם שִׂמְחַתְכֶם וּבְמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם וּבְרָאשֵׁי חָדְשֵׁיכֶם וּתְקַעְתֶּם בַּחֲצֹצְרֹת עַל עֹלֹתֵיכֶם וְעַל זִבְחֵי שַׁלְמֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְזִכָּרוֹן לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲנִי יהוה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם׃

> Also on your days of rejoicing, at your appointed festivals, and at the beginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over your sacrifices of well-being; they shall serve as a reminder on your behalf before the Lord your God: I am the Lord your God (Numbers 10:10).

Numbers 10:10 has been considered part of the P source.[183] "The beginnings of your months" here is rendered רָאשֵׁי חָדְשֵׁיכֶם, similar to Numbers 28, and again one of only two references in the Hebrew Bible to so render the feast. Referred to above are the two silver trumpets (חֲצֹצְרֹת) that Yahweh commands Moses to fashion "for summoning the congregation, and for breaking camp" (Numbers 10:2). These trumpets were to have the effect of assembling the people:

וְתָקְעוּ בָּהֵן וְנוֹעֲדוּ אֵלֶיךָ כָּל־הָעֵדָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד׃

> When you sound them the whole congregation will assemble before you at the entrance of the tent of meeting (Numbers 10:3).

This is reminiscent of the ritual in Ezekiel already examined in this chapter, which associates convocation with burnt offerings on certain occasions, including חֹדֶשׁ. Several types of blasts are listed in Numbers as instructing the Israelites to do different things, but the specific type is not specified in relation to the new moon and מוֹעֲדִים there. "The time [day] of your rejoicing" (בְּיוֹם שִׂמְחַתְכֶם), here refers,

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[183] Levine observed that the list of chieftains given in 10:1-28 is identical to that in Numbers 2 (Levine 1993: 303; cf. Leveen 2002: 206ff.; Binns 1927: 56-8.

according to Levine, to the "annual festivals".[184] Burnt offerings (עֹלוֹת) are familiar from the above texts, and "fellowship offerings" (זִבְחֵי שַׁלְמֵיכֶם) with burnt-offerings, "customarily refers to a regimen of sacrifices, in general".[185] Levine observed that this context is unique in its reference to these trumpets and their use in the cult in the entire Pentateuch.[186] They would appear to have served the purpose of summoning the crowd for convocation, and perhaps herald the presence of Yahweh.[187] Leveen suggests that the connection between the wilderness camp and the cult in this passage plays an important role in ensuring priestly authority, particularly in connection with the status of the priests who blow the trumpets.[188] In relation to the use of memory in this ritual process (regarding Numbers 9-10), Leveen argues:

> The passage creates both the content of the memory – the blowing of the trumpets to initiate the movement of the camp – and the conditions under which those memories will be retrieved – during times of war or of festivals in the land.[189]

The story of the wilderness, in this analysis, was taken up and associated with the priestly class, in order that upon hearing the silver trumpets, the summoned congregation would recognise a very ancient authority in the priesthood through the memory of the wilderness which was recalled by the trumpet blasts. This, in Leveen's opinion, would motivate the hearers of the trumpets to submit to priestly regulations for festivals, and effect social cohesion through the legitimation and preservation of priestly authority.[190] The trumpets also function, in Leveen's view, as mnemonic devices to remind Yahweh of Israel, and thus strengthen the relationship between God and Israel upon its sounding, upon sacrificing to him on certain occasions.[191] In the prescription of this ritual there are two ways in which the close relationship between Yahweh and Israel is ensured on new moons, and thus the special status of the people

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[184] Levine 1993: 306. This is argued on the basis of Deuteronomy 16:14, where the Israelites are told to rejoice (וְשָׂמַחְתָּ) on such occasions.

[185] Levine 1993: 306. שלמים, according to Levine, have a long Near Eastern history, and were "especially prominent in the Ugaritic sacrificial system". cf. Anderson 1987: 36ff.

[186] Levine 1993: 303.

[187] It is possible that different trumpets performed different functions relatively simultaneously at different points in the sanctuary, or perhaps in short succession. It is possible, although difficult to prove, that one summoned a congregation, while another was blown over the sacrifices. On the other hand, the same trumpet blast may have performed both of these functions.

[188] Leveen 2002: 210.

[189] Leveen 2002: 210.

[190] Leveen 2002: 210.

[191] Leveen 2002: 211.

of Israel is maintained, at חֹדֶשׁ, and the other occasions referred to: priestly authority is promoted at the centre of Israel, and Yahweh is reminded of Israel. Wagenaar suggests that the former text here (Psalm 81) may well have intended only the new moon of the seventh month to be associated with a horn blast, but that this latter text in Numbers 10 may well be a later extrapolation of the earlier instruction, adapted and applied to each month.[192]

Numbers 28 and Older Festival Codes: a Solution to Wellhausen's Problem

We come now to address the old Wellhausian problem that arises in many commentaries, often focussed on Numbers 28-29. Considering its obvious significance in the early Persian period in light of the above conclusions, why then is חֹדֶשׁ ignored by the 'ritual codes' in the Pentateuch which are considered to be older than Numbers 28-29: Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16:1-17?[193] This absence of reference to חֹדֶשׁ from other pentateuchal enumerations of festivals is the problem, the 'gap' in the history of the new moon which has been filled by the 'pagan'/'heathen' explanation. Numbers 28:11-15 prescribes considerable offerings to new moons, while earlier festival codes do not mention it at all, and yet its celebration is normally presumed to be of great antiquity. The general significance of חֹדֶשׁ in the intervening period (the late monarchic period) has been called into question.[194]

The issue is addressed here from two perspectives. First of all, we must remind ourselves that the essential features and types of context for the feast appear to have remained consistent from the citation of the eighth century prophets up to a much later time: sacrifice and convocation.[195]

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[192] Wagenaar 2005: 127.

[193] In 1912, as has been noted, Gray had suggested that חֹדֶשׁ was "intentionally ignored by the early lawgivers" (1912: 410), while Binns, in 1927, admitted that "The reason for this ignoring of a great festival by the earlier legislation is a little hard to understand".

[194] Sturdy considered the sacrificial provisions for חֹדֶשׁ, in this context, to reflect a "sharp increase" in the importance of new moon ritual from previous times, although no sufficient earlier evidence for this increase was cited by him by way of comparison (Sturdy 1976: 202).

[195] I mean here that the context has remained the *sacrificial cult* in general; realising that this may have gradually become focused upon one location: Jerusalem.

Secondly, and more importantly, the relationship between the festival code in Numbers 28-29 and the other festival codes, and their divergent content and concerns, must be considered. The main problem with the methodology behind the 'pagan superstition' or 'heathen' explanation of many previous scholars is as follows: In supplying an explanation, scholars have focussed primarily on the texts which actually refer to חֹדֶשׁ itself to provide the explanation. The texts which *do not* refer to it are counted only as evidence of absence, and therefore the particular thrust, and context, of the codes of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy remain neglected in the explanation.[196]

The root consideration behind my explanation is this: Numbers 28-29 is primarily concerned with the *priests' activity*, whereas all of the other earlier enumerations are *almost exclusively concerned with the patterns of ordinary people*. Numbers 28-29 differs greatly from the other texts. Comparing Numbers 28-29, for example, with Leviticus 23, a text often thought to have a special relationship with the code of Numbers 28-29, and commonly ascribed to P[197] (Numbers 28-29 is considered a late addition to P) there is a consistent pattern in the differences between the two texts.

Jacob Milgrom, in his commentary on Leviticus 23 states:

> This chapter is addressed to the Israelites. The priests are not included...the priests' role is deliberately muffled. The manifold obligations falling on the individual Israelite in the observance of the festivals are prescribed.[198]

This stresses the complementary relationship between texts like Leviticus 23 and the later Numbers 28, the latter being almost exclusively concerned with the activity of the priests. Daily sacrifices, for example, are not referred to *at all* in Leviticus 23; they are prescribed in exact quantities in Numbers 28:3-6. For the sabbath, cessation of regular work *is* prescribed in Leviticus 23:3, but *no sacrifices* at the sanctuary are even alluded to; the sabbath is treated in *exactly the opposite* sense in Numbers 28:

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[196] For example, McKay used the feast's absence alone to argue that חֹדֶשׁ was simply unimportant for the author of Leviticus 23 (McKay 1991: 21).
[197] cf. Levine 2000: 46ff.
[198] Milgrom 2000: 1951.

sacrifice within the Temple-complex is prescribed in detail, but rest is *not mentioned at all*. For Unleavened Bread, for example, Leviticus refers to sacrifices at the sanctuary, but no quantities are specified; in Numbers 28:19-24, exact quantities of sacrifices are prescribed. So in sum, Leviticus 23 is almost exclusively concerned with the ordinary Israelite; Numbers 28-29 is almost exclusively concerned with the duties of the priests.

Thus, when the prescription for the observance of חֹדֶשׁ in Numbers 28 is viewed, it should be read as a cultic text primarily concerned with the activity of the priests sacrificing at the altar – an area generally forbidden for most Israelites or Jews. Numbers 28-29 is not particularly concerned with the patterns of ordinary Israelites, as are all of the other codes.[199] In light of this overall distinction between the focus of Numbers 28-29 and that of the earlier festivals codes, one can make an important observation: the ritual code in Numbers 28-29 is *unique in the Pentateuch*. The provisions in Numbers 28-29 cannot, therefore, provide evidence for the "sharp increase" in importance of חֹדֶשׁ in the early Persian period, at least from the point of view of the sacrifices offered. There is only a slight difference in new moon offerings in Numbers 28 from those in Ezekiel 46; indeed, חֹדֶשׁ is the only festival which bears even an approximate consistency from the prescriptions in Ezekiel to those in Numbers, as seen. Numbers 28-29 is unique in the Pentateuch as a text governing sacrificial ritual in commodities and quantities: the *only* comprehensive liturgical calendar orientated towards priestly Temple ritual in the entire Pentateuch. It is *not* a more comprehensive version of other pentateuchal codes such as Leviticus 23, as has been seen, as it does lack details and concerns which are contained in the earlier codes. It serves a different purpose, and relates to a different context (or the same context from an entirely different point of view). Scholars cannot argue for a sharp increase in the importance of new moon days in the cult from Numbers 28 because there is no similar, earlier text with which it can be meaningfully compared, apart from Ezekiel 46, composed in the same broad period, wherein the new moon is the

[199] Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deuteronomy 16:1-17. The passages in Exodus merely allude to temple ritual (23:15; 34:20), and only insofar as they instruct the ordinary Israelite of his duty towards the temple, never the priest or Levite. Deuteronomy 16:6 states that sacrifices are only to be offered in "the place that the Lord your God will chose as a dwelling for his name" (Deuteronomy 16:6). Again, however, almost nothing of actual temple sacrificial ritual or commodities is included here; the text is concerned with the significance of certain ritual constellations, specifically the reference to the saving history (Mayes 1981: 254), for the ordinary Israelite/Judahite.

most consistent of all of the ritual constellations. It is therefore spurious to claim that Numbers 28-9 evidences a "surprising", "sharp increase" in the importance of חֹדֶשׁ at this time in the sacrificial cult.

Conversely, it can neither be argued, then, that the absence of חֹדֶשׁ evidences its problematic status for the authors of the earlier codes. One is rather led to conclude that the significance of חֹדֶשׁ related primarily to a different context: the priestly sphere in the Temple. [200] The earlier codes do not systematically deal with that sphere. If we are then to conclude that the principal context for חֹדֶשׁ is the sacrificial cult, and in particular the priestly sphere therein, more can be said about its absence from earlier codes. For example, it is clear the Deuteronomy does not provide an accurate or comprehensive picture of Israel during any period, let alone its own broad context.[201] This is the case with the sacrificial cult. In discussing Deuteronomy in relation to the cult, A. D. H. Mayes observed:

> Yahweh is not to be coerced or persuaded through sacrificial offerings. Sacrifices have their place in private worship as an expression of gratitude to God in fulfilment to vows...but they belong chiefly in the context of the humanitarian behaviour which the Israelite must adopt towards the poor, for they are to be shared with the poor, the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and the widow.[202]

While the festival code in Deuteronomy 16:1-17 does associate the festivals described with a visit to the sanctuary, the role of the priests on any of the occasions almost completely obscured. As Weinfeld concluded, "...the most essential charges and rites of the Israelite cult... are scarcely mentioned in Deuteronomy".[203]

Finally, with regard to the codes of Exodus 23 and 34, these are shorter than any of the codes in Leviticus, Numbers, or Deuteronomy and are by no means either focussed on the priests (again, the opposite is true), or particularly systematic in any

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[200] Levine points out that there is no overall indication of the actual location of the cultic activity described in Numbers 28:1-30:1, other than an "incidental reference" in 28:7 where a libation is to be offered בַּקֹּדֶשׁ, "in the Sanctuary", implying the Jerusalem sanctuary, as well as an implication in the use of the term חַג, implying pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Levine 2000: 365).

[201] cf. Weinfeld 1991: 282-9; Mayes 1981: 55.

[202] Mayes 1981: 58.

[203] Weinfeld 1991: 29.

of their prescriptions.[204] It is therefore concluded that there is insufficient reason to posit any problem in the history of חֹדֶשׁ for the authors of any of the older codes in Exodus, Leviticus, or Deuteronomy. The only problem is in our modern understanding of the feast. It is unfortunate that we cannot be clearer about what precise significance חֹדֶשׁ had for the authors of these codes, but there is certainly very little basis for sustaining any suggestion which posits 'pagan', 'heathen', or 'superstitious' practices as the reason for its absence. Now, however, it can be said that the primary context for חֹדֶשׁ observance was the sacrificial cult, and that this religious duty, while in a number of ways pertaining to the whole nation, did not involve mandatory attendance. It was a festival organised within the priestly sphere.

So in conclusion, it has not here been proven that there is a *certain* consistency of חֹדֶשׁ ritual from early times up to the Persian period, but it is hoped that it has been demonstrated that there is no basis for suggesting that its history was *necessarily interrupted* in the sacrificial cults of Israel or Judah (other than the obvious interruptions by Assyrian, Babylonian, and Syrian armies).

[204] Haran described these as "...assembled from quite particular points of view...[and] very limited in scope" (1979: 69).

3. THE NEW MOON THROUGH THE PERSIAN PERIOD

בִּשְׁנַת שְׁתַּיִם לְדָרְיָוֶשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשִּׁשִּׁי בְּיוֹם אֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הָיָה דְבַר־יהוה בְּיַד־חַגַּי
הַנָּבִיא אֶל־זְרֻבָּבֶל בֶּן־שְׁאַלְתִּיאֵל פַּחַת יְהוּדָה וְאֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל

> In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest… (Haggai 1:1).

While this introduction to the first oracle of Haggai is likely an addition of some writer after the prophet,[205] it is interesting because, as in Ezekiel, the date which it contains seems to suggest a social setting for Haggai's oracle: חֹדֶשׁ. Furthermore, it is also evident that the writer presumes the presence of the high priest and the governor of Yehud in this specific context. Edelman argues, "By selecting the new moon, the prophet would have had a ready audience at the cultic celebration…"[206] Texts which date to the late Persian period, or perhaps early Hellenistic period, bear witness to the continued importance of חֹדֶשׁ in ritual life up to that time. The 'national' character of the feast is further evidenced in the role it plays in the retrospective histories of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, particularly in the various attempts at the restoration of the community and its cult.[207] Specifically, its celebration is associated with the restoration of the cult upon the returnees' arrival in Jerusalem (Ezra 3:1-5). Also, various significant events in the narrative of Second Temple restoration occur on new moons. Ideologically, חֹדֶשׁ is significant in the Persian period in its association with the restored practice of the sacrificial cult.[208] The dates imposed upon this narrative of

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[205] cf. Edelman 2005: 114, 123.

[206] Edelman 2005: 116. Exactly what celebration was envisaged for the original context is not altogether clear, however, as the Temple had not been restored at the time referred to: c. 520 BCE (cf. Albertz 1994: 451-56).

[207] These sources have been dated to c. 400 BCE (Myers 1965: LXVII-LXX). Williamson tentatively suggested 400-300 BCE (1996: 46). Others have been more critical, suggesting much of the work is later, for example, Batten (1913: 2), who observed that, while composite, much of the material is these texts dates from the Hellenistic period; cf. Brockington, who suggests rather some time between 350 and 200 BCE (Brockington 1969: 24).

[208] It is probably reasonable to suggest that the new moons of various months throughout the year had some varying significance from one to the next. This is, however, a variety which is unfortunately not accessible to the modern scholar (except in the case of the seventh month, which has special observances, cf. Leviticus 23:24 and Numbers 29:1). Regarding oracles and the dates of significant restorative events in the books of Ezekiel, Haggai, Ezra and Nehemiah, the new moons of the months 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 12 are represented.

restoration continue to indicate the propitious and sanctified nature of new moon days.[209]

Following the 'Edict of Cyrus' (Ezra 1:2-4), the book of Ezra describes the returnees' arrival in Judea. The altar is rebuilt under Jeshua and Zerubbabel, and the sacrificial cult is restored:

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת כַּכָּתוּב וְעֹלַת יוֹם בְּיוֹם בְּמִסְפָּר כְּמִשְׁפַּט דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ: וְאַחֲרֵיכֵן
עֹלַת תָּמִיד וְלֶחָדָשִׁים וּלְכָל־מוֹעֲדֵי יהוה הַמְקֻדָּשִׁים וּלְכֹל מִתְנַדֵּב נְדָבָה לַיהוה:

> And they kept the festival of booths, as prescribed, and offered the daily burnt-offerings by number according to the ordinance, as required for each day, and after that the regular burnt offerings, the offerings at the new moon and at all the sacred festivals of the Lord, and the offerings of everyone who made a freewill-offering to the Lord (Ezra 3:4-5).[210]

This is undeniably an important moment in Second Temple history (at least in retrospect). In this version of the history, it is the first instalment of the Yahwistic sacrificial cult in Jerusalem since the destruction wrought in 587 BCE. חֹדֶשׁ, it seems, is integral to this moment of restoration, and a fundamental aspect of the cult which is restored. The terms כַּכָּתוּב, "as written", and כְּמִשְׁפַּט "according to the ordinance", indicate that a previous text is being drawn upon by the author here. There are several reasons for considering Numbers 28-29 as the authoritative cultic text referred to. The first reason is straightforward: it is the only text in the Pentateuch which prescribes sacrifices in any comprehensive detail. Several examples below also evidently draw from Numbers 28-29 in a similar way. The special significance of חֹדֶשׁ in Ezra-Nehemiah is indicated by the occurrence of several events on new moon days. The foundations of the restored Temple are first laid בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי, either "the second month", or "the second new moon" (Ezra 3:8),[211] and returnees leave Babylon with Ezra on the new moon of the first month, and arrive in Jerusalem on the new moon of the fifth month (Ezra 7:9). On the new moon of the tenth month Ezra presides over an

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[209] It should be noted that the present work is not particularly concerned with the accuracy of these dates from an exact historical point; rather I seek to understand the symbolic connection between new moons and certain events, as it was made retrospectively.

[210] A previous prescription of ritual and offerings is also referred to, in the same respect, in 2 Chronicles 31:3, also examined in this chapter.

[211] Cf. 1 Esdras 5:57 (below), where this is interpreted to imply a new moon.

investigation into foreign wives which is said to be completed by the new moon of the following first month (Ezra 10:16-17).

The re-working of earlier history, in the late Persian period, also features the feast of חֹדֶשׁ as an important feast in monarchic Judah. The essential function of the Jerusalem sanctuary, or at least its ideological and theological function,[212] is conveyed, by the Chronicler, in Solomon's statement to Hiram (חוּרָם) about its imminent construction:

> הִנֵּה אֲנִי בוֹנֶה־בַּיִת לְשֵׁם יהוה אֱלֹהָי לְהַקְדִּישׁ לוֹ לְהַקְטִיר לְפָנָיו קְטֹרֶת־סַמִּים וּמַעֲרֶכֶת תָּמִיד וְעֹלוֹת לַבֹּקֶר וְלָעֶרֶב לַשַּׁבָּתוֹת וְלֶחֳדָשִׁים וּלְמוֹעֲדֵי יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם זֹאת עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

> I am now about to build a house for the name of the Lord my God and dedicate it to him for offering fragrant incense[213] before him, and for the regular offerings of the rows of bread, and for burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths and the new moons, and the appointed festivals of the Lord our God, as ordained forever for Israel (2 Chronicles 2:4; 2:3 MT).[214]

This listing of yearly time punctuation is complete in that it begins with the daily תָּמִיד offerings (cf. Numbers 28:3-4). The Chronicler's understanding of the sanctuary's function is clear, and Israel is the entity which offers these sacrifices. Again, we see a text which likely depends upon Numbers 28-29: the two-phased תָּמִיד offering ("burnt offerings morning and evening"), unknown to Ezekiel or the pre-exilic ritual codes, is present here.[215]

The list of ritual occasions is repeated in 2 Chronicles 8 as Solomon is described sacrificing:

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[212] Ancient Near Eastern temples, including the Jerusalem temple, had a wide variety of functions, from trading and agriculture, to politics, storage, education, record keeping, and many more.

[213] This occurrence of קְטֹרֶת־סַמִּים contrasts with the phrase קְטֹרֶת תּוֹעֵבָה in Isaiah 1:13.

[214] The account by the Chronicler contains additional information to its parallel in 1 Kings 5:5, there is not as much detail, and no reference to any specific cultic occasions in Solomon's message to Hiram.

[215] Cf. Levine 2000: 48-49; Kohn (2002: 115) argues that this text is dependent on Numbers 28-29.

אָז הֶעֱלָה שְׁלֹמֹה עֹלוֹת לַיהוה עַל מִזְבַּח יהוה אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה לִפְנֵי הָאוּלָם: וּבִדְבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹם לְהַעֲלוֹת כְּמִצְוַת מֹשֶׁה לַשַּׁבָּתוֹת וְלֶחֳדָשִׁים וְלַמּוֹעֲדוֹת שָׁלוֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה בְּחַג הַמַּצּוֹת וּבְחַג הַשָּׁבֻעוֹת וּבְחַג הַסֻּכּוֹת:

> Then Solomon offered up burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar that he had built in front of the vestibule, as the duty of each day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses for the sabbaths, the new moons, and the three annual festivals – the festival of unleavened bread, the festival of weeks, and the festival of booths (2 Chronicles 8:12-13).

Here, the daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly sacrifices and rituals are again referred to, the main divisions of time within any single year in cultic life. The מֹעֲדִים, here מוֹעֲדוֹת, are also specified. Solomon is engaged here in offering sacrifices. Interestingly, this text differs from the ritual in Ezekiel 45-46, where the נָשִׂיא is clearly outside the confines of the inner court, and merely watches the priests sacrificing from a more marginal location. The "commandment of Moses" assumes some previous codification of these sacrifices and other rituals, again probably Numbers 28-29, presented as Yahweh's words to Moses (Numbers 28:1). As well as this, the mention of *three* annual מוֹעֲדוֹת probably precludes reference to the code in Ezekiel 40-48, which only describes two yearly ritual constellations, and also appears to refer to all of the festivals and holy days of the cult collectively as מֹעֲדִים.[216]

1 Chronicles 23, which forms part of a passage prescribing various duties of the Levites, refers to חֹדֶשׁ ritual with new details:

וְלַעֲמֹד בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֹּקֶר לְהֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לַיהוה וְכֵן לָעָרֶב: וּלְכֹל הַעֲלוֹת עֹלוֹת לַיהוה לַשַּׁבָּתוֹת לֶחֳדָשִׁים וְלַמּוֹעֲדִים בְּמִסְפָּר כְּמִשְׁפָּט עֲלֵיהֶם תָּמִיד לִפְנֵי יהוה:

> And they shall stand every morning, thanking and praising the Lord, and likewise at evening, and whenever burnt offerings are offered to the Lord on sabbaths, new moons, and appointed festivals, according to the number required of them, regularly before the Lord (1 Chronicles 23:30-31).

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[216] cf. Hasel 1988: 42.

The same totality of the cultic year is expressed in this description of some of the Jerusalem cult's inner workings, and, again, this includes morning and evening, sabbaths, new moons, and מֹעֲדִים. Special ritual action associated with sacrifice is also clearly implied, and the inclusion of the Levites here is important supplementary information. A complementary form of worship is found in their role. The use of הַלֵּל implies that this particular kind of "praise" that the Levites were engaged in was vocal, shouting or singing.[217] This probably involved the chanting/singing of psalms, because, as a technical term it is very common in that liturgical corpus. The term לַעֲמֹד, "to stand" clearly describes the Levites in a different mode of worship to the prescription הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ, for the people in Ezekiel 46 and Isaiah 66:23, which was a common Near Eastern mode of worship involving bowing down. All of this seems to have occurred while offerings were burnt on the altar.

The diverse ritual actions that, by the Persian period, would have provided strong physiological stimuli for the participant at any level, from priest to worshipper in the outer court, now begin to emerge. These would have affected the mood of the ritual at חֹדֶשׁ, in a regular, repetitive sequence throughout the year.

Contribution for חֹדֶשׁ Offerings

In the context of Hezekiah's reforms, the Chronicler records the king contributing towards the cult for burnt-offerings, including those for new moons:

> וּמְנָת הַמֶּלֶךְ מִן־רְכוּשׁוֹ לָעֹלוֹת לְעֹלוֹת הַבֹּקֶר וְהָעֶרֶב וְהָעֹלוֹת לַשַּׁבָּתוֹת וְלֶחֳדָשִׁים וְלַמֹּעֲדִים כַּכָּתוּב בְּתוֹרַת יהוה׃
>
> The contribution of the king from his own possessions was for the burnt offerings: the burnt-offerings of morning and evening, the burnt offerings for sabbaths, the new moons, and the appointed festivals, as is written in the law of the Lord (2 Chronicles 31:3).

חֹדֶשׁ appears here in the familiar context of the liturgical calendar, again listed comprehensively, representing the totality of the year. Details about Hezekiah in

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[217] The term is common in the Psalms and has parallels in several Semitic languages. It is generally associated with vocal activity, whether "crying aloud", "boasting", "shouting". It often occurs associated with worship in Yahweh's sanctuary (for example Psalm 106:1). See *BDB* 237-239.

relation to חֹדֶשׁ cannot be inferred with any certainty from this text, but again, the feast is associated with reform, and it is referred to in relation to a critical moment in the history of the Yahwistic cult. The authoritative status of the festival code of Numbers 28-29 in the sacrificial cult for the Chronicler may further be argued for, due to the reference, "as is written in the law of the Lord" (כַּכָּתוּב בְּתוֹרַת יהוה).[218] The subsequent verses refer to contributions from the people of Judah: they are described as having given a variety of agricultural tithes: corn, wine, oil, and honey (2 Chronicles 31:6).

Nehemiah 10:32-33 indicates that the ⅓ shekel[219] donation to the Temple went towards חֹדֶשׁ, and there is also further suggestion here for the authoritative status of Numbers 28-29:

> וְהֶעֱמַדְנוּ עָלֵינוּ מִצְוֹת לָתֵת עָלֵינוּ שְׁלִשִׁית הַשֶּׁקֶל בַּשָּׁנָה לַעֲבֹדַת בֵּת אֱלֹהֵינוּ: לְלֶחֶם הַמַּעֲרֶכֶת וּמִנְחַת הַתָּמִיד וּלְעוֹלַת הַתָּמִיד הַשַּׁבָּתוֹת הֶחֳדָשִׁים לַמּוֹעֲדִים וְלַקֳּדָשִׁים וְלַחַטָּאוֹת לְכַפֵּר עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכֹל מְלֶאכֶת בֵּית־אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
>
> We also lay on ourselves the obligation to charge ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: for the rows of bread, the regular grain-offering, the regular burnt-offering, the sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed festivals, the sacred donations, and the sin-offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work in the house of our God (Nehemiah 10:32-33).

The emergent picture from these texts is one of a communal effort and a communal responsibility for the function of the sacrificial cult, which was mainly executed by the priests and Levites. The people and the "king" (presumably the governor in Yehud) paid for the sacrifices, including those at חֹדֶשׁ. The sin-offering *of the people* is also included here, which again seems to point to the use of Numbers 28-29.[220] This evidence, in suggesting and acknowledging the society-wide relevance of חֹדֶשׁ ritual in the Persian period, in that it was part funded by the members of the society as a whole, recalls Victor Turner's category of "calendrical rites": they occur on a fixed

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[218] Kohn observes that sacrificial legislation throughout 2 Chronicles (2:3; 8:12-13; 31:3) is dependent of Numbers 28-29 and Leviticus 24:1-9 (Kohn 2002: 115-16). Note also the two-phased תָּמִיד.

[219] According to Wellhausen, a "novel of the law" (Exodus 30:15) raised this to ½ shekel (1994: 159).

[220] cf. Levine 2000: 406.

cycle, "almost always refer to large groups and quite often embrace whole societies".[221]

Because of the uniqueness of Numbers 28 as the only pentateuchal text which prescribes specific sacrificial ritual for new moon days, it is most likely that the passages discussed above which refer to "writings" (Ezra 3:4), or "the commandment of Moses" (2 Chronicles 2:13) refer to Numbers 28-29, unless the texts referred to in Ezra and Chronicles are not extant. Also, the association with Moses, referred to in 2 Chronicles 8:13, seems to imply a pentateuchal text. To chronologically support this, Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah would have to date to later in the Persian or early Hellenistic period than this section of Numbers, which is very likely, and widely accepted.[222]

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[221] Turner 1995: 168-69. It is not necessarily suggested, of course, that we should simply take this text at face value. Rather, the ideology and symbolism behind the practice in the mind of the authors of the tradition – that all Israel is collectively offering sacrifice – should be noted.

[222] Ackroyd asserted that a major stage in the evolution of the book of Chronicles "...belongs to that moment after the activity of Nehemiah and Ezra when reflection on their achievements was possible". When this "moment" was is not specified, but he admits that some of the text of Chronicles may date as late as the second century BCE (Ackroyd 1991: 9.), placing the composition of much of the text most plausibly long after the composition of Numbers 28-29. Grabbe describes Ezra-Nehemiah as a "composite, drawing on several sources", including Haggai and Zechariah, firmly dating Ezra-Nehemiah after these two Persian period texts (cf. Ezra 6:14).

4. THE HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PERIODS

A number of texts which demonstrate the sustained importance of חֹדֶשׁ in the sacrificial cult of Jerusalem into the Hellenistic and Roman periods, up to the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, are now examined. The era is dealt with only briefly here, because certain contexts emerge during this broad period which warrant separate examination, which will be carried out in other parts of the present work: Qumran (Chapter 5) and information pertinent to Diaspora settings (Chapter 6). It will also be noted in the next chapter (Chapter 4), that two texts (Judith and 1 Maccabees) attest the popular aspect, by which is meant widespread observance, of חֹדֶשׁ during this period. For the most part, the evidence of the Hellenistic and Roman periods suggests that חֹדֶשׁ retained its basic character, and that the beginning of the month continued to be regarded as a propitious time for Jews.

The Hebrew composition of the book of Ben Sira is usually dated to c. 190-180 BCE.[223] The original Greek translation of the text is thought to have been made sometime between 132 BCE and 117 BCE.[224] Both versions assert the moon's role in the regulation of cultic life:

> Καὶ ἡ σελήνη ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς καιρὸν αὐτῆς,
> ἀνάδειξιν χρόνων καὶ σημεῖον αἰῶνος·
> ἀπὸ σελήνης σημεῖον ἑορτῆς,
> φωστὴρ μειούμενος ἐπὶ συντελείας.
> μὴν κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς ἐστιν
> αὐξανόμενος θαυμαστῶς ἐν ἀλλοιώσει,
> σκεῦος παρεμβολῶν ἐν ὕψει,
> ἐν στερεώματι οὐρανοῦ ἐκλάμπων.
>
> It is the moon that marks the changing seasons, governing the times, their everlasting sign. From the moon comes the sign for festal days, a light that wanes when it completes its course.[225] The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven (Sirach 43:6-8).

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[223] Coggins 1998: 18.
[224] Skehan & DiLella 1987: 8.
[225] Verses 6-7 are the NRSV translation. From verse 8 the King James Version is quoted, as it follows the Greek more closely.

Comparison with the Hebrew version is interesting, because here there is explicit association of the Hebrew term חֹדֶשׁ with a physical description of the appearance of the crescent moon. Restored, verse 8a reads:

חדש כשמו הוא מתחדש[226]

> The new moon like its name renews itself (Ben Sira 43:8).[227]

It can be seen from this passage that חֹדֶשׁ is associated with the phases of the moon, and specifically, its renewal: the moon's light wanes with its course's completion (verse 7), and its renewal, חֹדֶשׁ, marks the renewal of the moon's light (verse 8). The term חֹדֶשׁ, here, is synonymous with the appearance of the first crescent/new moon. No further detail as to the ritual observance of חֹדֶשׁ is gained, as the passage is focussed on the role of luminaries and their praise.

A numbers of references to the new moon occur in 1 Esdras. This work is largely constituted by material from 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah rearranged, with some additional material (1 Esdras 3-4).[228] The version of it which is extant is in Greek, and its arrangement and composition have been thought to date from the second or the first century BCE.[229] 1 Esdras 5:47ff. reports the restoration of the altar under Jeshua and Zerubbabel and the sacrificial cult: daily, sabbath, and new moon (νουμηνιῶν). The restored programme is said to have begun on the new moon of the seventh month (which, of course, is the holiest month)[230] (1 Esdras 5:50-53). The text, like that of Ezra, thus reflects the concern for the practice of new moon ritual in the context of restoration.

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[226] Restored from the Masada Scroll of Ben Sira. cf. Skehan & DiLella 1987: 489; Yadin 1965. See also Lévi 1969: 56.
[227] Skehan & DiLella trans. (1987: 485).
[228] Coggins 1979: 4.
[229] Coggins 1979: 5; McNamara dated the work to between 150 and 100 BCE (McNamara 1983: 228). McNamara observed that 1 Esdras is not simply a straightforward translation of the relevant parts of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, and indeed it differs from the LXX version of the same events. It thus constitutes an independent tradition (McNamara 1983: 227-28).
[230] The new moon of the seventh month, of course, had retained a particularly propitious quality, being observed with special sacrifices in addition to the regular new moon offerings (Number 29:1-6; Leviticus 23:23-25). The seventh month also involves the celebration of Tabernacles, and Yom Kippur.

As in Ezra, certain important, restorative events occur on new moons. The foundations of the Temple are laid on the new moon of the second month (τῇ νουμηνίᾳ τοῦ δευτέρου μηνὸς). In this instance, 1 Esdras clarifies the Hebrew date and specifies the new moon (1 Esdras 5:57; cf. Ezra 3:8). In 1 Esdras 8:6, returnees leave Babylon on the new moon of the first month (τῇ νουμηνίᾳ τοῦ πρώτου μηνὸς), and arrive in Jerusalem on the new moon of the fifth month (τῇ νουμηνίᾳ τοῦ πέμπτου μηνὸς) (cf. Ezra 7:9). Ezra begins to investigate foreign wives on the new moon of the tenth month (τῇ νουμηνίᾳ τοῦ μηνὸς τοῦ δεκάτου) (1 Esdras 9:16), and the matter is resolved by the new moon of the first month (νουμηνίας τοῦ πρώτου μηνός) (1 Esdras 9:17; cf. Ezra 10:16-17). The people gather in the court of the Temple on the new moon of the seventh month (τῇ νουμηνίᾳ τοῦ ἑβδόμου μηνὸς), and a ritual involving the reading of the law, and the praising of Yahweh by the people, who are described as lifting their hands and falling to the ground in gesture of praise takes place (1 Esdras 9:37-48) (cf. Nehemiah 7:73ff.). Thus, 1 Esdras continues the tradition of restoration in which sacrifices on the new moon appear fundamental, new moon dates are meaningful in a positive symbolic sense, and through a series of events, many of which coincide with these dates, Israel is restored. Although this information is already present in Ezra-Nehemiah, it is nevertheless noted here, as 1 Esdras stands out from the usual process of translation of scriptures in the author's reworking and rearranging of earlier material.

In the early first century CE, Philo of Alexandria is very clear that חֹדֶשׁ is an important feast, and that it occurs with the crescent moon's first appearance (*Spec. Leg.* I 177ff.; II 142):

> Τρίτη δ' ἡ μετὰ σύνοδον τὴν κατὰ σελήνην νέαν νουμηνία
>
> The third is the new month, which is after the conjunction (*synodos*) according to the new moon (*Spec. Leg* II 41).[231]

The conjunction, as noted, occurs when the moon's light is obscured from the earth due to its orbit close to the sun (from the perspective of earth). The new moon, or first crescent, appears one or two days after this event, in the evening. Philo, therefore,

[231] Stern's translation (2001: 116).

refers to the first crescent in relation to the new moon (νουμηνία) here. In reference to the sacrificial cult, Philo divides the types of sacrifice into two broad categories: those which are offered for the nation, or *ethnos*, and those offered for individuals. Sacrifices in the former category, Philo argues, are actually offered for all humanity (*Spec. Leg.* I 168). The list of occasions upon which sacrifices which are offered for the *ethnos*, and for humanity, includes new moons (νουμηνίας). A sacrifice for all humanity is a clear Philonic element in the passage, but his initial interpretation, that new moon sacrifices are offered for the whole nation, is consistent with the nature of the feast from earlier times. The new moon sacrifices which he subsequently describes are also the same as those of Numbers 28, apart from the omission, in this passage, of the sin-offering (goat):[232]

> ...μόσχους δύο, κριὸν ἕνα, ἀμνοὺς ἑπτά.
>
> ...two calves, one ram, and seven lambs (*Spec. Leg.* I 177).

With these offerings, Philo also reports that offerings of fine meal, soaked in oil, with wine for libations, are to be offered in specific quantities, although these quantities are not given here (*Spec. Leg.* I 179). This also reflects the nature and type of sacrifices in Numbers 28-29.

In the late first century CE, Josephus refers to the offerings in the Temple on new moons in very familiar quantities:

> τῇ δὲ νουμηνίᾳ τάς τε καθημερινὰς θυσίας ἐπιτελοῦσι καὶ δύο βόας σὺν ἀρνάσιν ἐνιαυσιαίοις ἑπτὰ καὶ κριόν, ἔριφον δὲ ἐπι παραιτήσεσιν ἁμαρτάδων, εἴ τι κατὰ λήθην γένοιτο.
>
> On the new moon, besides the daily sacrifices, they offer two oxen, together with seven yearling lambs and a ram, as also a kid in expiation for any sins which may have been committed through forgetfulness (*AJ* III 237-238).

The list this time includes the sin-offering, and the animals and their quantities are precisely the same as in Numbers 28:11-15, whose quantities evidently retained their

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[232] Philo discusses sin-offerings in general elsewhere: *Spec. Leg.* I 226ff.

authoritative status in the cult in Jerusalem. The same passage of Josephus also states that this was to be funded at the public expense. This continued importance in the later Hellenistic and Roman periods is all the more evidenced by Josephus' remarks that the new moon, along with sabbaths and yearly festivals, was one of the occasions when the high priest appeared in accompaniment to the officiating priests, in his elaborate ritual vestments, at the Temple (*BJ* V 230).

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Levine describes חֹדֶשׁ as,

> ...a very ancient religious occasion with family significance as well as public features. It manifests the system of lunar calendation so basic to many ancient Near Eastern societies.[233]

I have supported the proposed antiquity of the feast in this chapter, and have focussed on the 'public' aspect which Levine refers to: that associated with the sacrificial cult. For the period when the Temple stood, we now have a clearer picture of חֹדֶשׁ ritual within the Temple-complex. Trumpets were sounded, and offerings were presented on the altar in front of the Temple, probably on the day after the first appearance of the lunar crescent on the western horizon. During these offerings Levites stood and sang or chanted psalms. The king, and later governor, had a prescribed location and activity during the ritual. The high priest also appeared, at least from later times. All of this happened in a defined, restricted ritual space, which required ritual purity, and which also represented closeness to Yahweh, in a sequence of holiness which was clearly represented in the architecture: the closer the participant was to the Temple and Holy of Holies, the closer to Yahweh, and the *purer* one had to be. In terms of spectacle, these ritual details must not be underestimated in their creation of mood. There must have been an element of anticipation and excitement for the crowd in the outer court. In earlier times, their peripheral location in the outer court of the complex may have rendered them out of sight of the sacrifices. As such, their worshipping may have been cued by such elements as the distant chanting of the Levites, and horn blasts, and indeed the considerable smell that the slaying and burning the fat of eleven animals would have created, not to mention the smoke, intended as a pleasing odour for Yahweh himself, must have been visible to the assembly, just as it was pungent to their noses, and surely this inspired great awe for the participant. Furthermore, the amount of animals sacrificed, as discussed in this chapter, compared to daily offerings and sabbaths, was surely evident from the participants' point of view, manifested in the visibly greater amount of smoke generated on חֹדֶשׁ. This would also have drawn the ritual out over a longer duration, due to the logistics of offering so many animals. Later, from Josephus' description of Herod's Temple, the liturgical drama would have

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[233] Levine 2000: 49.

been all the more intense, as it is reported that the inner court of the priests was separated from the outer court for men, merely by a low parapet about a cubit high, revealing the whole ritual to Jews, and perhaps by the later third century BCE, Jews only.[234] By the time of the Herodian Temple there remained an elevation obscuring the view from outside the worship area, and apparently an exterior edifice of forty cubits (*BJ* V 226; 195). At this time, the sacrifices may also have been visible for women from a balcony in the Court of Women,[235] an architectural acknowledgement of the spectacle. Although apart from trumpets, we have no direct references pertaining to חֹדֶשׁ in particular, there must have been special musicians and singers performing; cultic functionaries are attested in various texts. As such, attending חֹדֶשׁ convocation was a multi-sensory experience – an exclusive, multi-sensory experience with clearly defined ideology, whose repetition of traditional symbolic action on a month by month basis must have engendered a significant emotional reaction from its participants. Attendance may have been restricted to Jews, at least at times from the Hellenistic period onwards, and the burnt offerings were, from the Persian period, at the public expense. The details presented in this chapter most likely represent new moon ritual, along broad lines, until the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. The restriction of the court of the Israelites, apparently on pain of death, to Jews, witnessed by Josephus (*AJ* XV 417; *BJ* V 195), emphasises an element of exclusivity to the rituals held within.

The presence of symbols and symbolic action is evident, as many of the regular features connected with חֹדֶשׁ emerge as important symbols, not to mention the Temple itself and its associated features, such as the altar, Ark, Menorah, incense shovels, and architectural features. The high priest served a symbolic function, and the gestures of prayer also constituted symbolic action, as did the act of sacrifice itself. These latter three examples are still formations and relations which serve as powerful vehicles for the conception of a reciprocal relationship with Yahweh, retaining Turner's two "poles" of meaning: natural (Yahweh's creation and order in creation) and ideological (the covenant with him). It is also evident that many aspects

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[234] Sanders referred to Josephus' (*AJ* XII 145f.) discussion of the Temple and argued that by the late third or early second century BCE, gentiles were officially excluded from the Temple precincts by a proclamation of Antiochus III.

[235] cf. Sanders 1992: 57.

of Temple practice, while often the cause of division, retained a unifying function, such that the Temple was at the centre of the ideology of the sometimes seemingly irreconcilable views of disparate Jewish groups, and it also emerged as a symbolic rallying point in times of crisis. For the purposes of the present work, it is now clear that much of the "action" known regarding ritual in the Temple-complex on new moon days, was a prescribed symbolic and ritual action, invested in meaning, including bowing down before Yahweh and sacrificing to him, being in his presence. As such, חֹדֶשׁ can be seen as both a constellation of rites and a constellation of symbols.

Three main developments in the feast have been herein identified, which served to express and maintain the connection between Yahweh and the people of Israel as a whole: (1) the introduction of a sin-offering of the people which was to atone for the inadvertent offences of *all the people* so that their collective sacrifice was appropriate for the occasion, (2) trumpet blasts to engender social cohesion through the structured memory of the wanderings in the desert, and (3) the introduction of the standardised ⅓ shekel offering which was to include new moon offerings among its expenses covered. These developments largely relate to Second Temple times, and emphasise the socially cohesive role the feast was seen to play during that long period. Through these developments, the symbolic orientation towards a concept of Israel which was transcendent of locality can be seen in new moon ritual: the whole people of *Israel* is the sacrificer, all of the people are collectively atoned for, and are seen as collectively offering that sacrifice through the shared expense of it. Through the trumpet blast, the participants in the ritual are reminded of a shared history, a history which was focussed on their relationship with Yahweh.

Chapter 4

New Moon Feasts and New Moon Rest: *Ḥōdeš* Ritual in Restricted Social Contexts

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, חֹדֶשׁ was examined with reference to its observance in a public, centralised setting: pre-exilic sanctuaries and the centralised cult in Jerusalem. This chapter will focus on texts which pertain to how חֹדֶשׁ ritual may have affected the social patterns of individuals and families in a broad sense. We seek to understand what widespread significance the feast had in ancient Israelite and Jewish life. While this chapter touches upon a side of חֹדֶשׁ which is perhaps more family orientated, the texts examined do not necessarily pertain to the private household in a sense of being *away* from the activity of the sacrificial cult. 'Private' or 'household' ritual in association with new moons is largely unavailable to us for analysis, and as such we will examine what are seen to be broad indicators of religious activity on a wider scale on new moons. While an understanding of the feast in historical perspective is still sought, the nature of the texts available restricts us in places to a thematic, diachronic analysis. To that extent, this chapter identifies and discusses two main aspects of popular new moon observance: the activity of *feasting* or holding special meals (Part 1) and a cessation of work: free time both as *part of* the observance, or as a result of other aspects of popular observance (Part 2). These characteristics of חֹדֶשׁ have been identified by previous scholars and are employed here in an attempt to study the principal ways in which חֹדֶשׁ observance affected the social patterns of individuals, families, Israelites and Jews at large. Particular issues that arise here are the expression of loyalty, kinship and social relationships, the expression of power, and the maintenance of group boundaries (at feasts), and again a response to what appears to be a generally sanctified quality associated with new moon days (cessation of work). The question of how these might relate to concepts of group identity, such as the 'people of Yahweh' or the later Jewish *ethnos*, orientation towards which was recognisable from, and communicated through, participation in the actions, is considered.

1. THE NEW MOON AS A 'SPECIAL FOOD CONSUMPTION EVENT'

Aside from sacrifice and 'sanctuary convocation', the principal social event on new moon days reflected in biblical texts is the highly significant and participatory activity of *feasting*. The term 'feasting', as used with respect to eating and table fellowship, implies *special food consumption events*.[1] Dietler and Hayden assert that "...feasts are an extremely significant aspect of social life on a worldwide scale, and understanding them is crucial for apprehending and comprehending many social and cultural processes in ancient societies."[2] Table fellowship, Neyrey observes, has the potential to "symbolize group boundaries as well as social conflict".[3] In identifying the benefits of most types of feasting in societies, Hayden states that apart from certain limited circumstances, "all other benefits of feasting revolve around *the creation or maintenance of important social relationships*".[4] A feast symbolises, expresses, and maintains kinship, political power, and loyalty, in a number of ways. The suzerainty of the host may be evident from his/her role as provider and redistributor, the guests may express loyalty by attendance or presenting gifts on such occasions, and various elements such as dress, positions of diners, and kinds of food eaten may also be indicative of their status and relationship to the other diners. Ultimately, as an occasion and venue for the expression of social relationships, a feast pertains to some form of group identity. According to Dietler, "nearly all feasts actually serve in some ways to define social boundaries while simultaneously creating a sense of community".[5] This aspect of new moon ritual is therefore important for understanding the role of חֹדֶשׁ, a traditional ritual constellation, in identity discourse in biblical and Jewish contexts.

In relation to feasting on חֹדֶשׁ in ancient Israel and Judah, and later Judea, two texts are primarily examined here: 1 Samuel 20, and the Book of Judith. Our aim is to explore some of the themes identified above: expression of power, loyalty, and social relationships. It will be concluded that attending the חֹדֶשׁ meal had become part of a

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[1] This is the terminology used by Dietler and Hayden (2001: 3). This is chosen by them in order to contrast *special* eating events with everyday subsistence. It also avoids confusion between, for example, what are referred to as biblical *feasts* (or biblical "holidays") and *feasts* as the specific activity of eating in a group.

[2] Dietler and Hayden 2001: 2.

[3] Neyrey 1996: 159.

[4] Hayden 2001: 30. The emphasis is Hayden's.

[5] Dietler 2001: 88. In Dietler's view, feasts also often simultaneously establish relationships across the boundaries that they define.

paradigm of Jewish piety by the Hellenistic period. Much of the חֹדֶשׁ feast will remain unknown to us: accoutrements, precise type of food consumed, exact nature of the locus, number of guests, and decorative or costume elements. Interestingly, however, several of the *themes* raised by ethnographic work on feasting emerge clearly here, despite the lack of material details. These themes include political power, loyalty, kinship, and a religious/ritual element.[6]

A text which may indicate an eating event having been associated with חֹדֶשׁ is Hosea 5, examined in the previous chapter. Yahweh "devours" (יֹאכְלֵם) Israel (priests, king, and people) at the new moon (Hosea 5:7). In examining the basic symbolism of eating, Tamara Prosic notes that negative as well as positive connotations are attached to the process of consumption in the Hebrew Bible:

> From the perspective of the eater, eating means life; from the perspective of the eaten it means material destruction, disappearance or ultimately death. The eater is always a destroyer.[7]

In Hosea, Yahweh is clearly the destroyer, and Israel is the entity being destroyed and consumed. It has been noted in relation to this verse in Hosea that there is a certain irony in this destruction: חֹדֶשׁ is usually a prosperous time, but here it is associated with immanent devastation for Israel:[8] Yahweh will consume her. Are we to read into this that it is particularly in light of a commonplace *feast* that Hosea's oracle is so ironic? If Israel usually eats in the presence of Yahweh, indeed with Yahweh, on חֹדֶשׁ, then perhaps the irony here is emphasised in the fact that Yahweh will eat Israel and Israel's crops: "Now he will eat their property at the new moon" (Hosea 5:7).[9]

1 Samuel 20 and the New Moon Feast at Saul's Court

The key text for understanding the *eating* aspect of חֹדֶשׁ ritual in the monarchic period is 1 Samuel 20. This text differs from the majority of sources for חֹדֶשׁ in that its purpose is not specifically to prescribe any aspect of the ritual; it is not a 'ritual' text

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[6] Hayden (2001: 23-64) summarized material aspects of feasts which can be studied archaeologically. Cf. Schmandt-Besserat (2001: 391-403) on Sumerian feasts in iconographic perspective.
[7] Prosic 2004: 112-13.
[8] cf. Landy 1995: 71.
[9] Andersen & Freedman (1980: 380) trans.

in the sense of being a list of cultic instructions bereft of narrative or significant protagonists. Rather, it is rich in narrative and characters. The narrative is concerned with the relationships between David, Saul, and Jonathan, and forms part of the set of narratives that describe David's succession to kingship. It proves vital for understanding חֹדֶשׁ observance because the events described are based around David's absence from Saul's table on the new moon, and Saul's resultant anger with David. The text brings to light the social obligations associated with the more private observance of חֹדֶשׁ, and also the two-day aspect of the ritual in this setting. The concern is not, here, the historicity of the story or any of its characters. What is most relevant to the argument is the set of assumptions that the author of the text makes about the event, and the presumption that this social setting, the חֹדֶשׁ feast and the various routines and social obligations associated with it, were to some extent familiar to the intended audience.[10]

The events in 1 Samuel 20 constitute a turning point in the relationship between David and Saul.[11] The prevailing theme is one of loyalty and interrupted social reciprocity. The chapter begins with David's fleeing from Naioth to Jonathan to ask about Saul's anger with him, after two previous attempts by Saul on David's life (1 Samuel 18:10; 19:9-10). David devises a plan to test Saul's feelings towards him. The setting is the חֹדֶשׁ feast at Saul's table, which David, Jonathan, Saul, and Abner are expected to attend. David will not attend the meal. He asks leave of Jonathan, so that he can hide in a field, or open countryside.[12] Jonathan is to offer Saul a fabricated excuse for David's absence: that he went to Bethlehem for a clan sacrifice. If Saul is angered, and David's life is truly in danger, Jonathan is to give David a sign: a planned signal involving the shooting of three arrows, followed by a coded message. Likewise a similar but distinct signal is to indicate that David is not in danger from Saul. Two days of feasting are subsequently referred to. On the first day, Saul remains silent regarding David's absence, but we are told that Saul noticed that David's place was empty, and that Saul guessed that this absence was due to ritual impurity on

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[10] Edelman describes this as the "authorial audience", for whom the writer has "presumed a shared set of beliefs, knowledge and set of conventions" (Edelman 1991: 17).

[11] After this episode, according to McCarter, "Saul now knows that David stands in the way of his establishment of a dynasty" (McCarter 1980: 345).

[12] cf. *BDB* 961. The term שָׂדֶה, in Genesis 25:29; 27:3, 5, and, probably also in this context, implies a *hunting ground.*

David's part. On the second day, however, Saul is angered by David's repeated absence, and attempts to strike Jonathan with his spear, recognising David as a threat to his dynasty.

1 Samuel 20:5-6 introduces the reader to the principal detail of the episode: David's obligation to attend Saul's table for the חֹדֶשׁ meal, an obligation which, surely, the intended audience would have understood and related to:

> וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־יְהוֹנָתָן הִנֵּה־חֹדֶשׁ מָחָר וְאָנֹכִי יָשֹׁב־אֵשֵׁב עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ לֶאֱכוֹל וְשִׁלַּחְתַּנִי וְנִסְתַּרְתִּי בַּשָּׂדֶה עַד הָעֶרֶב הַשְּׁלִשִׁית: אִם־פָּקֹד יִפְקְדֵנִי אָבִיךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ נִשְׁאֹל נִשְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי דָּוִד לָרוּץ בֵּית־לֶחֶם עִירוֹ כִּי זֶבַח הַיָּמִים שָׁם לְכָל־הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה:
>
> David said to Jonathan, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at the meal; but let me go, so that I may hide in the field until the third evening. If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city; for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' (1 Samuel 20:5-6)

"Behold, tomorrow is the new moon" (הִנֵּה־חֹדֶשׁ מָחָר), indicates that the feast of חֹדֶשׁ is imminent, not a *month* in general. The term מָחָר provides a *terminus* that delineates a specific period of time, a *terminus from* which something is to take place: חֹדֶשׁ.[13] This implies that the text refers to a specific occasion for David's presence at Saul's table, not his everyday attendance. "To eat" more accurately translates לֶאֱכוֹל. In this story, David has clear obligations to attend this event at Saul's table; this is emphasised by Saul's anger at his absence later in the narrative (1 Samuel 20:33). This obligation is probably due to his association with the royal house.

Some commentators have expressed doubt over whether it is specifically for the occasion of the new moon feast that David is obligated to attend, or if he should have attended Saul's table in general, for a more regular routine of meals.[14] Smith,

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[13] There is a similar usage in Exodus 16:23: שַׁבָּתוֹן שַׁבַּת־קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוה מָחָר, "Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy sabbath to the Lord".

[14] Everyday meals and exchanges of food are, of course, still socially meaningful, but the above still holds due to the apparently *special* nature of new moon feasts. The conflation of the two in one's analysis, in the view of Dietler and Hayden, "precludes both understanding feasts as a specific social

and others, found a lack of unambiguous connection between David's obligation and the new moon in particular in this respect.[15] Other commentators disagree, and argue that the particular obligation which is upon David relates specifically to the new moon feast. This latter view is taken up here. From the repeated references to חֹדֶשׁ, and by inference from the narrative, Philbeck describes David's plan as "a test case involving the rites associated with the arrival of the new moon".[16] For Hertzberg the "two-day" feast of חֹדֶשׁ is alone reason enough for David to attend the royal table, due to its mention here.[17] According to McCarter the חֹדֶשׁ feast was chosen as an appropriate occasion for Jonathan to "sound Saul out" with regard to David, in explanation of this story,[18] and he adds elsewhere, in commentary on this verse, that the new moon was "a day of rest...and feasting".[19] Alter describes the day of the new moon, in his commentary on this verse, as associated with "ceremonial feasts".[20] These views suggest that חֹדֶשׁ was a suitable occasion for David's testing of Saul, and was a *special* day of feasting, whose obligations seem also to have been distinct from the everyday. The narrative seems dependent upon this. From the vocabulary examined above and below (מָחָר חֹדֶשׁ, verse 18), it is clear that a specific occasion for a meal is referred to, and that the author's choice of this occasion is intentional. This intentionality should not be ignored. From the narrative of 1 Samuel 20, and especially from the subsequent details of the special meal on the new moon which emerge, it is quite clear that the author's choice of occasion is significant. The feast is the primary context for the story, and reference to it is not incidental; it is repeated four times in the chapter, each time in immediate reference to the king's table. 1

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practice and understanding the important semiotic and functional relationships between feasts and these other kinds of practices" (Dietler and Hayden 2001: 3).

[15] Smith 1899: 187. In Smith's opinion, if the new moon were the only reason for David's attendance, he would have "expressed himself unambiguously to that effect". Driver also finds the idea that the new moon was the exclusive reason for David's attendance unconvincing, because he asserts that David was a "regular companion at table" for Saul (Driver 1913: 161). Mauchline, following Driver, suggested that David's attendance was compulsory in an everyday sense, but he adds "especially on a feast day" without any qualification or explanation regarding the distinction of the new moon, as a "feast day", from the everyday that is implied in his comment (Mauchline 1971: 145).

[16] Philbeck 1970: 62.

[17] Hertzberg 1964: 172-73. Hertzberg also stated that David's plan, in the narrative, rests on the fact that he would be invited for this special feast (1964: 173). Youngblood argued that David's expected attendance was a special occasion, due to the use of "the emphatic 'I'" (אָנֹכִי) in verse 5 (Youngblood 1992: 721).

[18] McCarter 1980: 344.

[19] McCarter 1980: 341.

[20] Altar 1999: 124.

Samuel 20:24 repeats that a communal meal is observed, which seems directly associated with חֹדֶשׁ from this reference:

וַיִּסָּתֵר דָּוִד בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיְהִי הַחֹדֶשׁ וַיֵּשֶׁב הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל־הַלֶּחֶם לֶאֱכוֹל׃

> So David hid himself in the field. When the new moon came, the king sat at the feast to eat (1 Samuel 20:24).

The repeated reference to חֹדֶשׁ stresses the specific association of the obligations described with the new moon feast. The reader or listener is reminded that it is no ordinary meal. Whether David was at Saul's table in an everyday sense or not, there are special obligations relating to חֹדֶשׁ.

The Succession of Days and the Lunar/Luni-solar Calendar

In 1 Samuel 20:5, the phrase "until the third evening" (עַד הָעֶרֶב הַשְּׁלִשִׁית) has raised complications regarding the length of חֹדֶשׁ celebrations. The texts examined in the previous chapter make no suggestion that חֹדֶשׁ lasted more than a day, and three days of special observance every month seems excessive in light of this. Mauchline amended this phrase to "until the evening",[21] and Smith, Driver, and Hertzberg, also omitted "third" (הַשְּׁלִשִׁית), a gloss by a later scribe in anticipation of the narrative that follows.[22] Smith suggested that perhaps the whole clause "until the third evening" should be considered a gloss,[23] but this does not explain the inappropriate gender suffix.[24] At no point, however, does the text of 1 Samuel 20 explicitly state that the feast of חֹדֶשׁ lasted three days anyway, and the inclusion of הַשְּׁלִשִׁית in verse 5 does not carry this as a necessary implication; three days of special observance are not described in the subsequent narrative. David simply intended to hide from Saul for

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[21] Mauchline 1971: 146.

[22] Smith 1899: 187; Driver (1913: 161-2) concludes that הַשְּׁלִשִׁית cannot be construed grammatically with הָעֶרֶב (the gender suffix is incorrect), and thus the former must have been added later: "a gloss due to a scribe who observed that in point of fact David remained in concealment till the third day". Hertzberg, like Smith, and McCarter, also observes that the word for "third" is omitted from LXX (Hertzberg 1964: 168 n. c; McCarter 1980: 335). Alter (1999: 124) suggests an amendment to "*'erev hashleshit*", rendering the meaning "the day after tomorrow" (cf. Youngblood 1992: 718).

[23] Smith 1899: 187.

[24] Alter 1999: 124. הַשְּׁלִשִׁית, according to Driver, is always "a third part", whereas a third day, or evening, must be השלשי (Driver 1913: 161).

three days. Even if it is a later gloss, its purpose was merely "to harmonize this part of the narrative with the sequel".[25]

Van der Toorn and Wagenaar have both suggested that this succession of three evenings may be explained by the use, in pre-exilic Israel and Judah, of an Egyptian-style lunar cultic calendar. In such a calendar, each month begins at the moment just before the obscuration of the *old* moon. This *old* moon appears every month at dawn, approximately two days before the appearance of the new moon.[26] The two-day sequence of חֹדֶשׁ observance at Saul's table is potentially explicable in light of this idea. The sequence of feasting would begin on the day of the appearance of the old moon (at dawn) and end in the evening (after two days) with the appearance of the new moon. If one is to think about David and Jonathan conversing and making their plan on the day *before* Saul's two-day feast began, it is possible to postulate that the evening of the first appearance of the crescent (the new moon), would be two days later, and thus the "the third evening". That is, David and Jonathan make a plan; the next day at dawn the old moon appears and there is a feast; the feast continued throughout that day and again the following day, which ends with the appearance of the new moon. Thus, the first evening is the evening *before* the feast, the second one is the evening after day one of the feast, and "the third evening" is that after the *second* day of feasting. It would be on this third evening that the new crescent would appear, bringing an end to the festivities.

This hypothesis is not a commonly accepted one, and there are problems with it, perhaps the simplest being that it does not easily explain the meaning of the term חֹדֶשׁ in the sense of "renewal", if it applies to an event towards the end, rather than the beginning, of the lunation. Also, Stern notes that calendars based on the last visibility of the old moon are not generally calculated, but based on observation:[27] how then, would David and Jonathan have known for definite that חֹדֶשׁ was to take place the following day (as they indicate in their conversation)? It is possible to suggest an explanation in light of what we know of the occasional two-day sequence

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[25] Ackroyd 1971: 163.

[26] Wagenaar 2005: 145 n. 107; Van der Toorn 1996: 212-213. The old moon appears in a crescent shape, but, unlike the new crescent, the *left*-hand part of the surface of the moon is illuminated for the observer on earth, not the right.

[27] Stern 2001: 102. He describes such empirical calendars as "totally irregular and unpredictable".

of חֹדֶשׁ in later times. It has been noted that David and Jonathan, in the narrative, know *in advance* that the following day will be the day of the new moon, and this has been taken by some to imply that a calendar based on calculation, rather than observation, was used. This is an unnecessary and unlikely explanation, however.[28] As will be seen regarding later times, the ritual surrounding חֹדֶשׁ began on the same evening every month: if the crescent appeared, the following day was declared sanctified, whereas if it did not, then *two* holy days were declared (cf. Chapter 8); this latter situation is reminiscent of the current example from 1 Samuel 20. The point is that whatever day the crescent eventually appeared, be that the evening of the twenty-ninth, or the thirtieth of the outgoing month, the *ritual* began the same evening (that of the twenty-ninth) every month, regardless. Thus, the succession of evenings in this story can be explained. If the month were to begin with the appearance of the *new* moon (the first crescent in the evening) this evening would be *the first evening*; the subsequent day (the day of חֹדֶשׁ) would end with *the second evening*. If, however, the moon did not appear at the normal time (the evening of the twenty-ninth day of the outgoing month) the *two* following days would be declared sanctified, and this progression would end with "the third evening". Thus approximately two days of feasting end with "the third evening".[29] The social process corresponding to the *renewal* of the lunation could span two-days. The view of a small number of commentators who refer loosely to three days of feasting should be corrected, in any case, as this text refers to two days of feasting only.

A 'Clan' Association?

David's excuse for his absence, that he needed to go to Bethlehem for a family sacrifice, has lead some to suggest that new moon days were appropriate times for occasional cultic events involving smaller groups, and this seems reasonable in light

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[28] According to Stern, *empirical sighting* of the lunar crescent was fundamental in Jewish, and other ancient calendrical systems, because *predicting* the first appearance of the crescent "...demands not only accurate knowledge of the courses of the sun and of the moon, but also an accurate astronomical theory of the criteria required for the moon to become visible – which even modern astronomers have not yet successfully established" (Stern 2001: 102)

[29] The fact of course, that David knew of *two* days of feasting *in advance* (if this an uncertain occurrence) is not explained, but we might conclude that if one intended to hide for the entire duration of the feast, one might hide until the third evening in order to guarantee one's absence from it whatever its eventual length.

of the generally propitious nature of חֹדֶשׁ in ancient Israelite society.[30] The new moon is seen as an appropriate occasion for a yearly sacrifice (זֶבַח הַיָּמִים) within the clan (מִשְׁפָּחָה) which, from this reference, did not necessarily involve parties outside one's extended family group.[31] Other than an indication of a sacrifice (which was probably consumed among the clan members),[32] the place, and the group (David's מִשְׁפָּחָה) little detail of the event is given, but a similar occasion, also referred to as זֶבַח הַיָּמִים, is referred to in 1 Samuel 1, when Samuel's family visits the sanctuary at Shiloh, and partook of a feast. It is probable that a similar occasion is referred to in David's excuse.[33] The clan is not referred to in the example in 1 Samuel 1, only immediate family members are referred to. This does not exclude the involvement of more distant relatives; it merely indicates that none were important in that particular narrative. This occasion described in 1 Samuel 1 did, however, involve a food consumption event in which at least all of the immediate family participated, apparently in the context of the shrine (1 Samuel 1:7-8).

The excuse in 1 Samuel 20, that David had to attend זֶבַח הַיָּמִים at Bethlehem, is taken up again by Jonathan in verse 28. Jonathan quotes David, with the added detail: "my brother has commanded me (צִוָּה־לִי אָחִי) to be there" (1 Samuel 20:28).[34] This excuse clearly raises the issue of loyalty and kinship in relation to the חֹדֶשׁ feast which David avoids. The excuse is deliberately fabricated, with the sole purpose of testing Saul's attitude to David. As such this reflects the deliberate choice of a delicate and controversial issue for that purpose. It is no coincidence that a narrative based

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[30] Mauchline (1971: 145) suggests that the full moon, as well as the new moon, was an occasion for similar clan-based celebrations. The celebration of the *full* moon is not at all as clearly attested as that of the new. The apparent limitation of direct references to the full moon in the Hebrew Bible to a mere two, combined with the great paucity of details attached to either reference, makes Mauchline's suggestion regarding it difficult to sustain. Of course, it is not stated in 1 Samuel 20 that David's family event occurred precisely on a new moon, but the juxtaposition is suggestive.

[31] DeVaux (1965: 470) also observes that "the first day of the month was [possibly] chosen for the annual sacrifice on behalf of the clan". DeVaux discusses the מִשְׁפָּחָה, and argues that as a "clan" group, it was focussed on one area: in his view one or more "villages", for example the Danites at Soreah and Eshtaol (Judges 18:11). The מִשְׁפָּחָה, in his view, had common interests and duties, and its members were conscious of "the blood-bond which united them", acknowledged with the use of the term "brothers" (e.g. 1 Samuel 20:29). He also draws from Nehemiah 11:4-8 and 1 Chronicles 9:4-9 that several מִשְׁפָּחוֹת might live together within a city (DeVaux 1965: 21). Haran observed that the 'clan' was a *flexible* kinship group (Haran 1969: 17); cf. de Geus 1976.

[32] cf. Levine 2000: 48-49; Haran 1978: 355, and below.

[33] cf. Haran 1969: 15-17. In the example of 1 Samuel 1, however, any association with the new moon itself remains conjectural.

[34] Alter observes that this detail is improvised by Jonathan in the story (Alter 1999: 128).

around a feast is in the midst of this political struggle, because issues of loyalty, kinship, dynastic/family rivalry permeate both. The motif of these two sacrificial feasts stresses the picture of David's divided loyalties which was intended to challenge and anger Saul in order to test his feelings towards David. Certain scholars have suggested, in light of this binary opposition between the two events, that the feast at Saul's table was also a yearly זֶבַח הַיָּמִים, for Saul's clan at Gibea.[35] This is not sustained here, however, in light of the clear distinction in the terms used to describe the respective feasts in 1 Samuel 20. We find חֹדֶשׁ used in reference to Saul's feast four times, and it is not used in relation to the feast at Bethlehem. The latter event is referred to twice, once as זֶבַח הַיָּמִים and once as זֶבַח מִשְׁפָּחָה, never as חֹדֶשׁ. It was found in the last chapter that the term חֹדֶשׁ is very commonly employed to refer to the monthly new moon celebration. The זֶבַח הַיָּמִים, in 1 Samuel 20, is the less frequent occasion, while חֹדֶשׁ is the regular one. This does not imply that Saul's feast did *not* involve a זֶבַח offering (discussed below), only that his was the more regular feast.[36]

Positions at Saul's Table

According to Dietler and Hayden, "spatial segregation" is one of several criteria that can serve to "define and inculcate social categories",[37] and indeed in the feast described in 1 Samuel 20, each individual described has their specific place referred to distinctively in the text, even if not always particularly clearly. 1 Samuel 20:18 and 24 repeat the reference to the special meal at Saul's table on the new moon, and assume that David has a fixed place, probably intended to represent his position in Saul's court, implying that other members of the king's court would have had similar positions:

וַיֹּאמֶר־לוֹ יְהוֹנָתָן מָחָר חֹדֶשׁ וְנִפְקַדְתָּ כִּי יִפָּקֵד מוֹשָׁבֶךָ׃

> Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon; you will be missed, because your place will be empty" (1 Samuel 20:18).

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[35] E.g. Caquot 1960: 17-18.
[36] For some more references to זֶבַח see 1 Samuel 3:1; 9:12, 13; 15:15; 16:2.
[37] Dietler and Hayden 2001: 10.

Repetition of מָחָר חֹדֶשׁ again indicates that a specific delineated time is referred to, rather than a month in general. "Missed" and "empty" are both translations of the verb פקד: the Hebrew literally means, "you will be counted/noted [as missing], because the place where you sit will be counted/noted".[38]

Verse 25 clearly states that the king had a fixed place at the feast, and also implies that Abner, Jonathan, and again, David, had fixed positions:

> וַיֵּשֶׁב הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל־מוֹשָׁבוֹ כְּפַעַם בְּפַעַם אֶל־מוֹשַׁב הַקִּיר וַיָּקָם יְהוֹנָתָן וַיֵּשֶׁב אַבְנֵר מִצַּד שָׁאוּל וַיִּפָּקֵד מְקוֹם דָּוִד׃
>
> The king sat upon his seat, as at other times, upon the seat by the wall. Jonathan stood, while Abner sat by Saul's side; but David's place was empty (1 Samuel 20:25).

The narrative description of the feast is confined to the roles and positions of these four characters. It is clear who has authority in this context and this is overtly represented in the spatial reality of the meal; the centre of activity is "the king's table" (שֻׁלְחַן הַמֶּלֶךְ) (20:29). Saul has the best position, which is his regular place, with his back to the wall (מוֹשַׁב הַקִּיר) (20:25). This is a position of honour: from here, as well as being more secure, he can survey all of the proceedings in the room.[39] He is unrestricted socially from this vantage point.[40] The other diners may have been more restricted in this way. Saul's security does indeed also seem to be an issue here, which relates specifically to his location. He has a vantage point in which he can only be attacked frontally and from which he can easily defend himself, and indeed *attack* others with ease; in his rage with David, he attempts to kill Jonathan by throwing his spear at him (1 Samuel 20:33).[41] This leads to two further observations on the

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[38] Auld (2004: 257) trans.

[39] This is, according to Hertzberg, "the best (and safest) place" (Hertzberg 1964: 175). Ackroyd describes Saul's position by the wall as "a position of safety and no doubt honour" (Ackroyd 1971: 167).

[40] Indeed it is still common for members of a wedding party to sit with their backs to the wall for the same social reason: the *most honoured* guests can view, at least theoretically, all of the other tables without the awkwardness of craning their necks, and can *be viewed* by all of the guests. This honour is normally restricted to the table of the wedding party. It is clear that those who occupy this place are the most honoured parties present.

[41] Nicholson (2002: 67) believes that this attack is caused by Saul's belief that Jonathan has been disloyal, not David. Alter argues simply that the incident demonstrates Saul's "blind destructive impulse toward his own dynasty" (Alter 1999: 129).

practical as well as symbolic security of Saul's position: he has his spear at his side (it is readily available to throw at Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20:33) and Abner, Saul's military commander and cousin, is at his side (מִצַּד שָׁאוּל).[42]

While Abner's location at the table forms an important part of the expression of Saul's power, Abner's position itself also derives meaning from its proximity to Saul's. The meaning of צד, in 2 Samuel 2:16 for example, as the actual *side* of the body, into which a sword could be thrust, as well as the term's meaning in representing spatial relationships such as in our above example, may imply that Abner was also sitting with his back to the wall. This may not be mentioned specifically in the text because Saul, as king, is clearly the most important person at the table. *He* is specified as having the place by the wall, and Abner, due to his subservient role, is described only in relation to Saul; Saul is honoured by virtue of being the king whereas it is his relationship with Saul from which much of Abner's honour is derived, and in which it is principally expressed in this context. As well as security, the honour bestowed upon Abner by his place beside the king is clear.

The phrase וַיָּקָם יְהוֹנָתָן, "Jonathan stood/rose up", in describing Jonathan's position at the table, has been the cause of some discussion among commentators. Several commentators amend וַיָּקָם to ויקדם, "and Jonathan was in front", following LXX καὶ προέφθασεν τὸν Ἰωναθάν.[43] Alter prefers "Jonathan preceded him" in translating the same amendment to ויקדם, although admits that the seating arrangement remains "a little obscure".[44] It seems that in either interpretation of this amendment Saul's back is to the wall, and that Jonathan is somewhere in the space in front of him, and thus in a position of lesser importance. This, of course, is also implied in Saul's throwing his spear at Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:33). At the king's table,

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[42] Hertzberg notes the proximity of Saul's spear from this location in relation to the theme of security (Hertzberg 1964: 175), and Ackroyd mentions Abner's proximity for the same reason (Ackroyd 1971: 167). Youngblood describes Saul's position by the wall as "relatively secure from surprise attack" (Youngblood 1992: 723).

[43] McCarter 1980: 338. Cf. Smith, who in his 1899 commentary, preferred this amendment. The term קדם, in his opinion, represented "opposite" as *hostile confrontation* in certain texts (2 Samuel 22:6; 2 Kings 19:32), but he drew attention to Psalm 21:4, in which the term is employed in a positive sense (Smith 1899: 193). Driver, in 1913, also thought that the term וַיָּקָם ("and he rose up") was out of place in the text, and also followed LXX (the Lucianic translation is similar), this time drawing attention to a similar usage of the amended form קדם in Psalm 68:25 (v. 26 in *BHS*). Hertzberg (1964: 170), Mauchline (1971: 147), and Ackroyd (1971: 167) also prefer this reading.

[44] Alter 1999: 127

it would seem from this, Abner occupied a position of higher honour than Jonathan, Saul's son. Whether or not this is related to Saul's calling Jonathan, at the table בֶּן־נַעֲוַת הַמַּרְדּוּת "son of a perverse, rebellions woman!" (1 Samuel 20:30) is not stated, but the comment does clearly reflect Saul's dissatisfaction with Jonathan in this case.

David's place (מְקוֹם דָּוִד) is not given a relative position as such, but perhaps, following Driver, it is implied in the order of the verse that he was opposite Abner.[45] As such, Saul's and Abner's places may have been roughly side by side, opposite David's and Jonathan's. Therefore the position of highest honour is occupied by Saul, and the second-most honour is Abner's, at Saul's side, while David and Jonathan occupy lesser positions opposite them. David and Jonathan do indeed seem to have lesser positions, but there remains a problem with Driver's suggestion that David and Jonathan were opposite Abner and Saul respectively: while this is possible, it depends upon the table attendance being limited to these four characters, which is not at all clear. These are merely the only four that happen to be mentioned, and, while it is possible that they were the only four in attendance, this is nowhere necessarily implied. Based on the description, Hertzberg asserts that only four men were expected at the feast, and that women were excluded.[46] This restriction to four has little to support it. It is possible that women were excluded from the meal, at least at the king's table, although this cannot be drawn regarding all other contexts, and there is little to support it here. Moreover, similar descriptions of cultic meals readily include female characters when they are important in the narrative, for instance with Hannah's participation in the זֶבַח הַיָּמִים at Shiloh, described in 1 Samuel 1.[47] The exclusion of women is also difficult to sustain for special cultic meals on new moon days in light of later evidence from the Hellenistic period in the book of Judith, which indicates that the heroine partook in some kind of special meals on these days, discussed in the next section. In 1 Samuel 20:25 the author seems particularly interested in describing

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[45] Driver 1913: 169.

[46] Hertzberg 1964: 175. According to Hertzberg, "women, as still today in the East, have no part in it" (1964: 175).

[47] This inclusion of women in the example of 1 Samuel 1 is not just for the convenience of narrative. Mixed sex meals find their way into ritual prescription. Deuteronomy 12:17-18, for instance, also discusses the eating of tithed commodities, and commodities offered to Yahweh, probably in the confines of the Jerusalem Temple-complex, or in another ritual context ("in the presence of the Lord..."), "together with your son and your daughter, your male and female slaves, and the Levites resident in your towns". The scene is not gender exclusive.

and representing the relationships between Saul, Jonathan, David, and Abner; that is the wider narrative context of this scene.

Ritual Purity at the Feast

Saul's thoughts regarding David's absence from the first day of the חֹדֶשׁ feast are described in the narrative in 1 Samuel 20:26, and imply the need for ritual purity at the meal under discussion:

וְלֹא־דִבֶּר שָׁאוּל מְאוּמָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כִּי אָמַר מִקְרֶה הוּא בִּלְתִּי טָהוֹר הוּא כִּי־לֹא טָהוֹר:

> Saul did not say anything that day; for he thought, "Something has befallen him; he is not clean, surely he is not clean" (1 Samuel 20:26).[48]

Saul, upon noticing David's absence, constructs an excuse for him, surmising that an event which resulted in David's temporary ritual impurity must have occurred. David may not have been ritually clean (טָהוֹר). Smith drew from this a "religious" character to the event, stating: "no one could eat of the meal without being ritually purified".[49] DeVaux also points out, drawing from the same text, that the religious character of the feast required guests to be "pure".[50] Here, there is clearly an assumption on the part of the authorship that the intended, "authorial" audience would have deemed ritual uncleanness as an acceptable, and indeed necessary, reason for absence. Smith speaks of a "proper rite of preparation" in connection with this, although the rite itself is not specified by him.[51]

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[48] The second reference to טָהוֹר in this verse, according to McCarter, is a conflation added in MT, and is not included in his own translation, which simply reads: "By some mischance he is not clean" (מִקְרֶה הוּא בִּלְתִּי טָהוֹר) (McCarter 1980: 338).

[49] Smith 1899: 192.

[50] DeVaux 1965: 470. Youngblood describes David's hypothetical state as "ceremonially unclean" (Youngblood 1992: 723).

[51] Smith 1899: 192. Akroyd (1971: 167) refers to contact with a dead body as an example of circumstances resulting in pollution, and refers to Deuteronomy 23:10 and Leviticus 15:16 regarding ritual cleanliness. Hertzberg also refers to Leviticus 7:20ff, which states that any who eat from Yahweh's sacrifice of well-being while in a state of uncleanness will be "cut off" from their kin (Hertzberg 1964: 175). This regulation illustrates the potential capacity of the "cultic" aspect of feasts, in this case as prescribed in Leviticus, to emphasise and maintain insider/outsider dichotomies, and be instrumental in their definition. Alter suggests that a seminal emission may be implied by the Hebrew term for "mischance", מִקְרֶה; this would exclude him from the meal (Alter 1999: 127). These are all plausible suggestions because, as the narrative reveals, David's uncleanness as a reason for his absence is no longer plausible after the first day; he was only temporarily unclean.

Despite the paucity of detail, we might deduce something about the ritual status of the location in which the new moon meal took place from this ritual requirement for purity. Dietler and Hayden, in relation to archaeological indicators of feasting, as well as ethnographic analogues, note that identified feasting locations "are often associated with notable ritual structures".[52] Was this also the case for Saul's חֹדֶשׁ feast? It seems that David's hypothetical uncleanness would have resulted from something like contact with a dead body or a seminal emission, and that a "religious" or "cultic" character to the meal may have resulted in a mandatory exclusion for those unclean in such ways. In the case of Deuteronomy 23:10, it is stated that when one is unclean, he must "go outside the camp" until the evening, after he has washed himself. In order to understand the application of this beyond the Exodus and Transjordan tradition in Deuteronomy, it is useful to briefly explore the ritual status of the camp itself, which parallels a number of other ritual loci.

In the Tabernacle traditions in Exodus, the Tent of Meeting relates to the spatial reality of the Temple, with the Tabernacle for Yahweh to dwell in.[53] Around the Tabernacle, the single court is enclosed by the hangings of linen (Exodus 38:9), with the altar at its centre (Exodus 38:1ff). This court parallels the inner court of the priests, where sacrifice took place, as described in 1 Kings 6-7, Ezekiel 40-48, and by Josephus (*AJ* XV 412-423; *BJ* V184-227); the inner court had the altar at its centre.[54] It may be inferred from the traditions of the Tabernacle, the *camp* has a similar status to an outer court at the sanctuary, because it is the next *stage* outwards in terms of ritual space after the inner court, just as the outer court of the Temple-complex is.[55] The Tabernacle, and its inner/only court, is at the *centre* of the camp. We find an association with the camp and the courts of the Temple in terms of spatial arrangement in the traditions of Exodus associated with P, but the description of Moses going to the Tent of Meeting in Exodus 33:7-11, which has been associated

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[52] Dietler and Hayden 2001: 8-9. These structures may be for the specific purpose of feasting in some cases, or a variety of rituals, including feasts, in others (see Hayden 2001: 57-58).

[53] That Solomon's Temple was the precedent for this tradition has been understood since Wellhausen (1878: 36-7). However, it is also evident that the parallel was made in the post-exilic period (cf. Haran 1978: 194).

[54] In relation to the altar and the inner court, Clements states: "The ordering of both features reflects the arrangement in the Temple of Solomon where permanent structures made of stone existed" (Clements 1972: 175).

[55] The Tabernacle traditions are the *only* Israelite or Jewish sanctuary traditions in which there is no architectural description of an outer court.

with a separate source, traditionally E,[56] suggests a similar association: when the people saw the cloud which indicated Yahweh's presence, they would remain at a distance, at the entrances of *their own tents*, and there bow down, or "worship" (הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ), a ritual gesture typically associated with the outer court on special cultic occasions, as discussed with reference to Ezekiel 45 and Isaiah 66:23 in the previous chapter. In this tradition, the camp is where the activity apparently associated with the outer court of the Temple-complex happens. The camp is a utopian place, where cultic cleanliness, evidently similar to that required in the outer court of the Temple-complex, was required, because it serves a parallel cultic function in the narratives.[57] More generally, it has been argued that the pillar of cloud which symbolised Yahweh's presence is deliberately reminiscent of the smoke from sacrificial offerings, which recalls the altar, its sanctuary context, and particularly indicates the proximity of Yahweh.[58] In Deuteronomy 23 there seems also, according to Mayes, to have been an implication that the "camp" is the camp of an army in holy war, and hence the author's concern with the purity of the assembly of Yahweh.[59] In both of these cases, special circumstances are implied, by the presence of Yahweh with the "camp" in each, requiring ritual purity similar, or equal to, that of certain public areas of the sanctuary, the context in which the reader, or hearer, of Deuteronomy or Exodus was most likely to be close to Yahweh in a similar ritual sense.

The issue of ritual cleanliness in 1 Samuel 20:26 therefore not only implies a cultic setting and perhaps sacrifice for the חֹדֶשׁ feast described therein, but also further indicates the *special* nature of the meal described. The uncleanness implied in the case of Saul's thoughts in 1 Samuel 20 seems to imply sacrifice. This aspect points to a זֶבַח offering: one which was eaten by the sacrificer.[60] A sacrificial or cultic meal suggests that we should consider the meaning, circumstances, and obligations of

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[56] Hyatt 1971: 259. We acknowledge the previous scholarly consensus on the identification of sources here, but it is beyond the needs and the range of our argument to significantly critique them.
[57] The P-edition of Exodus to which the Tabernacle account belongs, according to Johnstone, "is about sanctification, the possibilities of holy living now through observance of the Torah" (Johnstone 2001: 275).
[58] cf. Johnstone 2001: 216.
[59] Mayes 1981: 318. The cultic status of an army in holy war is significant. Gerhard von Rad, in his work on the subject, observed that an army in holy war "stood under severe sacral regulations" (von Rad 1991: 42). He argues that "we can consider holy war as an eminently cultic undertaking – that is, prescribed and sanctioned by fixed, traditional, sacred rites and observances" (von Rad 1991: 51).
[60] cf. Haran 1978: 355.

the חֹדֶשׁ feast as specific; it related specially to the event of the new moon, or a similar cultic event, with specific associated requirements, rather than David's subsistent, everyday attendance at Saul's table. The חֹדֶשׁ feast was a *special food consumption event*.

The חֹדֶשׁ feast may also have been associated with closeness to Yahweh, Smith's "religious character", due to the purity requirement.[61] This ritual cleanness tells us the ritual status of the space in which the meal took place: not necessarily an area of sacrifice, which may have been reserved for priests, but an adjacent area nonetheless. The possibility of a special sacrificial altar for the king, close to the "table of the king" should be *entertained* in this respect, but must remain speculative. A shrine context of some kind, similar to that of the visits that Samuel's family made to Shiloh, seems to be implied to the authorial audience here.

The issue of the length of special observances associated with חֹדֶשׁ arises from this chapter of 1 Samuel. As concluded above, reference to a *third* evening, in verse 5 does not imply that the food consumption aspect of חֹדֶשׁ ritual lasted for three days. Reference to a *second* day of feasting, however, is considerably clearer in this text, and most commentators accept this.[62] The progress of the story, and its logic, is, in fact, dependent on this two-day succession of special food consumption, and this also relates back to David's hypothetical uncleanness. On the first day Saul makes an excuse for David (verse 26), and only on the second, when this excuse is no longer sustainable (David would be clean by now) Saul asks Jonathan about David, and his anger is only then kindled. The two-day progression of the ritual is most explicitly referred to in verse 27:

> וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרַת הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי וַיִּפָּקֵד מְקוֹם דָּוִד וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל־יְהוֹנָתָן בְּנוֹ מַדּוּעַ לֹא־בָא בֶן־יִשַׁי גַּם־תְּמוֹל גַּם־הַיּוֹם אֶל־הַלָּחֶם׃

> But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David's place was empty. And Saul said to his son Jonathan, 'Why has the son of Jesse not come to the feast, either yesterday or today?' (1 Samuel 20:27).

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[61] Smith 1899: 192.
[62] See, for example, Hertzberg 1964: 172-73; DeVaux 1965: 470; McCarter 1980: 341.

Smith found the phrase מִמָּחֳרַת הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי impossible, and suggested the amendment מִמָּחֳרַת הַחֹדֶשׁ, discarding הַשֵּׁנִי.[63] Driver preferred an insertion of ביום, perhaps previously lost by haplography, before הַשֵּׁנִי to correct the text, and also translated the first part of the phrase as "on the morrow of the new moon".[64] The text would thus read: "on the morrow of the new moon, on the second day".[65] LXX carries both meanings, and is followed by the NRSV quoted above. The line attributed to Saul, particularly the phrase גַּם־תְּמוֹל גַּם־הַיּוֹם, "yesterday or today", clarifies the issue, and indicates that the feast took place over two days, and that the particular obligations associated with it also lasted two days. Importantly, as will be examined presently, the book of Judith also indicates special food consumption on two successive days at the time of the new moon in a later context.

In sum, it appears from 1 Samuel 20 that new moon days were associated with "special food consumption events", which can be contrasted with everyday subsistence. Our description is here focussed on the king's table, and the overall narrative context is one describing issues of loyalty, kinship, and royal succession. On new moon days there were particular social obligations on individuals, such as David, to attend a meal, and failure to attend was apparently viewed as an insult, in this case also something of a challenge. Attendance at a meal, as well as fixed places at the meal, expressed loyalty, kin, and power relations, which were expressed in the relative position of diners. The issue of cultic purity also emerges in this context, and points to the consumption of sacrificed meat, and also to a specialised locus, even structure, for such meals, perhaps associated with an altar, and possibly a shrine. Although the text describes certain activities which took place at the table of the king, Keel, and others, refers to the details therein as evidence primarily for the private, family observance of the feast.[66] It is also apparent that new moon days were

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[63] Smith 1899: 193-94. To make sense, either מִמָּחֳרַת הַחֹדֶשׁ or הַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי is required (Smith 1899: 194).

[64] Driver 1913: 169.

[65] In explanation of the unnecessary repetition in this rendering, Driver remarked that "A slight redundancy of expression is not out of harmony with Hebrew style" (Driver 1913: 169).

[66] Keel 1998: 105. Apart from referring to several verses of 1 Samuel 20 (verses 5, 18, 24, 27, 34), Keel does not attempt to justify this argument. Several ethnographic analogues caution this conclusion by presenting feasting, as a special consumption event, in a wider inter-family and *community* context, and this is also the case in certain Near Eastern contexts. See for example, Wiessner 2001; Schmandt-Besserat 2001. Others who argue for this family association include Goldstein & Cooper (1990: 21) and Wilke (1951: 175-176).

associated with less frequent זֶבַח הַיָּמִים ritual of the מִשְׁפָּחָה, which again overtly expresses kinship ties, shared interests, and subsequent loyalty in this story. Aside from the straightforward dichotomy which commensality can generate, express and maintain between insiders and outsiders, those who dine and those who do not, in numerous contexts, the purity requirement of חֹדֶשׁ feasts adds to and expresses this boundary maintaining potential.

It has been contended that much of the Deuteronomistic History was finally compiled to the state we now possess it from the exilic period onwards.[67] That is when the History ends, after all. Certain commentators have posited a broad three-stage process for the development of the corpus: original narrative sources, a "middle stage", and finally, the text's Deuteronomistic arrangement.[68] 1 Samuel 20, in McCarter's view, belongs mainly to one of these older narrative sources:[69] the narrative concerning David's rise to kingship (HDR), beginning with 1 Samuel 16:14, one of what he considers as the oldest sources for Samuel.[70] This History of David's Rise, discussed by Leonard Rost,[71] is preserved in 1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 5, a text which is considered to have a "strikingly heterogeneous appearance", but whose compilation was to legitimise David's succession over Saul.[72] McCarter is quite optimistic over the closeness of this work to the time of David himself, because its author supports David's succession over Saul, and supports Yahweh's free election of a new king, while, crucially, he does *not* treat of the promise of a Davidic *dynasty* under Solomon.[73]

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[67] cf. Noth 1981.

[68] Brooks 2005: 41-45; McCarter 1980: 12-30. The hypothetical sources, or narrative complexes, described and delineated by these and other authors are the Ark Narrative, the Saul Cycle, and the History of David's Rise (HDR) (McCarter 1980: 12-30). The "middle stage" is often referred to as the "Prophetic History", while the final stage, Deuteronomistic. Alter is sceptical of the "prophetic" character of this middle stage, but nevertheless adheres to the idea of earlier sources, and believes much of the narrative was composed "quite close to David's own time" (Alter 1999: xii, xv-xviii).

[69] McCarter 1980: 16. McCarter suggests three Deuteronomistic interpolations to the chapter: 1 Samuel 20:11-17, 23, 40-42, not quoted in the present work.

[70] McCarter 1980: 27.

[71] Rost 1965.

[72] McCarter 1980: 28.

[73] McCarter 1980: 29. McCarter treats of HDR as an example of a Near Eastern writing genre with parallels. He compares it to the thirteenth century BCE Apology of Hattušiliš (*CTH* 81), a Hittite text which describes the accession of a ruler whose rule is suspect (1980: 29). More recently, Tagger-Cohen (2005: 251-268) defended the historical background of much of the stories in the books of Samuel, including 1 Samuel 20, using Hittite comparisons. Interestingly, Wellhausen thought that the oldest parts of 1 Samuel 20 were precisely the sections which dealt with the two feasts: חֹדֶשׁ and the זֶבַח הַיָּמִים (1994: 266 n. 2).

Edelman suggests a general date for the initial composition of the Deuteronomistic History "at the close of the seventh century" as the most favourable for an analysis of texts concerning Saul (including 1 Samuel 20).[74] There remains, however, difficulty in ascertaining the date of any pre-Deuteronomistic material. Indeed, by the time of McCarter's commentary, he admitted that "...little agreement exists today about the original formation of the Samuel materials".[75] This conclusion remains tentative and it is probably safest to generally date the text somewhere in the monarchic period, but it seems from a diversity of suggestions that textual analysis cannot reach a more secure date. The narrative setting certainly suggests northern Israel prior to Deuteronomistic centralisation: the context is Saul's court, and there are evidently sacrifices in association with this court, and others in Bethlehem. In any event, the main concern is not with the historicity of the episode described, and finding the historical Saul and David is beyond the scope of the current work. Rather the text is viewed as presenting a generic, or perhaps clichéd, scene which might be seen as relevant to several periods. Because we cannot gain information on חֹדֶשׁ ritual within the private sphere, this text has been resorted to to provide, at least, a broad model for the nature of the feast as it may have occurred in several periods. The picture the text provides is one in which sacrifice is offered in various locations, and at least partly consumed by the diners. This appears to reflect an early stage in the history of Israelite sacrifice. This, Levine argues, is a development from "sacred meal" (זֶבַח), presentational offering, to the later cult dominated by burnt offerings.[76] While the זֶבַח is not explicitly associated with Saul's table in 1 Samuel 20, it appears that this type of sacrifice is reflected in the ritual feast which is nevertheless described. The זֶבַח is offered in the context of a shrine (cf. 1 Samuel 1, at Shiloh), and seems to have been appropriate for various occasions, including, as has been seen, for family, or clan (מִשְׁפָּחָה) celebrations. Our story seems to relate to a monthly זֶבַח of the king at חֹדֶשׁ. Part of the associated ritual of the זֶבַח at Shiloh was the activity of bowing down (הִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת), a practice also associated with the public cult on new moon days. Ultimately, it is difficult to view the events which took place at Saul's table in this episode as wholly separate from the events referred to by the eighth century

[74] Edelman 1991: 19.
[75] McCarter 1980: 12.
[76] Levine 2000: 48-49.

prophets. Isaiah 1, for example, refers to זֶבַח before proceeding to deal with the festivals in the section previously examined (Isaiah 1:11). Hosea 5:7 also, may indicate this, in the ironic reference to Yahweh's *eating* Israel. We should note that, while in the episode at the king's table was apparently a *socially restricted* context in which a specific group was present (family, clan, king's court), the event, in its connection with a shrine and a regular feast day, had an air of publicity about it. This might be viewed as evidence for the expression of family, clan, or political alliances at חֹדֶשׁ in the monarchic period, not only expressed by the presence of diners in the confined context we analysed above, but also in a more *outward* manner in this case, in a public setting: a display of alliance visible to those within and without, gathered at a local shrine. A number of social alliances and orientations could then be expressed at the new moon: a religious/'national' one in relation to Yahweh, regional or tribal, in terms of sanctuary,[77] and clan and political, in terms of the group a person dined with. It is not suggested here that these alliances were necessarily fixed and inflexible. It is possible that a person would have had an array of overlapping social alliances: aspects, or *horizons* of their identity. As such, David raises precisely this situation to test Saul's feelings towards him. Saul's anger with David is specifically expressed in family/clan terms. The decisiveness of this moment in the rupture at family level between these two figures is emphasised by Saul's calling David בֶּן־יִשַׁי "son of Jesse" (1 Samuel 20:27). Saul's using David's patronym disparagingly, in Green's opinion: "...names his failure to make David his own son..."[78] Thus we see that the feast of חֹדֶשׁ is deployed in the story to emphasise this family rupture, and this feast may well have been chosen precisely because of its social role in the expression of specific social alliances in a public setting.

The next section deals with evidence for special food consumption events in the Hellenistic period book of Judith. Judith is considerably later than Samuel, and while there are no intervening texts which deal specifically with the association of special meals with חֹדֶשׁ observance, there are several indications that Israelite and Jewish social patterns were affected by certain obligations on new moon days throughout that period. It was seen in the last chapter that texts such as 1 Chronicles

[77] 1 Samuel 1-2 suggests both of these considerations, especially 2:29, which refers to becoming fat "on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel..."
[78] Green 2003: 342.

23:30-31 and Nehemiah 10:32-33 attest to the central, public observance of new moon days well into the Persian and Hellenistic periods, and as noted below, this is also attested in later works such as 1 Maccabees, suggesting a persistence of widespread observance of new moon days. Unfortunately none of these texts are particularly concerned with more confined or *restricted* social patterns; that is not often the context which biblical authors are concerned with describing. So it is not until circa 100 BCE that we once again find explicit reference to a special food consumption aspect to חֹדֶשׁ ritual At this point, a more 'national' consciousness can be seen attached to the feast of חֹדֶשׁ by the author, and one specifically associated with a conception of *Israel.*

Judith Breaks her Fast

Evidence for feasting on new moons in the Hellenistic period is associated with the figure of Judith. Not only is this practice associated with her, but as such it is part of a set of traits that may well have been seen as paradigmatic of proper Jewish piety by that very association. Most scholars of Judith today recognise the Hasmonaean period as the most appropriate context for the composition of the book.[79] The new moon is referred to specifically in connection with Judith's eating habits. Importantly, חֹדֶשׁ is one of the few occasions when Judith breaks her fast:

> καὶ ἐνήστευε πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς χηρεύσεως αὐτῆς χωρὶς προσαββάτων καὶ σαββάτου καὶ προνουμηνιῶν καὶ νουμηνιῶν καὶ ἑορτῶν καὶ χαρμοσυνῶν οἴκου Ισραηλ.
>
> She fasted all the days of her widowhood, except the day before the sabbath and the sabbath itself, the day before the new moon and the day of new moon, and the festivals and days of rejoicing of the house of Israel (Judith 8:6).[80]

Although the above quotation is taken from chapter 8 of the book, it forms part of the introduction to the character of Judith herself, which only begins in that chapter. Previously the (un)historical scene had been set.[81] Moore points out that in this introduction, the author introduces the heroine primarily emphasising "what is most

[79] Baslez 2004: 362-76; Otzen 2002: 132; Ilan 1999: 127-153; Moore 1985: 67; Ball 1888: 247.
[80] The original text of Judith was possibly in Hebrew or Aramaic, while Latin, Greek, and medieval Hebrew translations are extant today (Otzen 2002: 138-41).
[81] The background 'historical' tale of Judith and Holofernes has been long accepted to be fictional.

important to him": her Jewish lineage, and her religious character and practice.[82] Judith's fasting, according to Otzen, is excessive, going beyond three years, and is connected with her widowhood. As such it functions as a sign of her piety, and her breaking her fast for sabbaths, new moons, and yearly festivals only further demonstrates that piety.[83] This piety and fasting is something that, in Moore's view, "the author obviously approved of".[84] Here in Judith, we see the social side of Israel's liturgical calendar, in its entirety, with the common reference to sabbaths, new moons, and yearly festivals together. If these were appropriate moments to break one's fast, then it can be assumed that they were associated with 'special consumption events', perhaps, here, in the more socially restricted ritual context. Indeed, although we can discern very few details of the event referred to from the above passage, it nevertheless implies that this break in fasting on the new moon, by definition, is 'special consumption'; it is deliberately contrasted, in reference to food consumption, with the mundane, the everyday, when Judith fasted, and this eating was evidently in fulfilment of a religious obligation. The context, physical or social, of her feasting is largely unknown to us.

Significantly, as with the sabbath in this reference, *two* days of fast-breaking are clearly attested, reminiscent of Saul's feast in 1 Samuel 20. If two days of fast-breaking occurred around the new moon for Judith, it is likely that on both days, the break revolved around a special meal; obligations to attend a special meal were probably the reason for her breaking the fast. As such, the background of 1 Samuel 20 is echoed in this later text, and we may now deem the two-day succession described therein all the more plausible. Unlike 1 Samuel 20, the book of Judith refers to a day *before* the new moon (προνουμηνιῶν καὶ νουμηνιῶν). Two ways of approaching this succession of two days of feasting in this context can be suggested. First, the initial day may refer to an evening feast, when the sighting of the new crescent in the evening was succeeded by a meal (προνουμηνιῶν), and *second* day may have been the first *full day* of the new moon, beginning the following morning, when there is also a meal (νουμηνιῶν). The issue of when the cultic day was considered to properly begin

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[82] Moore 1985: 185.
[83] Otzen 2002: 105. Moore states that this excessive fasting is in line with the beliefs of the Pharisees (Moore 1985: 181). Grabbe, however, disagrees, saying there is "nothing particular in the book to associate it with any of the known sects of early Judaism" (Grabbe 1994: 178).
[84] Moore 1985: 181.

arises here. Most biblical sources imply that a new day was reckoned to begin at nightfall. However, there are exceptions to this, identified by Beckwith, and these texts indicate that in certain cases at least, the day was considered to begin at sunrise instead.[85] Importantly, Beckwith's exceptions include Judith 6:21-7:1 and 11:17.[86] From this we can deduce that in the same text, the day *before* the new moon conceivable refers to the evening and night of the first appearance of the crescent, and the new moon itself may have been the daylight hours of the following day, beginning in the morning.

This reading is not, however, necessarily supported by the parallel reference to προσαββάτων in the text. While we know that in later times there was a similar succession of meals in respect to the opening evening of the sabbath, in pre-Amoraic Judaism this was not necessarily the case.[87] In pursuit of an alternative explanation for the sequence προνουμηνιῶν καὶ νουμηνιῶν, therefore, it can be suggested that a very similar succession of days to that of 1 Samuel 20 is described here, but expressed in different terms. Again, it should be considered that it was almost impossible in this period to predict the first appearance of the lunar crescent with an accuracy of greater than two days. Thus knowing the day *before* its appearance is problematic, and this hints at the context of the reference. As will be noted in Chapter 8, approximately every second lunar month was thirty days long, and at the end of such months/beginning of the next month, there were two new moon days. Every month, the ritual of observing the western sky began on the evening of the twenty-ninth day. Again, if the new moon were not sighted and attested to satisfactorily the next day (the thirtieth of the month), the rest of that thirtieth day, *and the following day* (which was the first of the new month), were considered holy.[88] The reason can now be considered as to why this two-day succession, in later sources, takes place: because the moon did not actually appear on the evening of the 29th. Therefore, the first day on which ritual takes place is not technically the new moon day as such, because the

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[85] Beckwith 2001: 6-8.

[86] He argues this because reference to the "day" precedes that to the "night" in Judith 11:17, implying a succession beginning with the dawn. In Judith 6:21-7:1, "the night is reckoned with the previous day". In Judith 6-7 Jews prayed "all that night" before the advance of their enemies "the next day" (Beckwith 2001: 6-7).

[87] Elbogin observed that in pre-Amoraic times, religious fraternities (חבורות) held meals the day before the sabbath, which were interrupted at nightfall (Elbogin 1993: 91). Beckwith suggests that comparable situation applies to Judith, where the day *before* the sabbath is a feast (Beckwith 2001: 199 n. 47).

[88] cf. Chapter 8, Part 1; *M. Rosh Hashshanah* 4:4.

moon has not appeared, whereas the second day is the true new moon day, and is the first of the month. Thus, the sequence 'the day *before* the new moon, and the new moon itself' conceivably encompasses this ritual procedure. While this reasoning is based on a later source, it provides a plausible context for the phrase in Judith in respect to the lunar/luni-solar calendar as it probably functioned in the time of the work's composition.[89] This two-day sequence would only have taken place approximately every second month, as there are approximately six 'full', or 'intercalated' (i.e. 30-day), months each year.[90] The author of Judith, like several ancient writers examined in the present work, attempts to encompass all of Israel's holy days in the above reference, and here, the reference is all the more encompassing in its inclusion of special observances attached to the new moon's reckoning procedure. As such, this observation implies that the actual succession of days did not necessarily vary at all from 1 Samuel 20 to Judith. Rather, a lexical flexibility in reference to the same succession is observed.

As the ideal of a good Jew (her name means "Jewess"), the elect of God, or indeed as a "personification of the people of Israel",[91] Judith's actions described, including pious observance of the feasting aspect of חֹדֶשׁ, can be viewed as paradigmatic, especially in light of the fact that in most respects, according to Moore, the book "had all the essentials of Palestinian Judaism (i.e. God, prayer, dietary scrupulousness, sacrifice, temple, Jerusalem…)".[92] The character of Judith, in the view of several scholars, is presented as a paradigm of Jewish piety. The text of Judith 8, therefore, provides unambiguous evidence for the importance of חֹדֶשׁ, and the prominence of the food aspect of its observance during the second and first centuries BCE. If the figure described is a Jewish paradigm, then חֹדֶשׁ observance is, in this instance, paradigmatic of proper Jewish behaviour, from a Jewish point of view. In the case of the character Judith in the book bearing her name, this does not only relate

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[89] On the similarity between the Mishnaic calendar and that of Hasmonaean times, see Stern 2001: 163; Bickerman 1984: 64; Herr 1976: 846.

[90] In fact, also in the context of the Mishnah, it is apparent that an eating event coincided with this two-day sequence, as well as the other new moons (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:5; *M. Sanhedrin* 8:2), although we do not necessarily suggest that these texts pertain to the exactly the same social contexts.

[91] Otzen 2002: 102.

[92] Moore 1985: 86. Moore makes this observation in registering surprise at the fact that the book did receive canonical status in Judaism; perhaps this was because, in the book, the Ammonite Achior was accepted into Judaism by being circumcised but *not* baptised, which was required according to Deuteronomy 23:3 (Moore 1985: 87).

to her own time: the author is self-consciously describing a figure from the past, albeit a fictional one. Judith's piety is something that is portrayed as *traditional*.

Patterson has recently reasserted the old argument that Judith was composed as "political propaganda for the only Hasmonean queen regnant, Shelamzion", as part of a wider programme of propaganda to legitimate her rule.[93] If this argument that the book of Judith is propaganda for the reign of Shelamzion were sustained, it further emphasises that the new moon in the work is seen as an essential feature of Jewish piety: it was part of an ideal set of social and religious behaviours and attributes, to the extent of its employment in propaganda.[94] It is at this point that we begin to see this aspect of new moon observance being considered an essential feature of *Jewishness*. Being Jewish, as the author of the text understood it, was connected with a set of particular attributes, elements of which may have become almost diagnostic of *Jewishness* to both insiders and outsiders. This dynamic will be taken up in the coming chapters. In the text of Judith we appear to be presented with Dietler's idea of social boundaries being established and maintained by feasts,[95] in this case pertaining to the new moon. Participation in the appropriate ritual was indicative of, and associated with, membership of the larger community, a community which, by the time of the composition of Judith, was considered an *ethnos*.[96] Moreover, it is not only the *ethnos* of the Jews which is understood as the subject of the book, but 'Israel'. It is evident that this is the perceived ideological entity which is associated with these special days, and which Judith ultimately delivers.

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[93] Patterson 2002: 5. Patterson follows this idea which, she explains, was put forth initially by Ball (1888: 247), and more recently by Tal Ilan (1999: 127-53). Alternatively, Baslez, based on the way warfare is described in the book, argues that Judith comes from a source and context which was not Hasmonean, but was, nevertheless, *nationalistic*, with the Jewish community personified in the figure Judith (Baslez 2004: 362-76).

[94] Recently Linda Day has drawn attention to some moral ambiguities in the character of Judith as presented in the book. She argues that the evaluation of the character is not static in the book, but changes with the course of the plot (Day 2001: 73). Nevertheless, Day does argue that the introductory section to the character (wherein she is commended for observing new moons), the reader encounters a positive evaluation of a figure who "...metaphorically represents the community" (Day 2001: 74-75).

[95] Dietler 2001: 88

[96] Goldstein (1976: 405) refers to a Seleucid letter 1 Maccabees 10, which describes the Jewish *ethnos*. See the next section for a discussion of this.

The final composition of Judith dates to the Maccabean/Hasmonean era, and, according to Otzen, "the work as a whole bears the impress of this period".[97] The Maccabean context, which Otzen states is accepted by the majority of scholars, is indicated by religious atmosphere and zeal, the ideal of piety, observance of the Law, and the importance of the Jerusalem Temple.[98] Moore further argues that the author's activity is probably best located in the latter half of the reign of John Hyrcanus I, or the beginning of Alexander Jannaeus' reign.[99] Finally, it has been seen above that several scholars, recently Ilan,[100] have postulated that the work was written at the beginning of Salome Alexandra's reign.

Hosea 5, 1 Samuel 20, and Judith 8 should be treated as evidence for "special food consumption events" in ancient Israelite and Jewish חֹדֶשׁ tradition, and these occasions should be differentiated from "...both everyday domestic meals and from the simple exchange of food without communal consumption".[101] Although temporally distant from one another, both Judith and 1 Samuel 20 indicate a somewhat consistent communal dining element to new moon ritual, both of which appear to carry obligation, and indicate "proper" practice: David's absence is offensive, and Judith is praised for her piety. The composition of Judith almost certainly took place several centuries later than that of the books of Samuel, but two things must be noted. First, it is known that Samuel was an important text until the time of Judith, and secondly, the author of the book of Judith consciously attempts to portray a set of circumstances in what was then the distant past; Judith is viewed as a traditional, *historical* paradigm of a good Jew. In this particular instance one is beset with a paucity of texts to further elaborate the nature of חֹדֶשׁ as a special food event. This may be due in part to the disinterest of biblical authors in the elaboration of

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[97] Otzen 2002: 132. Although the book presents itself as a history of events occurring in the lifetime of Nebuchadnezzar, Moore describes what scholars since Martin Luther have noted: a "shocking carelessness with well established historical and geographical facts" (Moore 1985: 46). Moore also states that the LXX translation of Judith was in existence at least by the first century CE, as it is cited by Clement of Rome (Moore 1985: 93). It has already been noted that the original may have been in Hebrew or Aramaic, while Latin, Greek, and medieval Hebrew translations are extant today (cf. Otzen 2002: 138-41).

[98] Otzen 2002: 132.

[99] Moore 1985: 67. He argues this date on the basis of "Converging lines of evidence, both historical and theological in character". Notable among these lines is the observation that the work contains an "open and friendly" attitude to the Samaritans, possibly indicating that the book was largely composed after John Hyrcanus' incorporation of Samaria into his territory in 107 BCE (Moore 1985: 69).

[100] Ilan 1999: 127-153.

[101] Dietler and Hayden 2001: 3.

individual, family, or even "clan", routines. While the Hebrew Bible and Apocrypha contain several texts that might be described as *popular* documents, being concerned with the movements of ordinary people, they are usually only concerned with ordinary Israelites, or Jews, *en masse*. Our understanding is therefore often hampered by very restrictive anecdotal evidence. What *can* be said is that חֹדֶשׁ in general retained a rather consistent importance from the time of Samuel's composition to Judith and beyond, to Jews in general, as is continuously asserted in this thesis, and particularly explored in Chapter 3. The consistent *two-day* pattern of meals in these two texts should also be noted. This two-day pattern will emerge again in Chapter 8, when the Mishnah is approached.

Feasting as a social activity, and indeed a *ritual* activity, is laden with meaning. Inclusiveness and exclusiveness, as well as positions at table, and food eaten, have huge implications for ideas of group and social identity; individual and family identity within a group and one's identity as *part of* that group are often unambiguously expressed in the context of the feast. According to Dietler, "...nearly all feasts actually serve in some ways to define social boundaries while simultaneously creating a sense of community".[102] Dietler and Hayden argue that special meals "...help to create the experience of...condensed meaning...and render feasts such ideal stages for the other important social transactions, such as presentations of valuables, making alliances, and...the construction of value".[103] Regarding the feast's role in the construction of value, it is argued that we must treat the construction of ideas about the social and religious identity of Jews in several contexts. Feasting seems, from the admittedly limited literature we have, to have been an important aspect of the observance of חֹדֶשׁ. It is one of the aspects of the ritual constellation which can be viewed as Israel's liturgical calendar given social expression in the rhythm of social life, and the construction of value and social and religious identity, punctuated and dictated by the course of the moon. Feasting, as a social activity, by no means excludes an element of formality; eating in a group is often characterised by repetition of certain forms and actions, and much convention. Nor does feasting exclude the creation of particular ritual moods. One need not emphasise the Durkheimian model of ritual in order to understand and stress the

[102] Dietler 2001: 88
[103] Dietler and Hayden 2001: 4. They quote Cohen 1979.

creation of feelings of mutual dependency by certain food consumption events. It is clear that table-fellowship, in numerous contexts, easily lends itself to the expression and maintenance of social cohesion and indeed social boundaries.

2. CESSATION OF REGULAR WORK ON NEW MOON DAYS

In relation to the feast of חֹדֶשׁ, Alter states: "Sacrifices were offered, ceremonial feasts were held, and ordinary business was not transacted".[104] In Part 1, it was seen that חֹדֶשׁ is regularly referred to in the biblical texts alongside the sabbath. At this point in our discussion, the *special* nature of new moon days in ancient Israelite life is clear. All of our sources so far indicate that the beginning of each lunar month was of some significance in a centralised cult setting and in certain more socially restricted contexts. A prominent aspect of the ritual that has been noted since Wellhausen is that of *rest*.[105] Was חֹדֶשׁ, like the sabbath, associated with a cessation of work? If it were, this would effect one of the most basic social patterns resulting from the observance of its rituals in Palestine and throughout the later Diaspora. A cessation from regular work may thus be a manifestation, in social routine, of the rhythm of Israel's cultic calendar, month after month. Along with the other festivals, the calendar of the sacrificial cult can be reflected in the behaviour of Jews in, near to, and hundreds of miles away from, Jerusalem; one's membership of that community is thus visible to those within and without by means of their social pattern, expressed at חֹדֶשׁ, the beginning of each lunar month, similar to the way it was on sabbaths.

Some of the texts discussed below refer explicitly to the cessation of certain work and trading activities on חֹדֶשׁ. Unlike the sabbath, there is no overt scriptural connection between this "rest" and the creative action of Yahweh. It should also be contrasted with the sabbath in that the authors of the Pentateuch are adamant that work should not take place on sabbaths; for new moons, no such scriptural legislation is extant. But how do we understand rest? 'Leisure' is a concept that has been defined and problematized by certain sociologists.[106] Dumazedier, for example, argues that 'holidays' and 'feast-days' in traditional societies cannot be described as 'leisure' in a modern sense, because "work and play were integrated in the feasts...[and] had similar meanings for the basic life of the community"; leisure, in his view, is a "specific product of industrial society".[107] Perhaps it would better to refer to a

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[104] Alter 1999: 124.
[105] Wellhausen 1994: 114.
[106] cf. Dumazedier 1974; Parker 1976; Cheek and Burch 1976.
[107] Dumazedier (1974: 13) refers to pre-industrial Christian society in stating that Sundays were "devoted to religious cult" and "festivals...gave rise to a great expenditure of food and energy". He also objects to the idea that the "idleness" of ancient Greek philosophers was *leisure*, because, in his

cessation of 'regular work', as is sometimes suggested in biblical translation. Regarding חֹדֶשׁ, it is not stated whether this cessation of work in question merely alludes to the free time required in order for individuals and families to fulfil their cultic observance, or if there was an independent tradition of *rest* as worship in and of itself. Unfortunately, due to the paucity of evidence and the brevity of our references, this is not a distinction which can fully be tested. In certain contexts, certain types of work were, at least, frowned upon on new moon days, and it is also evident that, in other contexts, the provision of free time on new moon days, or at least freedom from certain obligations, was fundamental to Jewish observance. It seems most likely, after Dumazedier, that free time, or freedom from certain obligations, or ordinary work, implies activities and obligations in other areas; ritual contexts are assumed. The free time which is identified herein as associated with חֹדֶשׁ may at least be considered, therefore, as a general indicator of ritual behaviour, as distinct from the everyday, which is ultimately the case for sabbaths as well.

Arad Ostracon 7

Ostracon 7 from Arad has been thought by a number of commentators to attest the observance of חֹדֶשׁ at the end of the seventh, or beginning of the sixth, century BCE by soldiers and priests in the fortress there. Eliashib is instructed to give the *Kittim* (mercenaries in the Judahite army)[108] supplies on the first day of the month:

אל אליָשִׁב. ועַ
תָּ. נָתֹן. לַכִּתים
לעשִׂרי ב 1 לחֹד
ש. עד הששה
לחֹדש ב(תים) 3 [ו]
כתבתה לפניך. ב
שנים לחֹדש . בעשִׂ
רי ושמן חֲ

argument, that idleness was achieved at the expense of slaves and servants, and therefore cannot be defined in relation to work; it was neither a complement to, nor a compensation for, work, but "merely a substitute" (Dumazedier 1974: 14-15).

[108] *Kittim* occurrs in Genesis 10:4; Isaiah 23:1; 1 Chronicles 1:7. *Kittim* is associated with islands in Ezekiel 27:6, and appears to be close to Sidon in Isaiah 23:12, and has therefore been identified with Greek islands, particularly Cyprus (cf. Aharoni 1968: 14).

[תם ושלחנו]

To Eliashib. And no-
w give to the *Kittim*
in the tenth (month) on the 1 (day) of the mo-
nth until the sixth (day)
of the month 3 *bat*(-measures). [And]
write down before you on
the second (day) of the month on the te-
nth (month). And oil, s-
[eal and send it].[109]

A peculiar feature of this directive to Eliashib has been noted by several scholars: there is evidently a day's lapse between the time when Eliashib is to give the supplies to the *Kittim*, and the time when he is to record the transaction ("write down before you on the second (day)..."). [110] Explanations for this have been suggested by a number of scholars.[111] In light of the peculiar instruction to Eliashib, scholars agree that the ostracon reflects an order which was contrary to usual practice, and that these exceptional circumstances related to special observance of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ. The usual opinion, Shveka observes, is that the instruction to record the delivery of the supplies on the second day of the month reflects the association of a cessation of work on new moon days.[112] What is difficult to understand, however, is why Eliashib is specifically ordered to profane the day by making this delivery in the first place. Why, in light of this, would he be ordered to postpone recording it until the following day?[113] It has been suggested that this may reflect a prohibition against transactions on this day.[114] The scholar who has provided the most detailed and comprehensive explanation to date is Avi Shveka.[115] Sheka proposes that Eliashib was not ordered to record the

[109] Text and translation from Shveka (2005: 50).
[110] Shveka 2005: 49; Loewenstamm 1992: 132.
[111] For example, Aharoni 1981: 22; Loewenstamm 1992; Shveka 2005.
[112] Shveka 2005: 52.
[113] The normal sort of injunction against work, Shveka agues, would have been one related to bearing burdens, as with the sabbath (cf. Jeremiah 17:24, 27; Nehemiah 13:19). It is the fact that only the writing is reserved for the second day that raises the problem (2005: 52-53).
[114] Lemaire 1977: 169. This is argued on the basis of Amos' condemnation of the grain merchants (Amos 8:5); cf. Shveka 2005: 54.
[115] Among the explanations of several scholars, Shveka's is the most convincing because his is the one which is most clearly related to existing knowledge of probhibition against work as it appears in the Hebrew Bible.

delivery on the second day of the month at all, but to falsify the record to represent that he had done so. As such, Shveka reads the text of the ostracon as:

> To Eliashib. And Now: give to the *Kittim* in the tenth (month) on the first (day) of the month, until the sixth (day) of the month, three *bat*-measures. And write down before you "on the second (day) of the tenth (month)." And oil…[116]

This order to falsify the record was given, in Shveka's view, precisely because it was forbidden to make such deliveries on חֹדֶשׁ, and so it was to be recorded as having taken place the following day.[117] Shveka points to a parallel for this episode in Ezekiel 22:26, wherein it is *the priests* who are condemned for not properly supervising the sabbath observance of the people: it is not only the priests' responsibility to keep their own observance; they must also be accountable for the transgressions of the people in general.[118] Shveka argues that Ostracon 7 here demonstrates a similar dynamic in relation to חֹדֶשׁ; but this time the situation seems to reflect tension between the soldiers at Arad, and the priests there, who would have had access to the records of this transaction referred to in the Ostracon. The falsification, it seems, was carried out because of necessity to deliver supplies to the mercenaries, with the aim of avoiding conflict with these priests.[119] Of all of the explanations provided for this interesting text, Shveka's is the only one which does not raise more questions than it answers. In support of his assertion that work in general was prohibited on the new moon, we now proceed to examine some other texts.

Biblical Texts and Apocrypha

A number of scholars have referred to 2 Kings 4, when suggesting that חֹדֶשׁ can be traced back to monarchic times, and that work was suspended on those days.[120] The

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[116] Shveka 2005: 65.

[117] Shveka 2005: 65. Other such orders to falsify information, he observes, are referred to in the Hebrew Bible, for example 1 Samuel 16:2; Jeremiah 38:24-26.

[118] This is also reflected in Ezekiel 44:15, where the duties of the Levitical and Zadokite priests include teaching the people about various aspects of the law (cf. Shveka 2005: 70).

[119] Shveka 2005: 69-70. Loewanstamm postulates that the order to violate חֹדֶשׁ was probably the result of an emergency, and that the order not to record it until the second day was to "…reduce the "desecration of the New Moon" to a minimum". (1998: 133, 135).

[120] For example Loewenstamm 1996: 134; Wilke 1951: 174; Wellhausen 1994: 114.

story of Elisha and the Shunammite woman includes a reference to חֹדֶשׁ relevant to this section:

וַתִּקְרָא אֶל־אִישָׁהּ וַתֹּאמֶר שִׁלְחָה נָא לִי אֶחָד מִן־הַנְּעָרִים וְאַחַת הָאֲתֹנוֹת וְאָרוּצָה עַד־אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וְאָשׁוּבָה: וַיֹּאמֶר מַדּוּעַ אַתְּי הֹלֶכֶת אֵלָיו הַיּוֹם לֹא־חֹדֶשׁ וְלֹא־שַׁבָּת

Then she called her husband and said, "Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys so that I may quickly go to the man of God [Elisha] and come back again." He said, "Why go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath" (2 Kings 4:22-23).

Here, sabbath and new moon are once again referred to in the same context, and each is seen as an appropriate time to visit a prophet, or man or God (אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים). It is possible that both being special days, there was specific provision of free time to facilitate such visits.[121] The "Great Woman" of Shunam, however, is depicted as wealthy, a character who would have had wealth enough for free time anyway. Nevertheless, her husband's response seems to imply that it was normal to make visits on such occasions; that is, prophets and similar figures generally expected visits on these days. This pattern may therefore reflect more widespread free time.[122] At the very least, this text provides a glimpse into the social patterns associated with חֹדֶשׁ, which included association with oracles and prophecy; these were socially significant events.

It was seen in Part 1 of the last chapter that חֹדֶשׁ was associated with a cessation of trading in Amos 8:

מָתַי יַעֲבֹר הַחֹדֶשׁ וְנַשְׁבִּירָה שֶׁבֶר וְהַשַּׁבָּת וְנִפְתְּחָה־בָּר

"When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale?" (Amos 8:5).

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[121] Paul (1991: 258) cites this reference as an allusion, at least, to a cessation of work on new moons.
[122] Cf. Loewenstamm 1996: 134; Robinson, in reference to new moon and sabbath in 2 Kings 4:23, states: "These were the rest days when no work was done and so visits to consult a prophet were usually made on them" (Robinson 1976: 44).

חֹדֶשׁ is associated with the sabbath again, and a common theme of cessation of trading occurs for both here. Two types of grain are specified: שֶׁבֶר and בָּר, in this case respective to the two different holidays, but should together be considered as "...representative of the whole process of selling agricultural products",[123] which was to stop on חֹדֶשׁ.[124] Also interesting in this regard is Ezekiel 46:1, and 46:3, examined in the previous chapter, where חֹדֶשׁ and sabbath are referred to in close association with regard to the Jerusalem cult, and both are specifically distinguished from שֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה ("the six working days"). This special status is reflected in the ritual of the Temple described in that text, as discussed in Chapter 3. It may then be supposed that, according to the author of this part of Ezekiel, חֹדֶשׁ was *not* a working day, as it is contrasted with regular days. Paul also cites 1 Samuel 20:5 as an allusion to a cessation of work, due to the reference therein to feasting.[125]

We know that חֹדֶשׁ observance was a consistent feature of Israelite and Jewish life for several centuries, and certainly throughout the Second Temple era. Certain later texts express more clearly the association of freedom from day to day obligations with new moon days, and allow us to continue to postulate the widespread significance of this association among Jews. Specifically, 1 Macccabees contains a letter from the Seleucid ruler Demetrius I to Jonathan Maccabee, dated to 152 BCE.[126] In this document, the Jews are referred to as *ethnos*, the status of a "privileged nation".[127] In the letter there are listed several "days of immunity" (ἡμέραι ἀτελείας). The letter states clearly that on such days:

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[123] Anderson and Freedman 1989: 692. They support this by arguing that "the same double action is involved...once the holiday is ended, whichever it is", because the single initial verb יַעֲבֹר ("pass", "end") covers both clauses.

[124] This reference was also viewed by Wellhausen to reflect an association of *rest* with the new moon.

[125] Paul 1991: 258.

[126] Goldstein argues that the letter is genuine and that it was probably preserved, initially, by anti-Hasmonaean Jews, because it is not actually addressed to Jonathan, but to the "nation of the Jews" (1 Maccabees 10:26). The letter may initially have been written with the intention of removing Jonathan from office, who had previously supported Alexander Balas, Demetrius' rival (Goldstein 1976: 405).

[127] Goldstein 1976: 405. According to Goldstein, "An *ethnos* ...was not directly administered and taxed by royal officials but by its own communal organs and officials" (1976: 195). A more general translation of this term is 'race', or 'nation': "a multitude of individuals of the same nature or genus" (*GELNT* 168). Philo describes the Jews as such (*De Decalogo* 1), as does Josphus (e.g. *AJ* I 91), and 1 Esdras 1:4. Used in the plural (ἔθνη), the term often translates הַגּוֹיִם "nations/Gentiles", in LXX e.g. 1 Kings 8:5 (1 Samuel MT); Psalm 2:1. This use of the plural has parallels in non-Jewish Greek sources (e.g. Aristotle, *Politica*, cf. *Liddle & Scott* 480).

καὶ οὐχ ἕξει ἐξουσίαν οὐδεὶς πράσσειν καὶ παρενοχλεῖν τίνα αὐτῶν περὶ παντὸς πράγματος.

No one shall have authority to exact anything from them [Jews] or annoy any of them about any matter (1 Maccabees 10:35).

Importantly this list includes new moon days. Bartlett expresses uncertainty as to what this "exaction or burden" refers to.[128] In Goldstein's view, "Jews are to be freed from the threat of having to violate the Torah by making payments or appearing in court on a Jewish holy day".[129]

In Classical Greek texts, the implication of ἀτελείας, "immunity", included "exemption from public burdens".[130] The fourth century BCE Athenian orator Demosthenes treats of immunity (ἀτελεία) in his oration against Leptines. In this speech, he attempts to repeal a law forbidding the bestowal of immunity on Athenian citizens. In late classical Athens, *immunity* is part of a special status bestowed upon benefactors of the state (cf. Demosthenes XX 48). The case stresses the special honour which the status of ἀτελεία indicates. This included immunity from taxes in some cases (Demosthenes XX 60) and performing public service (Demosthenes XX 40).[131] Previously, Herodotus recorded that Cambyses granted three years of "immunity" to his subjects, specifically from war-service and taxes (Herodotus III 67).[132] To return to the letter quoted in 1 Maccabees 10, these two elements (tax, and service in kind) are clearly also the subject in this Jewish immunity: no one can *exact* from them, or *annoy* any of them. The Jewish character of this immunity is in its restriction to these specific Jewish holy days. The author of the letter refers explicitly here to Seleucid royal sanction for the provision of free time for Jews on new moon days. As well as the payment of tolls, for example,[133] this would have been

[128] Bartlett 1973: 137.
[129] Goldstein 1976: 409.
[130] *Liddell & Scott* 268.
[131] Organising and funding the chorus for theatres and overseeing the gymnasia were common public services borne by citizens in classical Athens, from which benefactors in other areas could be made exempt (cf. Demosthenes XX 26). Isocrates, in the *Panathenaicus* oration dated to 342 BCE, praises Athenian democracy for its dual allowance for citizens to take up public office, and of the *immunity* that they can also receive from the same offices (Isocrates 12. 147).
[132] Several inscriptions also record the granting, and *purchasing* of immunity. *IG* 1.40; *IG* 2.570; *OGI* 10.13.
[133] Goldstein suggests this, pointing to a similar freedom from taxes and tolls for "imperial festivals", although this is not necessarily in connection with the Seleucid kingdom (Goldstein 1976: 409).

particularly relevant to Jews who were already in the Seleucid administration, and needed temporary leave to fulfil their religious requirements. Whether or not the letter is genuine, the author of 1 Maccabees clearly assumes the association of freedom from regular obligations with new moons as well as other special days, and presents this royal provision in the context of an overall guarantee for Jews to practice their religion in the Seleucid kingdom. This sits comfortably in the overall structure of the book of 1 Maccabees and its two main themes: zeal for the law and restoration of the Temple.[134] The letter not only implies exemption from public burdens such as those on new moons and other special days; it also clearly implies that relief of Jews from burdens should go beyond public duties: "No one" shall burden Jews on sabbaths, new moons, or other festivals *in any way* (παντὸς πράγματος), meaning more closely "in every way" (παντὸς), "in doing business, affairs" (πράγματος).[135]

The special nature of חֹדֶשׁ is reflected in the book of Judith, where Judith is described as breaking her fast around sabbaths, new moons, and yearly festivals, indicative of free time from other activities. חֹדֶשׁ was a socially significant ritual constellation in ancient Israel, and this fact is readily testified. While we must remain less certain about the provision of free time for new moons than we are with regard to the sabbath, there was certainly *some* association of rest with חֹדֶשׁ, however prevalent and continuous this association may or may not have been. Despite the lack of Pentateuchal legislation regarding widespread *popular* observance, new moon rites were still considered part of, and equated with, *torah*, and as such, were considered fundamental to Jewish communal experience, as shall be argued in relation to more contexts. Because the argument regarding free time remains somewhat circular (*viz* freedom from certain obligations resulted from participation in religious observance and freedom from certain obligations was *required* for it) one may at least view evidence for the provision of free time on חֹדֶשׁ as a general indicator of religious or ritual activity on those days.[136] If we think of days in terms of 'sacred' and 'profane', however, we might also conclude that a holy/sacred day involved a certain overall response, in that certain profane activities could not take place on it. This may

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[134] Bartlett 1973: 15.
[135] *RGELNT* 543; 613.
[136] Wellhausen argued that this association of rest may only be a consequence of other festal and sacrificial activity (1994: 114).

constitute what has been referred to as 'ordinary work'. The Hebrew conception of 'holiness' as 'separateness' affords us to postulate that carrying out ordinary work on a day such as חֹדֶשׁ may have constituted the profanation of the holy, a day which is *separated* for special activity was unpropitious for ordinary activity. This idea is supported by the generally sanctified nature of the new moon day.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Despite the restricted diachronic nature of the above analysis, it is possible to conclude that חֹדֶשׁ in Israelite and Jewish culture was associated with special food consumption, or 'feasting'. This constitutes ritual behaviour. Like at 'sanctuary convocation', participants in the more socially restricted חֹדֶשׁ feast had to reach a certain level of ritual purity. This purity related to order, and thus the practice of the new moon meal is a point of order in Israelite and Jewish life. The locus of activity was sanctified in some way, which also deems it an ordered space. This implies certain inevitable binaries in relation to the locus. As a sanctified, ordered space, it was a context from which *uncleanness*, *dis*order, were excluded. As a ritual activity, we would expect חֹדֶשׁ feasts to be associated with ritual behaviour. Other than eating, the exact form of this behaviour is not readily tangible from the sources for the ritual in question. Our knowledge is limited to areas of interest to the authors of 1 Samuel 20 and Judith, and some other sources which corroborate certain practices in a more general sense. The author of 1 Samuel 20 shows a clear interest in portraying the חֹדֶשׁ feast therein as a social obligation, a context to express loyalty or indeed disloyalty, a practice which involved physical and spatial representation of social relationships, hierarchy, and power, and also a cultic occasion requiring purity. This was a context in which the 'public' and 'private' spheres, as they are perceived today, were somewhat mingled. This mingling can be viewed as the potential expression of a variety of social relationships and horizons of an individual's identity, from religious-'national' to clan identity. Later, the author of Judith shows an interest in presenting special consumption on new moon days among several behaviours and attributes which form a particular model of Jewish piety. There is little strong grounding for arguing that the חֹדֶשׁ meal was gender exclusive. From the evidence of 1 Samuel 20, inter-family groups seem also plausibly postulated, observing the dynamic of expression of shared interests and loyalty which probably transcended blood ties.

The special meal of חֹדֶשׁ was an opportunity for "*...the creation or maintenance of important social relationships*".[137] This is clearly expressed in the loyalty issue presented in 1 Samuel 20. From 1 Samuel 20, it can be concluded that חֹדֶשׁ feasts expressed loyalty, power, and social reciprocity, and also that a failure to fulfil this condition was taken as an insult or a threat. Does the feast "symbolize group boundaries"?[138] It would appear so, notably also in the monarchic period, between families and other special interest groups. It cannot easily be said that such a feast in later times involved the exclusion of Gentiles, but the issue of ritual purity has certain implications. In Sanders' discussion of Gentiles and ritual purity in the Hellenistic period, he argued that in certain cases, the purity laws did not necessarily apply to Gentiles at all, and the Law only applies when the law of 'sojourners' applies (for example, Deuteronomy 5:14ff.). If Gentiles attended, providing purity laws did not apply to them, as some contend, then this does perhaps imply a legal distinction an insider/outsider Jew/Gentile dichotomy. Different rules would apply to different parties in the same setting. With this in mind, two broad possibilities remain: either Gentiles were excluded from such meals, or they were occasionally admitted, but subject to different purity laws. In either case a group boundary *may* have been played out and symbolised in the feast by the fact that in the same context, a potentially different set of regulations applied to Gentiles to that which applied to Jews.

Perhaps more importantly, by the Hellenistic period, חֹדֶשׁ appears to have gained a paradigmatic status, expressed in the book of Judith. Jewish meals in the Hellenistic period implied membership, internal cohesion, and hierarchy. As seen in the book of Judith, for example, the heroine's model behaviour cannot be associated with any particular sect,[139] and is intended to bear a 'national' quality.[140] From the same context, also, we see once again that this behaviour is elevated to the status of 'Israel'. Israel is the main concern of that work, and Judith is presented as a heroine who saves Israel. A conception of what a paradigm of a member of Israel is, and what she does, is associated with, and includes, new moon observance.

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[137] Hayden 2001: 30. Hayden's emphasis.
[138] Neyrey 1996: 159.
[139] Grabbe 1994: 178.
[140] Moore 1985: 86.

From the cessation of work which was associated with חֹדֶשׁ, observance of new moon days seems to have been commonplace. This cessation of certain types of work implies observance on a wide scale, observance that was not the peculiarity of a sect. It appears that this was a particularly old tradition, which was in all likelihood a response to the perceived sanctified and propitious quality of that day. From the reference in 1 Maccabees 10, it would certainly seem that freedom from various obligations on new moons was an important issue which affected the patterns of Jews at large, and whose guarantee was seen as a positive step in the 'national'-type narrative of 1 Maccabees.

CHAPTER 5

THE CALENDARS OF THE *ASTRONOMICAL BOOK* (*1 ENOCH* 72-82) AND *JUBILEES* AND THE ROLE OF *ḤŌDEŠ* IN THE RITUAL AND SYMBOLIC WORLD OF THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

When examining the ritual life as portrayed in texts from Qumran, a multiplicity of calendar traditions is encountered.[1] There has been much discussion and little agreement in relation to the Qumran calendar question. This issue cannot be resolved in the present work. However, two calendar traditions which have often been thought to bear influence on the writings of the Qumran *Yahad*,[2] and on its subsequent arrangement of holy days and festivals, are introduced: that of the *Astronomical Book* of *1 Enoch* (72-82), and the calendar of the *Book of Jubilees*. In Part 1, the view that the calendar in the *Astronomical Book* is ultimately a lunar or lunisolar calendar, which is synchronised with the courses of the sun, is presented (although it is noted that the 'solar' aspect of this synchronised system is *pseudo*-astronomical). In Part 2, an outline of the calendar of the *Book of Jubilees* is given. The author of *Jubilees* draws from the 'solar' tradition of the *Astronomical Book*, but notably departs from the latter tradition in a purging of any lunar calendation. Thus, *Jubilees* presents a calendar which, while based on a section of the *Astronomical Book*, is nevertheless potentially quite different in nature to the lunar-based calendar therein.

A calendrical tradition from the Dead Sea Scrolls which has received considerable attention is the body of texts known as the *Mishmarot* traditions.[3] While this group of texts certainly presents itself as an independent category of calendrical tradition, it is noted here that it does not constitute a calendar in the same sense that those of the *Astronomical Book* and *Jubilees* do. The *Mishmarot* texts rather present lists of schedules for the courses of the priests as they are envisaged to work in the Temple, closer to the modern understanding of 'calendar' in English. In presenting the

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[1] Calendrical texts presented by VanderKam (1998), some of which are discussed here, are: 4QPs(a) XXVII "David's Compositions"; *The Temple Scroll*; 1QpHab (*Pesher* Habbakuk); 1QS (*The Rule of the Community*); CD (*The Damascus Document*); 1QM (*The War Scroll*); *The Hymn Scroll* (*Hodayot*); 4QMMT (The 'Halakhic Letter'); 4Q327 (4QCalendrical Document E); 4Q317 (4QPhases of the Moon); 4Q320 (4QCalendrical Document A or Mishmarot A); Q319 (4QOtot [= signs]); 4Q321 (4QCalendrical Document B). More poorly preserved texts: 4Q321; 4Q322; 4Q323; 4Q324; 4Q325; 4Q326; 4Q328; 4Q329; 4Q330. See Talmon 2001: 7ff. on the classification of calendar-related documents and their categories in the DSS; Shemesh 2001: 245-63 presents a concordance of Qumran Cave 4 calendrical documents in the same volume.

[2] The term יחד indicates unity and togetherness, and, while occurring outside the Qumran corpus, is nevertheless used exclusively in a group of texts from Qumran in the strict sense of self-designation. The term occurs sixty-three times in the *Community Rule* alone, and is therefore often employed by modern scholars to designate the main community behind many of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Another community self-designation in Qumran texts is עצה (cf. Arnold 2006: 33ff.). It is understood, however, that not all of the texts from Qumran originate from a single community.

[3] See Talmon 2001: 93-154; Feldman 2004: 98ff; VanderKam 1998: 77-80; Beckwith 2001: 120-124.

reckoning systems potentially utilised by the Qumran *Yahad*, the initial focus here is on those of the *Astronomical Book* and *Jubilees*.

An exhaustive treatment of the calendars of the Qumran community is not attempted. Rather, the aim is to continue to focus on the role of חֹדֶשׁ in ritual and social life. In doing so, evidence is nevertheless presented for alternative calendars in the *Astronomical Book* and *Jubilees* (Parts 1 and 2). Following this, an examination of certain Qumran texts is undertaken in order to reconstruct some of the monthly ritual practice associated with the *Yahad*; an alternative provenance for certain texts is also noted where applicable (Part 3). Finally, two prevailing points of view regarding the utilisation there of the 364-day calendar of the *Book of Jubilees* are noted, and based on these points of view, three hypotheses regarding the relation of חֹדֶשׁ ritual to that community and its calendar are constructed and assessed (Part 4). This leads, inevitably, to several observations on the Qumran *Yahad*'s relationship with contemporary Jewish groups.

1. SOME NOTES ON THE CALENDAR OF THE *ASTRONOMICAL BOOK* OF *1 ENOCH* (72-82)

The *Astronomical Book* or *Book of the Luminaries* in *1 Enoch* (*Ethiopic Enoch*) 72-82 contains numerous references to the courses of the sun, the moon, and the stars. The book's prescription states that their motions were revealed to Enoch by the angel Uriel (*1 Enoch* 72:1), and what is described throughout appears to be a synchronised calendar of 364 days, in a triennial cycle, one of whose determinative units is the lunation. The exact date of composition of the *Astronomical Book* is uncertain. Some of the calendrical principles appear to date to the seventh century BCE,[4] but the Jewish text itself is not held to be that early. Based on the earliest Qumran fragments of the work (late third or early second century BCE),[5] it has been suggested that the *Astronomical Book* was written some time in the third century BCE.[6]

After the prescription, the author of the *Astronomical Book* proceeds to describe the movement of the sun through various 'gates' over the course of 364 days (*1 Enoch* 72:2-37). Each gate is the approximate equivalent of a month in length. This period of 364 days is referred to as a full year (*1 Enoch* 72:32). This year begins on the day after the vernal equinox, and is divided into twelve 'months': two months of 30 days are followed by one of 31; the thirty-first day of this third month is the summer solstice. Another two months of 30 days are referred to, followed by another of 31, whose thirty-first day is the autumnal equinox. The same pattern follows, through the winter solstice, to the completion of this 'year' at the vernal equinox three months later. This year is divided evenly into four seasons, each of 91 days:

$30 + 30 + 31 = 91$

$91 \times 4 = 364$

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[4] cf. Ben-Dov & Horowitz 2005: 108; Feldman 2004: 85.

[5] Ben-Dov & Horowitz 2005: 108; Milik 1976: 7. At Qumran, manuscripts of Enoch were discovered variously dating from the late third/early second century BCE, the middle and second half of the first century BCE, and the early first century CE.

[6] Nickelsburg & VanderKam 2004: 6; Aune 2001: 148; Davidson 1992: 18-19.

The scheme so-far described refers only to the sun. This section of the *Astronomical Book* is astronomical only, and makes no reference to the structuring of human activity. In isolation, it is not always considered a calendar in the strictest sense.[7]

The *Astronomical Book* proceeds to refer to the movements and phases of the moon: the illumination of the moon's surface is described, as well as the moon's course (*1 Enoch* 73). *1 Enoch* 74 proceeds to further describe the course of the moon, but the Ethiopic text is disturbed here, as although the text introduces the moon as subject to a similar law (74:1), and indicates that this luminary does, in fact, have a specifically calendric function (73:4), the text breaks off into additional information regarding the discrepancies between the sun's and moon's courses, and fails to complete a comprehensive description of the moon's phases. According to Nickelsburg and VanderKam, it appears that in chapters 73 and 74 the author is "...severely abbreviating a lengthier table which supplied such information for a much longer time, possibly even an entire year".[8] Fragments of *Astronomical Enoch* (4QEnastr) found at Qumran may serve to render a reconstruction of this part of the text.[9] The Ethiopic text begins to describe the illumination of the moon's surface in parts of fourteen. Its movement is also described in terms of the 'gates' it traverses (*1 Enoch* 73:1-74:9). The fragmentary nature of the text is also indicated by the author's comment that the moon "brings about the years precisely" (*1 Enoch* 74:12) without including a description or explanation of how it does so.

Various luni-solar cycles are known to the author of the *Astronomical Book*: reference is made to a 3-year period, as well as the 8-year 'octaeteris'.[10] The reconstructions, or expansions, of *1 Enoch* based on the Aramaic fragments from Qumran present, in Stern's words: "...a systematic synchronization of solar and lunar

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[7] Cf. Stern 2001: 5, who suggests that the "main thrust" of the text is astronomical. Calendars, unlike the above astronomical information, function to coordinate human activity and communal life (Stern 2001: v).

[8] Nickelsburg & VanderKam 2004: 100 n. *n*. Knibb described this part of the Ethiopic text as a "garbled summary" of the description in *Astronomical Enoch* from the Qumran fragments (Knibb 1978: 171.)

[9] Milik 1976: 274-5; Milik's work provides a comprehensive description of the fragments of 4QEnastr (1976: 139-272). cf. Nickelsburg & VanderKam 2004: 100 n. *n*.; 4Q208; 4Q209 Fragment 7 ii-iii; 4Q209 Fragment 25; 4Q210. Stern is less certain that the Aramaic fragments provide an original text, suggesting that they may be a commentary or expansion of the original text (Stern 2001:6). He does not, however, relate this to the probability that the Ethiopic text is interrupted or abbreviated.

[10] In the octaeteris a total of three 30-day lunations are intercalated over an 8-year cycle in order to balance the solar and lunar years (Stern 2001: 6).

calendars that conforms precisely to the 3-year cycle".[11] The illumination of the moon's surface is more systematically described in the Qumran fragments, again in parts of fourteen. This 3-year cycle consists of alternating lunations of 29 and 30 days, with a lunar year of 354 days[12] (the astronomical length of an ordinary lunar 'year'), although ultimately the moon's phases are integrated into a 364-day year, as will be discussed.[13]

The calendar described in *1 Enoch* appears to be lunisolar. A solar ephemeris is described (*1 Enoch* 72:2-37) with which the lunar months were apparently synchronised. The phases of the moon are described in terms of the illumination of its surface, in portions of 14. The lunar month in this system begins with the first appearance of the lunar crescent:

> ...it emerges on the thirtieth day [of the outgoing lunation], and on that day it is visible. It becomes for you the beginning of the month on the thirtieth day with the sun in the gate where the sun emerges... all its [the moon's] disc is empty, with no light except its seventh part, one-fourteenth part of its light (*1 Enoch* 73:4-5).[14]

Here it seems that the first crescent is described: by the author's system of describing the illumination of the moon, the minimum amount of light is described: 1/14. The occurrence of this on the *thirtieth* day indicates that a month of 29 days has just passed (the 30th therefore being the first day of the next, new month). The Enochic calendar seems therefore to be based around the lunation, and it has been suggested that the development of a 364-day year was a theoretical solution to the problem of the difference between the lengths of the total of twelve lunations (354 days) and the solar, or in this case stellar, 'year'.[15]

The Mesopotamian Background of 'Enochic' Astronomy

The problem facing lunisolar calendars and their constant need for rectification can be articulated simply and approximately as follows:

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[11] Stern 2001: 6.
[12] Stern 2001: 13.
[13] Milik 1976: 7.
[14] Translations of *1 Enoch* are from Nickelsburg & VanderKam 2004.
[15] cf. Feldman 2004: 90-91.

12 lunations = 354 days (approximately six 29-day months and six 30-day months)
1 solar/stellar year = 365.25 days (approx.)

Difference = 11.25 days (approx.)

It has been argued that the astronomy of *1 Enoch* is based on Mesopotamian astronomy known from the scientific tradition of MUL.APIN and the omen tablets of *Enuma Anu Enlil*.[16] These traditions contain basic rules for a lunar calendar, expressed in idealized mathematical schemes.[17] An ideal 360-day year is presented, divided by ideal lunations. Due to its impracticability and failure to align with the observed movements of the luminaries, this is thought by some to have been a didactic and theoretical model, rather than a practical one.[18]

The Mesopotamian 360-day calendar had a system for intercalation, involving observation of the moon and certain rising stars. This system assumes a 10-day epact per year, so every three years an additional ideal 30-day lunation was intercalated. One of the main differences between this Mesopotamian tradition and the subsequent Enochic calendar tradition is that the Enochic year is 364 days rather than 360.[19] However, it has been observed that the schemes are in fact similar, and that some of the principles of the Mesopotamian tradition are present in the Enochic one. The mathematics of the ideal Mesopotamian tradition can still be brought to bear on actual calendrical practice, and this is exhibited in the Enochic calendar.[20]

First of all, the lunations of the Enochic calendar are not only ideal, but relatively consistent with astronomical lunations: their lengths alternate between 29 and 30 days.[21] Although this strict alternation between 29 and 30-day months can be

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[16] Ben-Dov & Horowitz 2005: 108; Feldman 2004: 85; Glessmer 1996: 259-82; Horowitz 1996: 35-44; cf. Stern 2001: 8.
[17] Ben-Dov & Horowitz 2005: 105.
[18] Stern 2001: 8.
[19] cf. Feldman 2004: 87
[20] cf. Feldman 2004: 85ff.
[21] This is not always exactly the same as the way the moon's phases occur at all times, but alternating months between 29 and 30 days long (1) ensures that the calendar is always at *most* a single day out of synchronization with the moon's phases, and (2) that the total number of calendar days accumulated over a period of time will still be consonant with the moon's phases with a maximum inaccuracy of a single day, even after many years have passed. Jewish months, while usually 'lunar', are never exactly coincident with astronomical lunations, since this is never absolutely necessary or even practical.

described as 'schematic', the Enochic lunations seem nevertheless to be true lunar months. Secondly, it has been noted that, if the average of three years of lunar months plus one 30-day intercalated lunation (the principle of triennial intercalation of the above Mesopotamian system) is calculated, the result is 364. This reflects the Mesopotamian traditions, where a 30 day lunation is added to the year every 3 years. This part of the Enochic system broadly represents correct lunar calendation:

1 lunar year = 12 lunations ((6 × 29 days) + (6 × 30 days)) = 354 days.

The system can be seen to be based on the same principals as the Mesopotamian system of triennial intercalation when the following is considered:

354 + 354 + 354 + 30 (3 lunar years + 1 intercalated lunation of 30 days) = 1092 days;

1092 ÷ 3 = 364 (the average number of days per lunar year after triennial intercalation).

Thus, it appears that the earliest record of the 364-day year in Jewish sources (the *Astronomical Book*) is not, in fact, the introduction of a distinct 'solar' or schematic calendar, which was seen as anachronistic with the lunar or luni-solar calendar. The 364-day year, was, in fact, a theoretical harmonization of the lunar year with the solar year.[22] This number of days was originally the result of a system of luni-solar intercalation.[23] The calendar was still focussed around the lunation. The determinative unit of time was the lunation of 29 or 30 days. The numbers of days in the lunation dictate most of the subsequent multiples of calendrical mathematics. According to Feldman:

> This still reflected the cultural predisposition that gave primacy to the moon over the sun as the key building block of the calendar, plus the key assumption that there was a

[22] cf. Feldman 2004: 91. We should note, however, that this triennial system was neither, in fact, the most advanced nor the most efficient one in the Near East or the Eastern Mediterranean at the time of the composition of the *Astronomical Book*.

[23] This is further supported by the fact that, as Stern notes, the author must have been aware that a solar year was not, in fact, 364 days long. This is evidenced by knowledge of the octaeteris, whose system presupposes a solar/stellar year of 365¼ days (Stern 2001: 6 n. 21). It appears, therefore, that the construction of a theoretical 'solar' year of 364 days was as a result of lunar arithmetic, since it is clear that the solar year is not 364 days long.

> synchronous relationship between the lengths of the lunation, the stellar year, and the solar year.[24]

The calendar of the *Astronomical Book* of *1 Enoch* shows very little interest in the sabbath.[25] It is concerned mainly with astronomical calculation with reference to the sun, moon, and stars, leading Stern to conclude that the "main thrust" of the book is astronomical rather than calendrical.[26] Similarly, the author shows little interest in describing associated rituals or festivals, apart from a brief reference (*1 Enoch* 82:8-10).

In relation to how these astronomical laws may have been conceived to apply theoretically to humanity, for the author of the *Astronomical Book*, further details are considered. There is a small but significant difference between the treatment of the law of the sun (describing solar 'months' of 30 and 31 days long in terms of the 'gates' in which the sun rises and sets) and the law of the moon which should be noted in particular. The movements of the sun are merely described with no reference to human activity (*1 Enoch* 72:2-35). The moon, however, is treated differently. When Uriel describes the beginning of the lunar month as the appearance of the crescent, he tells Enoch:

> It becomes for you the beginning of the month on the thirtieth day… (*1 Enoch* 73:4).

Although this reference is brief, it is significant in its contrast with the section regarding the law of the sun and solar "months", which contains no reference to human activity. It might be deduced from this that the law of the sun is merely 'astronomical', and not calendrical in strictest sense, whereas the law of the moon is acknowledged to have some significance in the structuring of human life. The 'Law of the Sun' expresses, to some extent, the 'solar' backdrop of any Jewish calendar. When the lunar cycle was used, as it is today, to reckon holy days (apart from sabbaths) and festivals, it was always the case that it was employed in conversation with the solar

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[24] Feldman 2004: 88.

[25] Feldman 2004: 96. Feldman does note that the 364-day year of the Enochic calendar has clear advantages for priests who may have had a "sabbatarian" ideology "since this divides evenly into 13 weeks per season and 52 weeks per year" (2004: 69). He acknowledges, however, that the *Astronomical Book* nevertheless demonstrates no interest in the sabbath, nor necessarily even any awareness of it.

[26] Stern 2001: 5.

year, because festivals, on the lunar cycle, had always to be observed at appropriate stages in the agricultural cycle.[27] The 'Law of the Sun' in the *Astronomical Book* is not necessarily anachronistic with, or opposed to, the lunar cycles. Rather, the sun is an integral element, as in almost any Jewish calendar.[28]

The law of the stars, however, is imbued with liturgical significance of some kind, as festivals of the stars are referred to. This may refer to the practice of observing the rising of certain stars in order to use them as a fixed reference to rectify the lunar year with the solar/stellar year, a practice common to many lunisolar calendar systems, including Jewish ones. In a Jewish liturgical calendar, it could be ensured that Passover, for example (on a lunar cycle), occurred in the correct agricultural season (on a solar/stellar cycle) by observing the sun's course through the celestial equator, thus linking the timing of festivals directly with the stars.[29]

Regarding the accuracy of the calendar system in *1 Enoch*, an important point should be made. The scientific knowledge contained in the *Astronomical Book* has been referred to by some as 'pseudo-astronomy'.[30] This reference is obviously correct, since the solar/stellar year certainly does not total 364 days. The year is described as ending on the vernal equinox, but after a single year of 364 days, the true vernal equinox would not yet have arrived! Furthermore, this discrepancy would accumulate year by year. Conversely, in terms of lunar phases, the astronomy of *1 Enoch* may have been largely correct.[31] While an alteration between 29-day and 30-day months would not always synchronise exactly with the moon's appearance from

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[27] The Islamic calendar is not reckoned in this manner, but is purely lunar, and the Muslim festivals therefore migrate through the agricultural cycle from year to year (cf. Rochberg 1995: 1931).

[28] Ironically, when the calendar of *Jubilees*, which appears to contain purging of lunar calendation in exclusive favour of the sun, is examined, it is evident that, in reality, the *pseudo*-astronomical (and hence purely 'schematic') nature of this calendar implies that it is, in fact, the only Jewish calendar which we are aware of which, in practice, potentially *ignores* the movements of the sun!

[29] Stern discusses the 'rule of the equinox', for example, which prescribed that Passover should occur after the vernal equinox (Stern 2001: 50-53). Whether this was a tradition associated with the author of the *Astronomical Book* or not (and there is nothing in the text to either support or refute this), it may nevertheless attest to the association of observing the courses of the stars and the sun in order to calculate the correct timing of festivals on the lunar cycle. The rule of the equinox was probably a later innovation, but it is not unreasonable to suggest that similar, if less codified, methods were used in a similar manner in earlier times. Horowitz noted that the stars were often used in conjunction with the other luminaries due to the ease with which they can be observed (1996: 38 n. 8).

[30] For example Bickerman 1984: 68.

[31] This is especially evident if we accept Milik's assertion that the calendar of *1 Enoch* can be shown to have a close relationship with 4QEnastr (cf. Milik 1976: 274-5).

earth, a calendar based on this principle, as has been noted, would not amount to more than a single day's lapse between the astronomical lunations and the calendar months. Moreover, as also noted, the number of days accumulated over many calendrical lunar months would ultimately always balance with the total number of days in respective lunations. Years of 364 days, on the other hand, would quickly lead to discrepancy.[32]

The synchronised calendar in the *Astronomical Book* of *1 Enoch* includes descriptions of the cycles of the sun, the moon, and the stars. The reconstructed lunar calendrical information is feasibly practicable. The information regarding the stars and sun, however, is incorrect, and would inevitably lead to the total confusion of the months with the agricultural year (a disaster for the Jewish calendar). This inaccuracy has led Stern to suggest that the Enochic calendar was not intended to be implemented, but, like the Mesopotamian traditions mentioned, was probably intended as a theoretical model:

> ...the astronomical book of *Enoch* is unlikely to inform us, therefore, about actual calendrical practice. After all, the stated purpose of the book (in 72.1) is to reveal the courses of the sun and moon, rather than to prescribe the observance of any specific calendar.[33]

[32] Furthermore, we are unaware of a correcting procedure for this discrepancy. This, in particular, has led scholars to doubt the calendar's practical application (cf. Milik 1976: 14; Stern 2001: 7).
[33] Stern 2001: 8.

2. THE SCHEMATIC CALENDAR OF *THE BOOK OF JUBILEES*

According to J. C. VanderKam, one of the main arguments in the Book of *Jubilees*,

> ...appears to be an attempt to bring the Enochic solar calendar into direct contact with the biblical traditions of sabbaths and holidays.[34]

The calendar presented by the author of the book of *Jubilees* uses the '*Astronomical Book*' in *1 Enoch* (72-82) as a source, and favours the description of the 'Rule of the Sun' (in the *Astronomical Book*) as the actual calendar to be followed by Israel.[35] This text is usually thought to date to the second century BCE.[36] The year, in the Jubilean calendar, consists of 364 days (*Jubilees* 6:32). This is divided into four seasons of 91 days each. Each season contains 3 months of 30, 30, and 31 days. The first days of months 1, 4, 7, and 10, the first day of each season or part, are "Days of Remembrance"; each is ordained as a feast (*Jubilees* 6:23-29).[37] The Jubilean year of 364 days divides exactly into 52 weeks (*Jubilees* 6:30). Thus, the calendar of *Jubilees* is based on the pseudo-astronomy of the *Astronomical Book* (the 'Law of the Sun', *1 Enoch* 72:2-37), but it should be noted that it also differs sharply from the latter, in that the *Astronomical Book*, nevertheless, envisages a fundamentally lunar aspect, whereas the calendar of *Jubilees*, conversely, is *schematic* and not observational at all (even if superficially related to the sun).[38] Because this strictly schematic form is to be implemented, the courses of the luminaries are in practice relatively insignificant to *Jubilees*' calendar. Certainly the moon, while obviously the original source of the *concept* of the month (which still approximates the length of a lunation) is no longer a calendrical device. Indeed, it has been noted that the author of *Jubilees* initially ignores the moon as a calendrical device, associating months with the sun instead:

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[34] VanderKam 1998: 33.

[35] Stern 2001: 10; cf. *Jubilees* 4:17-25, where the author describes the figure Enoch as one who wrote a book of calendrical importance (presumably *1 Enoch* 72-82). As noted, the *Astronomical Book* describes the twelve solar 'months' of 30 and 31 days that are referred to by the author of *Jubilees*. The author of the *Astronomical Book* does not indicate that this sequence was indeed to be followed as a calendar, and proceeds to describe a lunar calendar, which was apparently the one to be followed by humans (*1 Enoch* 73:4). This is not the position of the author of *Jubilees*, who takes the *Astronomical Book*'s description of the sun's 'months', and insists on their calendrical function, purging the moon of calendrical significance.

[36] Stern 2001: 10; VanderKam 1998: 27; Wintermute 1985: 34; Schurer 1973: 308-18, 256.

[37] This structure is almost the same as with the order of solar 'months' in *1 Enoch*, except in the case of *Jubilees*, rather than being considered the thirty-first days of the 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 12th, months (*1 Enoch*), the calendar of *Jubilees* considers these days to be the *1st* days of months 1, 4, 7, and 10.

[38] Cf. Wintermute (1985: 56), who aptly described the 364-day year of *Jubilees* as "quasi-solar".

> And the Lord set the sun as a great sign upon the earth for days, sabbaths, months, feast (days), years, sabbaths of years, jubilees, and for all of the (appointed) times of the years… (Jubilees 2:9).[39]

Notably absent, in contrast to the creation account in Genesis 1, is the moon. The 'months' of the author are, moreover, apparently associated with the sun here.[40] Later, the author actually condemns lunar calendation outright. As Feldman suggests, "In *Jubilees*, the lunation is vehemently purged".[41] The months, it seems, are measured schematically. The calendar of *Jubilees* leans in favour of what it refers to as "the rule of the sun" (4:21). While the description of the paths of the sun in *1 Enoch* is apparently the primary source for the Jubilean calendar, and while indeed the sun features as an important symbol for the ideology behind this calendar,[42] modern commentators should not refer to the Jubilean calendar as a "solar calendar";[43] the calendar therein is schematic. The 'astronomy' on which it is based (the 'solar' astronomy of the *Astronomical Book* of *1 Enoch*), as has been discussed, is unquestionably *pseudo-astronomy*: the solar year does not last 364 days.[44] There are certain other notable features of this calendar. If the year consisted of 52 weeks (364 days) exactly, then the year always began on the same day of the week. Similarly, feast days would have occurred on the same day of the week each year.[45] Without correction, the calendar would fall behind the actual solar year by approximately 1¼ days each year, 12½ days after ten years, and so on.

The present work is concerned with Jewish months. While the author of *Jubilees* condemns those who reckon their calendar by the moon, nevertheless the month remains a fundamental feature in the calendar, as, according to Wintermute, in the author's society, "…the concept of 'month' was too important in dating to be

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[39] Translations of *Jubilees* are from Wintermute 1985.
[40] Wintermute associated this reference with the author's "…strident opposition to lunar calculations" (1985: 56).
[41] Feldman 2004: 77.
[42] Cf. Stern (2001: 10), who points out that the Jubilean author's reworking of Genesis 1 is "deliberate", and ascribes the sun the function of a sign for "Sabbaths and for month and for feasts and for years" (*Jubilees* 2:9).
[43] See, for example, VanderKam 1998: 27-33.
[44] As noted in relation to the solar element of the *Astronomical Book*, we are similarly unaware of any intercalation scheme, either in *Jubilees* or in any of the Qumran documents, by which this year was rectified with the actual solar year of approximately 365¼ days.
[45] Stern 2001: 10-11.

disregarded".[46] The months of the Jubilean calendar were schematic, and their beginnings occurred at points throughout the year which bore only a chance relationship with the current lunar phase. Regarding the significance of the beginning of the month in this system, Fritz Wilke pointed out an interesting feature of the *Book of Jubilees* which is relevant to our discussion:

> Der Verfasser der „Kleinen Genesis", des sogenannten „Buchs der Jubiläen", bemüht sich um 100 v. Chr. sogar zu zeigen, daß dem Neumond seit jeher für die heilige Geschichte eine hohe Bedeutung zugekommen sei.[47]

Wilke was perhaps inaccurate in referring to "*Neumond*" because of the Jubilean author's purging of the moon's role in its calendar.[48] All of the references which Wilke cited are dated according to *Jubilees*' calendar, and therefore probably refer to moments at the beginning of schematic months, rather than lunar ones.[49] While it has been noted that *Jubilees* does not give calendrical significance to the moon, there are nevertheless two important points of continuity in that text from previous ritual life: (1) The 'month', even if no longer reckoned by the moon's phases, retains its place as a fundamental division of time; (2) the beginning of the month (the first day), also retains status as an important moment in the author's worldview. The examples that Wilke referred to exhibit a propitious and religious quality having been associated with the first of the month, despite the fact that this day is apparently not, in *Jubilees*, associated with the new moon itself. The events described as having occurred at the beginnings of months range in significance from important moments in the "salvation history",[50] such as Adam and Eve's exit from the garden of Eden (*Jubilees* 3:32), and the first appearance of dry land after the flood (*Jubilees* 5:30-31), to events of a particularly cultic focus, such as Noah's sacrifice after disembarking from the ark (*Jubilees* 6:1). *Jubilees* 6:36-38 also appears to refer to the continued importance of

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[46] Wintermute 1985: 39.
[47] Wilke 1951: 177. On the alternative title, "The Little Genesis", see Wintermute 1985: 41.
[48] Despite the apparent simplicity of *Jubilees*' calendar, VanderKam notes considerable confusion in pre-Qumran scholarship on *Jubilees* (VanderKam 1998: 31-32). This may provide context for Wilke's omission of this detail. He may not have been aware of many of the details of the emerging Qumran texts as his article was submitted for publication. In fact, the issue of the Qumran calendar emerged particularly only after the publication of an article by Talmon (1951: 549-63).
[49] Cf. Wintermute (1985: 60 n. g), who stated: "There is no way that a new moon would be able to coincide on a regular basis with the first of every month in that system". Similarly, Jaubert (1953: 255 n. 1) argued that the "nouvelle lune" of *Jubilees* was not lunar. See *Jubilees* 3:32; 5:23, 29; 6:1, 24, 25, 26; 7:1; 14:1, 20; 16:1; 44:1, for the dates to which Wilke referred.
[50] cf. Keel 1998: 108; Wilke 1951: 177.

the first day of the month (or at least the 'month' in relation to ritual), warning the reader against those who examine the moon diligently and subsequently confuse the months.

Jubilees' calendar, according to Stern, differs from the description of 'solar' months in the *Astronomical Book* of *1 Enoch* (72-82), in that the former may have been intended to be observed in practice.[51] There are various features of the text of *Jubilees* which have led commentators to conclude that the calendar presented therein was of a sectarian, or at least marginal, nature in late Second Temple times.[52] Particularly telling is the assertion that

> ...all of the sons of Israel will forget, and they will not find the way of the years. And they will forget about the new moons[53] and (appointed) times, and sabbaths. And they will set awry all of the ordinances of the years (*Jubilees* 6:34).

This passage provides an indication of the socially marginal nature of the calendar of *Jubilees* and its associated observances. Whether or not it is accepted that the Jubilean calendar is the original one of Israel, the author refers to an alternative calendar being observed by *all* Israel. It may be suggested from this that the calendar of *Jubilees* was observed, at the time of the work's composition, by a minority group. It is also notable that the author of *Jubilees* describes the angel of the presence telling Moses that this calendrical deviance would occur after Moses' death, but any further chronological reference to it is left unspecified (*Jubilees* 6:38). It may be drawn from this that the apparently widespread calendar (the calendar of "*all* the sons of Israel"),

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[51] Stern 2001: 10. This is evidenced in *Jubilees*' continued interest in the timing of months and festivals, as opposed to the *Astronomical Book*'s respective lack of interest. Concerning calendrical issues, the views of the author of *Jubilees*, in VanderKam's opinion, "...differ sharply from those of the person who wrote the *Astronomical Book* and who incorporated the moon into his scheme for measuring time". At some point between the third century BCE and the mid-second century, he suggests, lunar calendars became problematic for the author of *Jubilees*, and the author's associated group. VanderKam suggests that this may have been the result of the use of Hellenistic calendars in Palestine (VanderKam 1998: 28, 32). The tone of *Jubilees* indeed suggests that due to the similarity between the older Jewish luni-solar calendar and other Hellenistic luni-solar calendars (whether Babylonian or Macedonian), the author may well have drawn from the *Astronomical Book* of *1 Enoch* in order to discover and implement a distinctively *Jewish* calendar, over against the lunar ones which characterised many of the cultures of the Near East.

[52] cf. Stern 2001: 11.

[53] Again, here understand the first days of schematic months. According to VanderKam, "It is difficult to imagine what going astray for the first day of the month might involve unless the author and is circle calculated it differently than others did" (VanderKam 1998: 28). Cf., however, Chapter 8 of the present work, where we find that the first day of the month in the lunar calendar is a particularly uncertain one.

to which the Jubilean author is opposed, had long been observed by Jews, since Israel's supposed error is potentially rooted in such distant past. According to Stern:

> The polemic in these passages implies that at the time when *Jubilees* was written, the lunar calendar must have been widely used; adherents to the calendar of *Jubilees* may have been no more than marginal.[54]

[54] Stern 2001: 11. Wintermute also acknowledged that the author of *Jubilees* may have been a member of "a small band of Hasidim", although he did not believe that this necessarily implied that the group had "...yet broken sharply away from the larger Jewish community". He did, however, describe the calendar of *Jubilees* as a "special calendar of 364 days... that was adopted by the particular Jewish community to which the author belonged"; the group he also described as a "zealous, conservative, pious segment of Judaism" (Wintermute 1985: 38). We may be best, in relation to *Jubilees*, to speak of its context in such terms, rather than 'sectarianism', because, as Feldman notes, "...it does not express awareness of a schism between various groups" (Feldman 2004: 121-22).

3. MONTHLY RITUAL IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Regarding the community thought to be associated with the site of Qumran and much of the literature discovered there, Daniel K. Falk argues:

> There can be little question that the Yahad had developed an extensive and comprehensive liturgical cycle without parallel in the Second Temple period among the average population of Jews.[55]

Despite this assertion, and the fact that the literature which survives from Qumran contains numerous calendrical, liturgical, and astronomical texts, it has been noted that, comparatively, very few of them actually refer explicitly to monthly *ritual* of any kind.[56] Indeed, the Qumran community possessed, copied, and preserved many of the biblical and other texts already examined in the present work, but their possession of these texts apparently did not result in the prominent survival of חֹדֶשׁ[57] related evidence in their literature. Are we to conclude from this that the feast was of minimal importance, then, to the Qumran *Yahad*? Here, several texts which assert the place of monthly ritual at Qumran are examined.[58]

4QNon-Canonical Psalms B

4Q381 is a collection of fragments of pseudepigraphical psalms which are ascribed to various named and unnamed figures, such as Manesseh, an unnamed "Man of God", and a king of Judah whose name is lost from the manuscript.[59] E. M. Schuller describes fragment 1 from this collection as a "creation psalm": "...an extended retelling of the account of creation in a psalmic context".[60] The order of events includes praise of God's power and wisdom (line 2), his creation of heaven and earth by an oath (line 3), his power over water features (line 4), luminaries (line 5), and vegetation (line 6).[61] Schuller admits lines 7-10 are ambiguous, but suggests that the

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[55] Falk 1998: 253. As two possible exceptions to this statement, Falk refers to the Essenes as described by Philo and Josephus (in the event that this group is not the Qumran *Yahad*), and the Therapeutae.
[56] cf. Arnold 2006: 156.
[57] The term is often spelled in the *plene* (חודש) in the DSS.
[58] It is understood that the texts which survive from Qumran do not necessarily reflect the composition and archives of a single community, but may reflect a diversity of authors, communities, and periods. As each Qumran fragment is dealt with herein, possible divergences in origin will be noted.
[59] Schuller 1998: 90.
[60] Schuller 1998: 91, 92.
[61] Schuller observes that the order of this creation account is neither dependent on that of Genesis 1 nor on older creation psalms (Schuller 1998: 92-93).

subject of line 7 may be the luminaries, while line 8 more clearly describes the calendar:[62]

7 את א[שתו] וברוחו העמידם למשל בכל אלה באדמה ובכל [

8 [לח]דש ב[ח]דֿש למועד במועד ליום ביום לאכל פריה תנובבֿ[הארץ

9 [ ]◦◦ ◦ [ ]◦ ועוף וֿכֿל אֿשֿר להם לאכל חֿלבֿיֿ כל וגם[

7. with [his] w[ife]. And by his breath he made them stand, to rule over all these on earth and over all [

8. [mon]th by [m]onth, sacred festival by sacred festival, day by day, to eat its fruit (that) [the land] makes flourish [

9. [ ] .. . [ ]. and birds and all which is theirs, to eat the choicest of all, and also [

(4Q381 Frg. 1, lines7-9)[63]

While a precise date for the composition of either the collection or any of the psalms in particular is probably not accessible, Schuller suggests that the Persian or early Hellenistic period should be considered the original context for the corpus.[64] This early origin, with the fact that the psalms do not reflect the "distinctive sectarian vocabulary and theology" of the *Yahad*, indicates that the psalms in this corpus may not originally have been composed at Qumran, nor exclusively associated with the community which dwelt there.[65] Its preservation may indicate, however, that for the Qumran community, the month was ritually significant. The possible reference to חֹדֶשׁ here is consistent with the texts below and also with many texts outside the Qumran corpus, but its precise significance is difficult to ascertain. It may be best to follow Schuller's assertion that the text, while probably preserved by the Qumran community, reflects a broader Jewish worldview and ritual life.

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[62] Schuller 1998: 95-96.

[63] Edited text and translation from Schuller 1998: 92-94.

[64] Her criteria for reaching this conclusion include linguistic features (Late Biblical Hebrew), dependence upon or re-use of biblical texts, and theology (absence of later theological ideas) (Schuller 1998: 90).

[65] Schuller 1998: 90. Another feature which Schuller cites in support of this is the frequent use of the Tetragrammaton.

The Temple Scroll

11QTemple[a] (also known as 11Q19), *The Temple Scroll*, Col. XIV, envisages a regimen of sacrifices to be carried out on a regular basis in the Temple in Jerusalem.[66] This includes prescribed offerings for the beginnings of months. Much of the material in *The Temple Scroll* "...generally follows the Bible", as acknowledged by Vermes,[67] and this is certainly the case with the provision of sacrifices for the beginnings of months. Although quite fragmentary, Col. XIV of the scroll quotes Numbers 28. The allotment for months in the *Temple Scroll* therefore appears, after reconstruction, to be exactly the same as that prescribed in Numbers 28:11-14.[68] The animals were to be offered "on the first day of each month for the months of the year..." (11QT[a]/11Q19 XIV lines 2-10)[69]

The Manuscript of 11QT[a] has been dated to between 25 BCE and just after 25 CE.[70] The 'Festival Law', the section of the *Temple Scroll* dealing with the various feasts, including חֹדֶשׁ, and their sacrifices (Cols 13-29), is thought by some to be a later insertion into the text of the traditional text of the *Temple Scroll*.[71] According to Swanson, there are many aspects of the *Temple Scroll* and its study which lack consensus in modern scholarship. He acknowledged however, that Yigael Yadin's original premise that the Temple Scroll originated from the Qumran Community had been widely accepted, and supported by Vermes, who dated the first composition of the scroll to second century BCE.[72] Swanson concluded that certain aspects of the

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[66] For an introduction to the *Temple Scroll*, see Crawford 2000 and for commentary see Maier 1985. Detailed reconstructions of the Hebrew manuscripts of the scroll can be found in Yadin's three-volume publication (Yadin 1977-83), which contains the Hebrew text and an English translation of the introduction and notes of Yadin's *editio princeps* (Yadin 1977). More recently, a critical edition has been published by Qimron (1996). 11QT[a] is the largest intact scroll surviving from Qumran.

[67] Vermes 1997: 191; see Swanson 1995 for a systematic study of the use of the Hebrew Bible in the Scroll.

[68] See Chapter 3, Part 2, especially 122 ff. for details of these commodities. Cf. Swanson (1995: 4), who noted that the various feasts are prescribed in the *Temple Scroll* "...following the order of Numbers 28-29".

[69] 11QT[b], a second copy of the *Temple Scroll*, does not contain this section. 11QT[b] is a more fragmentary version of the Scroll, but some argue that it should be seen as a later *version* rather than just a *copy* as it contains supplementary material (cf. for example Crawford 2000: 12-13). The translation above is from Vermes 1997: 193.

[70] This manuscript appears to have been written by two scribes, the earlier of the two apparently being responsible for columns 6-66, which includes the 'Festival Law' (cf. Crawford 2000: 12).

[71] cf. Swanson 1995: 17. The earliest surviving copy of the *Temple Scroll*, 4QRouleau du Temple, is thought to be a hundred years earlier than 11QT[a], but it does not contain any material before Col. 35 of the latter, and therefore is lacking the section which deals with festivals (cf. Crawford 2000: 14).

[72] Swanson 1995: 1-2; Vermes (1997: 191) noted some "particularly striking" cases of similarity between the *Temple Scroll* and *Damascus Document*, such as "...prohibition of royal polygamy, of

scroll's content pointed to a period after the composition of Chronicles, but before the Maccabean revolt.[73] He also suggested that the Scroll was "...a Levitical redaction of the Priestly redaction of the Torah...[which] offers reasonable alternative interpretation or application of certain aspects of the law".[74] So, while it is noted that the feast of חֹדֶשׁ appears to have been prescribed in familiar terms, and envisaged as a major function of the Temple, it cannot be concluded with certainty that this understanding was originally associated with the Qumran community. It should, however, be observed that that community was interested in maintaining and developing this text and its contents.[75] The presence of a 364-day calendar of the scroll has been suggested. In reference to the beginnings of months, Körting observes that the *Temple Scroll* is associated with the schematic calendar from *Jubilees*, and as such, the beginnings of months in this context should be associated not with the beginning of a lunation, but rather with the beginning of schematic ("quasi-solar") months.[76] While this may be evident from the text, it does not decisively demonstrate that this corresponded to ritual practice at Qumran, as the scroll may portray an idealised picture.[77] This issue is explored further in Part 4.

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marriage between uncle and niece, and of marital relations within the city of the sanctuary..." He also noted similarity with the *Nahum Commentary*, but nevertheless acknowledged that the text may have a pre-Qumranic history of development.

[73] Swanson 1995: 242-243. Particularly, Swanson argued that the text dated to *before* the Maccabean revolt because it lacked any sense of crisis or schism, and pointed towards a period of stability in the cult. This, however, can be an uncertain way to date a text. There is no reason why an ancient author would not compose a text portraying stability and reliability precisely because such an environment was lacking. Apocalypse, for example, is only *one* response to crisis. Swanson's criterion here is in conflict, for example, with many scholars of the Mishnah, who argue that the order and certainty presented therein is a response to continuous *dis*order and political, economic, and religious upheaval that resulted from the two great wars against Rome in the first and second centuries CE (cf. for example, Neusner 1979: 147). Swanson's treatment, however, is thorough, and considers several options.

[74] Swanson 1995: 242.

[75] Cf., however, Laperrousaz (1989: 91-97) and Thiering (1989: 99-120), who both dated the scroll approximately to the first century BCE, and associated its contents more assertively with the Qumran sect.

[76] Körting 2004: 233 n. 6; cf. Feldman 2004: 78.

[77] The Temple and its dimensions, as described in the scroll, probably do not correspond in reality to the contemporary Jerusalem structure. The scroll probably describes an idealistic picture. We therefore cannot be certain that the calendar described therein was necessarily in current use. Declor argued that there was some connection between the Herodian Temple and that described in the *Temple Scroll*, although he admits that particular details differ (Declor 1989:67-89). Despite some similarities, however, it still appears that what is described in the *Temple Scroll* was not undertaken as a building project, and remained idealistic. Eliav, for example, notes certain "utopian" features which are drawn from Ezekiel 40-48 (Eliav 2003: 87).

***The Community Rule* (1QS 10:3-5)**

There are two notable references to the beginning of the month in *The Community Rule*. The following extract includes what appears to be a list of occasions upon which the master (משכיל) is to make an "offering of lips":[78]

3 ...במבוא מועדים לימי חודש יחד תקופתם עם

4 מסרותם זה לזה בהתחדשם יום גדול לקודש קודשים ואות נ למפתח חסדיו עולם לראשי

5 מועדים בכול קץ נהיה ברשית ירחים למועדיהם וימי קודש בתכונם לזכרון במועדיהם

3. ...at the commencement of the seasons on the days of the new moon, together with their turning-point and

4. their transmitting one to the other – when they are renewed (it is) a great day for the most holy and a sign of the release of his eternal mercies, at the heads of

5. seasons in every time to come, at the beginning of months at their appointed times, and on holy days in their fixed order, as memorials at their appointed times.[79]

Charlesworth dated the *Community Rule* to the mid-second century BCE "...and the beginning of the sect's life 'in the wilderness' at Qumran."[80] Furthermore, Charlesworth observed that "It has long been recognised that the *Rule of the Community* evolved in tandem with the needs of the Community, and reflects its ideological, social, and legislative thinking and practice as it developed over time, especially at Qumran."[81] These references should, therefore, be taken as securely indicative of the liturgical status of monthly ritual in the community. While this was probably the case, there remains uncertainty as to the precise significance of חֹדֶשׁ in this context. There are two main problems in relation to this question:

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[78] The reading "offerings of lips" is based on a reconstructed lacuna (line 26), and is uncertain. The term is nevertheless repeated, and the practice alluded to again in the following lines, lending some credence to the reconstruction (Qimron and Charlesworth 1994: 43).

[79] Text and translation from Qimron and Charlesworth 1994: 42-43. Cf. 4QS MS B Frg. 8; 4QS MS F, Frg. 1, Col. 2, which contain fragmentary versions of the same section of text (Qimron and Charlesworth 1994a: 66-67, 90-91).

[80] Qimron and Charlesworth 1994: 2.

[81] Qimran and Charlesworth 1994: 2. VanderKam argues that 1QS should be given considerable weight as a source, due to its function as a "sort of constitution" for the community (VanderKam 1998: 45).

1. The text does not refer to the nature of the liturgy specifically associated with new months.[82]

2. Two distinct terms appear to be employed to refer to the beginning of the month: ימי חודש and ברשית ירחים. The relationship between these is unclear.

Stern describes the above passage in general as "extremely obscure".[83] From a calendrical point of view, *The Community Rule* presents particular difficulties in relation to the 364-day schematic calendar. Reference to this calendar in the text is disputed.[84] It has been argued that the divergence in terms for the beginning of the month may reflect the ritual observance of both the beginning of a schematic month (as in the calendar of *Jubilees*), and the beginning of the lunation.[85] This interpretation might read too much into the passage, however, as the text appears to be a descriptive section, followed by a section of poetry.[86] It is also held by some scholars that ימי חודש in this context does not actually refer to the beginnings of months in general, but may refer to the four "Days of Remembrance".[87] Monthly liturgy, in either interpretation, is attested, and the text therefore suggests the new month's place in the ritual life of the community, even if ambiguously.

***David's Compositions* (11QPs[a] 27:2-11)**

The Psalms Scroll, also known as 11Q5 or 11QPs[a], from Qumran cave 11 contains a narrative section towards the end of the work (Column XXVII) which indicates that David wrote in total 3,600 songs and 450 psalms. Included in these are songs associated with "new moons":

4 ...ויכתוב תהלים

5 שלושת אלפים ושש מאות ושיר לשורר לפני המזבח על עולת

6 התמיד לכול יום ויום לכול ימי השנה ארבעה ששים ושלוש

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[82] The only information known is the fact that all of the liturgy referred to was associated with the 'Master', and was in praise of God as creator (Col. 9, line 26). This does not help in understanding the specific significance of חֹדֶשׁ compared with any other day, as daily liturgy is also referred to under the same heading.

[83] Stern 2001: 12.

[84] VanderKam (1998: 45-46), for example, suggests that 1QS points to a distinct calendar in use at Qumran, whereas Stern (2001: 17) urges more caution.

[85] cf. Falk 1998: 188-89.

[86] VanderKam 1998: 46.

[87] cf. Weise 1961: 32-38.

7 מאות ולקורבן השבתות שנים וחמשים שיר ולקורבן ראשי

8 החודשים ולכול ימי המועדות ולים הכפורים שלושים שיר

4. And he wrote
5. 3,600 psalms; and songs to sing before the altar over the whole-burnt
6. *tamid* offering every day, for all the days of the year, 364;
7. and for the *qorban* of the Sabbaths, 52 songs; and for the *qorban* of the New
8. Moons and for all the Solemn Assemblies and for the day of Atonement, 30 songs.

(11QPs[a] DavComp lines 4-8)[88]

Sanders dated the *Psalms Scroll* as a whole to the first half of the first century CE on account of the hand of the scroll, which he concluded was transitional from early to late Herodian.[89] It is difficult to date the composition of the section itself. Sanders stated that, "While 11Q5 was not necessarily composed at Qumran, it was clearly compatible with the Community's beliefs, as evidenced by a second copy of it (11Q6)."[90] Again, little about the nature of the liturgy intended here can be ascertained. It is indicated that the nature of the offering is perceived to be different (קורבן) to the daily offerings (תמיד), but how this would have affected these songs is unclear. As Sanders observed, nothing in the text serves as any kind of direction for the liturgical use of any particular psalm, or group of psalms, or indeed any of the categories given.[91] The text, however, states that David's various compositions were inspired by God (line 11). This, in Falk's view, at least attests to the idea of praise ordained by God.[92] An important feature of this text to note is its calendar, which appears to be the 364-day calendar of the *Book of Jubilees*.[93] The year is 364 days long. Mention of 52 sabbaths corroborates this, and the schematic calendar of *Jubilees* divides evenly into 52 weeks. In light of this, it is conceivable that the beginnings of schematic months are intended for ראשי החודשים here, but this is not at all certain.[94]

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[88] Text and translation from Sanders 1965: 92.
[89] Sanders 1965: 9.
[90] Sanders 1997: 213. 11Q5 is also known as 11QPs[a]. Sanders also commented that the text may have attested to certain beliefs about David "…in the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E." In reference to the authorship, Falk observes that it is possible that the use of the Tetragrammaton indicates a non-Qumranic author, although he also conversely notes the apparently Qumranic calendar as a caution (Falk 1998: 95).
[91] Sanders 1997: 213.
[92] Falk 1998: 96.
[93] Stern 2001: 12; cf. Beckwith 2001: 146-150.
[94] Out of the Thirty Holy Seasons referred to in David's Compositions, Talmon suggests that many of the Qumranic feasts should be included in the count (cf. Appendix 1 in Talmon 2001: 15), but this

This would seem, at least, to provide some evidence of this association. The context seems to attest to a *tradition* of a calendar in which the first days of the schematic months may have been considered liturgically significant. Whether or not this corresponded to ritual reality at Qumran, or elsewhere, remains unclear, and a collection of psalms and songs which may have corresponded to David's compositions has never been found.[95]

A Fragment referring to Creation and the Festivals (4Q286 6)

The following fragment appears to refer to creation and a cultic calendar, and one of two possible readings of it includes 'new moons':

1	]מה כיא אתה בראתֹ[ה
2	]במועדיהמה ומחדש [
3	]להשביעמה [[96]

Davila translates this fragment as follows:

> 1 [...]..for Y[ou] have created [...] 2 [...] in their festivals and from month [to month...]
> 3 [...] to satisfy them [...][97]

Davila acknowledges, however, the possibility that this is not the only reading, and refers to Nitzan's alternative translation of line two:

> 2.]at their appointed times; and renews [[98]

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conclusion is not straighforward, and the thirty holy seasons are usually estimated only subsequent to subtracting twelve for new moons. The identification of the remaining eighteen is not always agreed upon. For example, Talmon suggests that they include the four epagomenal days at the beginning of each 91-day 'season' (of the Jubilean calendar), and other characteristically Qumranic festivals such as New Wine and New Oil (Talmon 2001: 15). Falk however, suggests with considerable confidence ("Almost certainly..." in his words) a rather different arrangement, confining his postulated occasions to traditional biblical festivals (including twelve 'months'). However, he still omits two biblical occasions in order to confine his list to thirty: Trumpets (*contra* Talmon) and *Omer* Waving (also *contra* Talmon). He also postulates a prayer for each of the seven days of Tabernacles, as well as the additional eighth day (Falk 1998: 193). Talmon, on the other hand, suggests that only one day of Tabernacles is prescribed a prayer (2001: 15). This matter is not easy to resolve.

[95] Falk 1998: 94.

[96] Edited text from Nitzan 1998: 24-25.

[97] Edited translation from Davila 2000: 57.

[98] Nitzan 1998: 25.

Here, rather than translating ומחדש "and from month", Nitzan prefers to read the *Pi'el* participle of the verb חדש "to renew". This reading, she suggests, "…may refer to God who renews the annual and seasonal course of the luminaries, the winds, the rains, etc. for satiating (להשביע) every living being".[99] Nevertheless Nitzan remains uncertain, and refers to parallels which also refer specifically to the course of months (4Q381 1 8-9).[100] This may lend support for Davila's reading. If "months" is read, it may be concluded that this fragment evidences the place of months as cultic units for the author of this blessing, and associates them with God's creative activity, as a "benevolent and life sustaining order".[101] Both of these conclusions, however, should be expected in any event, as they are common elements in biblical and Jewish cultic life and worldview.

A New Moon Prayer

4Q508 32 constitutes, according to Davila, "A fragment of a prayer for the New Moon celebration".[102] Interestingly, Arnold observes that although the small corpus of texts from Qumran which refer to monthly ritual indicate that the beginnings of months were "proper times for liturgical prayer", only this one very fragmentary text from the liturgical collections seems to contain such a prayer.[103] 4Q508 32 refers to the beginnings of months as memorials:

]י̊ ◦[ ]◦י̊ם [

]ר̊אשי חודש[ים

לכ]מה לז̊כ̊ר̊[ון

]ל[[104]

[…]. .[…]…[…beg]innings of the month[s …] […to y]ou for a mem[orial…][105]

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[99] Nitzan 1998: 25. She finds a parallel for this usage in Psalm 104: 30.
[100] Nitzan 1998: 25.
[101] cf. Levenson 1994: 12.
[102] Davila 2000: 29.
[103] Arnold 2006: 157.
[104] Edited text from Baillet 1982: 183.
[105] Edited translation from Davila 2000: 29. Rather than "beginnings of months", Baillet translated the second line as "…néoménie[s…]" (Baillet 1982: 183).

Baillet, while admitting that 4Q508 is difficult to date due to lack of uniformity in the letters, nevertheless suggested that it was written "...probablement dans les premières années de l'ère chrétienne".[106] Baillet also noted a possible parallel here with Numbers 10:10, where the silver trumpets (חצצרת) are to be blown on several occasions including new moons, "as a memorial" (לְזִכָּרוֹן).[107] The text is too fragmentary, however, to discern more.

4QBerakhot

The context of the liturgy preserved in 4QBerakhot is the community's annual covenant renewal ceremony.[108] In a hymn which includes a description of the heavenly throne room, the liturgical cycles are referred to:

8 חסדיֹם וענות טוב וחסדי אמת ורחמי עולמים ורזי פל[אים
9 בהר[אותמ]ה ושבועי קודש בתכונמה ודגלי חודשים [
10 ראשי ש]נים בתקופותמה ומועדי כבוד בתעודות[מה

8. in kind deeds and virtuous humility, and true kindness and eternal mercies. And wo[ndrous] mysteries
9. when th[ey app]ear and holy weeks in their fixed order, and divisions of months, [
10. beginnings of y[ears in their cycles and glorious festivals in times ordained [for them (4Q286 frg. 1 a, col. ii, b, lines 8-10)[109]

Chazon describes the *Berakhot* text as "distinctively Qumranic".[110] Nitzan dates the text to c. 50 CE due to the use of the Herodian formal hand. She also notes the characteristic Hebrew spelling of the Qumran community.[111] The reference to דגלי חודשים has parallels in several other liturgical texts, and, according to Nitzan, may point to the idea of heavenly liturgical hosts who praise God at appointed times.[112] Chazon argues that the *Berakhot* text attests to the idea of liturgical communion with angels by the *Yahad*, or "joint human-angelic praise" of God. This belief, while

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[106] Baillet 1982: 177.
[107] Baillet 1982: 183.
[108] Chazon 2000: 102; Nitzan 1998: 25.
[109] Edited text and translation from Nitzan 1998: 12-13.
[110] Chazon 2000: 96.
[111] Nitzan 1998: 10.
[112] Cf. 4Q502 27 3 for a similar reference to דגלי ירחים, (Baillet 1982: 90) and 4Q503 for similar references to shorter time periods, such as evening and nights (cf. Nitzan 1998: 16).

attested here, was not, in her view, exclusive to Qumran, but was part of "...the matrix of Second Temple Judaism".[113] The above context, in Nitzan's view, at least points to "...the specific organisation of time into periods of months".[114] Davila translates דגלי חודשים as "divisions of new moons".[115] Whether this translation or the translation to "months" is more suitable, is uncertain regarding this context.

***The War Scroll* (1QM)**

The beginning of col. II of the *War Scroll* describes the divisions of Israel, the cultic time-divisions of the Temple, and how they relate to one another. The subject of the gates of the sanctuary on cultic occasions arises, and the beginnings of months emerge:

3 ...וראשי משמרותם איש במעמדו ישרתו וראשי השבטים ואבות העדה אחריהם
להתיצב תמיד בשערי המקדש
4 וראשי משמרותם עם פקודיהם יתיצבו למועדיהם לחודשיהם ולשבתות ולכול ימי
השנה מבן חמשים שנה ומעלה

3. ...their chiefs of divisions shall serve, each one in his position. The chiefs of the tribes and the fathers of the congregation behind them are to take up their station steadily in the gates of the sanctuary;
4. their chiefs of divisions with their numbered (men) shall take up their station for the festivals, for their new moons and sabbaths, and for all the days of the year, from the age of fifty and over.

(1QM II, lines 3-4)[116]

Duhaime dated 1QM (the most complete copy of the scroll) to the last part of the first century BCE on account of its formal early Herodian script.[117] Philip R. Davies initially situated this part of the text above in a larger section (cols. II-IX), which he described as a separate document, a "...compilation made in the Hasmonean period of

[113] Chazon 2000: 104-05. The other Qumranic texts which Chazon examines in this context are *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (11QShirot 'Olat ha-Shabbat), and 4Q503 (Daily Prayers). We may find parallels to this tradition in the epistles to the Colossians and the Galatians, in Aristides *Apology* XIV, and Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* VI 5 41:1-3, examined in Chapters 6 and 7 herein.
[114] Nitzan 1998: 16.
[115] Davila 2000: 49-50.
[116] Edited text and translation form Duhaime 1995: 98-99.
[117] Duhaime 1995: 80.

traditions which arose during and immediately after the Maccabean wars".[118] More recently, however, much of the material, including col. II, has been deemed even later, partly in light of the author's use of the Book of Daniel, and also due to apparent similarities with Roman legionary warfare. Vermes, in light of this, preferred the last decades of the first century BCE or the beginning of the first century CE.[119] It is possible that the *War Scroll* originates from the Qumran community, or close to it, but this is not certain or agreed upon.[120] It has been noted that a reference to twenty-six leaders of divisions (ראשי משמרותם) in this text may imply the 52-week, 364-day calendar of *Jubilees*, but there are problems with this conclusion.[121] The text, in light of the above extract, attests to the place of monthly ritual in the symbolic and cultic world of its authors, and specifically its association with the final war between good and evil.

Purification Liturgy for 'New Moons' (4QPurification Liturgy)

A fragment of 4Q284 is the first of two texts examined here that indicate a fixed schedule of purification associated with the liturgical calendar. This first example associates the practice with new months more securely:

3 [	ש]בּת לכול [שב]ועי
4 [	השנה ו] שנים עשר חודשיה
5 [	וארבעת מו]עדי השנה בימי
6 [	] סרך הדות לישראל
7 [	]מי נדה להת[קד]ש

[118] Davies 1977: 123.

[119] Vermes 1997: 162-63. He argued that the *War Rule* was written some time after the mid-first century BCE, and based on the reference to a 'king' of the *Kittim*, suggested that the Roman Imperial era should be considered (after 27 BCE).

[120] cf. Duhaime 1995: 83-84. *The War Scroll* is observed to have certain similarities with other Qumran documents, such as *The Community rule* (1QS), *The Rule of the Congregation* (1QSa), and the *Thanksgiving Hymns* (1QH). On the other hand, the term *Yahad*, as observed by Duhaime, is not used in direct relation to the community, as it is in other documents. However, use of the 'Sons of Light' and the 'Sons of Darkness' in the scroll, and exiles in the wilderness, may reflect, Duhaime argued, "...sectarian appropriation of earlier material" (Duhaime 1995: 86).

[121] According to VanderKam, twenty six leaders may be in conflict with 1 Chronicles 24:7-18, which refers to twenty four divisions. 26 corresponds more comfortably with the 52 weeks of the 364-day year (the divisions of priests rotated Temple-duty on a weekly basis), whereas 24 (Chronicles) does not. VanderKam also cautions us however, by observing the twenty six *leaders* do not necessarily imply twenty six *divisions*, and in other calendrical texts from Qumran, the authors presuppose twenty four divisions (with Chronicles) anyway, even if a 364-day calendar is intended (VanderKam 1998: 49).

8 [	]שכבת הזרעֹ
9 [	]תֹמ֯ לו ֯֯
10 [	]*vacat*
11 [	]א אֹשר֯

3. [Sa]bbath of each of the [wee]ks of
4. [of the year and] its twelve new moons
5. [and the four sea]sons of the year on the days of
6. [ ] order of thanksgiving for Israel
7. [ ] sprinkling waters to clea[n]se themselves
8. [ ] semen
9. [ ] to him
10. [ ] *vacat*
11. [ ] which

(4Q284 Frg. 1, lines 3-11)[122]

Baumgarten dates this text to the first century CE on account of the late Herodian hand.[123] According to Baumgarten, "The references to the Sabbaths, new moons, and festivals of the year provide a calendar setting for the purification rites which are described in the text which follows."[124] This calendrical purification to be carried out at the beginnings of months involved the sprinkling of water (מי נדה).[125] Baumgarten finds parallels for this in relation to the sabbath in 2 Maccabees 12:38 and *The Damascus Document* (CD X 14).[126] Both of these examples, but especially the former, seem to indicate that the purification took place in preparation for the holy day. There is a similar parallel in relation to the new moon in Josephus' account of Saul's new moon feast in *Antiquities* VI.[127] This may have been a response to the

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[122] Edited text and translation from Baumgarten 1999: 125.
[123] Baumgarten 1999: 123, 125.
[124] Baumgarten 1999: 125.
[125] Baumgarten follows Levine (1993: 463-4) and suggests that, although נדה can denote impurity, the verbal root is a variant of נזה "to spatter". As noted, מי נדה in Numbers 19, as in the above, indicates water for sprinkling. The inclusion of קדש in this context, as Baumgarten observes, is used to refer to purification in Exodus 19:10, 14 (Baumgarten 1999: 125).
[126] Baumgarten 1999: 125. The connection between purification and the sabbath in CD is evident mainly from juxtaposition in the text. Col. X, lines 10-13 deal with purification with water, while lines 14ff. discuss keeping the sabbath.
[127] Cf. Goldstein 1984: 447, who noted that in 2 Maccabees 12, the author indicates that this practice is according to "established custom" (κατὰ τὸν ἐθισμὸν), and not "law". Interestingly, Josephus' account of Saul's new moon feast contains a similar addition, seemingly added by Josephus, where he claims that Saul purified himself "as the custom was" (ὡς ἔθος εἶχεν) (*AJ* VI 235). Also, this context,

general propitious and sanctified quality of the holy day over the profane. The texts above indicate that this view existed with respect to new months at Qumran, but based on the parallels it seems probable that the custom existed outside of Qumran and had relevance for other Jewish groups. It is also possible in light of parallels that water used for purification was in anticipation of the meal associated with the new moon.

***Rituel de Purification* (4Q512)**

One of two possible reconstructions of this fragmentary papyrus renders the beginning of a month as a time for purification (the second such example).[128] The following reading is that of Baillet:

] ולמועד שבת בש[בתו]ת לכול שבועי
ו]מועֹ[ד]. .[ו]ארבעת מועדי]
ו]מוֹעד ק[צ]יר יקיץ ור[אש ח]ודש א]
] *vacat* [ ] *vacat* [ ] *vacat* [ ]
להתקדש[ ] במים[

Baillet's translation is as follows:

1. ...et pour la fête du sabbat, lors des sa[bbat]s de toutes les semaines de
2. [...et] *la* fêt[e de ... et] les quatre fêtes de
3. [...et] la fête de la mo[is]son <et de l'été> et le dé[but du] 1er [m]ois.
5. ...dans l'eau ... pour se consacrer

(4Q512 frgs. 33 and 35, IV lines 1-5)[129]

Baumgarten does not accept Baillet's reading, and prefers to render line 3 as:

ו]מוֹעד ק[צ]יר יקיץ זר[ע]ודש א]

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as previously noted, has been associated by several commentators with a seminal emission as a potential reason for impurity. We do not, however, know the exact nature of the method of purification in either case. Baumgarten also notes a parallel in Exodus 19:10, 14, where purification takes place in preparation for the theophany at Sinai, and a prohibition of sexual activity is also evident (Exodus 19:16) (Baumgarten 1999: 125). This would seem to support that suggestion that the kind of purification referred to in 4Q284 Frg. 1 was common in contemporary Judaism, and not specific to the Qumran community.

[128] The text is dated to the first century BCE by Baillet due to a Hasmonaean period script (Baillet 1982: 262).

[129] Edited text and translation from Baillet 1982: 264.

...and] the season of harvesting, <and summer>, sowing, and grass...

This reading is more plausible, in Baumgarten's view, because the alternative (reading the first of the month), "...does not fit well with the agricultural description of the four seasonal feasts (*Jub.* 6:23)".[130] This is a plausible suggestion, due to the evident parallelism in Baumgarten's reconstruction: "four festivals" (מועדי ארבעת in line 2), as he suggests, may refer to the four 'Days of Remembrance' at the beginning of each quarterly season, and these are reconstructed here as harvest, summer, sowing, and grass.[131] Arnold argues that the above fragment indicates that purification occurred not only in response to defilement, but that it was also carried out on regular cycles. He does not, however, rule out reading the beginning of a month.[132] In any case this fragment seems to refer either to these four feasts or else just *one* month's beginning (Baillet's reading of the *'alef* in line 3), not to a schedule of monthly purification throughout the year. Baumgarten also notes that this text bears a close resemblance to 4QPurification Liturgy in its reference to purification by water on fixed festive days. The exact manner of purification in this text is elusive, but perhaps refers to immersion or again, sprinkling. It cannot be said with certainty that the purification herein referred to occurred on the same date as that referred to in 4QPurification Liturgy, or if indeed the same manner of purification is intended.[133]

The Hosea Pesher

Finally in the Hosea Pesher, the interpreter quotes verses which have already been discussed (in Chapter 3), but may cast specific significance on them which is relevant to the Qumran group's overall arrangement of festivals:

15 ח֯[גה חד]שה ושבתה וכול מועדיה פשרו אשר֯

16 כול המו]עֲדות יוליכו במועדי הגואים ו֯[

17 שמחה] נהפכה להם לאבל [134]

15. her fea[st, her new] moon and her sabbath and all her celebrations. Its interpretation:

[130] Baumgarten 1999: 125.
[131] cf. Arnold 2006: 178.
[132] Arnold 2006: 178.
[133] Baumgarten 1999: 123.
[134] Edited text from Allegro 1968: 32, supplemented following Brin 2001: 259.

16. they fix [all cele]brations in agreement with the celebrations of the nations, but a[ll]
17. [joy] will be changed into mourning for them.

(4Q166[a] Col. II, lines 15-17)[135]

This commentary has been dated to the Herodian era on account of the script used.[136] The author of this *pesher* interprets this oracle of Hosea to refer to Jews celebrating their festivals in a manner similar to the festivals of the Gentiles (מועדי הגואים). Brin's translation of line 2 is somewhat interpretative, and is better rendered, with Allegro, as "[all cele]brations they will bring into the Gentile festivals".[137] Here יוליכו, the *Hiph'il* imperfect of הלך, implies "bring" rather than "fix".[138] This reading allows for the possibility that the Qumran commentator intended the implication that the Jewish festivals were being reckoned according to what was thought to be a 'Gentile' *calendar system* (hence the alternative reading "they fix..."),[139] but it does not necessarily imply this. It may refer to any aspect of the observance of festivals, which in the eyes of the author could have been contaminated with Gentile practices.[140]

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[135] Edited translation from Brin 2001: 259.
[136] Horgan 2002: 113; she suggests that historical background reflected in the *pesher* is probably "...the end of the Maccabean period, the time of civil strife preceding the Roman occupation beginning in 63 B.C.E." cf. Lim 2002: 30.
[137] Allegro 1968: 32.
[138] Cf. Ecclesiastes 10:20: "A bird of the air [the heavens] may bring (יוֹלִיךְ) the voice/word".
[139] Horgan follows Bernstein here, and argues for this interpretation (Horgan 2002: 117; Bernstein 1991:21-34).
[140] Stern 2001: 17.

4. THE 364-DAY SCHEMATIC CALENDAR AND THE LUNI-SOLAR CALENDAR AT QUMRAN

The subject of calendars at Qumran has attracted much scholarly attention, but is beset with interpretative difficulties. This subject cannot be resolved in the present study, but two scholarly perspectives are nevertheless noted, and based on these, three hypotheses in relation to the role of חֹדֶשׁ observance at Qumran are considered.

Perspective 1: The Times of Qumran Festivals were reckoned by the 364-day Calendar of the *Book of Jubilees*

Many scholars believe that the schematic calendar presented in *Jubliees* was actually utilised by the Qumran community.[141] This theory, for a time, enjoyed scholarly consensus.[142] Joseph Baumgarten asserted that "...it has been widely recognized that the Qumran sect followed the calendar which is known to us from the Book of Jubilees".[143] In fact, several scholars have argued that the calendar issue was one of the main motivations for the sect's very existence. Martin G. Abegg, for example, argues in relation to the calendar,

> ...here we touch upon one of the keys, if not the Rosetta itself, in explaining the independent existence of the Qumran sect.[144]

The presence of the 364-day calendar in the sect's literary and liturgical corpus, and in the symbolic world of Qumran, is by no means disputed.[145] Regarding its *utilisation* there, VanderKam recounts how a series of passages in *Pesher Habakkuk*, *The Community Rule*, *The War Scroll*, *The Hymn Scroll*, and in the *Damascus Document* led a number of scholars to argue that the Qumran community employed a calendar which was *distinct* from that of the Jerusalem authorities, and which reckoned the Jewish festivals on different days.[146] In the *Pesher Habakkuk*, for example, the 'Wicked Priest' apparently visited the 'Teacher of Righteousness' on Yom Kippur (11:2-8). This seems to indicate that Yom Kippur occurred on different

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[141] Scholars supporting this view have included Feldman 2004; Talmon 1999: 29-40; VanderKam 1981: 52-74; Baumgarten 1977: 101-114; Jaubert 1953: 250-64.
[142] Stern 2001: 12.
[143] Baumgarten 1977: 101.
[144] Abegg 1999: 396. See VanderKam 1981: 52-74, for a systematic argument for this position.
[145] See, for example, 'David's Compositions', examined in Part 1, where a 364-day year is unambiguously referred to.
[146] VanderKam 1998: 44-51.

days in the separate spheres of each of these figures, as surely the Wicked Priest (being an opponent from Jerusalem) would have been busy in the Temple on Yom Kippur. Thus, a different calendar seems evident.[147] *The Community Rule* includes the instruction not to *advance* or *retard* the appointed times (col. 1, 13-15). In light of the clear biblical stipulations regarding the specific dates of festivals (in terms of day, month), this instruction has been interpreted to imply that different calendars must have been in use; the different calendar may have been the 364-day Jubilean one, perhaps evidenced by a reference in Col. 10 to the four 'Days of Remembrance' of that calendar.[148] Mention should also be made of 4QMiqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah (MMT, or 'Halakhic Letter'), a document which is sectarian and polemical, containing numerous *halakhot* peculiar to the Qumran community. According to some scholars, the polemical text should be understood as having originally contained an exposition of the 364-day Jubilean calendar.[149] This may suggest that the 364-day calendar of *Jubilees* was a sectarian issue associated with the Qumran community.[150] As Talmon argues regarding the Qumran sect, "...the 364 days calendar is an infallible criterion of their ideonic universe".[151]

Perspective 2: The 364-day Schematic Calendar was merely Speculative, and the Luni-solar Calendar was used to reckon Festivals at Qumran

While the more traditional view has been that the Qumran *Yahad* employed the 364-day schematic, or 'solar', calendar to govern their festive times, in opposition to the Temple authorities, and as some argue, to a large extent in opposition to other Jewish groups in general (and therefore *sectarian*), a number of scholars have recently cast doubt on this hypothesis.[152] In reviewing the evidence for the use of a 'sectarian' calendar, or a calendar which differed fundamentally from the Temple authorities, at Qumran, Stern raises some major difficulties. First, he notes, there is a large amount of evidence for 'lunar' calendars at Qumran.[153] The presence of lunar calendation

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[147] VanderKam 1998: 45; cf. Talmon 1951: 552.
[148] cf. VanderKam 1998: 45-47.
[149] cf. Qimron and Strugnell 1994: 1.
[150] cf. Stern 2001: 17.
[151] Talmon 1999: 31.
[152] For example Ben-Dov & Horowitz 2005: 104-120; Beckwith 2001: 93-140; Horowitz 1996: 35-44.
[153] Stern 2001: 12. There is a problem with referring to 'anti-lunar-calendar polemics' at Qumran, because (as introduced in more detail in Parts 1 and 2 of this chapter) there are several kinds of lunar based calendars evident from the texts from there. For example, there are numerous texts containing the *Mishmarot* calendar (4QMishmarot, the calendar of the priestly courses, cf. Talmon 2001: 93-154),

calls into question the notion that so-called "anti-lunar-polemics"[154] can be drawn upon as decisive or reliable evidence for the use of the 364-day *non*-lunar calendar. This consideration, at least, should be a caution to scholars. We should not assume a simple dichotomy between 'solar' and 'lunar'. The calendar situation at Qumran was much more complex than this simple binary. Stern also notes recent reluctance to attribute all of the literature found at Qumran to a single sect.[155] Thus, arguing for the use of a particular calendar for that sect is also problematic, if some of the texts cannot be securely attributed to its members. These are not the only or indeed the more serious problems with the hypothesis that the Qumran community observed the 364-day schematic calendar. Josephus, for example, while clearly interested in describing the 'four philosophies' of Judaism, and particularly in describing their distinctive features, is either unaware of a distinctive calendar used by any of them, or else he chooses not to discuss it.[156] The Jewish months in the works of Josephus, while often compared or equated with Macedonian months (which at his time of writing would have been non-lunar), are described nevertheless unambiguously, and specifically, as lunar months.[157] This lack of reference, in Stern's view, suggests that only lunar (or luni-solar) calendars, and not the 364-day calendar, were utilised by Jewish groups by the first century CE.[158] This may reflect the evident impracticality of the 364-day calendar and its inevitable failure to synchronise with the natural seasons (365¼-day natural years) in the long term, leading Stern to suggest that at most, it may have been utilised in limited contexts for short, interrupted periods.[159]

Stern is also cautious about using the more regularly cited Qumran texts, which VanderKam had previously cited, in assuming that the 364-day calendar was ever used at Qumran. *The Community Rule*, for example, instructs the reader not to

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which is clearly synchronised with the phases of the moon, and which appears to be unique to Qumran texts. These calendar texts, with their clear references to, and use of, the moon, imply that referring to "anti-lunar calendar polemic" is an over-simplification of a complex set of traditions.

[154] cf. Talmon 1999: 29-40.

[155] Stern 2001: 12.

[156] It may well be that Josephus simply chose not to discuss it because it did not interest him, or that the subject did not fit his own agenda. Steve Mason has recently argued that using Josephus as a source for Jewish sects, particularly the Essenes, in the first century is problematic (Mason 2007: 219-61).

[157] Josephus *AJ* III 240, 248; IV 78; cf. Feldman 2000: 302.

[158] Stern 2001: 18.

[159] Stern 2001: 15. Despite the survival of a significant amount of calendrical texts, we are unaware, as previously mentioned, of any correction procedure for the 364-day calendar. Indeed, it could be said that such a procedure is against the whole ethos of that system. Some scholars have suggested hypothetical solutions (for a brief survey of suggestions, see Feldman 2004: 52, esp. n. 15; Talmon 2001: 6).

advance or retard the times of festivals: this may, in Stern's view, merely refer to incorrect calendar reckoning, not necessarily the use of calendars which were fundamentally different from one another.[160] Similarly, Stern rightly observes that Yom Kippur could easily have occurred on different days if the same luni-solar calendar system was separately employed by different groups, particularly if this involved the sighting of the new moon as a central practice in that calendation.[161] It has also been suggested that the exposition of the 364-day calendar in 4QMMT is problematic, as although included in extant manuscripts, it is not referred to in the main body of the work, perhaps indicating that it is secondary, and "...not central to Qumran sectarianism".[162] These difficulties, Stern concludes, seem to imply that some of the calendars of the Qumran corpus, including the 364-day schematic calendar of the *Book of Jubilees*, "... served only as *idealistic* or *theoretical* models", or else only relevant to some futuristic "ideal world order", as some of the contexts examined here seem to suggest.[163]

In light of the above difficulties I shall proceed to suggest three hypotheses regarding the place of חֹדֶשׁ in the ritual life of the Qumran *Yahad.*

Hypothesis 1: The Qumran *Yahad* Observed *Ḥōdeš* at the Beginning of Schematic Months, *in Opposition* to Other Jews

It has been noted that according to the 364-day calendar presented in the *Book of Jubilees*, the beginnings of months retained a propitious quality, and bore a historical/mythic and cultic significance, particularly in the 'salvation history' presented therein.[164] In the event of this schematic calendar having been used to govern the times of festivals at Qumran, it is conceivable, if not probable, that חֹדֶשׁ corresponded in practice there similarly to the beginnings of the twelve *schematic* months, and thus bore no relation to the lunation, apart from a shared approximate duration. A reconstruction of 4Q216 described God as having:

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[160] Stern 2001: 17.
[161] Stern 2001: 17. This possibility is clearly supported in the Mishnah, which is examined in Chapter 8 of the present work. There it is clear that due to the difficulty in sighting the new moon at certain times, the result was that a discrepancy of a day was relatively common.
[162] Stern 2001: 17; cf. Schiffman 1994: 305.
[163] Stern 2001: 16.
[164] Wilke 1951: 177; cf. Keel 1998: 108.

> ...appointed the sun as a gre]at [sign above the earth] for day[s], for [sa]bbaths,, for [months, for festivals, for years, for the weeks of years, *vacat* for jub]ilees...[165]

This passage, while largely reconstructed, seems to be the creation account in *Jubilees* 2:8-9, where the sun, not the moon, is assigned calendrical function.[166] This passage demonstrates that at least for the author of *Jubilees*, and perhaps for the scribe at Qumran, the month, and thus חֹדֶשׁ, was governed by the sun (at least theoretically), not the moon. While exactly the same problem as previously (i.e., this may only speculative and unrelated to reality) is encountered, it can at least be observed that a model or precedent was available to the Qumran community: the 'months' and thus the ritual associated with חֹדֶשׁ could conceivably have been loosely associated with the sun (or schematic months, rather than lunar ones). Feldman takes this view and suggests that the group "...interpreted Rosh Hodesh as the beginning of a schematic 'new month'..."[167] This situation would potentially have had a notable effect on the social patterns of the group, and indeed this could particularly have affected their interactions with other Jews. A 'sectarian' interpretation of the calendar situation of Qumran would favour such a view. For example, according to Talmon,

> Normative Judaism conceived of the new moons as propitious signs, which were greeted with special benedictions. In contrast, the Covenanters made use of Rabbinic terminology with a vengeance, and defined "new moons" with calculated acrimony מולדי עולה.[168]

Not only would this situation involve a war of words, however: the fundamental liturgical pattern at Qumran would have been distinct from, and often incompatible with, that of other Jewish groups. Yearly festivals, as commonly noted, would have been observed at different times; the same holds true for חֹדֶשׁ, and indeed it is possible, given the highly sabbatical nature of the 364-day calendar, that its employment would have rendered sabbaths on different occasions to those of other

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[165] From Talmon 1999: 31.
[166] Talmon 1999: 31. This reconstruction is on the basis of *Jubilees*.
[167] Feldman 2003: 28.
[168] Talmon 1999: 38. The term מולדי עולה, according to Talmon, refers to those "born of iniquity", but in his view may also have a double meaning, referring also to the 'birth' of the moon (*viz* the *new moon*, lunar חֹדֶשׁ). The connotation of *molad* referring to the moon is known from rabbinic literature (Talmon 1999: 36). *Molad*, however, does not refer to the new moon as such in rabbinic terminology, and certainly not the feast of חֹדֶשׁ, as will be noted below. There are also problems with the notion of "normative Judaism", and especially with the suggestion that this Judaism, if it ever existed, is represented in rabbinic literature.

Jewish groups as well. Thus, all of the Qumran *Yahad's* holy days, including 'new moons', would have occurred at times other than those of other Jews. This situation would have rendered a significant amount of day-to-day interaction with Jews from outside of the group problematic, as many of the holy days of either side would prevent sustained contact, due to the threat of pollution and profanation. As Davidson suggests,

> By such a [364-day] calendar their worship was regulated throughout the year, and their use of it set them apart from the temple worship in Jerusalem, where the lunisolar calendar was apparently in vogue.[169]

This hypothesis leads to the suggestion that חֹדֶשׁ, as a regular feast (with the other feasts and sabbaths), would have been an important feature of the group members' distinctive sectarian identity, and would have marked off members of the *Yahad* clearly and uncompromisingly from other Jews on a regular basis. Perhaps most notably, it has been suggested, for example here by Talmon, that calendar difference "...caused the members of the community to abstain from participation in the Temple cult".[170]

This hypothesis is not without problems, however, and most of the problems are the same as those relating to the use of the 364-day calendar in general: it is uncertain whether or not this kind of calendrical polemic is speculative of an ideal calendar, or whether it related to the calendar's real utilisation. Furthermore, there are two significant problems with Talmon's 'sectarian' interpretation of the Qumran calendar situation and its focus of new moons. First, he assumes that the natural opponents of the *Yahad* are represented by later rabbinic literature. This is a very difficult case to argue, as much of the first evidence of tannaitic literature, particularly associated with the calendar, is considerably later than the abandonment of the site of Qumran.[171] Secondly, his interpretation of *molad* as "new moon" is not the generally accepted meaning of the term; it is usually considered to indicate the *conjunction* of

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[169] Davidson 1992: 148.
[170] Talmon 2001: 3.
[171] See Neusner 1988 on the (problematic) reconstruction of the compositional history of the Mishnah.

the moon between the earth and the sun.[172] Also, מולדי עולה in the context of Qumran does not necessarily have anything to do with the moon at all. It is difficult, therefore, to conclude with certainty that anyone in Qumran expressly condemned the observance of חֹדֶשׁ in specific connection with the moon. At most, this kind of terminology might refer to some kind of lunar observance, but as previously seen, this still does not make sense, as the *Yahad* was indeed intensively interested in charting the moon's phases. Refutation of Talmon's idea, however, does not rule out the 'sectarian' interpretation that has been hypothesised, but nevertheless the practices of the Qumran community remain somewhat obscure here. External evidence for calendar sectarianism, Stern observes, "...is remarkably slim".[173] Perhaps the most important feature of the evidence to note in this context is that from the above analysis of surviving Qumran texts which describe, prescribe, or refer to חֹדֶשׁ, it seems that the feast apparently did not receive a great deal of special attention.[174] Nor, obviously, was it ignored. The 'sectarian' interpretation, therefore, would seem to apply disproportionate emphasis and too much social significance on the place of חֹדֶשׁ for the Qumran *Yahad*, for whom, it seems, the feast was not problematic or polemical. Moreover, as noted the feast at Qumran seems to have shared many characteristics with its observance in other Jewish contexts.

Hypothesis 2: The Qumran *Yahad* Reckoned New Moons in a Similar Manner to Other Jewish Groups

If one were to conclude that the 364-calendar was not generally utilised by the *Yahad*, and was merely idealistic or seen as a feature of some future age, the possibility that the feast of חֹדֶשׁ was observed in a similar manner to other Jewish groups, by sighting the first appearance of the lunar crescent, must be taken seriously. Furthermore, a number of documents from Qumran, such as 4Q317 (Phases of the Moon) and the

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[172] cf. Stern 2001: 191-96. In fact, Talmon's argumentation might be seen to be somewhat circular if taken up by others. Talmon has long considered the *Yahad* to have utilized the 364-day Jubilean calendar for the reckoning of their festivals, including חֹדֶשׁ (cf. Talmon 1951: 549-63; 1999). In his 1999 chapter, he takes this position as a point of departure, and only subsequently argues for the double meaning of מולדי עולה. In light of this, the latter phrase should not be considered *corroborative* evidence for the observance of a 'schematic' חֹדֶשׁ, but rather as a *possible* implication of his original point of departure. I do not, here, suggest that Talmon's argumentation is itself circular; I rather suggest that his point regarding the above phrase is an implication of his long-standing hypothesis, and should not, therefore, be considered to corroborate the original hypothesis that חֹדֶשׁ at Qumran was not lunar.

[173] Stern 2001: 18.

[174] Of course, it is accepted that accident of survival governs this situation, to some extent.

4QMishmarot texts, painstakingly chart the moon's phases, demonstrating a clear interest in its use in calendation.[175] In view of the fact that numerous other Jewish contexts attest to חֹדֶשׁ coinciding with the first appearance of the lunar crescent at the beginning of its phase, both in Israel-Palestine and in the Diaspora, it may be best to conclude that this was also the case at Qumran, should satisfactory evidence for the practical application of the 364-day schematic calendar fail to emerge. This was, it seems, the most common understanding of the term חֹדֶשׁ in contemporary Judaism in general.[176]

As a caution against this hypothesis, it is observed that some of the texts examined, such as *David's Compositions* and the *Temple Scroll*, seem to refer, sometimes unambiguously, to the 364-day calendar, and include חֹדֶשׁ as an integral part of it.[177] While the same problem is encountered (*does this refer to an ideal situation or actual practice?*) it can at least be observed that the *concept* of חֹדֶשׁ being associated with the beginning of a schematic month was not alien to the members of the community, nor necessarily alien to the reader of *Jubilees*. Because of the presence of this idea in the sect's symbolic world, it is not necessarily a great leap in logic to assume that some may have wished this to become practice, especially those willing to dwell in the harsh environment of Khirbet Qumran.

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[175] See, also, Stern 2001: 11-14 on the use of the term דוק, an obscure event which occurs in synchronization with the schematic calendar at Qumran in 4Q320-321a. Scholars have variously concluded that the term connotes the last day of a lunation, the conjunction, the new moon, the full moon, or the first day after the full moon. Its meaning remains obscure and disputed. Wise suggested that the term referred to the full moon (1994: 228ff.), whereas Talmon suggests that דוק refers to the beginning of the moon's waning (cf. Talmon 2001: 35-36). Some scholars, as Ben-Dov and Horowitz observe, suggest that דוק is coincident with the new moon (2005: 111). Ben-Dov and Horowitz, however, dismiss this assumption on astronomical grounds in a comparative study wherein they also examine evidence for a similar Babylonian phenomenon. This is also etymologically supported by their assertion that the term דוק derives from the root דקק, "to be/become thin" (Ben-Dov & Horowitz 2005: 113, 115 n. 43). It has also been suggested that a similar phenomenon referred to as X occurred at the beginning of the month at Qumran, although again, Ben-Dov and Horowitz have argued that this assumption "finds no basis in the Qumran calendar scrolls". They also argue that the phenomena X and דוק have no bearing on the cult, and cannot, therefore be considered to have anything to do with festivals (2005: 115). I would like to thank Helen Jacobus for her explanation of these phenomena.

[176] cf. Gandz 1949; Talmon 1999: 35.

[177] Feldman (2004: 120) includes the *Temple Scroll* as one of the principal texts which advocates a 364-day calendar.

Hypothesis 3: The Qumran *Yahad* Observed *Both* the Beginnings of Schematic Months, *and* the Appearance of the Lunar Crescent

The idea that both the beginning of the lunation and the beginning of a schematic month, at Qumran, were liturgically significant has been suggested by Falk.[178] This argument is based on his reading of *The Community Rule* (1QS) 9:26-10:5, in which there is a clear distinction in the terminology used to describe the beginnings of months in two parts of a small section of the work (ימי חודש and ברשית ירחים).[179] According to Falk, "It is probably best to understand this passage as a description of the lunar cycle and the high regard in which the new moons were held even by adherents of the solar calendar".[180] This idea is appealing, especially in light of the fact that the members of the Qumran group were clearly intensively interested in creating an extensive liturgical cycle and corpus, and also were clearly intensively interested in both charting the phases of the moon, *and* synchronising them with the 364-day calendar. It is easy, therefore, to demonstrate that many of the Qumran authors had a high regard for the lunar cycle, while also being interested in the 364-day calendar.

There remain a number of problems with this hypothesis, however. Stern has noted the obscurity of the passage in question.[181] Coupled with this obscurity, it should be noted that the cited passage contains a section of prose followed by a section of poetry. The poet could easily have been merely searching for a parallel term for ימי חודש. Furthermore, Falk's conclusion is weakened by the observation that not only is the latter section poetry, but that the preceding section appears to have been included in order to introduce, clarify, and specify what follows.[182] If this interpretation is correct, then ימי חודש and ברשית ירחים are, in fact, parallel terms,

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[178] Falk 1998: 188-89.

[179] The term ירחים "months" is, in fact, very rarely employed in the literature which survives from Qumran (cf. 4Q256 XIX, 3; 4Q258 XI, 2, both of which are fragments of the same passage in the *Community Rule*; 4Q502 27, 3; 4Q509, 131-132i 8), just as it is not as commonly employed in the Hebrew Bible. In fact, many of the usages of the term in the Hebrew Bible are intended to imply a month as an approximate duration (*viz* a 'month of days'), and often not a calendar month in its fixed sense (cf. *BDB* 437; *Koehler-Baumgartner* 404).

[180] Falk 1998: 189.

[181] Stern 2001: 12.

[182] VanderKam (1998: 46) states that "The poem is introduced by a paragraph about the times when he should offer benedictions; the poetic part then presents his actual expression of those blessings…"

and refer to the same thing.[183] If both new moon and schematic months are intended by this text, as Falk suggests, then this context appears to be the only one which evidences this. The beginning of a lunation *and* the beginning of a schematic month were invariably associated with liturgy (because *every day* was marked by liturgy), but it nevertheless does not seem likely that the 'feast' referred to as חֹדֶשׁ occurred twenty four or twenty five times a year (new moons and schematic months) instead of twelve or occasionally thirteen. In fact, no text suggests this. Quite the opposite: *David's Compositions* seems to imply twelve new months throughout the year (see above), and 4Q284 frg. 1, line 4 refers explicitly שנים עשר חודשיה ("twelve new moons/months"). The citation in 1QS merely indicates a certain liturgy, not a 'feast' or 'festival' as such. This hypothesis is the least likely of the three, and should be ruled out.

[183] The 'thing' is question, in light of this, appears to have been related to the moon, due to the lunar nature of both of these terms. Cf. however, Talmon (1999: 15) who also considers both terms to refer to the same beginning of the month, but argues that the referent is the beginning of the schematic month, not the lunar phase.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Our initial conclusion should be that, with the division of time into 'months' at Qumran, the subsequent ritual response to this (חֹדֶשׁ ritual) retains a place in the ritual practice of the community, and in the symbolic world of the texts, their authors, and that of the community members. We may have to accept, however, that while this ritual and significance is present, it did not have as much significance in that community as it did in other Jewish contexts, nor was חֹדֶשׁ ritual considered to be as central to the community's experience and identity as the sabbath or the yearly feasts. According to Arnold:

> It seems that the basic cycle that structured the community's view of the world was the week rather than the month. As a priestly community, such a weekly focus fits together, both with the priestly *Mishmarot* and with the priestly account of creation preserved in Gen 1. More than any other cycle of time, the week could claim that it was ordained by God.[184]

While the issue of calendars and the Qumran community cannot be resolved here, some preliminary conclusions may be made. In the cases of several of the texts examined herein, the nature of the calendar *envisaged* in certain cases can be ascertained (even if the subsequent *response* of the community which preserved them is unclear). The clearest example of this is *David's Compositions*.

Of the three hypotheses examined, we have initially ruled out number 3, that the *Yahad* associated חֹדֶשׁ with both the lunation and the schematic Jubilean month, in favour of the conclusion that either the feast of חֹדֶשׁ occurred at the beginning of a schematic month, or at a genuine 'new moon'. There has been a particularly 'sectarian' association with the idea that the feast corresponded with the schematic months known from *Jubilees*. It has also been suggested that it is problematic to conclude that the *Jubilees* calendar was utilised at Qumran for a sustained period. From the texts specifically examined in Part 3 referring clearly to חֹדֶשׁ, it is not possible to demonstrate that the feast was of great significance to the *Yahad*, or indeed other communities which may have been associated with the composition of the Qumran texts. It was, of course, integral to the community's ritual life, as it seems

[184] Arnold 2006: 157.

to have been to that of all Jewish communities. But its observance does not seem to play a central defining role in the group's specific communal identity. Furthermore, the feast does not seem to emerge, as some have suggested, as a sectarian issue.

In light of the evidence available, the presence of texts referring to חֹדֶשׁ ritual needs to be reconciled with the apparent lack of *extensive* engagement with that event when compared with other ritual occasions mentioned throughout the Qumran corpus. It is suggested here that the reason for the paucity of references to חֹדֶשׁ is that the feast was not, at Qumran, an especially *distinctive* practice when compared with the way in which other Jewish groups generally observed it. There was probably not a great enough distinction between the fundamental nature of the *Yahad*'s observance of חֹדֶשׁ and that which was familiar to other Palestinian Jews. The group, or groups, behind the composition and preservation of the Scrolls was certainly aware of חֹדֶשׁ, and indeed appears to have observed it, but it has been concluded in this chapter that many of the elements of this festival as they appear in Qumran texts can be seen to have clear parallels in other Jewish contexts. These elements include water purification, liturgy, belief about communion with angels (as we also see in the next two chapters), the role of the feast as defined in Numbers 28:11-15, and a cosmological association, particularly with respect to God's creative activity. It is suggested that we do not find many references to חֹדֶשׁ observance at Qumran because the ritual was too similar there to the practice of Jewish communities in general to attract specific attention. חֹדֶשׁ apparently did not function as a distinctive marker of internal, sectarian divisions within Judaism in this case, and therefore did not play a major role in the definition, vis-à-vis other Jewish groups, of any community which may have been associated with the site of Qumran. This is probably the reason for the near silence of the Qumran texts on this issue.

More than this, certain texts from Qumran such as the *Temple Scroll* and the *War Scroll*, despite often containing many of what are seen to be the idiosyncratic beliefs of a sect, and indeed a sectarian tendency, חֹדֶשׁ is nevertheless envisaged as an 'Israel' event. If חֹדֶשׁ can be seen to have played a role in the any group's communal or sectarian identity at all, then it seems that this may have been defined in its members' vision of an idealised future, even if this was not the case in their

contemporary ritual practice. This involved another conceptualisation of Israel. This seems to have given the ritual of the community some special significance, but possibly not in the manner that some argue. There were evidently many sectarian issues, but חֹדֶשׁ ritual, from the above evidence at least, cannot be demonstrated to have been one of them. We therefore do not hear a great deal about the festival. In the next two chapters, contexts which involve more interaction between Jews and Gentiles are examined. It is in *this* type of context that חֹדֶשׁ emerges as definitional of Jewishness, or Jewish community, over against the practices of Gentile neighbours.

Chapter 6

Observance of New Moons in Three Jewish Diaspora Contexts

INTRODUCTION

> Diaspora observance of new months and festivals is reasonably well attested in literary and epigraphic sources. It may be argued, indeed, that they were vital to any community wishing to identify itself as Jewish.[1]

In this chapter we will encounter three cases from the Jewish Diaspora. First, from the city of Berenike in Cyrenaica, two inscriptions from the first century BCE/CE are examined. Following this, two New Testament epistles are examined, which refer to the significance of חֹדֶשׁ in different first century CE contexts: the Roman province of Galatia, and Colossae in Phrygia. Each context provides a window into Jewish activity in Diaspora settings, one in North Africa, and two in Asia Minor.[2] We will come into contact with what might be called a 'Pauline' view of Jewish ritual, and perhaps also indirectly, through the same literature, with a more conservative set of views which some have associated variously with the Jerusalem church, James, or Peter.[3]

We encounter terms which are potentially problematic in this discussion, because our understanding of 'Christian' or 'Jew' has developed and gained significance over the course of two millennia,[4] and indeed other terms such as 'Jewish-Christian' can compound the complexities of each. In this respect I refer to the 'Christian' communities as *churches*, and within that category there will emerge an occasional need to distinguish between Jewish and Gentile members of these churches. This is not meant to imply the existence of a singular coherent 'Jewish-Christian' movement that rivalled Pauline teaching.[5] Nor does use of the term 'Jew' or 'Jewish' herein imply a homogeneity or 'orthodoxy' in Judaism in the first

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[1] Stern 2001: 26.

[2] Although the latter two cases are usually considered to be associated with 'Christian' communities, it will emerge that they should also be viewed within the sphere of Jewish activity outside of Israel-Palestine.

[3] cf. Horrell 2000: 1-3, 13ff.

[4] This terminological problem, as well as some potential solutions to it, is discussed briefly by Philip Esler (1998: 3-4).

[5] On 'Jewish Christianity' and some of the problems associated with the category, see Marcus 2006: 87-102.

century.[6] Traditions, practices, or understandings which can be viewed commonly held at that time are argued for specifically.

The form of the sources demands that each context is viewed separately, before discussing commonalities between the situations of each; it will be seen in parts 2, 3 and 4 that there are several common issues that emerge.

This chapter will close with a discussion on the significance of the 'new perspective' on Pauline literature, which has characterised much Pauline scholarship since the reception of E. P. Sanders' 1977 work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.[7] This scholarly movement is pertinent for our discussion on the significance of חֹדֶשׁ in first century Judaism. This is due to the arguments of certain scholars who characterise forms of Judaism known to us from c. 200 BCE, to the time of the composition of the New Testament epistles and beyond, as 'covenantal nomism', that is, the idea that God freely elected Israel and gave her commandments, that obedience to these commandments was the *condition for remaining within the covenant*, and thus one's continued membership to the covenant people.[8] The idea is that, for a Jew in the Hellenistic or Roman period, Torah had the ultimate goal of "...maintaining and manifesting status as the people of Yahweh",[9] and one's membership to Israel. This understanding has led some scholars to argue that certain practices emerged as *focal points* in this praxis.[10]

The purpose of parts 3, 4, and 5 of this chapter is not specifically to prove or disprove the idea of 'covenantal nomism' in relation to first century Judaism, but rather to examine the two references to חֹדֶשׁ ritual in the Pauline corpus in the context of an elaboration of the notion. This task is taken up because of certain scholars' tendency to talk about "identity markers" in relation to Jewish ritual.[11] The new perspective constitutes a recent attempt to resolve the complex issue of the writings of

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[6] Grabbe, for example, used the metaphor of "currents" within a "main flow" to describe Judaism before 70 CE, and preferred not to use "orthodoxy" due to the "enormous diversity evidenced by the many movements at the time" (Grabbe 1996: 111-12).
[7] Sanders 1977.
[8] Sanders 1977: 235-36.
[9] Dunn 1991: 24.
[10] Dunn 1991: 28. Dunn's emphasis. Dunn's student, Alan Bevere (2003), has a similar understanding, discussed herein.
[11] cf. Bevere 2003; Dunn 1991.

Paul and his companions and their relationship with the Jewish Torah in the first century. Within this particular methodological framework, it is possible to demonstrate that the ritual associated with the new moon, חֹדֶשׁ, can be viewed as a "*focal point of distinctiveness*" for first century Jews, and one which Paul and his movement specifically preached against. Within the specific scholarly understanding of 'covenantal nomism' and Paul's relationship to it, חֹדֶשׁ emerges as one of what the above scholars would categorise as a *focal point of distinctiveness* for first century Jews in the two contexts examined.[12] Later, some of the specific terminology used by some of these scholars will be critiqued, and some alternatives suggested.

[12] Dunn 1991: 25-6.

1. A NOTE ON JEWISH FESTIVAL CALENDARS IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE

As noted in the previous chapter, there has been some discussion about the Jewish liturgical calendar of the period around the turn of the era.[13] The Qumran community, while seeming to practice some form of most of the otherwise known biblical festivals (with the exception of Purim), including חֹדֶשׁ, also observed additional feasts.[14] The significance of these additional feasts is not assessed in this work, but here it is worth noting that despite the possible departure by the Qumran sectaries from what is argued was a more commonly observed selection of Jewish festivals, other contemporaneous writers seem to agree on a standard list of the main Jewish feasts, which is largely in line with the presentation in Numbers 28-29. Two well-known first century Jewish sources from different contexts present a clear understanding of the succession of the Jewish feast days, familiar from Pentateuchal sources. Philo, writing in Alexandria in the first half of the first century CE, places the new moon after the sabbath, and third in his enumeration, stating,

> Εἰσὶ τοίνυν ἀριθμῷ δέκα ἑορταί, ἃς ἀναγράφει ὁ νόμος· πρώτη μέν, ἣν ἀκούσας θαυμάσαι τις ἂν ἴσως, αὕτη δ' ἐστιν ἡμέρα πᾶσα· δευτέρα δὲ ἡ δι' ἑξ ἡμερῶν ἑβδόμη, σάββατον αὐτὴν Ἑβραῖοι πατρίῳ γλώττῃ καλοῦσι· τρίτη δ' ἡ μετὰ σύνοδον τὴν κατὰ σελήνην νέαν νουμηνία·
>
> There are in all ten feasts which are recorded in the law. The first, the mention of which may perhaps cause some surprise, is the feast of every day. The second is that held on the seventh day with six days between, called by the Hebrews in their native tongue Sabbath. The third is the new moon which follows the conjunction of the moon with the sun (*Spec. Leg.* II 41).[15]

Philo goes on to complete his list of ten feasts with reference to Passover, "first ears" (*omer* waving), Unleavened Bread, Weeks, Trumpets (new moon of the seventh month), Yom Kippur ("the Fast"), and Tabernacles (*Spec. Leg* II 41). He presents a

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[13] See, for example, Herr 1976; VanderKam 1981; 1997; Wacholder & Wacholder 1995; Stern 2001, esp. chapters 1 and 2 therein.

[14] e.g. in the Temple Scroll (11QT) (cf. Baumgarten 1987: 71). See Talmon, Ben Dov and Glessmer (2001: 7-8) on Purim and the book of Esther and Qumran.

[15] This translation accurately describes Philo's intended meaning, but does not translate the Greek literally. Stern more accurately translates it as: "...new month, which is after the conjunction according to the new moon" (Stern 2001: 116).

list of events familiar from Numbers 28-29.[16] The new moon is third in his list.[17] Josephus, himself originally a priest from Jerusalem (*BJ* I 3), and writing somewhat later in the first century,[18] presents the same list in a slightly different order, based on Numbers 28-29, with the same addition of "first ears" (which is based on Leviticus 23:15-21) and once again presenting the new moon after the sabbath, and third in his enumeration of Jewish ritual constellations:

> Ἐκ δὲ τοῦ δημοσίου ἀναλώματος νόμος ἐστὶν ἄρνα καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν σφάζεσθαι τῶν αὐτοετῶν ἀρχομένης τε ἡμέρας καὶ ληγούσης, κατὰ δὲ ἑβδόμην ἡμέραν, ἥτις σάββατα καλεῖται, δύο σφάττουσι τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἱερουργοῦντες. τῇ δὲ νουμηνίᾳ τάς τε καθημερινὰς θυσίας ἐπιτελοῦσι καὶ δύο βόας σὺν ἀρνάσιν ἐνιαυσιαίοις ἑπτὰ καὶ κριόν, ἔριφον δὲ ἐπι παραιτήσεσιν ἁμαρτάδων, εἴ τι κατὰ λήθην γένοιτο.
>
> The law ordains that at the public expense a lamb of a year old shall be slain daily, both at the opening and at the close of the day; but on the seventh day, which is called the sabbath, they slay two (on each occasion),[19] the ritual being otherwise the same. On the new moon, besides the daily sacrifices, they offer two oxen, together with seven yearling lambs and a ram, as also a kid in expiation for any sins which may have been committed through forgetfulness… (Josephus *AJ* III 237-238).

Josephus continues to describe the yearly festivals and his list is constituted by the same events as Philo's.

These two views represent that of a priest, from a family originally from Judea, and a Jew from Alexandria. Cultural differences between them should not be overstated on this basis alone, but their distinct backgrounds are noted. As such we have two different Jewish writers from two different Jewish contexts with the same

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[16] The exception is Philo's reference to "first ears", which is referred to Leviticus 23, but not explicitly in Numbers 28-29. This feast, however, is assumed by the latter because, first, Numbers 28-29 appears to assume familiarity with Leviticus 23 anyway, and secondly, Numbers 28:26-30 prescribes ritual for the feast of Weeks, which necessarily requires a starting date to count these weeks from (which is the "first ears", cf. Leviticus 23:15-21).

[17] Stern, although observing that by the Roman period νουμηνίᾳ could also imply the beginning of a solar (essentially, the term means "new month") states nevertheless that "…Philo makes it abundantly clear that his noumenia is lunar" (Stern 2001: 22).

[18] The Greek version of *The Jewish War* was possibly completed between 75 and 81 CE (cf. Bartlett 1985: 76-77).

[19] This bracketed detail is not included in the original Greek text.

understanding of what constituted the most important of the Jewish festivals, and, apart from daily offerings, are presented in *three* basic categories: weekly events (sabbath), monthly events (new moon/חֹדֶשׁ), and yearly festivals. In the epistles to the Galatians and the Colossians, it will become evident that Jewish ritual is referred to in these same categories. Despite the difficulties in apprehending a 'normative' Judaism,[20] the possibility of חֹדֶשׁ being a commonly observed liturgical event in the first century, in Israel-Palestine and the Diaspora, is tenable. The above sources do not preclude other events in which Jews participated, but they do suggest a basic understanding of what the *main* Jewish festivals were, at least in the regions discussed: Palestine, Egypt, and parts of Asia Minor – the eastern Mediterranean. Our next section will also suggest this in relation to the region of Cyrenaica.

[20] cf. Grabbe 1996: 111-112.

2. BERENIKE (CYRENAICA)

Two inscriptions from Berenike in Cyrenaica (modern Benghazi, Libya) attest to Jewish observance of new moons in that community.[21] Both inscriptions have been dated either to the mid-first century BCE or the first half of the first century CE.[22] The content and situation of each is similar: they were each erected by the Jewish community to honour an official. *CIG* III 5361, which will be focussed on,[23] was set up to honour the Roman official M. Tittius by periodically honouring him at community assemblies.[24] *CIG* III 5362 was also erected to honour a Roman citizen; in this case, the citizen was a member of the local Jewish community.[25] There are two calendrical elements in the inscriptions. The first relates to the dual date given at the beginning of one of the inscriptions:

> [Ἔ]τους νέ, Φαῶφ κε΄, ἐπὶ συλλόγου τῆς σκηνο-
> πηγίας, ἐπὶ ἀρχόντων Κλεάνδρου τοῦ
> Στρατονίκου...[26]
>
> 55th year, 25 Phaoph<i>, at the assembly of Tabernacles, under the archons Kleandros son of Stratonicos... (*CIG* III 5361, lines 1-3).[27]

What is significant about this date is that it is referred to using two different reckoning systems: the Egyptian calendar, and a distinct Jewish one. Some part of the festival of Tabernacles occurred on 25 Phaophi.[28] There is a problem with concluding that this Egyptian calendar was used to reckon Jewish festivals here. According to all our other sources on biblical and Jewish festivals, no part of the festival of Tabernacles could

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[21] *CIG* III 5361; *CIG* III 5362; cf. Roux and Roux 1949: 281-96; Reynolds 1977: 244-7. Applebaum argues that the presence of a Jewish community in Berenike should be assumed from the mid-third century BCE, if not earlier. Josephus connects the establishment of a significant Jewish presence in the area of Cyrene, and other cities of Libya, with the activity of Ptolemy Lagos (*Apion* II 44) (Applebaum 1979: 131, 160). cf. Barclay (1994: 232-3), who, with less certainty, maintains the plausibility of an early Ptolemaic date for Jewish settlement in Cyrenaica.

[22] Stern 2001: 25.

[23] Both texts appear to have largely similar contexts and formulae. The above, however, has retained a more legible condition.

[24] Stern 2001: 120; Applebaum 1979: 161.

[25] Reynolds 1977: 246.

[26] Edited text from Roux and Roux 1949: 283.

[27] Stern asserts that the reference to Tabernacles is not part of the narrative of the inscription, which has not begun at this stage, but belongs securely to the dating formula (Stern 2001: 58 n. 33).

[28] What is meant by assembly (συλλόγος) here, according to Stern, is unclear, as Tabernacles lasts seven days, with a special eighth day (Leviticus 23:36); he suggests that συλλόγος might refer to any of these eight days (Stern 2001: 59).

have taken place on the twenty-fifth of the month; it ran from 15-22 of the seventh month.[29] A distinct Jewish calendar is therefore evident. Stern, based on the second calendrical element below, argues that this Jewish calendar was probably lunar.[30]

Importantly, the Roman official is apparently to be honoured by the Jewish community at each new moon:

> ὧν χάριν ἔδοξε τοῖς ἄρχουσι καὶ τῶι πολιτεύ-
> ματι τῶν ἐν Βερενίκη Ἰουδαίων ἐπαινέσαι τε αὐ-
> τὸν καὶ στεφανοῦν ὀνομαστὶ καθ' ἑκάστην
> σύνοδον καὶ νουμηνίαν στεφάνωι ἐλαίνωι καὶ
> λημνίσκωι.[31]

The translation provided by Roux and Roux is as follows:

> pour ces motifs, les archontes et la communauté des Juifs de Bérénikè ont décidé de lui décerner l'éloge, de le couronner nominativement à chaque assemblée et nouménie d'une couronne d'olivier avec bandelette.[32]

Roux and Roux translate καθ' ἑκάστην σύνοδον καὶ νουμηνίαν as "à chaque assemblée et nouménie",[33] and Stern, "at every *synodos* and *noumenia*".[34] The term σύνοδος, then, would here have the connotation 'assembly'.[35] At each assembly and, specifically, at each new moon, the official was to be honoured by the community. The inscription implies that at each new moon, the Jewish community would gather together in a body that was thought to broadly represent the community as a whole, as it is clearly stated that the honouring action was seen to have been one taken by the whole community (τῶι πολιτεύματι τῶν ἐν Βερενίκη Ἰουδαίων). The list of archons in the first lines of each inscription also indicates this. As Applebaum puts it:

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[29] Leviticus 23:34, 40-42; Numbers 29:12; Deuteronomy 16:13-15; Nehemiah 8:18.
[30] Stern 2001: 34.
[31] *CIG* III 5361, lines 21-25; edited text from Roux and Roux 1949: 284.
[32] Roux and Roux 1949: 285.
[33] Roux and Roux 1949: 285.
[34] Stern 2001: 120.
[35] This can refer to an 'assembly' or a 'meeting' of various sorts, including those of political clubs, national gatherings, or of a society for festival purposes. Various other senses, such as that of private meetings, a meeting in court, or hostile meetings between armies are also within the range of the term (cf. *Liddell and Scott* 1720).

"...the wardens of the organized community and the community itself..."[36] This is an important detail because, even if we do not know much about the exact role that the feast of the new moon played in this particular Diaspora setting, it can at least be concluded that it was an occasion with community-wide significance: it was *not* an occasion on which unrepresentative groups practised remote or obscure rituals, with little significance to the majority of the community. Whatever occurred was, at least symbolically, action carried out by, or on behalf of, the *whole* local Jewish community. One can also draw some brief conclusions about the locus of these community gatherings. Both inscriptions refer to the upkeep of the "amphitheatre".[37] The exact form of this building is largely unknown. It is normally maintained that it was not an amphitheatre in the later sense.[38] The inscription, according to Applebaum, "...shows that the building did not belong to the gentile city, but was a specifically Jewish structure, apparently designed for the community's gatherings".[39] Applebaum suggests that such an early instance of the term 'amphitheatre' implies that its meaning, at that time, was probably "elastic and fluid"; the term implies, at least, that the building was either circular or elliptical, or that the seating was arranged with two opposing sides (as ἄμφω means "on both sides").[40]

The new moon, in both inscriptions, emerges as a time for community gatherings.[41] Stern also argues for the presence of a further detail in reference to it, here contained in a *double entendre*.[42] While σύνοδος generally refers to a meeting or

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[36] Applebaum 1979: 160. Gruen, based on the distinct references to the *politeuma*, and to the *archontes*, suggests that the *archontes* may have had a corporate existence independent of the rest of the community (Gruen 2002: 114). In any case both bodies are referred to in these inscriptions.

[37] *CIG* III 5361, line 27; *CIG* III 5362, lines 10, 20. Reynolds notes one instance out of the two references in the latter inscription of the variant spelling ἀνφιθεάτρου, which she suggests may exhibit the influence on local Cyrenaican Greek on the language of the inscription (Reynolds 1977: 246).

[38] cf. Reynolds 1977: 247.

[39] Applebaum 1979: 161. This, in Applebaum's view, is made clear in the wording of the inscription: the maintenance carried out was "a contribution *to* the politeuma" (ἐπίδομα τῶι πολιτεύματι) (my emphasis). Had this been a public building, the term *politeuma* would have been replaced by 'polis'. He also doubts that the Jewish community would have met to pray in a building "contaminated by gentile idolatry" (Applebaum 1979: 161, 165). Barclay finds it "...marginally more likely" that a specifically Jewish building is referred to here (1996: 237). We learn from a later inscription from Berenike (c. 55 CE) that the Jews there had, by that time, a building which they referred to as "synagogue" (cf. Gruen 2002: 108).

[40] Applebaum 1979: 165. Gruen agrees that the designation here refers to the shape, not the function, of the structure (Gruen 2002: 126).

[41] *CIG* III 5362, lines 12-17. While this second inscription is more fragmentary, its contents are similar, and it records action taken by the "community of the Jews of Berenike" (lines 12-13) at each *synodos* and *noumenia* (lines 16-17).

[42] Stern 2001: 120.

coming together of sorts, one of the specific applications of this is the *conjunction* of the moon between sun and the earth, one or two days before the new moon. This understanding is present in Jewish, as well as other, literature in Greek.[43] In Stern's view, both this meaning, *and* the sense of an *assembly of people* are intended here, and this *double entendre* provides further evidence for the Jewish reckoning of the new moon (חֹדֶשׁ, νουμηνία) beginning at some point coincident with the actual appearance of the lunar crescent, one or two days after the conjunction (σύνοδος). Reference to these closely related astronomical phenomena by Philo demonstrates that for an ancient Jew who spoke Greek, the juxtaposition of these terms could well have drawn this exact relationship to mind, and support Stern's theory:

> Τρίτη δ' ἡ μετὰ σύνοδον τὴν κατὰ σελήνην νέαν νουμηνία
>
> The third is the new month (*noumenia*), which is after the conjunction (*synodos*) according to the new moon (*Spec. Leg* II 41).[44]

This, of course, does not *prove* Stern's theory, but it does suggest that many readers of the inscription would have been familiar with both possible meanings of the term σύνοδος, especially in its association with νουμηνία. If this interpretation is correct, it confirms that the Jews of Cyrenaica associated their νουμηνία with the lunar crescent, and that their distinctive calendar was lunar.[45] Stern is probably not the only reader to have been struck by this double meaning.

What can be concluded from the above inscriptions with some certainty, in any case, is that the Jewish community in Berenike reckoned the dates for their festivals with their own distinct calendar, and that new moons were an important feature of this calendar, and significant events in the social life of Jews there.[46] It is

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[43] cf. *Liddell and Scott* 1720; Philo *Spec. Leg.* II 41.

[44] Stern's translation (2001: 116). Philo elaborates this astronomical aspect of the new moon again elsewhere (Spec. Leg. II 140-41).

[45] Stern 2001: 120. I have already noted the potential ambiguity of the term νουμηνία. In certain contexts, νουμηνία can imply the beginning of a month which was not lunar, or which did not coincide with the lunar crescent's appearance (cf. *Liddell and Scott* 1183). Thus Philo and, occasionally, Josephus specify the month's association with the actual appearance of moon itself (e.g. Philo, above; Josephus *AJ* IV 78).

[46] Barclay suggests that it at least appears that a council of community representatives met on these occasions (Barclay 1996: 237). If a representative number of individuals met, however, this still apparently included representatives of the ruling body of archons, and separate community representatives (*archontes* and *politeuma*).

difficult to ascertain from these references exactly what observance entailed. A gathering can be assumed, and one which was probably mainly constituted by Jews, but apparently not exclusive to them. It can be said, at least, that this occasion was one which was *considered* a special day relevant to the entire Jewish community there. This conclusion can be drawn from both of the inscriptions referred to here, as both contain references to the *politeuma* of the Jews in Berenike, and to *synodos* and *noumenia*.

Commenting on these inscriptions, Reynolds states that: "...the impression is of a group seeking a measure of integration with the Greeks".[47] One can agree at least with the sentiment of Reynolds' comment: the Jewish community of Berenike, at the moments of the erection of these two inscriptions, apparently enjoyed a measure of integration in Berenike. There are a number of reasons why such a conclusion is possible: for example, most of the archons have Greek names (such as Philonidos, Autokleous, and Kleandros), the concept of community is expressed in Greek terms (*politeuma*),[48] and indeed, by honouring Roman citizens in the manner in which they do, the community and its archons manifest tendencies towards Hellenistic civic life. Reynolds' comment is also informed, naturally, by the fact that the acts of honouring of a non-Jewish Roman official suggests a degree of tolerance and indeed benefaction towards the Jewish community by the honoured individual, as well as the gestures of honour by the Jewish community. Nevertheless there are problems with Reynolds' conclusion, because she appears to base it on an assumed dichotomy between two discrete 'groups': Greeks and Jews.[49] Her conclusion would also assume that these groups are naturally set apart from one another somewhat, such that integration is not assumed, and needs to be *sought*. Both of these implied assumptions are problematic.[50] The Jewish community of Berenike, as Applebaum concluded, had been established since the mid-third century BCE, if not earlier.[51] By the time of the

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[47] Reynolds 1977: 245.
[48] On this tern, see Lüderitz 1994: 183-225.
[49] This criticism can initially be sustained by noting that there were 'Greeks' in Cyrenaican cities who were not citizens of their cities; there were also Jews who held citizenship in certain cities, for example in Asia (Sardis and Iasus, Barclay 1996: 271), and indeed in Cyreaica (cf. Applebaum 1979: 182-3). cf. Barclay (1996: 161) who discusses the ease with which Philo moved between the Jewish and Greek aspects of his environment and identity.
[50] Rutgers, for example, problematizes the notion that ancient Jews were either "...living in splendid isolation or longing to assimilate..." (Rutgers 1995: 263).
[51] Applebaum 1979: 160.

inscriptions' erection, the community had been long established. By the first century BCE, there were likely many Jews in Berenike for whom Greekness was not an alien or foreign factor, but rather an element of their own culture and identity.[52] The impression given from the two inscriptions mentioned here is one of stability, with a degree of self-confidence.[53] These inscriptions exhibit a confidently Judean/Jewish identity which appears to be an unproblematic mix of Jewish/Semitic and Greek/Hellenistic culture (including, of course, Egyptian elements). We should, therefore, be cautious when assuming groups with *opposing cultures*, and acts of *seeking* integration; neither of these factors is necessarily evident here.

From this evidence we can draw some conclusions about the place of the Jewish community in Berenike, and indeed compare it to that of other Jewish communities throughout the Hellenistic world. While there is an acknowledged complexity in the various Jewish identities and the cultural interaction between Jews and their neighbours throughout the Diaspora,[54] certain patterns emerge. We often hear that one of the primary needs of Jewish communities was to live according to their own customs. This was regularly manifested in guarantees from local rulers that Jews are free to observe sabbaths and festivals.[55] Collecting the Temple tax is also often attested to as having been a primary concern.[56] The inscriptions examined herein do not attest to the need for guarantees in respect of festival observance; they rather attest to a relatively harmonious and apparently unproblematic practice of

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[52] Although, from Josephus' references to Strabo (*AJ* XIV 115), the Jews of Cyrene (and perhaps, we should consider, Berenike) were apparently not, as a body, Greek citizens, we cannot conclude that this excludes a certain degree of consciously held 'Greekness' amongst the Jews there, or their exclusion *from* Greek culture; only from certain political rights. This potential status issue, moreover, may indeed have been a minimal distinction, as Josephus elsewhere reports that the Jews of Cyrene had long enjoyed equal rights before the law (ἰσονομία) with the inhabitants of the city (*AJ* XVI 160; cf. Applebaum 1979: 176). We can neither rule out the probability that certain individual Jews were Greek citizens. There were Roman citizens in the community, and Applebaum, based on Augustus' edict (*SEG* 9, 8, para III, 56-62), suggests that Jews who held *civitas* also became members of the Greek city, or continued their responsibilities to the Jewish *politeuma* (Applebaum 1979: 183). The history of the precise civic and legal status of Cyrenaican Jewry is not entirely clear. The divisions, apparently referred to by Strabo, of the populace of Cyrene (Cyreneans, Metics, peasants, and Jews) suggest, in Applebaum's view, a special status held by the Jews. Josephus may, however, have been inaccurate or have distorted the truth regarding this reference (Applebaum 1979: 176-77).

[53] As Barclay suggests, "...the greater the range and permanence of local expressions of community, the stronger was the support available for such Jews who wished to maintain their Jewish identity" (Barclay 1996: 414).

[54] cf. Harland 2006: 223; Barclay 1996: 399, 414ff.

[55] cf. Josephus *AJ* XIV 256-58; XVI 45; Gruen 2002: 117. This, of course, also applied to the Jews in Israel/Palestine (cf. 1 Maccabees 10:33-35).

[56] cf. for example, Josephus *AJ* XVI 162-65; Cicero, *Pro Flacco*.

Jewish festivals. Other evidence, not so far discussed here, indicates that the half-Shekel tax was regularly paid by Cyrenaican Jews, although our knowledge of this is as a result of its interruption, rather than its harmonious payment.[57] Leaving aside the occasional difficulties in the payment of the tax, it may be observed that the effort to pay it by local Jews still attests to their ties with Judea and Jerusalem.[58] It appears, then, from our two inscriptions examined, that the Jewish *politeuma* of Berenike was a successful one, with a confident Jewish/Judean identity, which was not necessarily seen as being opposed to Greek culture.[59] The Jews in Berenike sustained this position by participating in public life, engaging with the wider population on several levels (here is a higher administrative one, but we should also assume more popular levels as well). As Barclay observes:

> ...it seems that the leaders of the Jewish community Berenice were willing to identify themselves in large measure with the interests of the whole civic community.[60]

They maintained their Jewish identity by observing their festivals, and gathering in community settings on such occasions. These were also times to honour individuals who were not members of the Jewish community, and it can be concluded that certain Jewish traditions were recognised by others and respected. As Barclay also states:

> The organisation of community gatherings for meals, festivals and fasts, and the establishment of decision-making bodies which regulated community affairs, also served to reinforce, on a regular basis, the sense of Jewish belonging.[61]

From the two inscriptions examined above, it can be concluded with some confidence that Jewish new moons played a central role in this ongoing process for the community in Berenike. The Jews of Berenike gathered together on new moons, apparently in their own designated building, and included in the activities was the

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[57] Applebaum 1979: 65, 183. Josephus (*AJ* XVI 169) reports an incident in which the Jewish community was in conflict with the city of Cyrene over the right to pay the tax.
[58] Other evidence, in the form of Cyrenean Jewish burials in Jerusalem also suggest ties between the Jews in this region and Jerusalem. In 1941, eleven ossuaries for Jews with Cyrenean names were found in a tomb in the Qidron Valley. Acts 10:9, also, reports the presence of a Cyrenaican-Jewish synagogue in Jerusalem (cf. Applebaum 1979: 216, 216 n. 55).
[59] As Modrzejewski states: "...adhesion to Greek cultural norms was fully compatible with fidelity to the principles of Judaism" (Modrzejewski 1995: 56).
[60] Barclay 1996: 238.
[61] Barclay 1996: 415.

honouring of prominent figures from inside *and* outside their community. On the new moon, the gathered body was thought to be representative of the whole Jewish *politeuma* and its leadership of archons.

The precise date of the inscriptions is not agreed upon, and suggestions regarding the one examined herein vary from arguments for some point in the first century BCE to another in the first century CE. Disagreement results from the fact that the part of one of the inscriptions (*CIG* III 5362) where the year should be is lost. The other's (*CIG* III 5361) reference to "year 55" could relate to two different eras: the Cyrenaican one counted from 96 BCE (which would date the inscription to 41 BCE), or the Actian era, which would date the inscription to 24 CE.[62] Of these possible dates for *CIG* III 5361 (examined here), Reynolds prefers c. 24 CE, due to the presence of a Roman citizen among the officials listed.[63] Stern suggests that if we consider the year as 41 BCE, this date would correspond exactly with the first day of Tabernacles of that year, were the beginning of the seventh Jewish month reckoned from the appearance of the lunar crescent. On the first day of Tabernacles work is prohibited and the ritual of palm-taking occurs.[64] This may lead us to favour 41 BCE for the erection of this inscription. Stern, however, ultimately concedes that it is impossible to reach a very reliable conclusion.[65]

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[62] Reynolds 1977: 244. This second inscription, not quoted herein (*CIG* III 5362), whose year is not preserved, but whose text contains a similar reference to *synodos* and *noumenia*, is dated by Applebaum to 8-6 BCE (Applebaum 1979: 160).

[63] Reynolds 1977: 245. This conclusion on this basis is uncertain, and this is acknowledged by Reynolds herself: the position of Marcus Tittius Sexti (the official mentioned) is one of authority, but he is not given a normal title of provincial government (*proconsul*, *quaestor*, *legatus*, or *procunsulis*). Reynolds suggests the possibility that the normal system of administration had been interrupted at the time of the inscription's erection, and concedes that such an interruption is more plausible for the earlier date (41 BCE) (Reynolds 1977: 245). Applebaum also suggests a date of 24/25 CE. Later, Applebaum also dates the same inscription to 25 BCE (Applebaum 1979: 170); this is presumably a clerical error.

[64] Stern 2001: 121. Stern uses the Julian calendar in retrospective synchronisation with the Egyptian calendar to establish a date for this inscription (see Stern 2001: 59). cf. Leviticus 23:35, 39-40.

[65] Stern 2001: 121.

3. COLOSSAE

The remains of the city of Colossae are situated inland in south western Turkey, the region of ancient Phrygia in Asia Minor. Phrygia and Colossae had experienced a chequered history of Persian, Seleucid, and Pergamene suzerainty, and from 133 BCE, Colossae had been subject to the authority of the Roman proconsul of Asia.[66] The city was located several kilometres off the main trade route that connected Ephesus and Pergamum with the east, in the valley of the river Lycus, a tributary of the Maeander. Sixteen kilometres from Laodicea and twenty from Hierapolis, Colossae's inhabitants had access to the Anatolian and Mediterranean worlds; both neighbouring cities, Laodicea and Hierapolis, are mentioned in the New Testament epistle (Colossians 2:1; 4:13, 15-16). The earliest extant reference to Colossae is Herodotus' *History* 7:30.[67] Xenophon described Colossae as "a populous city, both wealthy and large" (*Anabasis* i. 2,6), although the growth of neighbouring cities Laodicea and Hierapolis may have contributed to the city's decline by the Roman period, prompting Strabo to describe the settlement as one of a list of πολίσματα, or "small towns" (xii. 8, 13).[68] Based on Strabo's description, R. P. Martin suggested that the Colossians' is perhaps the least important church mentioned in the New Testament epistles.[69] F. F. Bruce contested this, arguing that recourse to Strabo's testimony here is problematic, due to an apparent lacuna in the text of *Geography* 12.576; it was not Strabo's intention, it seems, to include Colossae in his list of "small towns". Moreover, Bruce pointed out that inscriptional evidence indicates that Colossae retained its importance even into the second and third centuries CE.[70] Bruce also observed that Pliny the Elder (died 79 CE) included Colossae in a list of "famous towns of Phrygia" (*Nat Hist* 5.145).[71] In either case, there was significant civic life in the city at the time when the epistle was written. Colossae had enjoyed an autonomous civic status under Seleucid and Pergamene rule, and this was to be retained under Rome.[72]

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[66] See Bruce 1984: 1-10 for a brief introduction to the history of the city and region.
[67] This mention is in connection with Xerxes westward march towards mainland Greece in 480 BCE (Bruce 1984: 4).
[68] Quoted in Martin 1972: 1. Martin also quoted Herodotus, who describes Colossae as "a great city of Phrygia" (*Histories* vii. 30).
[69] Martin 1972: 1.
[70] Bruce 1984: 5.
[71] This reference is also complicated by the fact that Pliny seems to have extracted this list from an older source (Bruce 1984: 5).
[72] Bruce 1984: 5.

The Jewish population of Phrygia is known through the later Julia Severa Inscription,[73] but Judean, or *Judahite* settlement of western Anatolia had apparently begun at an early date. The prophet Obadiah refers to "the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad" (Obadiah 1:20). This toponym probably corresponds to the Lidian city of Sardis.[74] While this tradition associates Judahites with the region from an early date, it seems the most significant event influencing later Jewish presence in Phrygia may have been a decision about three centuries later by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III to plant two thousand Jewish families from Babylonia and Mesopotamia in Lydia and Phrygia for reasons of stability. This decision is known through the writings of Josephus. He records a letter from Antiochus III to Zeuxis, governor of Lydia, regarding the transportation of these families to Phrygia and Lydia in the late third century BCE (Josephus *AJ* XII 149). Trebilco and Bruce both argued for the authenticity of Josephus' account, despite some disagreement amongst scholars on the issue.[75] The figure which Josephus quotes (two thousand families which, Trebilco suggested, would have amounted to more than ten thousand individuals[76]) is significant, and Josephus' account is given at least some credit by later evidence for what Bruce described as a "large and thriving Jewish population in the Lycus valley and elsewhere in Phrygia" by the end of the Mithridatic wars in the 60s BCE.[77]

An incident in 62 BCE suggests an organised Jewish presence in the Lycus valley, the immediate environs of Colossae, by that time. The current proconsul of Asia, Lucius Valerius Flaccus, had impounded the proceeds of the half-shekel tax contributed for the upkeep of the Jerusalem Temple. The incident is known to us because a legal case was taken against him for this action, and he was subsequently defended by Cicero, whose forensic speech is extant (*Pro Flacco*). In the speech, it emerges that at Laodicea, sixteen kilometres from Colossae, over twenty Roman pounds of gold had been impounded from the Jewish population (*Pro Flacco* 68). Bruce argued that this amount was exaggerated by Cicero, but nevertheless that it

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[73] Fitzpatrick-McKinley (2002: 66-8) discusses four of the recorded patrons of this synagogue. One of whom, Julia Severa, is likely to have been a Gentile (2002:67). cf. Trebilco 1991: 58-9.

[74] cf. Kraabel 1983: 178ff. Bruce observed the similarity between Hebrew סְפָרַד, Akkadian *Sapardu*, and Persian *Sfarda*, all versions of the ancient name (Bruce 1984: 8 n. 28). Raabe dated the book of Obadiah to c. 587/6-553 BCE (Raabe 1996: 55), and Watts, to the end of the sixth or beginning of the fifth century BCE (Watts 1975: 51).

[75] Trebilco 1991: 5; Bruce 1984: 9.

[76] Trebilco 1991: 6.

[77] Bruce 1984: 10. cf. McGing 1986 on these wars.

indicates a considerable Jewish presence even when allowance is made for that exaggeration.[78] The information would suggest that the Temple-tax was regularly collected in this region and kept in Laodicea before eventually being transferred to Jerusalem. This locates an organised Jewish presence there, in close proximity to Colossae, from whence some of the tax surely originated. Acts 2:10 also refers to Jews from Phrygia in general, in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

The presence of a Jewish community in Phrygia, and most probably at Colossae, can thus be reasonably postulated by the first century CE; indeed, in light of what has been seen, the absence of a Jewish community at Colossae seems quite unlikely. This conclusion is further suggested on the basis of the assertion by several scholars that what has often been referred to as the 'Colossian Heresy', the situation which occasioned the composition of the New Testament epistle to that city, was primarily 'Jewish' in its constitution.[79]

The western area of Phrygia, including the Lycus valley, was probably initially evangelized during Paul's ministry in Ephesus (52-55 CE).[80] The authorship of the epistle to the Colossians has been disputed since the first half of the nineteenth century, and this remains an undecided issue.[81] The epistle is generally considered to be either from Paul's hand, but the latest of his genuine epistles, or else the earliest of the deutero-Paulines, from someone close to Paul himself, quite possibly, as the salutation indicates, Timothy (Colossians 1:1).[82] Sanders argued that Colossians, like Ephesians, is at least "substantially influenced by Paul's thought".[83] The text's

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[78] Bruce 1984: 10-11.

[79] This has been argued, for example, by Wright 1986; 1991; Sappington 1991; Dunn 1995; Bevere 2003.

[80] Bruce 1984: 14. Bruce entertained the possibility that Paul travelled to Ephesus via the Lycus valley. It is evident from the letter that Paul did not personally spread the gospel in the Lycus valley, but an individual called Epaphras, whom the author of the letter calls "fellow slave" (Colossians 1:7).

[81] Paul's authorship was first brought into question by Mayerhoff in 1838, and has been sustained be some, including Kiley (1986); cf. Barclay 1997: 12. For a defence of the Pauline authorship see F. F. Bruce (Simpson & Bruce 1957; Bruce 1984: 28-33), who argued that it was written while Paul was imprisoned in Rome (60s CE), and composed later than the other epistles. Indeed, Paul's imprisonment is referred to in the letter (4:3, 10, 18). See also Barth & Blanke 1994: 114-126.

[82] Barclay 1997: 34. Alan Bevere suggests that is Colossians is very close to Paul, whether or not it was written by him (Bevere 2003: 1).

[83] Sanders 1977: 431.

theology is therefore considered "Pauline" in many respects, due to its accord with the theology of the genuine epistles.[84]

The Colossian church, according to the epistle, had been called by the Father to "share in the inheritance of the saints of the light" (Colossians 1:12).[85] The author of Colossians is described as struggling for the Colossian church and also for that of Laodicea, congregations whom Paul had apparently not met personally (2:1). Unity is encouraged (2:1), and the reason given for the author's instruction is "so that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments" (Colossians 2:4). This ambiguous warning against some false teaching is taken up again in 2:8. It seems that the author is not necessarily condemning a specific circumstance, but rather issuing a general warning against a teaching which is, in the author's mind, "according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe" (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) (Colossians 2:8). The author goes on to claim that the addressees were circumcised with a "circumcision without hands" (2:11-14), and that a record of legal demands had been erased in Christ's crucifixion (2:14). After this, the author reassures the addressees in relation to issues regarding food and drink, sabbaths, festivals, and regarding new moons (νεομηνίας). Members of the Colossian church, it is assured, should not be *judged* in relation to these issues; these are a "shadow" (σκιὰ), while the "substance" or "body" (σῶμα) is Christ's.[86] In chapter 3 of the epistle, the author writes what has been referred to as the 'unity formula':[87] "...there is no longer Greek or Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free; but Christ is all and in all!" (Colossians 3:10).

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[84] Patrick Byrne describes the epistle as "Pauline heritage" (Byrne 2001: 120). Colossians is seen to differ theologically from the 'genuine' epistles in relation to the cosmos, but in this regard, Sanders argued that "Colossians is building on a genuine Pauline view" (Sanders 1977: 474). Horrell notes the presence of a "realised eschatology" in Colossians which is not present in the genuine epistles (Horrell 2000: 113).

[85] "Saints", or "holy ones", (ἁγίων) is used in Colossians (1:2, 4, 22, 26; 3:12) to describe humans chosen by God. This recalls LXX designations for the chosen Israel, such as ἔθνος ἅγιον ("holy nation") (Exodus 19:6) and λαὸς ἅγιος ("holy people") (Deuteronomy 7:6). In the above reference from Colossians, those formerly outside Israel (i.e. Gentiles) are now called to share in this inheritance (Barth & Blanke 1994: 186).

[86] "Shadow" (σκιὰ) refers generally darkness or gloom as well as shade, but it also represents a special distinction from the body, or *reality*. This distinction can be applied to the New Testament idea of the "Jewish rites and dispensation as prefiguring the future more perfect things of the gospel dispensation", as seen here in Colossians (*GELNT* 666).

[87] Bevere 2003: 115-121.

It will emerge in the next section that each of the issues highlighted above, circumcision, food laws, sabbath, new moon, and festivals, the "elemental spirits of the universe" (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου), and the unity formula, is paralleled in Paul's epistle to the Galatians.[88] Regarding Colossians, Bevere argues that, "Certainly these suggest that there is something Jewish in the background of the letter".[89] This not only refers to Paul's Jewishness, but to the "philosophy", or "human tradition" which the author warns against: the letter appears to be polemical, and, due to the issues identified above, it is suggested that the polemic is against a form of Judaism.[90] In explanation for the evident drink restrictions, explanations have included special Nazirite restrictions,[91] or restrictions regarding wine offered in libation to pagan gods, which should not be consumed by pious Jews.[92] Indeed several scholars have, among these points, focussed on the evidently Jewish liturgical calendar referred to in Colossians 2:16 in favour of the argument that the author of the letter is responding specifically to a perceived Jewish or 'Judaizing' threat in Colossae. It is to this verse that we now turn.

After claiming that "circumcision without hands" has erased a record of legal demands (Colossians 2:11-14), the author writes,

> Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων, ἅ ἐστιν σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
>
> Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing[93] festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. These[94] are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).

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[88] This comparison is made systematically by Bevere (2003: 52-121).
[89] Bevere 2003: 13.
[90] Wright 1986; 1991: Bevere 2003: 16.
[91] Bruce 1984: 113-114.
[92] Bevere 2003: 78. In support of this, Bevere refers to texts including Daniel 1:3-16; 10:3 and Esther 4.16-17. Barth & Blanke (1994: 337) point out that *brōsis* and *posis* refer *both* to food and drink, and also to the *act* of eating and drinking. They also provide several parallel references, including Romans 14:17; Matthew 24:49; Luke 5:30 (which includes criticism of eating *and* drinking with tax collectors and sinners); 7:34. These parallels suggest that postulating a Nazirite association may be unnecessary to explain the drinking reference.
[93] The term μερος also means *part*, *lot*, *fate*, or *portion* (cf. *Liddell & Scott* 1104); this kind of reading is also appropriate to this context, such that a 'part' or a 'portion' in festivals can also be considered within the general meaning of 'observing', indicating that this observance is, for some, part of the

It should be noted at once that the punctuality of these rituals occasions, weekly, monthly, and, presumably, also yearly, reflects the same liturgical calendar as described by Philo and Josephus, and indeed this hints immediately at the Jewish background of the referents.[95] Bruce argued that, based on this reference and especially the mention of sabbaths, the "obligatory" sacred calendar, like the Levitical food laws, was in danger of being imposed upon the Colossian church, whose congregation should be "free from obligations of this kind".[96] The overall message of the letter is a reassurance for the Colossian church: its members do not need to be circumcised or observe dietary restrictions, festivals, sabbaths, or new moons, and they are not to be judged on these matters.[97] This is because they have already been circumcised, in a spiritual circumcision, and because the other calendar observances mentioned, like the legal record referred to, have changed in significance, in light of the significance of Christ. This relationship between the Jewishness of the practices referred to in Colossians and their changed significance in light of the risen Christ is taken up by Bruce:

> Basically the heresy was Jewish. This seems obvious from the part played in it by legal ordinances, circumcision, food regulations, the sabbath, new moon, and other prescriptions of the Jewish calendar – things which once had their place as "a shadow of the things to come" but had lost their validity now that Christ, the reality which they foreshadowed, had come and fulfilled their significance…[98]

Despite a lack of certainty regarding an immediate or imminent threat of the community adopting these practices, or becoming divided over them, many scholars have gone to great effort to specifically identify those who may hypothetically have

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inheritance alluded to earlier in the epistle using the same term (τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου, "part of the inheritance") (Colossians 1:12).

[94] This sense here is more like "…which are…" than "These…"

[95] An additional element in the letter which shows accord with contemporary Judaism is reference to the role of angels in worship (Colossians 2:18). The inclusion of this in Galatians will be noted also, as well as referenced in Chapters 5 and 7 herein.

[96] Bruce 1984: 114.

[97] Giem, as noted in Chapter 1 Part 3, has suggested, in light of the order in which the holy days are listed, and their juxtaposition, that the main concern of this verse is the sacrificial cult and the connection between the it and the community through the half-shekel Temple tax (Giem 1981: 195-210, esp. 207 n. 17).

[98] Simpson and Bruce 1957: 166.

been "judging" in verse 16.[99] Suggestions regarding the identity of the opponents, or a singular systematic movement or teaching, have included "Gnostic Judaism",[100] "ascetic visionaries"[101] with "elements of apocalyptic Judaism",[102] "philosophically-inclined gentiles drawn to the Jewish community and then to the Christian congregation…a distinctive blend of popular Middle Platonic, Jewish, and Christian elements that cohere around the pursuit of wisdom",[103] and "mystical and Torah-observant Judaism".[104] The majority of reconstructions include a central "Jewish" element, due to the identifiable Jewish motifs mentioned above.[105] Indeed, some scholars have emphasised the possibility that we do not need to look to a Gnostic or syncretistic movement at all, and that all of the elements which appear in the letter are found in extant Jewish texts from the same period; according to Bevere, "One need not search elsewhere for the nature of the Colossian philosophy than the synagogues of Colossae".[106]

In relation to the Colossians' 'opponents'/the 'Colossian Heresy', the question of a single delineated group, or of a specific identity which can or cannot be apprehended by modern scholars, is not of major concern to the present work. It is suggested that 'heresy' is probably an inappropriate term to describe this context. What is hoped is clearly evident is that the situation in Colossae can be viewed in the context of the debate over the significance of Jewish ritual and Torah, and the significance of these in relation to Christ's activity for Pauline theology. Whoever may have been "judging" the Colossian church, or indeed from whomever the author of Colossians *perceived* a potential threat to come, the resultant action which the author took was to expound the significance of the above features, what some have

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[99] Here the verb κρίνω is used, which can be translated as, "*to judge*, i.e. to form and express a judgement, opinion, as to any person or thing, more commonly unfavourable", which can be rendered "*to pass judgement upon*", *RGELNT* 413-14.
[100] Abbot 1897: xlix.
[101] Sumney 1993: 386.
[102] Sumney 1993: 388.
[103] DeMaris 1994: 16-17.
[104] Hurtado 2002: 248; Stettler 2000.
[105] One exception to this tendency is Troy Martin, who argued that Colossians is a response to a "cynic critique" (Martin 1996); Bevere describes Martin's as "a unique point of view" (Bevere 2003: 42).
[106] Bevere 2003: 19. Part of the argument for the Colossian opponents, active or otherwise, being from the Jewish population of the Lycus Valley is a distinct lack of evidence for an internal schism in the church there, as opposed, as will be seen in Part 4, to the Galatian churches, where internal schism is evident (Bevere 2003: 18).

called Jewish "badges of identity",[107] and their changed status: they are a "shadow" (σκιὰ) of things to come. Thus, for example, circumcision has become a spiritual, rather than material matter, and for the same reason, the sabbath, new moon, and yearly feasts, need not be observed. Their significance has changed in light of the crucifixion.

The significance of all of this for our current discussion is twofold. First, in the context of a theology, ritual life, and praxis which is generally referred to as 'Pauline', חֹדֶשׁ observance is seen as no longer necessary in communal life; it is a shadow whose significance, like that of the sabbath, has changed such that it need not be observed, and the community is to live free from judgement in relation to this (whomever this judgment may potentially originate from). In relation to the 'new perspective' on Paul in scholarship today, this change in significance is explicable in light of the idea of 'covenantal nomism': Paul and the Pauline movement had the aim of devaluing the genealogical, *ethnic* and historical specificity of Israel in order to create a new, universal people of God, the distinctions of Israel, that which marked off Israel as the specific people to whom the covenant with Yahweh was limited, "the "ethnocentrism" of biblical and post biblical religion", was opposed by some in the early church to allow for the allegorical Israel, to which all humankind could belong in a new covenant.[108] In light of the return in our discussion to the 'new perspective', we come to the second point in the significance of Colossians for the nature of new moon ritual. Scholars such as Dunn and Bevere have argued that the nature of 'covenantal nomism' as a religious system meant that Jewish practice "*almost inevitably came to expression in focal points of distinctiveness* – particularly laws, especially ritual practices, which reinforced the sense of distinctive identity".[109] Bevere applies this idea to Colossians, and includes the new moon under the heading "Sabbath and Special Days",[110] and indeed he discusses the new moon briefly therein. He is not, however, *completely* justified in choosing this heading for this section of his discussion, because he has focussed primarily on the sabbath. Based on Colossians alone, as with Galatians which he also examines, and which will be viewed next, it is not necessarily justified to focus specifically on the sabbath,

[107] Bevere 2003: 53-121.
[108] Boyarin 1992: 52.
[109] Dunn 1991: 28.
[110] Bevere 2003: 73-79

because it is not accorded special significance over against the new moon in *this specific context*; they appear in a list together, and indeed the new moon precedes sabbaths in the list ("festivals, new moons, or sabbaths"). In this context, therefore, there are several '*focal points*'. The new moon, in the epistle to the Colossians, emerges as such a focal point, a distinction which was seen to stand in the way of a universal people of God.

4. GALATIA

In relation to first century CE Asia Minor, the title 'Galatia' has two general meanings. The first refers to the area around Ancyra, in north central Asia Minor, to which a 'Celtic' people migrated, upon the invitation of Nicomedes, king of Bithynia, around 278 BCE; [111] some refer to this as "ethnic Galatia".[112] This is often referred to as "North Galatia". The second usage of the term Galatia refers to the *Roman province* of Galatia, which from 25 BCE was governed by a praetorian legate, and, during the two preceding decades, the ruler of Galatia had absorbed portions of Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia.[113] Thus, "Galatia" has an ethnographic sense (the north) and a more general political sense (Roman province),[114] and the latter encompasses the former. Further territorial additions were made to the Roman province of Galatia after 25 BCE, such that by the mid-first century CE, the province spread from the coast of the Black Sea in the north, to the Mediterranean in the south.[115] We also know that the province included at least thirteen Roman colonies, and these were mainly in the southern part of the province.[116] The Via Sebaste, the Roman road accessing and linking the south of the province, including the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, was built sometime around 6 BCE, whereas roads accessing northern Galatia, were built in the 70s and 80s CE.[117]

There is scattered evidence for Jewish communities in various parts of Galatia, but, for the most part, the information concerns the south of the *Roman province* of Galatia, around the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. Pisidian Antioch, formerly part of Phrygia,[118] is mentioned in Acts as having a synagogue, in which Paul was invited to speak (Acts 13:14). Acts 13:50 also suggests that there were some

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[111] Witherington 1998: 2. Historical information about the movements of Gauls in the eastern Mediterranean, including in Asia Minor, is drawn from Polybius, Livy, and Strabo.

[112] Witherington 1998: 2. This region is considered to have been settled by a people who might be called "Gallic" or "Celtic" due to the interchangeable application of the terms Κέλται/Κέλτοι and Γαλάται. These are used interchangeably in Greek sources, such as the works of Polybius and Pausanias, to refer to peoples in other regions as well Galatia. The situation in Latin sources is similar for the terms Galatae, Galli, and Celtae (cf. Witherington 1998:2; Burton 1921: xvii-xxi).

[113] Burton 1921: xix-xx.

[114] Fung 1988: 1.

[115] Witherington 1998: 3.

[116] Witherington 1998: 3.

[117] Witherington 1998: 4.

[118] Some refer to this eastern area of Phrygia as "Phrygia Galatica" (cf. Bruce 1984: 14) contrasting it with the area which includes the Lycus valley to the west (Phrygia Asiana), the environs of Colossae.

Jews who were of influential standing in that city, at least enough to have incited leading men and women from there against Paul and Barnabas.

Acts also refers to the presence of a Jewish community in Iconium, some of whom were apparently converted to the early church (Acts 14:1). Again at Iconium, apparently, Paul and his followers were forced to flee the city, and preached in the cities of Lystra and Derbe (Acts 14:4-5) It may also be inferred, if this information from Acts is accurate, that there were Jews in Iconium established enough, at least, to have some influence on other occupants or officials of the city. Trebilco discussed the historicity of Paul's activity in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, which has been questioned, and supports the above passages with additional information from the New Testament.[119] While this is relevant for the study of Paul as a figure, it is rather the question of the general credibility, indeed *possibility*, of the events that we are here concerned with, in the mid-first century CE. It should suffice to observe that in order for Acts to have been read with credibility in the first century, basic details, like the existence of entire Jewish communities in these cities, are likely to have been accurate. Acts 14:19 describes Jews coming from Antioch and Iconium to Lystra, and persuading people against Paul and Barnabas, but does not specifically refer to a Jewish community or a synagogue.[120]

Evidence for a Jewish community in the area of North "ethnic" Galatia includes a description by Josephus of a statement of Jewish rights, including the right to collect the Temple tax, concerning Jews in that part of the empire by Augustus (c. 2/3 CE). This statement was, apparently, inscribed upon a column in the temple of Caesar in Ancyra, capital of the Roman province and the centre of North Galatia (*AJ* XVI 162-65).[121]

It is not agreed upon today as to whether Paul's letter to the Galatians was originally addressed to the communities which he is purported to have established in South Galatia (Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe), mainly known from

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[119] Trebilco 1991: 20-24. Ó Fearghail (2003: 42-44) also briefly deals with Paul's activity in Antioch, Iconium and, and Lystra, with supplemental information from other NT sources.
[120] Lystra is more than 100 miles from Antioch, but Trebilco (1991: 22 n. 86) mentions a statue of Concorde set up by the citizens of Lystra in Antioch, in honour of the latter city. This, in his opinion, "shows there was some contact between the two cities" (1991: 22 n. 86).
[121] Bruce 1984: 11.

Acts, or to communities in "ethnic" Galatia (perhaps Ancyra or Pessinus). The majority of Anglophone scholars tend to favour the "South Galatian Hypothesis", the theory that the communities addressed in the epistle were based in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe in the south of the Roman province of Galatia.[122] The "North Galatia" hypothesis is defended by several German scholars and others.[123]

The situation in the Galatian churches differed from that in Colossae and Laodicea in two ways: first, a rival teaching had clearly begun to take hold in the churches there, as opposed to the apparent imminence of judgement at Colossae; and secondly, in Galatia, Paul seems to know who his opponents are, as he does their specific rival gospel,[124] his question "Who has bewitched you?" (Galatians 3:1) is evidently part of his rhetorical strategy in the letter.[125] Paul states clearly that some kind of gospel other then his has been preached and, to some extent, taken hold in the churches of Galatia (Galatians 1:6-7). He goes on to write that there is *no* gospel other then the one that he has preached, and that whatever rival gospel has gained ground is false. Paul disapproves of it (1:7-9), saying that his *true* gospel is not a human innovation, but comes directly from God through revelation (1:11-12). Featuring in an autobiographical section is what has been labelled the 'Antioch Incident', which involved a controversy regarding the implementation of Jewish purity laws by Peter and the "circumcision party" and the resultant separation of Jewish and Gentile church members in that city (2:11-14). Following this Paul goes on to discuss the relationship between the Law, faith, and righteousness, and their significance in light of Christ's crucifixion (2:15-21), and following this he continues to discuss the same issues in relation to members of the Galatian churches, referring to the well-known passage in Genesis 15 and Abraham as a model for righteousness through faith (3:6-9).

The nature of the alternative gospel that was apparently effectively preached is the subject of some debate. A range of hypothetical reconstructions of the Galatian

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[122] Proponents of this theory include Burton 1921; Fung 1988; Witherington 1998.
[123] These scholars include J. Louis Martyn (1995; 1997); Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (1998); Philip Esler (1998). German proponents have included Marxsen 1968; Kümmel 1975.
[124] Fung 1988: 3. The opponents of Paul, as Fung pointed out, feature in every chapter of the letter.
[125] Some scholars have noted that a rhetorical technique of "interrogation" is employed throughout verses 1-5 here (cf. Kern 1998: 109-112).

alternative gospel, and "the Teachers"[126] behind it, have been offered by scholars. Suggestions have included a doctrine of a *Judaistic* and *legalistic* type.[127] The opponents have also been labelled "Jewish Christian extremists",[128] "Judaizers" insisting on circumcision and "salvation through works",[129] "Torah-observant Jewish Christian charismatic nomists",[130] "Christian-Jewish evangelists",[131] or "Jewish Christians who wanted the Galatians to be circumcised and follow at least some of the law, in particular its ritual aspects".[132] Other suggestions include the argument that the Galatians, after Paul's departure, followed a "Judaizing" gospel, and, following their aversion to circumcision, returned to their former pagan religion.[133]

Most scholars hold that whatever teaching Paul was preaching against, it included features which have been associated with first-century Judaism, and indeed there are several features of this alternative, rival gospel which are referred to in the letter that support this. From a very cursory reading, the Law is immediately evident as a central issue; νόμος occurs in the text of Galatians thirty two times.[134] Circumcision is a central feature as well, and Paul's opponents were, apparently trying to *force* circumcision upon the Galatians, or at least that is what he implies (6:11-12). Purity laws are also an issue in the letter, particularly in the context of the

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[126] Martyn 1997: 18.

[127] Burton 1921: liii-liv. An argument for the presence of Gentile Christian 'Judaizers' has been put forth recently, for Galatia, and other contexts (Muehlberger 2005: 123-24). This is to some extent plausible in view of other evidence for Gentiles adopting Jewish customs, although the probability that the perpetrators of the alternative gospel in Galatia were from the *Jerusalem* church makes this suggestion unnecessary in explaining the conflict there. In Galatians 2, Paul describes his interactions with the church in Jerusalem, probably indicating his suspicion that his opponents were from there. Muehlberger also criticises the idea of *Gentile* 'Judaizers' for focusing exclusively on Gentiles as proselytizing Jewish practices (2005: 124).

[128] Neil 1967: 68.

[129] Guthrie 1969: 11-12.

[130] Arnold 1992.

[131] Martyn 1997: 18.

[132] Witherington 1998: 25.

[133] Martin 2003: 116. T. Martin argues for the Galatians' returning to their former "pagan" way of life on the basis of Galatians 4:8, where Paul compares the Galatians alternative gospel to their former religious life. This is not the prevailing view, and it is generally accepted that if Paul is actually drawing this comparison, which is not certain, he is doing so in order to rhetorically condemn their adoption of the *Jewish* calendar and law. J. L. Martyn stated that the Galatians' observing holy times is taken by Paul as "a sure sign that they are in the process of returning to the veneration of the cosmic elements", and that this is "incompatible with their having been known by God" (Martyn 1997: 412-14). Witherington also argued that "Without question, the agitators would never have agreed that following the mosaic law was anything like practicing in pagan rituals or participating in the worship of the Emperor, but that is what Paul's analogy is meant to suggest" (1998: 301-2).

[134] cf. Hong, who concludes that "...the Greek word is used predominantly to refer to the Mosaic Law" (Hong 1993: 189).

'Antioch Incident' (2:11-18). Especially controversial was the issue of inclusion at meals: whether or not *Jewish* members of the church should eat with Gentile converts (2:11-13). The 'Unity Formula' also appears again in Galatians, preaching the 'no longer Jew or Greek' message (3:28), as do the "elemental spirits of the universe" (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) and angels (4:3, 9; 3:19), and of particular interest to us, a liturgical calendar of special days (4:10).[135]

Regarding the Galatians and their new gospel which has evidently begun to take hold, Paul claims:

> ἡμέρας παρατηρεῖσθε καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς. φοβοῦμαι ὑμᾶς μή πως εἰκῇ κεκοπίακα εἰς ὑμᾶς.
>
> You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted (Galatians 4:10-11).

At first glance, this list of cultic events seems to differ from that of Colossians, but a closer look reveals that similar Jewish rituals are referred to. The "Jewish" nature of this verse is first of all suggested by its inter-textual referents: it clearly echoes the creation account of Genesis 1 in its reference to days, seasons, and years. Indeed, in the New Testament text, Paul employs the same Greek terms as LXX Genesis 1:14-16, "seasons" (καιροὺς), for example, here being a Greek translation of Hebrew מוֹעֲדִים, "set times" (Genesis 1:14; Galatians 4:10). J. Louis Martyn argued that, rather than using the specific cultic terms of his opponents, Paul presents the calendar in this way in order to echo the account of creation in Genesis 1:14, which is often supplemented with "months" in other contexts.[136]

The verb used for "observing" also points to Jewish referents. Central to certain arguments for the Jewish nature of this calendar is Paul's use of the verb

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[135] We have already encountered the association of angels with holy days in Chapter 5, when it was noted that at Qumran, the idea of communal worship with angels emerges. The reference to angels in Galatians, and in Colossians, may indicate a similar association. In Chapter 7, we shall also encounter two texts from the second century CE which suggest this association.

[136] Martyn 1997: 416-17. He also observed that, in other sources, these time periods, like in Galatians, are listed in order of length, for example Philo *de Op. Mundi* 55; 60.

παρατηρεῖσθε, meaning "ye observe, keep religiously",[137] or "scrupulous observance of stipulations appropriate to religion",[138] which, according to Witherington "suggests scrupulous observance of these calendrically based rites". While the verb is not used elsewhere in the New Testament or LXX, it is used a number of times by Josephus specifically to describe the observance of Mosaic Torah.[139]

Regarding the specific reference to "months" (μῆνας) in Galatians 4:10, above, it is probable that Jewish new moon ritual is referred to. Comparison with LXX translations of Hebrew texts concerning the new moon suggests this. Thornton argues this point, based on a survey of designations for חֹדֶשׁ in LXX. Μήν is a regular LXX translation of חֹדֶשׁ, often meaning "month" rather than new moon.[140] This ambivalence of חֹדֶשׁ, however, is often evident when the term is translated into Greek, and indeed is used in several instances where 'new moon' is clearly intended: for example, in the LXX translation of 1 Samuel 20:24; 20:27; 2 Chronicles 8:13; and Amos 8:5, all examined in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis, and all clearly referring specifically to the new moon festival.[141] The term μήν, therefore, in Jewish contexts reflects the same ambivalence and flexibility of its Hebrew equivalent. As such, its use in Galatians 4 is not problematic, since these LXX references all translate instances of חֹדֶשׁ which are clearly intended to convey the specific days of the new moon, rather than the more general "month".

For these reasons, as well as the overall context of this liturgical calendar in the letter to the Galatians, its citation alongside issues such as the Law, circumcision, the 'Unity Formula', food laws, and references to Abraham and the descendents of Sarah and Hagar, the majority of commentators on Galatians view this reference to "days and months and seasons and years" (Galatians 4:10) as referring to sabbaths ("days"), new moons ("months"), מוֹעֲדִים/yearly festivals ("seasons"), and sabbatical

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[137] Burton 1921: 233.
[138] Martyn 1997: 412.
[139] Witherington 1998: 301; Josephus *AJ* III 91; XI 294; XIV 264; *Apion* II 282.
[140] See *RGELNT* 465.
[141] Thornton 1989: 99 n. 13. He points out that this dual usage is similar to biblical and rabbinical writers' use of the Hebrew term חֹדֶשׁ. cf. Dogniez 2006: 361-62; Caquot 1960: 1; Gandz 1949: 260.

or Jubilee years. In fact, ancient commentators, including John Chrysostom in the fourth century, interpreted Galatians 4:10 in precisely this way.[142]

Paul, of course, is clearly disapproving of these practices in the letter, and following his reference to these practices, states that their proliferation implies that his time evangelising the Galatians was wasted (Galatians 4:11). As can now be seen, there exists what Alan Bevere describes as "verbal and conceptual correspondence" between Colossians and Galatians, particularly in light of the five overall parallels which Bevere observed: "(1) Circumcision, (2) Sabbath and special days, (3) food laws, (4) τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου and angels, and (5) the denial of social and ethnic distinctions in Gal. 3.28 and Col. 3.11".[143] The fifth point, the *denial of social and ethnic distinctions*, refers to the 'Unity Formula': "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

As has been noted, scholars have gone to great effort to reconstruct a systematic teaching or a singular movement or indeed compound set of circumstances behind the "different gospel" (Galatians 1:6) which Paul preaches against in the letter. Ideas, though varied, tend towards identifying an individual or group preaching a conservative message regarding the significance of Jewish Torah for those who accept Jesus as the messiah, and hence often refer to 'Judaizers'. Though this term is problematic (for it somewhat assumes a dichotomy between "Judaism" and these early churches), it is at least conceivable that this notion broadly represents the actual circumstances in some limited ways. Importantly, Paul does establish what he himself is *for*, and what he is *against* in the letter, at least in relation to the praxis of the early Galatian churches referred to. He is *against*, for example, the idea that church members with Gentile backgrounds be circumcised (6:11-12). He is also against the implementation of Jewish ritual purity laws, particularly as they apply to table fellowship, due to the resultant separation between Jewish and Gentile community members (2:11-14). He is *for* the idea that, in light of the significance of Christ, social and ethnic distinctions, such as female/male, free/slave, and, significantly, Jew/Gentile, are redundant. For him, all are one under Christ.

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[142] Alexander 1994: 31.
[143] Bevere 2003: 25, 53.

In the above scheme, חֹדֶשׁ can now be commented on. Paul is *against* the observance of חֹדֶשׁ in the Galatian churches whom he addresses. A least some members of the churches have, along with the sabbath, yearly festivals, and perhaps also Jubilee years, begun to observe Jewish חֹדֶשׁ ritual every month. According to Paul's preaching, which he claims is the only true gospel (Galatians 1:7), the communities in Galatia should be unified, and leave aside social and ethnic distinctions. They should do this by leaving the physical signs and practices of these distinctions behind. The primary distinctions, on the traditional Jewish side, are circumcision, the Law, laws relating to table fellowship, the sabbath, the yearly festivals, the Jubilee year, and, as for the author of the epistle to the Colossians, חֹדֶשׁ, the ritual constellation associated with the new moon.

The 'new perspective' on Paul brings this overall understanding to a discussion regarding identity. Before this, however, it should be observed that even without the insights of scholars of the 'new perspective', Paul's letter to the Galatians can be viewed as a document which is fundamentally concerned with issues of group identity, because it is plainly termed as such by Paul himself. In his work primarily concerned with 'social identity' in Galatians, Philip Esler in particular has taken note of this fact and stressed it.[144] He notes the rather large occurrence of numerous group designations. The Galatians are addressed as ἐκκλησίαις (1:2), "foolish Galatians" (3:1), and "my children" (4:19), and numerous other designations appear throughout the letter, including, for example, "seed of Abraham" and "heirs according to the promise" (3:29), "children according to the promise of Isaac" (4:28), children of Sarah (4:21-31), and "the Israel of God" (6:16).[145] As Esler points out, all of the above designations, which Paul deems applicable to his Galatian audience, "...supply answers to the question, 'Who are we?'"[146] The terms, as Esler observes, "...serve to highlight aspects of the *identity* of the members of the congregations", and he states: "The rich array of language and argument relating to identity, here presented in collective forms, is one of the most striking features of this letter, although this is a

[144] Esler 1998.
[145] Esler 1998: 37.
[146] Esler 1998: 37.

topic rarely taken up by commentators".[147] Other noteworthy terms for collective designation in the epistle include "Jews" (2:13-13), "the Gentiles" (2:12), and, as has been seen, "Greek" (3:28).

As will be discussed in Part 4 of this chapter, scholars of the 'new perspective' on Paul have argued that the 'pattern of religion' which characterized Judaism at the time of the composition of Galatians can be described as 'covenantal nomism': fulfilment of the Law, which was given to Israel by God, in order to remain within the covenant with him.[148] Dunn's development of the idea of 'covenantal nomism', the argument that covenantal nomism inevitably resulted in a focus on particular "points of distinctiveness...which reinforced the sense of distinctive identity and marked Israel off most clearly from other nations",[149] is interesting to note because it seems fair to argue that certain behavioural and conceptual traits in particular are controversial and become the focus of Paul's attention, and these have already been identified above. These seem to represent some of the 'classic' points of distinction which have been posited by many scholars, both ancient and modern.[150] I wish to conclude this section with the point that, in the case of Paul's letter to the Galatians, חֹדֶשׁ emerges on an equal footing with the sabbath, it seems, as one of these points of distinctiveness in that context. When Paul attempted to preach unity and the removal of social and ethnic distinctions, he focussed on a relatively small number of named practices. חֹדֶשׁ is one of these.

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[147] Esler 1998: 38. His emphasis.
[148] cf. Sanders 1977: 235-36.
[149] Dunn 1991: 28.
[150] Bevere 2003: 52-121.

5. THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL AND 'COVENANTAL NOMISM'

One of the main contributions of E. P. Sanders' work was his characterization of the Judaim(s) of Palestine from c. 200 BCE to c. 200 CE as a "pattern of religion" which can be described as "covenantal nomism".[151] The problem, which he had considered unresolved, was significant: Paul, in the surviving literature attributed to him, seemed clearly to have a certain relation to the Law of Moses, and preached a great deal against certain contemporaneous attitudes to the Law. But, the Judaism which appeared to be described by Paul appeared *not* to be the same as that which is reflected in near-contemporary Jewish documents, rabbinic or inter-testamental. As Sanders argued, "Paul's own polemic against Judaism serves to define the Judaism which is then contrasted with Paul's thought".[152]

In light of the problem of contradiction between Paul's depiction of Judaism and that of other near contemporary Jewish texts, Sanders undertook what he described as "...the holistic comparison of patterns of religion".[153] Rather than focusing his comparison on particular "*individual* motifs" such as the Law or the Temple, for example, or "reduced *essences*" such as the faith-versus-works discussion, Sanders undertook to examine each pattern of religion, Palestinian Judaism and Pauline religion, on its own terms, before comparing them.[154] Sanders concluded that the *pervasive* pattern of religion which characterized various forms of Palestinian Judaism was 'covenantal nomism'.[155] Regarding Tannaitic material, for example, he argued:

> God has chosen Israel and Israel has accepted the election. In his role as King, God gave Israel commandments which they are to obey as best they can. Obedience is rewarded and disobedience punished. In the case of failure to obey, however, man has recourse to divinely ordained means of atonement, in all of which repentance is required. As long as he maintains his desire to stay in the covenant, he has a share in God's covenantal

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[151] Sanders 1977: 235-238.
[152] Sanders 1977: 4.
[153] Sanders 1977: 12-24.
[154] Sanders 1977: 12-13.
[155] Sanders 1977: 426. This approach by Sanders to the study of ancient Judaism, particular rabbinic Judaism, was criticised by Jacob Neusner, although Neusner did not disagree with all aspects of Sanders' work (Neusner 1988, see especially Appendix 7: "Other Readings of Judaism in Tannaite Times", pages 405-19). For an early response to Sanders' 1977 work, see Neusner 1978a: 177-191. Martin Hengel and Roland Deines also criticised certain aspects of Sanders' work, but this mainly concerned his later elaboration of a 'Common Judaism' (cf. Hengel & Deines 1995: 1-70).

> promises, including life in the world to come. The intention and effort to be obedient constitute the *condition for remaining in the covenant*, but they do not *earn* it.[156]

A divinely ordained means of atonement is perhaps one of the most consistent features of all of the texts which Sanders examined. One of the most important corrective implications of this provision is that Judaism in these centuries can no longer be seen as characteristized by "petty legalism", or "legalistic works-righteousness",[157] such that Jews *earned* a place in the afterlife as though their merits in keeping the finer details of Law were weighed up against their respective transgressions, and associated with arrogance and smug self-satisfaction.[158] Boyarin described the contents of this accusation as a "commercialistic religious attitude".[159] This was a frequent and inaccurate Christian charge against Judaism.[160] The consistent provision of a means of atonement, identified in Sanders' analysis, renders such an understanding unnecessary. Covenantal nomism, a Sanders saw it, is thus a pervasive pattern of religion in the Palestinian Judaism of Paul's time; its relative consistency throughout the texts he examined would seem to suggest this.

Paul, then, can be examined in light of this analysis, with his conviction that God appointed Christ as Lord over the whole world. This apparent universalism results in the assertion that Jews and Gentiles are equal. Thus Jews are not in a privileged position due to the Law, and indeed Gentiles are to be on equal footing. Sanders argued with reference to Romans 3:29 that "...there must be *one ground* of salvation in order that Jews and Gentiles may equally have access to salvation. This is, in effect, an argument against the law as being in any way necessary for salvation".[161] This positive argument, particularly drawn from Romans 1-4, in Sanders' opinion, has a resultant negative argument "*...against the necessity of keeping the law*". In his analysis: "Faith represents man's entire response to the salvation offered in Jesus Christ, *apart from the law*; and *the argument for faith is really an argument against the law*".[162] Paul's 'pattern of religion', according to

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[156] Sanders 1977: 180.
[157] Sanders 1977: 427, 549.
[158] Sanders 1977: 550.
[159] Boyarin 1994: 43.
[160] Sanders 1977: 427.
[161] Sanders 1977: 489.
[162] Sanders 1977: 490-91.

Sanders, "...cannot be described as 'covenantal nomism', and therefore Paul presents an *essentially different type of religiousness from any found in Palestinian Jewish literature*".[163] Pauline religion, according to Sanders, is characterized as "participationist eschatology": "...one participates in salvation by becoming one person with Christ, dying with him to sin and sharing the promise of his resurrection".[164] Paul polemicizes against the "prior fundamentals of Judaism": election, covenant, and law, and, in Sanders' view, "...it is because these are wrong that the means appropriate to righteousness according the law (Torah observance and repentance) are held to be wrong".[165] Sanders, in Boyarin's view "...laid the foundations for a reading which neither slanders Judaism nor slanders Paul by making his account of Judaism a slander".[166]

A notable scholar who accepts Sanders' characterization of the Judaism around the turn of the era as 'covenantal nomism' was James D.G. Dunn.[167] He discussed the "Four Pillars of Second Temple Judaism", which includes, as the third pillar, "covenant focussed in Torah".[168] Dunn's overall understanding of 'covenantal nomism' within this category is similar to, and indeed based on, that put forth by Sanders, but with several developments. Dunn saw the book of Deuteronomy as the "classic statement of what Sanders has fittingly described as 'covenantal nomism'".[169] The assertion of Deuteronomy was repeated in the Ezra reforms, and also around the Maccabean crises, "when it was precisely Israel's identity as the covenant people, the people of the law, which was at stake".[170] One of Dunn's developments is thus an extension of Sanders' chronological range such that the notion is applied to a context as early as the Deuteronomist, well before 200 BCE.

Dunn also identified two main corollaries to the "basic axiom of covenantal nomism". First, "...the law so understood became a basic expression of Israel's

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[163] Sanders 1977: 543.
[164] Sanders 1977: 549.
[165] Sanders 1977: 552.
[166] Boyarin 1994: 47.
[167] In Dunn's assessment: "...nobody who entertained serious aspirations to understand Christian beginnings generally or Pauline theology in particular could any more ignore the sharp contrast he [Sanders] drew between his restatement of Palestinian Judaism and the traditional reconstructions of Judaism within Christian theology" (Dunn 1998: 5).
[168] Dunn 1991: 18-36, 23.
[169] Dunn 1991: 24. See also Dunn 1998: 338-39.
[170] Dunn 1991: 24.

distinctiveness": because Israel was specifically chosen by God, Israel was distinctive and distinguished from other nations.[171] Secondly, the special election of Israel by God led almost inevitably to sense of *privilege*: Israel was chosen before others.[172] In relation to his first corollary, that the Law was an expression of Israel's distinctiveness, he stated: "In sociological terms the law functioned as an 'identity marker' and 'boundary', reinforcing Israel's assumption of distinctiveness and distinguishing Israel from the surrounding nations".[173] The Law as a whole, in this analysis, structured Israel's separateness through prescribed distinctive behaviour and separation from others. On this tenet, Dunn's logic progressed to his understanding of the *privilege* of Israel as expressed by the Law:

> A sociological perspective also helps us to see how *conviction of privileged election and covenantal nomism almost inevitably came to expression in focal points of distinctiveness* – particularly laws, especially ritual practices, which reinforced the sense of distinctive identity and marked Israel off most clearly from other nations, test cases of covenant loyalty.[174]

Thus, the "social function of the law" was, according to Dunn, "...defining and marking off Israel from other nations".[175] Dunn argued that three important examples of these *focal points of distinctiveness* are circumcision, sabbath, and food laws. A final point to note is Dunn's assertion that such practices, as "identity markers", were important from *two* perspectives: "...Jewish looking out 'from inside' and Graeco-Roman looking in 'from outside'".[176]

Dunn uses his development of the idea of 'covenantal nomism' to gain insight into Pauline attitudes to the Jewish Law. For Dunn, "works of the Law", which much of Pauline teaching is against, refers to Dunn's *focal points of distinctiveness* which "marked Israel off most clearly from other nations".[177] So Paul, in his assertion that

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[171] Dunn 1991: 25-26.
[172] Dunn 1991: 26.
[173] Dunn 1991: 26.
[174] Dunn 1991: 28.
[175] Dunn 1991: 120.
[176] Dunn 1991: 28. I prefer to view these two perspectives as the (more important) *internally cohesive social strategy* which is embedded in the ritual, and (of secondary importance), the potential for such ritual to function as a *node of identity discourse*. I prefer not to view the outward display characteristic towards 'others' as a ritual's primary purpose.
[177] Dunn 1991: 28.

early churches were not required to observe certain rituals, or the Law as a whole, is arguing that:

> *God's covenant grace is also for the Gentiles as Gentiles, that the eschatological fulfilment of the promise through Abraham does not require Gentiles to merge their ethnic identity into that of the Jewish people.*[178]

Because the Law as a whole is seen as a boundary for Jewish identity, and especially because certain practices and laws were *focal points*, practices and beliefs particularly associated with this attitude to the Law, Paul preached against them. His insight gained by his Damascus Road experience was that God's grace was *universal*, and thus practices which asserted Israel's *distinctiveness* had no place in this universalist praxis.

E. P. Sanders' seminal work can be seen to have left an invitation for the completion of a sequel,[179] and this invitation has, to some extent, been accepted by Daniel Boyarin.[180] This is not to say that Boyarin has taken up Sanders' 'holistic' method of comparison, or that he has necessarily taken up a comparative project at all. Rather, Boyarin attempts to locate Paul's form of Judaism within a wider trend of "Greek speaking Judaism".[181] Boyarin locates Pauline theology in a tradition he refers to as "the eclectic middle-platonism of Greek-speaking Judaism in the first century".[182] He is not as concerned with defining and defending the notion 'covenantal nomism' as Sanders and Dunn are, but he certainly presupposes such an understanding, and he states this explicitly in reference to Sanders' articulation:

> This seems to me a fairly accurate broad statement of "the Jewish pattern of religion."[183]

Boyarin observes that in reality, no one was ever able to fulfil all of the requirements of Torah, such that the mercy of God would always have to be dependent on grace to

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[178] Dunn 1991: 124.
[179] Indeed Sanders states from the outset that his intention is not to deal with "Hellenistic Jewish" texts such as Philo of Alexandria, and that this decision is made mainly on practical grounds (Sanders 1977: 1-2).
[180] Boyarin 1994.
[181] Boyarin 1994: 14-15.
[182] Boyarin 1994: 14.
[183] Boyarin 1994: 43.

some extent. He thus rejects the notion of 'legalism' in favour of 'covenantal nomism'.[184]

Boyarin's main argument is based on the understanding that the kind of religion represented by Paul is "a religio-cultural formation contiguous with other Hellenistic Judaisms". This is most seen, in Boyarin's view, in comparing Paul's ideas with those of Philo of Alexandria.[185] Not only does he argue for common elements in these two writers, but, on the basis of further comparison between Philo and other New Testament texts such as the gospel of John and epistle to the Hebrews, he states, "I take these affinities as prima facie evidence for a Hellenistic Jewish cultural koine, undoubtedly varied in many respects but having some common elements throughout the eastern Mediterranean".[186] Within this understanding it is argued that such New Testament texts are less of a reaction *against* contemporary Judaism, and more a *continuation* of a certain stream of Hellenistic Jewish thought. Boyarin argues that within this stream there was a tradition of an allegorizing interpretation of scripture and tradition, witnessed in the writings of Philo. This was, in Boyarin's view, a result of Jewish contact with Hellenistic culture: as Jews interacted with others, the question of how Jewish tradition could be of universal benefit arose. The answer, Boyarin writes, lay for some in the allegorizing of Jewish "signifiers" in order to read universal significance into them:

> The dualism of Hellenized Judaism provides one answer to this question by allegorizing such signifiers as "Israel," "history," and the practices of Judaism. Thus Philo interprets these signifiers as having meanings of universal applicability. The Bible, its prescriptions, and the history it relates are universal in that they teach everyone important truths.[187]

The kernel of Boyarin's argument is his assertion that Paul, as a Jew writing from within such a tradition, adopted the *same allegorizing approach*:

> Literal interpretation and its consequences, observances in the flesh such as circumcision, commitment to the history of Israel, and insistence on procreation are all linked together in Paul's thinking, as are their corresponding binaries: allegorical interpretation, per se,

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[184] Boyarin 1994: 43.
[185] Boyarin 1994: 13-14.
[186] Boyarin 1994: 14.
[187] Boyarin 1994: 25.

> and specifically of circumcision as baptism, of Israel as a signifier of the faithful Christians, and of procreation as spiritual propagation.[188]

Thus Paul is able to write about his scriptural interpretation "according to the flesh" (κατὰ σάρκα), and "according to the spirit" (κατὰ πνεῦμα), the *literal* and the *allegorical*.[189] It was not the intention of Philo, however to devalue the "physical practices and genealogy of Israel", Boyarin argues, but this is exactly what Paul did:

> For Philo, such a spiritualized and philosophical Judaism, one in which a faith is substituted for works, remains only a theoretical possibility. For Paul it became the actuality of a new religious formation which deprives Jewish ethnicity and concrete historical memory of value by replacing these embodied signs with spiritual signifiers.[190]

So Boyarin sees the preaching activity of Paul as a first century solution to one of the central tensions within Judaism: the tension between "the universalism of the Torah's content and the particular ethnicity of its form".[191] Paul, in Boyarin's view, produced the "...devaluation of the ethnic body – Jewish – as the corporeal" in favour of the "Universal Subject" under Christ.[192] Boyarin believes that numerous ancient writers such as Philo, Paul, and the author of the Wisdom of Solomon, evidence a belief in the *specialness* of Jewish rites, what Dunn might call the *distinctiveness* of the Law, in their function in marking Jews from other peoples, hence the title of Philo's *Special Laws*.[193] In his construction of the idea of the 'Universal Subject', Paul subordinates Jewish ritual distinction in favour of a *new* community under Christ to which this subject belonged. Boyarin, for our purposes, actually argues a thesis quite similar to those of Sanders, and especially Dunn, in a number of ways, but discusses the location of Paul's thought in the tradition of "middle-platonism of Greek-speaking Judaism in the first century", in which the allegorical interpretation of scripture and tradition is taken to full fruition, or, as Boyarin actually concludes, to the negative devaluing of the physical practices and genealogy of Israel.

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[188] Boyarin 1994: 15.
[189] Boyarin 1994: 15.
[190] Boyarin 1994: 25.
[191] Boyarin 1994: 29.
[192] Boyarin 1994: 38. This also produced the devaluation of the gendered body, according to Boyarin, because the Universal Subject was, in his view, male.
[193] Boyarin 1994: 26.

The above three are well-known examples of scholars working within, or in the wake of, the 'new perspective' on Paul, and much of the discussion revolves around issues of group identity, especially the relationship between Jews, Jewish identity, and the growing community of Gentiles claiming a share in the spiritual inheritance of Israel. Several scholars within the 'new perspective' have, as seen here, focussed on the role of Jewish ritual as a means of preserving one's Jewish identity, or the role of ritual and Torah as boundary mechanism. It is this that forms the 'new perspective' on Paul.

What it is hoped is highlighted from this discussion is the possibility that we can read the two New Testament texts examined from the 'new perspective', and that it can thus be argued that, within the framework of 'covenantal nomism' the new moon emerges as one of the *points of distinctiveness* which Dunn thinks inevitably emerge as the foci of Jewish identity. This is a plausible conclusion because Paul and the author of Colossians focus on the new moon in the context of various other items which 'new perspective' scholars such as Dunn and Bevere class as "badges of identity".[194] In his focussing on the new moon, it appears that Paul and the author of Colossians regard it as one of the *focal points of distinctiveness* which stand most clearly in opposition to his move away from other kinds of Judaism, or to the creation of the more universal Israel which involved Gentile members.

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[194] I do not choose to use this term ourselves, because it gives misleading primacy to the notion of certain ritual practices being "on display", such as circumcision, for example. To say that circumcision is a "badge of identity" naturally leads one to ask the question: 'who was viewing this badge'? Although it is readily accepted that intercultural engagement occurred in certain contexts (e.g. gymnasia) while undressed, an understanding of circumcision which posits (by implication) the main part of its function to involve the display of genitalia is not taken up here or recommended. Circumcision was certainly a *focal point* in identity discourse, but the analogy of 'badge' clearly has certain failings. The same might be said about certain practices in relation to ritual purity such as bathing, which was, and is, associated with ritual often rather too discrete to be associated with the term 'badge'. Another reason for not choosing such terminology is particularly pertinent to the new moon: it appears that while new moons were central to Jewish experience, Jews were still not the only group in the eastern Mediterranean to have new moon festivals and this was, in fact, acknowledged. Up to a certain time, observing new moons seems to have be a practice which Jews shared with surrounding peoples, to such an extent that Philo is ambivalent about the feast: it is a special Jewish practice, with universal benefits (*Spec. Leg* II 140), and yet he elsewhere associates new moons with other nations (cf. *De Decalogo* 96). Therefore, the metaphor badge does not provide the most meaningful description.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In Part 1 of this chapter it was suggested that חֹדֶשׁ can be viewed as a widely observed Jewish practice in the first century CE. There was a certain selection of Jewish ritual constellations which seems to have been standard to Jews in various Palestinian and Diaspora contexts, and this was posited on two bases: first, on the testimony of Josephus, Philo, and subsequently the two Pauline texts examined in Parts 3 and 4 of this chapter; secondly, on the observation that the book of Numbers and the Pentateuch had prescribed these rituals previously, and by the first century had authoritative status. We should *not* preclude absolutely (a) alternative understandings of systems for reckoning festal times, such as the alternative 364 day solar calendar of the Qumran community, and thus an alternative timing of the festivals, or (b) the addition, or subtraction, of certain rituals and festivals in certain contexts, for example, again, additional events in evidence at Qumran. What does appear in the common list of Jewish liturgical events that was examined, previously and in this chapter, is חֹדֶשׁ, the monthly ritual constellation associated with the new moon.

In conclusion to this chapter I suggest that in the two contexts in Asia Minor, חֹדֶשׁ is a central issue in the development of new communities and identities. In Berenike, conversely, we find evidence for a confident Jewish identity, and a sense of belonging partly created and maintained by that community's new moon gathering. Also, members of that community interacted specifically as members of that community and thus expressed their Jewish identity on new moons. The former two examples from Asia Minor suggest the role of the feast in the negotiation of new identities for the contexts which they immediately refer to, several Galatian communities, Colossae, and also Laodicea, but it is suggested that they also testify to a wider understanding of the social meaning of Jewish Torah, including חֹדֶשׁ, and that they are but two references to what was surely a longstanding disagreement involving several parties. While there were certainly multiple parties and many voices in first century Judaism, and emergent Christianity was no exception to this, the Pauline literature herein discussed *broadly* represents two points of view as noted in the introduction to this chapter. While the 'Jewish-Christian' side is most likely unfairly represented, distorted, and incorrectly conflated into one somewhat indirect voice, it

is worth reflecting at least on the evidence for disagreement on the issues discussed, and particularly חֹדֶשׁ for the purposes of this thesis. There is evidence for what some have described as *Judaizers*. This, at least, suggests that there were some in the first century who could not tolerate members (whether Jews or Gentiles) of their communities who did not observe appropriate חֹדֶשׁ ritual. It can, therefore, be seen as one of a reduced set of items which was of *central importance*, at least to some parties, in what was seen as the correct ritual life of those claiming membership to the people of God. This reminds one of Judith, the paradigm of a good Jew, whose rigorous piety included חֹדֶשׁ observance. But the kernel of this argument is the probability that those who did not advocate Jewish observance such as on חֹדֶשׁ, those who preached *against* such ritual, Paul being the most famous example, seem to have done so in reaction to the idea that there was a reduced set of rituals and ideas that constituted the core behavioural traits of members of the people of God, Israel, and that they preached specifically against these traits. This is not to suggest that there was a coherent community around the Mediterranean or Near East which constituted Judaism or Israel, but there were certainly many communities and individuals, in Israel-Palestine and throughout the Diaspora, who viewed themselves as constituting Israel, or called themselves Judean, or Jewish, and for these, it seems, there were various understandings of what constituted their ritual way of life. The two New Testament texts examined include, as seen, relatively brief references with very little actual detail on what specifically *occurred* on חֹדֶשׁ, but both of the texts provide a sufficient context for their references to the new moon for us to gain some understanding of the social role of חֹדֶשׁ in each respective setting, and for the authors of the texts addressed to each community, which at this stage seems to have been similar. חֹדֶשׁ, with circumcision, 'the Law' in general, particularly purity laws, the Sabbath, and yearly festivals, seems to have stood in the way of a *separate* early Christian community, separated from other forms of Judaism, because it was a *focal point of distinctiveness*, and contributed to a *distinctive identity* which ran counter to the aims of Paul and his followers.

Chapter 7

The Employment of New Moon Ritual in Second Century Christian Constructions of Jews as 'Normative Literary Opponents'

INTRODUCTION

> Calendar had long distinguished Jewish groups from their pagan neighbours, giving social expression to their distinctive self-identity; Christians were following a similar path but with the added similarity/contrast with the Jews.[1]

This chapter will focus on four Christian sources from the second century CE which refer to new moon ritual: the *Apology* of Aristides, Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, the *Epistle to Diognetus* and the *Kerugma of Peter*. In each of these texts, we find attempts by Christian authors to characterise Jewish ritual life. It is frequently argued that these characterisations emerge particularly in the context of identity discourse and the process of Christian self-definition, regularly in relation to the status of Jewish Torah in Christian life.[2] In this chapter, it will be shown that new moon ritual, along with several other well-known features of Jewish life such a circumcision, sabbath, and purity laws, was used by these ancient authors to construct a Jewish 'other' which was set off against the ritual life of second century Christians, in order to define the latter in contradistinction to this constructed Judaism.

Many commentators on the texts examined here argue that second century Christian authors constructed a Jewish 'other'. The construction of the Jewish 'other' facilitated the construction of a clearer boundary between the emergent Christian church and other forms of Judaism. Modern scholars have increasingly accepted that the boundaries between the earlier church and various contemporary forms of Judaism were not as clearly asserted and defined as was thought in the past, or as applied to later times. The boundaries between these two perceived communities were apparently more porous than previously thought. Along with this realisation has come the acceptance that Judaism itself was certainly not a singular entity, nor was the early church.[3] Early Christian differentiation from Judaism, therefore, was a complicated process, because of the multifaceted nature of both. The early church, with its claims to being the true Israel, asserting roots in the Jewish scriptures, had to be defined in

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[1] Lieu 1996: 16.

[2] cf. Boyarin 2004: 28.

[3] Pearce and Jones, for example, note a move in scholarship away from viewing Judaism and Jewish identity in Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods as normative, homogenous phenomena, and note an alternative model which "...stresses the existence of a plurality of Judaisms and Jewish identities in antiquity that made up complex and variegated phenomna in both the Land of Israel and the Diaspora" (Pearce & Jones 1998: 15).

relation to, but distinct from, contemporary Judaism, and yet it was difficult to identify a coherent 'Judaism' against which the early church could be defined. Many scholars now acknowledge that early Christian writers *constructed* a singular 'Judaism' for their own self-definition, a process which Judith Lieu calls "Self-definition vis-à-vis the Jewish Matrix".[4] The church, she had previously argued, was "...defined in contradistinction to the Jews".[5]

The second social focus of the construction of the Jewish 'other' was the internal variance of Christianity itself at this time, and the beginning of heresiological discourse and the establishment of 'orthodoxy'.[6] In the efforts of second century Christian writers to define the Church as a new people with a new distinct set of practices, but in contrast to this constructed 'Judaism', Christian heretical groups who did not seem to conform to the norms of the projected image of orthodox Christianity were often rhetorically considered Jews or compared to Jews, in order to contrast them with certain definitions of emergent Christianity of the time. Although this was an intra-church focus, it was ultimately concerned with boundaries, as Karen King states:

> "Orthodoxy" and "heresy" are terms of evaluation that aim to articulate the meaning of self while simultaneously silencing and excluding others within the group... Calling people heretics is an effort to place *outside* those who claim to be on the *inside*.[7]

In the context of second-century Christian writings, a constructed and monolithic 'Judaism' served the self-definition of the church by placing the image of the church in opposition to Jews. Constructed 'Judaism' also functioned to place heretics 'outside' the boundaries of this new people.[8] Mention of new moon ritual bore a prolonged relevance at least in some early Christian contexts, as it seems to have been observed by certain Christian groups up to the fourth century.[9]

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[4] Lieu 2006: 214-229; cf Lieu 1996: 1.
[5] Lieu 1996: 139.
[6] Boyarin 2004: 28-29.
[7] King 2003: 24.
[8] These mentioned are but two of the four 'fronts' which, according to Lieu, Christian writers felt the need to defend themselves: "the state, the philosophers, the Jews and the heretics" (Lieu 1996: 157).
[9] Marcus quotes Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* as evidence for the observance by a "Jewish Christian minority" of regulations of Torah, including monthly ritual (Marcus 2006: 101). Indeed, as late as the time of John Chrysostom in the fourth century this remained an issue (cf. Alexander 1994: 31; Harkins 1979).

In the four contexts below, new moon ritual appears as a consistent aspect of the Christian construction of Judaism. חֹדֶשׁ appears precisely in the activity of boundary maintenance or indeed boundary *creation* at this time. There may not, in the second century, have been distinct and discrete 'groups' ('Judaism' and 'Christianity') which can be considered *bounded*, and so it was precisely for this reason that our writers were so concerned with *creating* boundaries. In the case of the four references to new moon ritual below, it will be suggested that a common Christian polemical tradition is drawn from in these cases, but that this same tradition also has roots in Jewish literature, and indeed also that our 'construction' of Judaism has a certain relationship with actual contemporary Jewish ritual.

1. ARISTIDES OF ATHENS

According to two patristic traditions, Aristides, a philosopher from Athens, was one of the first Christian apologists. His *Apology*, according to both traditions, was a systematic statement of the doctrine of the early church, and was apparently copied and read by many.[10] A reference by Eusebius would suggest that this work was presented to Hadrian in c. 124 CE, as the event is said to have taken place at Athens.[11] This is, evidently, the earliest Christian apology that we today possess. The work was considered to be largely lost until the late nineteenth century, when J. R. Harris discovered a seventh century Syriac manuscript of the text at St. Catherine's monastery at Mt. Sinai, and subsequently made an English translation and an edited Syriac text available to western scholars.[12] The Syriac manuscript, curiously, is actually addressed to Hadrian's successor, the emperor Antoninus Pius, although some scholars consider the weight of the evidence to favour a date of composition during Hadrian's reign.[13]

According to Judith Lieu, the text is a particularly good example of second-century Christian twofold concern for differentiation and self-presentation;[14] the author seeks to: "...explain and defend Christianness".[15] Aristides' *Apology* divides the world into three or four main races, and, importantly, describes Christians as a particularly blessed "race" (γένος).[16] According to the Greek text, there are three races: those who worship several "so-called-gods" (subdivided into Chaldeans, Greeks, and Egyptians), Jews, and Christians. In the Syriac version there are four races: barbarians, Greeks, Jews, and Christians. This division into races broadly reflects the structure of both versions of this *Apology*. Aristides identifies each race almost solely by reference to their understanding of God and their associated religious practices. So, for example, the barbarians worship the elements, such as water and

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[10] Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl* IV 3.3) and Jerome (*Illustrious Men* 20) claim that Aristides presented his apology to Hadrian (117-138 CE) at the same time as the apologist Quadratus.
[11] Grant 1992: 382.
[12] Grant 1992: 382; Harris 1893. This discovery also led to confirmation that portions of the text of Aristides' *Apology* were preserved in at least two fourth century papyri (*POxy.* 15: 1778), an Armenian fragment and a section of the Greek novel *Barlaam and Josaphat*, ascribed to John of Damascus (Grant 1992: 382).
[13] Lieu 1996: 165
[14] Lieu 1996: 164.
[15] Buell 2003: 32.
[16] Lieu suggests that this strategy of describing Christians as a 'race' was apparently used by the opponents of Christianity (cf. Tertullian, *Scorp.* 10) as well as Christians themselves, and suggests that it developed in the context of attack and persecution (Lieu 1996: 84).

winds, mistaking them for gods; they worship images and therefore do not comprehend the true God (*Apology* III, V, VII). He proceeds also to attempt to discredit the Greeks, who supposedly worship fictitious gods, and to discuss the Greeks mainly in terms of their modes of worship of these gods, which he also attempts to discredit. Before propounding the truth of the Christian understanding of God, he turns to the Jews (*Apology* IV). Aristides praises the Jews' monotheism, and their assertion that the one God is omnipotent. He also describes certain Jewish traditions which he finds impressive, such as burial customs, philanthropy, and charity. Crucially, however, the Jews, in Aristides opinion, fall short of true knowledge and proper worship of the one God, such that they actually worship angels and not God (*Apology* XIV). Marcel Simon states:

> ...Aristides, though he recognizes that the Jews by virtue of their monotheism and the purity of their moral principals are superior to pagans, denounces their ritualism as a corruption of true religion.[17]

Along with what Lieu calls his "explicit and in some ways positive representation of Judaism",[18] Aristides nevertheless gives us a short description, or "thumbnail sketch"[19] of the ways in which he thinks the Jews err in their worship:

> Nevertheless they too have gone astray from accurate knowledge, and they suppose in their minds that they are serving God, but in the methods of their actions their service is to angels and not to God, in that they observe sabbaths and new moons and the passover and the fast, and circumcision and cleanness of meats: which things not even thus have they perfectly observed (*Apology* XIV).[20]

The close association of race with particular customs, especially religious ones, was not exclusive to early Christian self-definition, but it seems mainly to have occurred

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[17] Simon 1986: 86. Simon probably overstates his point here. Aristides does denounce Jewish *ritual*; to state that he denounces their ritual*ism* may read too much into the text. Aristides does, after all, praise Christian ritual. Both groups are described as having ritual/customs: only one is seen, however, to practice the *correct* ritual.

[18] Lieu 1996: 15.

[19] Lieu 1996: 190.

[20] This English translation by Harris (1891: 48) is based on the Syriac manuscript published by Harris. Aristides' argument that Jewish religious practices are not observed perfectly is a recurrent theme in early Christian self-definition and justification for not observing Torah.

in Judeo-Christian discourse.[21] It is certainly central to the purpose of the *Apology* of Aristides, which was to argue for the religious superiority of the Christian *race* with reference to the religious beliefs and customs of each mentioned. This emphasis on what may be described as *racial* identity is given extra force in the assignment by Aristides of a single ancestor to each tradition described: Abraham for the Jews, and for the Christians, Christ.[22] This, according to Simon, was: "...in order to make it clear that he is speaking of actual societies, of peoples and not simply of cult groups".[23] Denise Kimber Buell argues that "ethnic reasoning", like the above example, was an important rhetorical strategy for early Christians because of the already existing precedent of religiosity being tied to race in the Roman period, and she cites Aristides' *Apology* as an example of this.[24] As also seen in the *Apology*, Jews are described in similar terms, and new moon observance, in Aristides' view, was, with several other familiar nodes of discourse, central to this. As Buell puts it: "...for Aristides' *Apology*, religious practices are the primary means for differentiating *genē*". Aristides was not the only second century Christian writer with this understanding, as will be seen especially when examining the slightly later *Epistle to Diognetus*.[25] New moon ritual, in this framework of 'ethnic reasoning', is a similar identifying feature for Aristides' understanding of the Jewish γένος. Regarding this extract from the *Apology*, Lieu observes: "Here, too, Aristides belongs to a wider tradition of the characterisation of Jewish belief", and she cites the verses from the epistles to the Colossians and Galatians which was examined in Chapter 6. This tradition of the characterisation of Jewish religious life included new moon observance, and, in her opinion, may well have dated back to LXX Isaiah 1:13-14,[26] which will be examined in the closing section of this chapter. The possible tradition to

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[21] Some ancient and modern writers focus on religious practice when describing "races". Buell observes that: "...religion is often singled out as a site of ethnoracial difference", and she cites the ridicule of Egyptian veneration of animals by Romans, Greeks and Jews alike as an example of this discourse (Buell 2005: 42).

[22] Curiously Aristides states that the god Kronos is the father of the barbarians, and he also traces the Greeks back to a single ancestor, Hellenos (Aristides, *Apology* II).

[23] Simon 1986: 108.

[24] Buell 2005: 35. Buell does not, however, argue for the use religion and ritual merely as indices to groups in antiquity, but asserts that, especially in Aristides' case, ritual also serves an intra-group function. In her reading of Aristides' *Apology*, religious practices: "...continue to perpetuate the kin bonds and collective identity of its participant members" (Buell 2005: 46).

[25] Buell 2005: 36.

[26] Lieu 1996: 171.

which Lieu refers also seems to have included the texts examined in this chapter, below.[27]

Aristides' apologetic discourse is a clear indication that he is attempting to both define and defend Christianity in the second century, as Buell has argued.[28] In this process of self-definition, it was considered necessary by the author to specify the precise, or at least most important, differences between Christians and other 'peoples' specifically through religious beliefs and ritual patterns. The author, by his juxtaposition of Christianity and Judaism, and his praise for certain Jewish beliefs and practices, attempts to construct a tangible boundary between Christianity and Judaism, as these are the two most closely related peoples.[29] It is in this process of boundary creation that the author then constructs a normative set of Jewish traits, and new moon ritual is one of these traits. How here does the 'image' of Jews created by Aristides relate to the 'reality' of Jewish ritual life? On the basis of the author's reference to 'purity', rather than just *eating habits* in general, and from the author's relative friendliness towards Jews, Lieu suggests that we might take seriously some of Aristides' observations on Jewish ritual, but uncertainty remains.[30] One particular detail which Lieu focuses on is Aristides' suggestion that Jews worship angels instead of God. Regarding this accusation, she provides two possible contexts: first, perhaps Jews did indeed worship angels, especially in Asia Minor, as is referred to in the epistle to the Colossians, as has been seen. Secondly, she suggests that Aristides' accusation of Jewish angel worship may be based on a misinterpretation of the Jewish practice of observing the moon to fix the times for חֹדֶשׁ, and the liturgical calendar in general (with the exception, of course, of the sabbath).[31]

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[27] Lieu 1996: 170-71.

[28] Buell 2005: 32

[29] In support of this, Lieu argues that the fourfold division of the Syriac version of Aristides' *Apology* "...by its phrasing links the barbarians and the Greeks together on the one hand and the Jews and Christians together on the other" (Lieu 1996: 166).

[30] Lieu 1996: 170-177. Harris (1891: 13) also noticed this supposed friendliness. Another reason to suppose that Aristides maintained a friendly disposition towards Jews is his tracing Christian genealogy back to Christ: he does not, like many other more supersessionist Christian writers, attempt to argue with the Jews over Abraham as an ancestor (Lieu 1996: 172).

[31] Lieu 1996: 172. It may, of course, refer to the liturgical connection with angels which was hinted at in texts from Qumran (cf. Chapter 5, Part 3), and perhaps also in the epistles to the Colossians and the Galatians (cf. Chapter 6, Parts 3 and 4).

In terms of the intra-church purposes of this *Apology*, it is clear that the author is interested in defining both what Christianity *is*, and what it is *not*.[32] Thus we see Aristides tackle two of the 'fronts' of much early Christian apologetic literature. Aristides, like numerous other early Christian authors, adds weight to this assertion by adding that one's access to salvation depended upon the appropriate membership to the correct group.[33] Next is examined another text which Lieu examines closely: Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*.

[32] Helmut Koester argued that Aristides, in his treatment of the Jews here, draws from Christian polemic against "Jewish-Christian syncretism" (Koester 1987: 341).

[33] Buell 2005: 76. This idea is also evident in the writings of Paul, Justin Martyr, and Pseudo-Clementine (Buell 2005: 75-6).

2. JUSTIN MARTYR

Justin Martyr was born in Samaria, in the city of Flavia Neapolis. According to Barnard, "He speaks of being brought up in Gentile customs, of being uncircumcised and of having received a Greek education".[34] Eusebius reports that he taught in Rome in the reign of Antoninus Pius and was martyred, in 165 CE, under Marcus Aurelius.[35] Justin, a Gentile Platonist, converted to Christianity shortly before the Bar Kokhba revolt of 132-35 CE.[36] Around 150 CE, he moved to Rome, where he founded a school of philosophical instruction.[37] The text with which the present work is concerned with here is the *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin's longest work, written after his *First Apology*, which can be dated from 151 to 155 CE. The *Dialogue* probably dates to c. 160 CE.[38] The significance of חֹדֶשׁ ritual is discussed at two points in Justin's *Dialogue*.

Whereas it has been suggested that Aristides represents a 'friendly' disposition towards Jews, a friendliness which has been upheld by at least some scholars,[39] Justin Martyr's attitude to Jews and Judaism has been the cause of more discussion.[40] The *Dialogue with Trypho* has led some scholars to believe, for example, that his attitude to Jews, like that of Aristides, is one of friendliness.[41] The form and genre of the work, dialogue, by its nature gives voice not only to Justin's Christian assertions, but also to those of the Jew Trypho. This might be seen in contrast to later anti-Jewish polemic, in which Jews would hardly be given a voice.[42] Also, regarding Justin's idea

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[34] Barnard 1967: 5. These details of Justin's life are recorded in *Dialogue with Trypho* (Henceforth *Dialogue*) II and XXIX.

[35] Barnard 1967: 5. Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 11, 16. This is the date given for Justin's martyrdom in the *Chronicon Paschale*.

[36] Barnard 1967: 13.

[37] Barnard 1967: 13.

[38] Barnard 1967: 21. Justin's other works, which at least are accepted as genuine, are his first and second *Apologies*. Buck dates the apologies from 151-54 CE, but also finds an indication that the *First Apology* may have been written as early as 139, due to his naming of Marcus Aurelius as Verissmus, and not as Caesar, a title which he adopted in 139 CE (Buck 2003: 55). Story (1970: XIII ff.) introduces the earliest extant manuscripts of the works of Justin and surveys the evidence for the dating of the composition, and argues that the *Dialogue* must be later than 154-55 CE, due to Justin's allusion to his first apology. He does not believe a more precise dating of the *Dialogue* is possible (1970: XV).

[39] Lieu 1996: 166. This "conciliatory attitude to Judaism" is found mainly in the Syriac version of the *Apology* which, according to Lieu, lacks the "echoes of later polemic", found in the Greek version (1996: 166).

[40] See, for example, Rokeah 2002.

[41] See, for example, Barnard (1967: 40).

[42] Gager, however, considers both this kind of dialogue form, and *Adversus Ioudaeos*, treatises against Jewish religion, to originate from the same "spawning ground of anti-Jewish arguments" (Gager 1983: 153).

of those who will be saved, he notably betrays a sense of tolerance on two fronts: to those who acknowledge Jesus as the Christ but still observe Torah and its ritual trappings, and also to a remnant of the Jews of his own time.[43]

It has also, however, been noted that Justin Martyr is the first Christian writer to identify Christianity with, or as, 'Israel' in explicit terms,[44] and as such, is the earliest proponent of Christian supersessionism, and the consequences of this view are not particularly positive, especially in relation to the Jews. Negative consequences of this outlook are betrayed throughout the *Dialogue*. Gager, for example, observes that in the *Dialogue*, Justin argues that Mosaic Torah is no longer valid, that Jews fail to comprehend the true meaning of scripture, and that the suffering of Jews in his own time is divine punishment for the murder of Christ and the persecution of Christians.[45] Justin's anti-Judaism, expressed in his attitude to Jewish Torah, goes beyond declaring it invalid: its original purpose, as Justin saw it, was, in Lieu's words: "...best understood as a remedy for Israel's inveterate hard-heartedness; moreover, circumcision was indeed a sign of separation for the Jews, but of separation for punishment..."[46] It is difficult, in light of such assertions, to consider Justin as particularly *friendly* towards Jews. Regarding Justin's inclusive comments regarding the salvation of some Torah observant Christians as well as a remnant of the Jews, it may well be best to view these in the context of second century competition between Christian and Jewish communities for gentile religious loyalties,[47] as indeed for converts from each other's communities.

It is not surprising, then, that Trypho, rather than being considered a historical figure, is seen by several scholars as a 'straw figure', or 'paper tiger', a vehicle used by Justin to prompt the author towards his own aims, like many of the images of Jews as presented by Christian writers.[48] This brings us to the question of what Trypho's

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[43] Stylianopoulos 1975: 36. See *Dialogue* 26.1; 120.1-21; cf. Gager 1983: 165. Lieu (2006: 220) contrasts Justin with the more negative author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* in relation to the issue of some of the Jews being heirs to covenantal promises. However, she attributes Justin's tolerance here to "pressing practical grounds": to keep these groups 'in the fold' (Lieu 1996: 139).

[44] Gager 1983: 228. This observation, in Gager's view, was first made by Peter Richardson (1969).

[45] Gager 1983: 165.

[46] Lieu 2006: 222. This punishment refers to the end of the revolt of Bar Cochba and the banning of Jews from Jerusalem under Hadrian, when circumcision was noted as an identifying feature for Jews.

[47] Gager 1983: 154.

[48] Lieu 2006: 226; Rajak 1999: 61.

purpose really was. Why did Justin paint such a vivid picture of a Jewish opponent, and one who was, admittedly, rather erudite in biblical traditions and some of the actual teachings of post-biblical Judaism?[49] There are several scholars today who argue that it was for precisely the reason of constructing a normative 'Jewish' opponent against whom to contrast new Christian identity: Christian "self-definition vis-à-vis the Jewish matrix".[50] Karen King describes Justin's *Dialogue* as: "...a polemical treatise that established the contours of a particularly influential Christian construction of Judaism and framed the rhetorical opposition of Christianity to it".[51] In this process, Justin also seems to 'arm' other second-century Christians with material from, and for, real-life debates with Jews.[52] The form and genre of dialogue, therefore, may well have presented Christians with common Jewish criticisms of Christianity, as well as a means to argue against them. This leads us to one of the criticisms put in the mouth of the fictional Trypho: Christians do not observe Torah and its ritual trappings.[53] More than this, however, this Jewish 'straw figure' actually attempts to paraphrase the Law by reference to what appear to be its most notable features in the mind of the author (Justin). Trypho addresses Justin:

> εἰ οὖν καὶ ἐμοῦ θέλεις ἀκοῦσαι, φίλον γάρ σε ἤδη νενόμικα, πρῶτον μὲν περιτεμοῦ, εἶτα φύλαξον, ὡς νενόμισται, τὸ σάββατον καὶ τὰς ἑορτὰς καὶ τὰς νουμηνίας τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἁπλῶς τὰ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γεγραμμένα πάντα ποίει, καὶ τότε σοι ἴσως ἔλεος ἔσται παρὰ θεοῦ.[54]

> If, then, you are willing to listen to me (for I have already considered you a friend), first be circumcised, then observe what ordinances have been enacted ['observe as has been ordained'] with respect to the Sabbath, and the feasts, and the new moons of God; and, in a word, do all things which have been written in the law: and then perhaps you shall obtain mercy from God (*Dialogue* 8.4).[55]

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[49] Justin presents Trypho has having, for example, a "remarkable" agreement with scriptural exegesis known from rabbinic sources (Lieu 1996: 111).
[50] Lieu 2006: 214-229.
[51] King 2003: 42.
[52] In support of this idea, it is noteworthy that Justin is himself the inheritor of a collection of early Christian "proof texts" for precisely the reason of apologetic discourse (cf. Shotwell 1965: 30-31).
[53] This, as noted by Gager, was a common Jewish criticism of early Christian religion, especially in light of the fact that so many Christians also apparently renounced "all of the practices that had defined Israel for centuries", while still attempting to identify themselves as 'Israel' or as inheritors of the covenant (Gager 1983: 157).
[54] Text from Goodspeed 1984:
[55] Roberts & Donaldson (1995: 198-99) trans.

This broad outline of Jewish ritual life reflects, of course, the broad outline which Aristides presents, although this specific reference from Justin's *Dialogue* omits the food purification laws. For both authors, then, the *constructed* Jew, by these instances is a male (note the inclusion of circumcision in both extracts), who is, of course, circumcised and observes the sabbath, new moon, and yearly ritual constellations associated with Jews, some of which are specified by Aristides (and in Aristides' case purity laws, which Justin also refers to in our next extract).[56]

The above is not the only section of Justin's *Dialogue* which treats of Jewish new moon ritual and its significance. In *Dialogue* 46, the conversation turns to the matter, also familiar from Aristides, of whether or not it is actually possible to properly observe the ritual enactments of Torah (in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction). It emerges, in the view projected upon Trypho, that it is not possible, although certain ordinances can indeed still be fulfilled, and these clearly include new moon ritual:

> Κἀγὼ πάλιν· Συσκεψώμεθα κἀκεῖνο, εἰ ἔνεστιν, ἔλεγον, φυλάσσειν τὰ διὰ Μωυσέως διαταχθέντα ἅπαντα νῦν.
>
> Κἀκεῖνος ἀπεκρίνατο· Οὔ· γνωρίξομεν γὰρ ὅτι, ὡς ἔφης, οὔτε πρόβατον τοῦ πάσχα ἀλλαχόσε θύειν δυνατὸν οὔτε τοὺς τῇ νηστείᾳ κελευσθέντας προσφέρεσθαι χιμάρους οὔτε τὰς ἄλλας ἁπάσας προσφοράς.
>
> Κἀγώ· Τίνα οὖν ἃ δυνατόν ἐστι φυλάσσειν, παρακαλῶ, λέγε αὐτός· πεισθήσῃ γὰρ ὅτι μὴ φυλάσσων τὰ αἰώνια δικαιώματα τις ἢ πράξας σωθῆναι ἐκ παντὸς ἔχει.
>
> Κἀκεῖνος· Τὸ σαββατίζειν λέγω καὶ τὸ περιτέμνεσθαι καὶ τὸ τὰ ἔμμηνα φυλάσσειν καὶ τὸ βαπτίζεσθαι ἁψάμενόν τινος ὧν ἀπηγόρευται ὑπὸ Μωυσέως ἢ ἐν συνουσίᾳ γενόμενον.[57]
>
> [Justin:] And I replied, "Let us consider that also together, whether one may now observe all of the Mosaic institutions."

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[56] The reference to purity, found in both Aristides' *Apology* and Justin's *Dialogue*, as we have noted, also betrays a better knowledge of Jewish ritual than some other Christians such as the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, who seems to see the issue merely as a matter of eating habits (Lieu 1996: 171-2.)

[57] Text from Goodspeed 1984.

> [Trypho:] And he answered, "No. For we know that, as you said, it is not possible either anywhere to sacrifice the lamb of the passover, or to offer the goats ordered for the fast; or, in short, [to present] all the other offerings."
>
> [J:] And I said, "Tell [me] then yourself, I pray, some things which can be observed; for you will be persuaded that, though a man does not keep or has not performed the eternal decrees, he may assuredly be saved."
>
> [T:] Then he replied, "To keep the Sabbath, to be circumcised, to observe months, and to be washed if you touch anything prohibited by Moses, or after sexual intercourse." (*Dialogue* 46:2)[58]

The conversation has once again turned to a summary-style description or 'thumbnail sketch', one which is quite similar to the one previously examined, although omitting yearly festivals. At this point, it appears that we a dealing with a rather generic view of Jewish ritual, and perhaps a common tradition.[59] In this extract we may well also detect two of the 'fronts' which early Christian writers adopted and opposed: Jewish opponents, perhaps seen as a threat to Christians due to the inclination of some gentiles, and possibly also Christians to convert; Jewish groups evidently competed, to some extent, with the early church for converts. Regarding the second 'front', the above extract is also probably the beginning of Christian heresiological discourse, as some have argued, and was aimed at other Christians who continued to observe the ritual trappings of Jewish Torah.[60] By constructing a Jewish 'straw figure' to argue with, Justin attempts to discredit Jews and Jewish post-biblical tradition that he is familiar with, which potentially would address the temptation for other Christians to join a Jewish group, but it may also have been an attempt by Justin to construct an opponent, argue about Torah and other Jewish traditions, and 'win', and thus discredit some of the ritual trappings of other second-century Christians or Christian groups with whom he disagreed or of whom he disapproved. As Gager points out:

> ...whenever we hear criticisms of specific observances in the Mosaic covenant we must suppose that they are being directed at least as much at Christians as at Jews. In this

[58] Roberts and Donaldson (1995: 217) trans.

[59] This list of ways in which Mosiac Torah can yet be fulfilled is, in Lieu's words: "...notably similar to Philo's minimal definition of Jewish identity in the diaspora setting of Alexandria". This understanding of 'orthopraxy' involves circumcision, sabbath, festivals, dietary laws, and rules against intermarriage (cf. Lieu 1996: 115, 149 n. 37).

[60] Indeed, Marcus observes that in the surrounding two chapters of this section of the *Dialogue*, Justin describes various kinds of "Jewish Christian groups" who continue to observe regulations of the Torah (Marcus 2006: 101).

> sense, these debates have an unmistakable intramural significance for Christians despite their formal character as encounters between Christians and Jews. [61]

Again we see, in the *Dialogue*, the construction of boundaries between the two emergent and multiform traditions, here from a Christian writer. This involved, as it did with Aristides, the construction of a Jewish 'other' in order to facilitate defining the Christian 'self'. Therefore it is probably better to consider the genre of this text, with Rajak, not as dialogue but as apology. Regarding the form of the work, she states:

> Establishing a polarity, drawing attention to an enemy, and making the most of a conflict are valuable techniques of advocacy. The effect is more memorable, and therefore more persuasive, than merely stating a case... And the process may acquire permanence: the enemy may become an intrinsic part of a group's self definition: one understands oneself in terms of the 'other', by insisting upon what one is not.[62]

As was noted in relation to second century Judaism and Christianity, these two 'groups' (if they can be so called), or *collective traditions* both varied significantly, each in its own right, and also may well have lacked clearly defined boundaries between them at this time. It is in this context which Justin writes, and to this purpose he constructs his Jewish 'other', in contradistinction to his Christian 'self'. The identity of this Jewish 'other', Trypho, as has been seen, is characterised for Justin by his peculiar religious beliefs and practices in the world of the text, and these include new moon ritual as a central feature in the two extracts quoted.

The writings of Justin Martyr, including his *Dialogue with Trypho* retain a persistent theological tone, a concern with religious practice, and, as Buell argues in relation to him also, 'ethnic reasoning'.[63] Christians are a people (γένος, ἔθνος, or λαὸς). One can become a member of this "people", according to Justin, by changing one's practices and way of life to following the commandments of Christ. As such, Christianity, in his view, is universally applicable because anyone from any race can join by changing to the correct mode of religion, but Buell argues that in Justin's

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[61] Gager 1983: 154.
[62] Rajak 1999: 61.
[63] Buell 2005: 98-99.

mind, this constitutes a shift to a new racial or ethnic identity.[64] What constitutes membership of the Jewish race for Justin, as put so clearly in the mouth of Trypho, was circumcision, sabbath, new moon observance, and feasts. These are the essential criteria for this writer.

[64] Buell 2005: 98-99. Boyarin does not argue this. He claims that Justin, in his creation of orthodoxy, created the idea of a 'religious' identity, separate form ethnicity or race. He also argues that this category profoundly affected the discourse of the rabbis, who began to act as more of a 'church' than a 'people' as a result of the profoundly dialectical discourse with Christianity at this time (Boyarin 2004: 29). He does claim, however, that, racial or not, Justin was intensely engaged in constructing a Christian and a Jewish identity in his writings (Boyarin 2004: 28), and he is probably correct in assuming that with Justin and other second century Christians on the one hand and Jewish groups on the other, this process was indeed dialectical.

3. THE *EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS*

We do not know the exact identity of the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*. He or she is merely referred to as μαθητής, or "disciple" in the text. The text, according to Carolyn Osiek, probably dates to the late second century CE, and is addressed to an eminent patron.[65] The *Epistle*, like the other texts which have been examined, is primarily concerned with Christian identity, and it emerges that the author, like Aristides, and Justin, has recoursed to 'ethnic reasoning', referring to Christians as a 'race'; according to Buell, the *Epistle* is another example of an early Christian text which employs ethnic reasoning to "...explain and defend Christianness".[66] Regarding the *Epistle to Diognetus*, Osiek states:

> This remarkable document written in defence of Christian faith and practice reflects both the clarity and the ambiguity of Christian existence in the pre-Constantinian period as its adherents began to develop a sense of their own identity.[67]

She examines the *Epistle* in the context of her chapter: "The self-defining praxis of the developing *ecclēsia*".[68] The author of the *Epistle* also discusses the identity of the Christian 'race' in terms of ritual life. As Osiek also observes:

> This distinct Christian identity was being forged in these important years between Jesus and Constantine through development of distinct patterns of behaviour in the areas of marriage, family, and religious practice.[69]

To this aim articulated by Osiek, the author of the *Epistle* employs a structure familiar from Aristides' *Apology*. Christians are the third 'race', and before expounding upon the virtues of this race, the author first offers criticisms aimed at the Greeks, and then the Jews. As with Aristides, the focus is upon the respective *religious practices* of

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[65] Osiek 2006: 274; Stern 2001: 123. Previously, the text had been though to date to the first half of the second century, c. 130 CE (Cleaveland Coxe 1994: 23). Lieu and Buell also argue that the text dates to around the end of the second century (Lieu 1996: 156; Buell 2005: 30).

[66] Buell 2005: 32-33. Buell, however, argues that while this text does constitute an attempt by a second century Christian writer to define Christianness in racial terms, the writer does seem to define 'race' differently to ways familiar to modern readers, specifically in the possibility of "races" being intrinsically related to customs (the modern reader would probably refer to this as "culture" rather than race), and the possibility of there being a "new race" (*Diognetus* 1.1) (Buell 2005: 30). The examples of Aristides and Justin, though, do demonstrate that customs can lead to the adoption of new ancestors, and thus were indeed seen at times as racial.

[67] Osiek 2006: 274.

[68] Osiek 2006: 274-292.

[69] Osiek 2006: 274.

each race.[70] Marcel Simon noted that *Diognetus* is one of the more anti-Jewish Christian texts of the second century, attributing Jewish observance of traditional rites not to misinterpretation of scripture like other writers, but to their supposedly "evil inclinations".[71] As the author refers to Jewish ritual, an overtly negative tone is evident:

> Ἀλλὰ μὴν τό γε περὶ τὰς βρώσεις αὐτῶν ψοφοδεές, καὶ τὴν περὶ τὰ σάββατα δεισιδαιμονίαν, καὶ τὴν τῆς περιτομῆς ἀλαζονείαν, καὶ τὴν τῆς νηστείας καὶ νουμηνίας εἰρωνείαν, καταγέλαστα καὶ οὐδενὸς ἄξια λόγου, <οὐ> νομίζω σε χρήζειν παρ' ἐμοῦ μαθεῖν. ... τὸ δὲ παρεδρεύοντας αὐτοὺς ἄστροις καὶ σελήνῃ τὴν παρατήρησιν τῶν μηνῶν καὶ τῶν ἡμερῶν ποιεῖσθαι, καὶ τὰς οἰκονομίας Θεοῦ καὶ τὰς τῶν καιρῶν ἀλλαγὰς <καταδιαιρεῖν> πρὸς τὰς αὐτῶν ὁρμάς, ἃς μὲν εἰς ἑορτάς, ἃς δὲ εἰς πένθη· τίς ἂν θεοσεβείας καὶ οὐχ ἀφροσύνης πολύ πλέον ἡγήσεται τὸ δεῖγμα;[72]
>
> But as to their scrupulosity concerning meats, and their superstition as respects the Sabbaths, and their boasting about circumcision, and their fancies about fasting and the new moons, which are utterly ridiculous and unworthy of notice, – I do not think that you require to learn anything from me... And as to their observing months and days, as if waiting upon the stars and the moon, and their distributing, according to their own tendencies, the appointments of God, and the vicissitudes of the seasons, some for festivities, and others for mourning, – who would deem this a part of divine worship, and not much rather a manifestation of folly? (*Epistle to Diognetus* IV 1-5)[73]

That the calendar of the Jews is luni-solar, at least in the mind of the author, is suggested from this reference.[74] Again we see a second century Christian author focusing on circumcision, sabbath, new moon, and, this time, simply *eating habits*, and there are, therefore, hints at a generic Christian view of Jewish ritual, as

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[70] Buell 2005: 30.
[71] Simon 1986: 86. Lieu places this *Epistle* among "...the fundamental writings in the development of anti-Jewish polemic" (Lieu 1996: 18).
[72] Text from Marrou 1997: 60.
[73] Roberts & Donaldson (1995: 26) trans.
[74] Stern 2001: 23. Both the stars and the moon are referred to. We have already noted that the stars can be used in the reconciliation of lunar and solar years in any luni-solar calendar. It also appears that the observation of the new moon was fundamental to the calendar according to the author, although it is not as clear here as it is the example below (Part 4), cf. Stern 2001: 123.

previously. What is also significant from this extract is the fact that the author addresses the reader(s) as if they are already aware of such practices, emphasised in the phrase: "I do not think that you require to learn anything from me". This points either to a known tradition of these practices in particular being of central significance in Jewish life (this seems evident in light of the texts viewed in this chapter), at least from a Christian point of view, or indeed it may point to Christian awareness of this *actually* being the case from their own observations and interactions.[75] Both would seem to be the case, and this brings us to another important observation regarding the *Epistle to Diognetus*: there is *supplementary information* included, specifically regarding new moon ritual: the Jewish calendar, in this description, is an empirical one which involved observing the heavens. The *Epistle* departs from the generic descriptions of Aristides and Justin, perhaps suggesting first hand knowledge of Jewish practice on the part of the author. In terms of 'image' and 'reality', important distinctive categories set out by Judith Lieu in relation to Jews in the second century, the description may be quite close to 'reality' here. In Chapter 8 it will shown that the Mishnah actually corroborates much of what the author of the *Epistle* hints at here: the empirical sighting of the moon by Jews in order to fix the days of חֹדֶשׁ and yearly festivals.[76]

The main points which should be emphasised here are that the author of the *Epistle* discusses three 'races': the Greeks, the Jews, and the Christians. The author also identifies these races by their religious beliefs and practices, and certainly identifies the Christians in this way. As Simon stated, "They [Christians] are a distinct and independent group, in a category of their own. Nevertheless their differences appear only in the sphere of religion..."[77] Buell also argues this point in relation to the text. According to her, the rhetoric of the text:

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[75] Christians did, after all, share the pagan "world" in which they lived with their Jewish neighbours, and must have had connections of many levels, including local, business, and family relationships, and even that of master/mistress and slave (Lieu 1996: 277).

[76] Based on much if this same evidence, and indeed upon information gleaned from the epistles to the Colossians and the Galatians, Thornton suggests that the Jewish practice of observing the sky in order to view the first appearance of the new moon may have been a common Jewish custom which was particularly noticeable to their gentile neighbours (Thornton 1989: 97-101). Evidence for the same lunar calendar reckoning is found in *M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2.5-8, and is discussed by Bickerman (1984:60-69). Evidence for the empirical sighting of the crescent moon is also found in *M. Sandhedrin* 1.2, and is discussed by Herr (1976: 845-7).

[77] Simon 1986: 108.

> ...positions Christians as comprising a *genos*, like Greeks and Jews; moreover, it implies that the salient content of a *genos* for this text is "religion," depicted in terms of both appropriate practices and the appropriate understanding of the object of worship.[78]

In this scheme of identification, familiar, in fact, from Aristides also, the Jews are identified specifically with their ritual observances, and these, again, include special observance of new moon ritual, alongside the other 'classic' distinctive Jewish practices. This remains, of course, a Christian point of view for the moment, but much of these characterisations of Jews by Christians may have had their roots in Gentile views of Judaism, arousing a need for Christians to identify themselves in contradistinction to Jews vis-à-vis exactly those practices.[79] Similarly, however, Christian views on Greek religion may have had their roots in Jewish apologetic and polemic.[80] Thus we see a Christian writer drawing on the surrounding world, and especially Judaism, in the self-definition of the second century church.

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[78] Buell 2005: 30.

[79] Rajak argues that, in spite of the fact that Greek and Roman writers' views on Jewish life often constituted "stereotype and hostile caricature", they are, nevertheless, also often based on those actual practices which caught the attention of outsiders (Rajak 1999: 57).

[80] Lieu 1996: 157.

4. THE *KERYGMA OF PETER*

A text referred to as the *Kerygma of Peter*, or *Preaching of Peter*, is partly preserved by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromateis* VI. 5). Clement was active at the end of the second century, and in the first two decades of the third. Cleveland Coxe suggested that Clement died around 220 CE.[81] It has also been suggested that the *Stromateis* of Clement were completed before 202 CE.[82] The *Kerygma of Peter*, quoted in Clement's *Stromateis*, must have been composed at a reasonably earlier date, at the end of the second century at the latest. From the small extract of the text that we possess thanks to Clement, it certainly appears that the *Kerygma of Peter* was not unlike several other second century Christian texts, both in structure and in subject matter. Among Clement's quotations are suggestions that the text contained an exhortation against the worship of the Greeks. These is also reference to Jewish worship, and the order in which these peoples are quoted by Clement, and the manner in which they appear to be presented, seems likely to reflect the original source because the order and structure is clearly paralleled in the *Epistle to Diognetus* and the *Apology* of Aristides.[83] It should come as no surprise, then, that the last extract of the *Kerygma of Peter* (so Clement tells us) in this section instructs the reader or listener to worship god in a new way, "by Christ" (Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* VI 5). So, the author of the *Kerygma of Peter* concludes his discussion on the rituals and beliefs of the Greeks and the Jews by urging the reader to worship God in a new, Christian way (γένος). This view is to a large extent sympathetic to those of the other authors examined in this chapter, but we once again turn to the author's reference to Jewish practices, which is also quoted by Clement. Clement once again introduces the *Kerygma of Peter* here:

> Καὶ ὅτι γε ὡς τὸν αὐτὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν τε αὐτῶν καὶ Ἑλλήνων ἐγνωκότων φέρεται, πλὴν οὐχ ὁμοίως, ἐποίσει πάλιν ὧδέ πως· Μηδὲ κατὰ Ἰουδαίους σέβεσθε· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι μόνοι οἰόμενοι

[81] Cleveland Coxe 1995: 167.

[82] Cleveland Coxe 1995: 168. This is suggested on two bases: first, on the basis that the latest event referred to in the work is the death of the emperor Commodus; Eusebius suggests that this work was finished in the reign of Severus, Commodus' successor (*Hist. Eccl.* VI 6); and secondly, that the work may well have been completed before 202 CE, because Clement is said to have left Alexandria that year (Cleveland Coxe 1995: 168).

[83] In fact, J. Rendell Harris, the editor of the first publication of the Syriac text of Aristides' *Apology*, thought that the *Kerygma of Peter* was *earlier* than the former, and that it "...exercised a considerable influence on the writings of the second century", influencing both Aristides and the author of the *Epistle* (Harris 1891: 86-87, 91, 97)

> τὸν θεὸν γινώσκειν οὐκ ἐπίστανται, λατρεύοντες ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀρχαγγέλοις, μηνὶ καὶ σελήνη. Καὶ ἐὰν μὴ σελήνη φανῇ, σάββατον οὐκ ἄγουσι τὸ λεγόμενον πρῶτον, οὐδὲ νεομηνίαν ἄγουσιν οὔτε ἄζυμα οὔτε ἑορτὴν οὔτε μεγάλην ἡμέραν.[84]
>
> And that it is said, that we and the Greeks know the same God, though not in the same way, he will infer thus: "Neither worship as the Jews; for they, thinking that they only know God, do not know Him, adoring as they do angels and archangels, the month and the moon. And if the moon be not visible, they do not hold the Sabbath, which is called the first; nor do they hold the new moon, nor the feast of unleavened bread, nor the feast, nor the great day" (Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* VI 5 41:1-3).[85]

Immediately it is clear that this text shares some details of its description of Jewish practices with the above texts. Jewish worship is characterised by several prevailing features (at least in the author's mind). The introductory phrase: "Neither worship as the Jews" indicates that a similar *broad outline* to that provided in our other texts is the intention of this author.[86] The following broad outline is different, however, from our previous examples. The overt charge of moon-worship, not present in the other traditions, is most likely a deliberate and spurious slur on the part of the author. The author, like the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, is clearly aware of the use of the moon to reckon the Jewish liturgical calendar, and that it is assumed to depend upon the sighting of the new moon.[87] This awareness in the *Kerygma of Peter* is betrayed in the reference to the fact that if Jews do not see the moon on certain occasions, they do not hold certain rituals, and the examples he gives include the new moon (seemingly equal to חֹדֶשׁ, like our other examples). As will be seen in the next chapter, this may well have been correct regarding the second century, as it was earlier. The author therefore knows why Jews may have looked for the moon on certain evenings, and why the moon's movements were carefully observed by Jews, and yet the charge of moon-worship is pursued none the less.[88] This charge of moon worship may have

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[84] Text from Descourtieux 1999.
[85] Translation from Ante-Nicene Fathers series.
[86] Regarding the intended audience of the *Kerygma of Peter*, the instruction against worshipping "as the Jews" is interesting in that in this case it seems clearly directed against other Christians, not Jews, as there is a distinction between *being* a Jew, and being *as* a Jew (presumably really a Christian) in this case.
[87] cf. Stern 2001: 23, 123.
[88] Based on the *Kerygma of Peter* also, Thornton argues again for the sighting of the moon by Jews as one of the more noticeable features of Jewish ritual life to gentiles in the Diaspora (Thornton 1989: 98).

parallels in the *Apology* of Aristides, who concludes that the Jews, by their manner of worship, which includes new moon ritual, worship angels rather than God (*Apology* XIV). Angel worship here is juxtaposed with new moon observance in the *Kerygma of Peter* and this may once again point towards a common tradition of Christian polemic against Jewish ritual, but one which had at least some roots in reality, as seen in Chapter 5 (angels) and in the next chapter of the present work (lunar observation).[89]

The accusation that the Jews think that they alone know God is not an innovation of this author, nor is the charge that they worship angels and not God, as has been seen. The latter charge, of course, is also known from the *Apology* of Aristides. No reference is made, at least in the section which Clement quotes, to circumcision, purity, and/or food laws, although no particular significance can be drawn from this, because we simply do not know if this omission is attributed to the original text.

It is important to note that the author of the *Kerygma*, like Aristides and the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, describes Christians as 'third race' (τρίτῳ γένει). Judith Lieu, however, suggests that we should perhaps here translate *genos* as "type" rather than "race".[90] Christianity is, however, clearly placed in opposition to the Greeks and the Jews. This may suggest that the same sort of "ethnic reasoning" was employed in the *Kerygma of Peter*.[91] Lieu also suggests that this tripartite division betrays a common tradition and interdependence between this and several other texts, including the *Epistle to Diognetus*. In relation to the scheme of identification of peoples in the *Kerygma of Peter*, Buell states:

> Hellene, Jew, and Christian are functionally equivalent categories of "peoples," where peoplehood is marked by modes of worship and attitudes toward "the one Lord".[92]

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[89] Lieu, in observing Aristides' more moderate tone, is also reluctant to read an accusation of moon worship from his reference to angel worship, seeing this referred to explicitly only in the *Kerygma of Peter* (Lieu 1996: 171).
[90] Lieu 1996: 167.
[91] Buell argues for the presence of ethnic reasoning in the *Kerygma of Peter*, precisely in the section referred to and quoted herein, and, this, in her analysis, is also evident in the wider context of the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria, in which Clement also presents Christians as a 'people', distinguished by religious practices (Buell 2005: 139).
[92] Buell 2005: 139.

While there is, therefore, the suggestion that the author of the *Kerygma of Peter* identifies Christians as a race, Lieu observes that this idea is only fully elaborated in genealogical terms, in Aristides' *Apology*.[93] In the *Kerygma of Peter,* the modes of worship which mark the Jewish people include new moon observance (misunderstood as worship in this case) as a central feature.

[93] Lieu 1996: 167.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

> It has, in recent years, become something of a truism to assert that in order to construct *her own* identity, early Christianity had to construct for herself the identity of the '*other*', of Judaism within which she was born…[94]

It seems that in order to engage with second century Christian self-definition, and Christian definition of Judaism, one would be best to think in terms of Lieu's basic categories of 'Image' and 'Reality' and, in using second century Christian eyes to view contemporary Judaism, the relationship between these two categories must be considered. Particularly when examining the 'image' versus 'reality' of the ritual life of Judaism through these eyes, there are certain considerations to be made. There are two distinct methodological schemata for us to think about in light of the above quoted sources for new moon ritual in second century Judaism. First, the above texts can be viewed as corroborating one another. The historian can view a text, observe a feature, reference, or characteristic, and search for corroboration in other sources. In this case it is clear that there is some textual corroboration. It must, however, also be considered that these texts carry many of the same referents, and display very similar concerns, and therefore may have drawn from *shared traditions*. As Stern points out, "Christian authors, in particular, would have been tempted to form assumptions about the Jews on the sole basis of a conjectured biblical past" (*viz* one Christian author might portray Jews in a way similar to another Christian author, because the authors shared the same *old* sources for Jewish religion).[95] Thus, rather than providing additional 'witnesses' for the modern historian, each Christian author may simply draw from a similar source or tradition, and thus present a similar picture. In support of the corroborative function of the texts, however, is the noticeable variation between the different Christian descriptions of Jewish ritual life. Indeed, there is incidence of additional information in relation to new moon ritual in two sources (*Diognetus* and the *Kerygma of Peter*).

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[94] Lieu 1996: 1.
[95] cf. Stern 2001: 23.

Additionally, in support of the corroborative nature of these sources, another text can be quoted, from Justin Martyr's first *Apology*, not previously quoted herein, but referring to חֹדֶשׁ. As has already been noted, many of Justin's writings betray the use of common 'proof texts', drawn from the LXX and selected in defence of early Christian belief, practice, and identity.[96] Tessa Rajak argues for Justin's use of proof texts, particularly from prophetic literature.[97] In light of the evident need for several second century Christians to distance themselves from these central aspects of Torah observance, indeed to renounce Torah observance, and to justify their stance to Jews and other Torah observant Christians (not to mention potential gentile *and* Jewish converts), it is hardly surprising then that Justin quotes Isaiah 1:13-14, a text which was examined in Chapter 3, in which the prophet condemns the cultic life of Judah and Jerusalem as corrupt, and specifies several kinds of ritual in his condemnation:

> καὶ πάλιν ἀλλαχοῦ· Τὰς νουμηνίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ σάββατα μισεῖ ἡ ψυχή μου, [...] ὁποῖα μὲν οὖν ἐστι καὶ τὰ διδασκόμενα διὰ τῶν προφητῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, νοεῖν δύνασθε.
>
> And again, in another place, "Your new moons and sabbaths my soul hateth..."... What kind of things are taught through the prophets from [the person of] God, you can now perceive (*Apology* 37.5).

Justin here uses this quotation from Isaiah as a proof text to argue against the observance of new moon days in the second century church. The employment of such a proof text would suggest that there was indeed an actual contemporary circumstance which occasioned the need for this employment. As Lieu rightly concludes regarding second century Christian apologetics: "The apologetic arguments against the Jews were not exercises in theoretical self-justification, but were addressed to living needs".[98]

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[96] Indeed, W. A. Shotwell argues that the use of proof texts is of more importance in Justin's *Apology* than in the *Dialogue* (Shotwell 1965: 30-31; cf. Lieu 1996: 196 n. 109). Justin also used the sayings of Jesus in his writings for similar proofs, although the use of these may well have been reserved for debates with Christian opponents (cf. Bellinzoni 1967).

[97] Rajak 1999: 61. Rajak also refers to the use of similar proof texts in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, in which the author anticipates debate with Jews regarding God's covenant with the Jews and the validation of Old Testament prophecies in Jesus.

[98] Lieu 1996: 190.

Ultimately, it can be argued, after Lieu, that it was because of the formative and symbolic nature of certain aspects of Jewish religious life that they were specifically opposed and inverted in Christian self-definition, that Christian resistance to certain ritual practices is a 'mirror image' of the importance of the same practices for contemporary Jews:

> This rhetoric of reversal of the formative symbols of the opposition group, particularly by a breakaway sect, is a familiar and sociologically recognised means of differentiation and self-justification. As such it does not demand the actual presence of the opponent, since its main focus is an internal one.[99]

Thus, it has been seen that traditions regarding חֹדֶשׁ may well indicate the ritual constellation's status as a 'formative symbol' for second century Jews. We must also remember Boyarin's point that a more nuanced dialectic was taking place between these two emergent groups at this time.[100] Cultural interaction did not merely constitute Jewish tradition filtering into Christian communities in this period. Jews may well have adopted some of the rhetoric of their rivals, and this may even have indirectly caused the continued importance of חֹדֶשׁ, which will now be examined in its Mishnaic context in the next chapter. On dealing with 'outsider' sources for Diaspora Judaism, John Barclay suggests:

> In identifying the bonds which held Diaspora Jews together, we will find ourselves most confident at those points where the perceptions of 'outsiders' match those of 'insiders'. If non-Jews repeatedly commented on Jewish characteristics which were also held by Jews to be essential to their way of life, we can be sure that such items were indeed integral to the identity of Diaspora Jews. If it can be shown that the features we identify also functioned *in social reality* to clarify Jewish distinction, we can further be assured that we have located the critical phenomena.[101]

In the next chapter, the new moon from a second century CE Jewish point of view is examined, and it is suggested that we have indeed located one of these 'critical phenomena'.

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[99] Lieu 1996: 119.
[100] Boyarin 2004: 28-29.
[101] Barclay 1996: 401.

Chapter 8

Sanctification and Danger: The 'Centripetal' Role of *Ḥōdeš* in the Mishnah and its Place in the Symbolic World of the Rabbis

INTRODUCTION

> The authority to declare ("sanctify") the New Moon, and thus to determine the dates of Holy days, was a highly important one in the religious and social life of the Jewish people. It was a principal factor in creating a sense of unity between all the communities in the Homeland, and to a certain degree in the Diaspora as well. Consequently, whoever controlled this aspect of Jewish life possessed immeasurable influence over the nation as a whole.[1]

The Mishnah is rich in calendrical information, and much detail is dedicated to the technical reckoning of חֹדֶשׁ and its ritual observance, both in reference to the time of the Mishnah's completion (c. 200 CE), and in reference to previous times. We find at the core of this treatment the desire for the coordination of Jewish ritual life, and its appropriate alignment with the heavens, with the movement of the moon, and the sanctification of certain times on earth as they are sanctified in heaven. This concern is focused on the exact reckoning of each new moon throughout the year and its appropriate ritual of sanctification. The Mishnah depicts a post-70 CE transference of authority over this process from the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem to the rabbinic Beth Din. This chapter will focus on the social implications of the Mishnah's treatment of new moon days, particularly bearing in mind Gedalyahu Alon's idea that new moons, both practically and ideologically, could be used to create a sense of unity for Jews in Israel-Palestine and in the Diaspora, and to exert the authority of those controlling the calendar. The specific requirements of the liturgical calendar, combined with limited astronomical knowledge, led to certain conventional solutions to the problem of the exact coordination of ritual life, which at times departed from strict astronomical alignment and through the subsequent requirement for social consensus, led to the invocation of calendrical authority. *One* of these conventional solutions is presented in the Mishnah, and therein, it is the rabbis who are depicted as rising to seize this authority. The argument will be made on the basis of the evidence in the Mishnah, and its significance will then be assessed in light of the previous evidence examined. A concern will be with how prevalent the views of the rabbis actually were, and how representative they may have been regarding Jewish life at large. It may well be that

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[1] Alon 1989: 707.

in their depiction of a calendar under rabbinic control, they were attempting to wrest that control, in reality, from other authorities.

The historian of Jewish liturgy Ismar Elbogin argued that, in the post-biblical period: "...the New Moon lost its festive character; it was demoted to the rank of secondary feasts".[2] This may be said to be true in relation to the feast's treatment in the Mishnah, although the Mishnah is not overly concerned with the festive aspect of the new moon anyway.[3] Around the end of the second century CE, however, the procedure of reckoning and sanctification of each new moon was still important to many Jews, a procedure which bore continuity with previous times. By the end of the second century CE, there persisted also a memory of the importance of חֹדֶשׁ ritual in the Temple, and in Jewish life during the times when the Temple stood, in the retrospective and "utopian" tractates of the Mishnah.[4] The presentation of the feast by the writers and compilers of the Mishnah sees certain changes in חֹדֶשׁ ritual from previous times. The account therein is not, however, without numerous points of continuity with previous tradition, and importantly, at least until c. 359 CE, and probably later still, the empirical sighting of the first appearance of the lunar crescent was to remain fundamental to Jewish calendar reckoning, and hence liturgical life.[5] Eugene J. Lipman argued that: "... during the Mishnaic period, the focal point of calendation had been the visual sighting of new moon".[6] We also encounter continuity in the special liturgical status of חֹדֶשׁ well into rabbinic times, but this present chapter shall focus on the Mishnah.

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[2] Elbogin 1993: 103.

[3] This decrease probably generally reflects the loss of the feast's sacrificial element in the wake of the Temple's destruction.

[4] The Mishnah's final stages of redaction, according to Jacob Neusner, took place c. 180-200 CE (Neusner 1980: 177; 1991: 1). This view is widely accepted (cf. for example, Alexander 2006: 1; Samely 2002: 17; Maccoby 1988: 25, 30; Lipman 1970: 24).

[5] According to a later tradition, the Patriarch Hillel IV is said to have made public the mathematics of the calendar in 369 CE, such that, at some point subsequently, the empirical observation of the new moon was no longer necessary for the regulation of liturgical life (Alon 1989: 110). This tradition is late, however, (Geonic) and there is no contemporary evidence to support it, suggesting that it may simply refer to a calendrical change in later centuries (cf. Stern 2001: 155).

[6] Lipman 1970: 128.

Here, an examination of the main details of the Mishnaic treatment of חֹדֶשׁ, or רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ,[7] ritual is presented, and from this evidence its significance is assessed. The context for this rabbinic treatment of the new moon must be contrasted with the second century Christian sources discussed in Chapter 7. Here is not an attempt to produce a Judaism of reduced traits, or a minimal and summarising set of defining characteristics. Rather, the details presented in the Mishnah are discussed by the rabbis in the context of a vast and exhaustive treatment of a vision of Judaism. It is, however, acknowledged that the Mishnah is in *some* ways like some of the previous sources examined, such as the writings Justin Martyr or the *Epistle to Diognetus*, in that its authors are still engaged in the production of *a specific vision of Judaism* with specific purposes, rather than a definitive statement or description of any or all of the various contemporary forms of Judaism.[8] The difference is that the Mishnah's Judaism was not the product of polemic and contradistinction, but the product of reverence for the past and a desire to enshrine the traditions of the past in the knowledge and ritual life of the present.[9] Much of the material in the Mishnah has been considered utopian, because it describes the Temple's dimensions and ritual in great detail, despite the Temple's absence and the unlikelihood of its restoration, after two catastrophic wars against Rome.[10] While in this utopian scheme some details of ritual which were to occur on new moons can be found, it should be noted that much of what is presented in this chapter is deeply concerned with the pragmatic execution of calendrical procedure, previous and contemporary.

The Mishnaic presentation of the ritual of reckoning each new moon day is examined (Part 1), as is evidence that suggests that opponents to some calendrical authorities attempted to disrupt the system described (Part 2). Again the association of *feasting* with new moon days is encountered (Part 3), and it is also learnt from the Mishnah how the new moon was marked by the liturgy of the early synagogue (Part

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[7] The use of רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ to refer to the feast of the new moon increases from the time of the Mishnah, although the simple form חֹדֶשׁ is still regularly used.

[8] As Catherine Hezser states: "Rabbinic literature can certainly not be seen as representative of ancient Judaism as such" (Hezser 2005: 352).

[9] cf. Maccoby 1988: 34: "Jews studying the Mishnah are continually reminded that they were heirs of a great polity, with a legal system of its own". Neusner argued: "If the Mishnah plans to have its materials studied, its intention therefore is to turn whoever studies the document into someone who knows what priests know, and… *can* do pretty much what priests can do" (Neusner 1979: 149).

[10] Neusner called the Mishnah "…a design of a utopia for an Israel that did not exist when the design was made up, and which would never come into existence." (Neusner 1991: 1)

4). In the final section, the presence of Temple ritual and symbolism in the new moon's ritual as it is prescribed for post-Temple times is discussed, and the relationship between the feast and the 'utopian' character of the Mishnah is considered (Part 5).

1. THE NEW MOON AS THE FOCUS OF THE MISHNAH'S 'CALENDAR MECHANICS'

Gedalyahu Alon summarised the process for reckoning new moon days during the period with which we are concerned:

> We know that all through amoraic times, and earlier in the tannaitic age, going back to the period before the Destruction, all New Moons were fixed by direct observation. On the twenty-ninth of each month an ad hoc tribunal sat awaiting the appearance of eye-witnesses – *edei ha-hodesh* – who would testify at formal proceedings that they had seen the crescent moon, whereupon the court would make proclamation.[11]

Much of the material relating to חֹדֶשׁ in the Mishnah, particularly that preserved in tractate *Rosh Hashshanah*, is dedicated to the above mechanism by which new months were reckoned. In particular, the process of examining witnesses who claim to have seen the crescent moon, and the subsequent announcement of this appearance, occupies the writers' attention. Various circumstances are envisaged, from the situation of the witness leaving his home to report the sighting in the court of the calendar authorities, to the place and manner in which he was cross-examined.[12] The goal was the *sanctification* of the new moon, on the day of the new moon, חֹדֶשׁ. The number of witnesses required for the sanctification of each new month, and the types of individual witnesses and judges who would or would not constitute a legitimate quorum for this sanctification, are also discussed. It will be noted that the authors of the relevant passages depart several times from a discussion of contemporary calendrical practice in relation to the new moon, and embark upon interesting retrospectives with regard to new moon ritual in the times when the Temple stood. In this context we are given information which would otherwise have been unavailable from the biblical, earlier Jewish, or early Christian sources already examined.

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[11] Alon 1989: 110. With regard to Alon's words here, it is suggested that although he provides a useful description in simple terms, the tribunal he speaks of was not, in fact, *ad hoc*, as it met quite regularly, on the evening of the 29th day of each month. On a technical note, the end of the 29th day of any Jewish month is actually the 30th night, if the cultic day is assumed to begin at nightfall. To avoid confusion, the evening which falls after the 29th day of a month will herein be referred to as the 'evening of the twenty-ninth day', and the evening which follows the 30th day (the 31st night) will be referred to as the 'evening of the thirtieth day', similar to the western method of describing days.

[12] The use of the masculine pronoun here is not arbitrary; it rather reflects the Mishnaic writers' prohibition of women from bearing testimony about the new moon (*M.Rosh Hashshanah* 1:8)

The Calendar Basics

The basic procedure which is described in the Mishnah is at first quite straightforward: around sunset at the end of the twenty-ninth day of each lunar month, certain individuals kept watch for the first appearance of the thin lunar crescent beginning the moon's cycle once again after two or three days of obscuration.[13] This astronomical event would eventually occur in the evening of either the twenty-ninth, or the thirtieth day of each month, the number of days since the previous new moon. When this event was witnessed, those individuals were encouraged to report their sightings to central calendar authorities. They would travel to the authorities, traditionally regarded as based in Jerusalem and then Yavneh, and thereupon be examined by experts on what they had witnessed. A list of questions would be put to each witness, and each of these questions relates specifically to the appearance of the moon in the witnesses' accounts. If there was a satisfactory quorum of witnesses, whose testimony correlated with one another, and also with some basic astronomical criteria at the disposal of the calendar authorities, then a decision about the beginning of the new month was made, and the court exclaimed: מְקֻדָּשׁ, "It is hallowed!" (*M. Roshshana* 2:7).

The process is relatively simple, but to the modern reader might seem encumbered with detail, especially in light of the fact that it was known, for example, that one lunation equals around 29.5 days.[14] If this was indeed known, then why was there a continual effort to observe the strictures of this calendar court every month? Indeed, it will become apparent that these strictures amounted to a cumbersome and at times very complicated process, vulnerable to interference. Before turning to the social significance of the process of reckoning and sanctifying new moons, its precise technical purpose to calendar authorities, and to Jewish life, as the rabbis see it, should be stated. A Jewish lunar 'month' must be either twenty-nine or thirty days. Thirty-day months are referred to herein as 'intercalated' months, and twenty nine-

[13] See Chapter 1, Part 2; Keel 1998: 104.

[14] As noted in Chapter 1, Part 2, the mean duration of a lunar month is 29 days 12 hours 44 minutes and 3 seconds (Schurer 1973: 588), and the astronomical duration, or "synodical cycle" of the moon actually fluctuates between approximately 29 days 6 hours and 30 minutes, and 29 days and 20 hours (Stern 2001: 101). Philo of Alexandria appears to have been aware of the approximate length of a lunar month (*Spec Leg* ii. 26 140ff), and the rabbinic calendrical process at all times presumes that a lunar month corresponds to either 29 or 30 days on earth. As early as the second century BCE, Hyparchus had calculated the average length of a lunation to approximately 29 days 12 hours (cf. Herr 1976: 848).

day months as 'regular' months.[15] In an observational calendar, the length of the month depends upon when the moon reappears at the start of the following month: whether it appears on the evening of the twenty-ninth or the thirtieth day of the outgoing month. At the time of the Mishnah's completion and the period preceding it, it was known that an average non-leap year might include around six regular months of twenty-nine days, and six intercalated months of thirty days.[16] It was *not* known, however, how the length of the outgoing month (*viz* the exact appearance of the new moon) could be predicted any more accurately than this. It can therefore initially be concluded that one of the main technical purposes for carefully reckoning and sanctifying each new moon was to conclude with as much surety as possible whether the outgoing month was regular (twenty-nine days) or intercalated (thirty days), and thus the beginning of the new month.[17] The procedure to decide upon this took place towards the evening of the twenty-ninth day of *every* month and continued the following morning and possibly until the evening of the thirtieth day. חֹדֶשׁ, following an intercalated month, might also occur on the thirty-first day, which was therefore the first of the new month. It is evident, therefore, that it *was known* when the *proceedings* of this new moon *reckoning system* would begin in advance. It was not known, however, at what point *during* the two days of proceedings the new moon would actually appear, and therefore exactly how long the procedure would take (whether one or two days).[18] The calendar was thus constantly renegotiated on a month by month basis.

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[15] This terminology is chosen for convenience, as it corresponds with Neusner's translation of the Mishnah. In some other works, these are respectively referred to as 'full' (thirty-day) and 'hollow' (twenty-nine day) months (cf. Bickerman 1984: 66; Wacholder and Weisberg 1971: 229). As well as 'hollow' regular twenty-nine days months are occasionally referred to as 'defective' or 'deficient' (cf. Herr 1976: 851). Here, we should draw a distinction between an 'intercalated' month (one of thirty days) and the intercalation of a second Adar (i.e. the addition of a thirteenth month to the year). The latter will herein be referred to as the *intercalation of the year*, although I will not have cause to discuss this at length.

[16] Even this total, however, was not reliable: the authors of the Mishnah knew that in any year there could be a total of eight intercalated months and four regular months, or *vice versa*, but could not reach a more precise conclusion (*M. Arakhin* 2:2).

[17] cf. Bickerman 1984: 64-65; Herr 1976: 845. Alon 1989: 110.

[18] This was observed by Gandz, who suggested that "The people were accustomed to observe every 30th day of the month as the new moon day regardless of whether the new moon had been visible in the preceding night or not" (Gandz 1949: 269).

The Calendar Court and the Continued Importance of the New Moon

At this point, it should be noted that the sequence of days in this procedure is significant. Under normal circumstances, it seems that if the moon appeared on the evening of the twenty-ninth day of the outgoing month, then the witnesses would assemble in the court of the calendar authorities on the thirtieth day. During that day (30), the witnesses were apparently examined in Beth Yazeq in Jerusalem, which the Mishnah describes as a large courtyard (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:5). This was the centre, according to the Mishnah, of the court procedure of the sanctification of the new moon, until the Jewish authority moved north to Yavneh.[19] In Beth Yazek, also, a special meal is said to have taken place on the occasion of the sanctification of the new moon (see Part 4). The examination in the calendar court involved five principal questions regarding the appearance of the moon upon the witness's sighting it:

כֵּיצַד רָאִיתָ אֶת הַלְּבָנָה, לִפְנֵי הַחַמָּה אוֹ לְאַחַר הַחַמָּה? לִצְפוֹנָהּ אוֹ לִדְרוֹמָהּ? כַּמָּה הָיָה גָּבוֹהַּ וּלְאַיִן הָיָה נוֹטֶה? וְכַמָּה הָיָה רָחָב?[20]

> How did you see the moon? Was it facing the sun or turned away from it? Was it to the north or to the south? How high was it, and in which direction was it leaning? And how broad was it? (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:6)[21]

The questions were posed such that the responses had to variously either stand up to astronomical knowledge at the disposal of the authorities, or coincide with the testimony of at least one other valid witness, or both.[22]

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[19] Herr 1976: 847. The problem of the historical accuracy in accounts of Yavneh will not be addressed here. The overall historical significance of the reckoning of the new moon is, however, assessed in the final section.

[20] Hebrew sections of the Mishnah quoted herein are taken from Albeck 1988.

[21] English sections of the Mishnah quoted herein are taken from Neusner 1988. This translation is chosen because of its useful supplementary comments which allow the Mishnaic style to be interpreted more easily in English, while at the same time preserving the style of the original Hebrew. As such, square brackets in the English quotations of the Mishnah are those added in Neusner's translation, and not the present author's.

[22] Ernest Wiesenberg compared these questions to modern lunar theory and suggested that "one may reconstruct a fairly comprehensive and accurate lunar theory in vogue among the Tannaim and Amoraim" (Wiesenberg 1962: 153). In this study he concluded that the witnesses themselves are not credited with astronomical knowledge. In his opinion, answers to questions 1-2 and 4-5 were checked against astronomical calculations at the disposal of the court, whereas question 3, regarding the moon's height, was impossible to calculate (not to mention the exact time of the sighting), and was therefore posed merely for comparison with the testimony of other witnesses (Wiesenberg 1962: 195). We are also told that, in previous times, Rabban Gamaliel had had a tablet on the wall of his upper room with pictures of the moon on it, against which witnesses' testimonies could be compared (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:8).

If at least two valid witnesses arrived at Beth Yazeq and satisfactorily attested to the moon's appearance in the presence of at least three judges, then the court sanctified the new moon.[23] That day, through this sanctification, was changed from the thirtieth of the outgoing month to the first of the new month in the instant of sanctification. Thus, it could be approximately midday in the calendar court on the thirtieth day of the month. If it was deemed an hour later that the new moon had indeed appeared, then the court actually altered the date from the thirtieth of the outgoing month to the first of the new month, and the rest of the day was חֹדֶשׁ, the outgoing month was pronounced regular (twenty-nine days), and the following day, beginning at that coming nightfall, was the *second* of the new month. If by nightfall on the same day the witnesses were examined in the court, however, the new moon had not been satisfactorily attested to, then the following day was considered the new moon proper, חֹדֶשׁ, and the outgoing month was considered intercalated (having thirty days).

Granted, with much of the above lunar information at hand, it would be theoretically possible for a society to operate with a *relatively* reliable civil calendar, *without* having to observe the recurring appearance of the new moon. Indeed, it was known that one could simply alternate between regular and intercalated months as a default calendar.[24] In this system one would, if careful, never be more than a day out

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[23] Although three were sufficient, this did not mean that this was always the case, implying that more judges may usually have been present (Schurer 1973: 591).

[24] Herr 1976: 850; Gandz 1949: 268-69; *T. Arakhin* 1:8-11. This practice was known to the author of the *Astronomical Book* (cf. Chapter 5, Part 1; *1 Enoch* 78:5-6; Feldman 2004: 81). Alon argued that the calendar authorities in Jerusalem were quite capable of predicting dates in advance with relative accuracy. He argued this on the basis of several "rules of thumb" which he claimed the rabbis possessed and used in connection with the process of examining witnesses (Alon 1989:110). Herr disagreed with this conclusion, although he did acknowledge several "imprecise" calculations at the disposal of the Tannaim. I presume that these calculations correspond with Alon's "rules of thumb" (unfortunately Alon did not make this clear). Two such rules were (1) that there were never less than four intercalated (thirty day) months in a year, and never more than eight, and also (2) that six intercalated months never immediately followed one another (cf. Herr 1976: 849). As one can imagine, these rules, however useful, would not permit the precise prediction of most new moons, and it is precisely on the basis of there being different, complementary reckoning procedures (observation on the one hand, and such 'rules of thumb' on the other) that Herr rejected the idea that rabbis could accurately predict dates (Herr 1976: 850). Bickermann also argued against the idea that the Jewish calendar at this time was pre-calculated (Bickerman 1984: 64). See Stern (2001: 99-154) on the difficulty of predicting the appearance of the new moon.

of synchronisation with everyone else in calendrical matters.[25] In Mishnaic times, however, two important issues resulted in the need to reckon the beginning of each month precisely to within a single day, and thus the cumbersome workings of the calendrical court were required. These issues can be reduced to the categories of religious needs on the one hand, and ideological and political needs on the other. These two areas, of course, overlap considerably, but can be analysed discretely.

First, the religious system of the Mishnah, as in previous times, resulted in the need for the precise observation and coordination of certain new moons in particular. The reason behind this was the exact reckoning of the yearly Jewish festivals. According to the Mishnah:

> עַל נִסָּן מִפְּנֵי הַפֶּסַח; עַל אָב מִפְּנֵי הַתַּעֲנִית; עַל אֱלוּל מִפְּנֵי רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה; עַל תִּשְׁרֵי מִפְּנֵי תַקָּנַת הַמּוֹעֲדוֹת; עַל כִּסְלֵו מִפְּנֵי הַחֲנֻכָּה: וְעַל אֲדָר מִפְּנֵי הַפּוּרִים.
>
> At Nisan, because of Passover; at Ab, because of the fast; at Elul, because of the New Year; at Tishre, because of the determination of the set feasts; at Kislev, because of Hanukah; and at Adar, because of Purim (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:3).[26]

Because Passover must begin on the 14 Nisan exactly, it was necessary to determine precisely the 1 Nisan, the new moon of Nisan. Similarly, the destruction of the Temple was commemorated, from these times, with a day of fasting on 9 Ab; the new moon of Ab needed to be determined exactly. Naturally, the other feasts mentioned above demanded the same precision in order to be properly observed. The two most important of these six new moons were the new moons of Nisan and Tishre. This was because of Passover in Nisan and the feasts in the seventh month, Tishre: Rosh

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[25] This kind of situation is suggested to have been a normal occurrence in Mishnaic times. In tractate *Sanhedrin* it is argued that if two different witnesses to a capital case come forward and testify to the same event, and in their testimony as to when the event was witnessed there is a discrepancy of a single day (for example one says 'on the second of the month' and the other says 'on the third of the month') their seemingly conflicting testimony is still valid, because it is presumed that they may not be knowledgeable about the observed length of the previous month (*M. Sanhedrin* 5:3). Stern, while observing this uncertainty, does not suggest that it would have lasted more than "a few days" (Stern 2001: 164)

[26] The Mishnah also indicates that in the times when the Temple stood, the new moon of Iyyar was important due to the "Lesser Passover" (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:3). The above quote indicates the new moons at which messengers go forth from the calendrical authorities so that Jews in the land of Israel and in the Diaspora can observe the above festivals on the correct dates.

Hashshanah on the new moon, the Day of Atonement, and the festive month culminating in Tabernacles.

This calendrical responsibility, during the times when the Temple stood, in Gedalyahu Alon's view, was "...one of the primary links between the mother country and the Diaspora".[27] Jewish communities in the Diaspora may have relied upon Jerusalem for the dating of festivals, to ensure that their prayers were heard at the same time as those in Jerusalem, and so that pilgrims would know when they needed to arrive there.[28] According to the Mishnah, it was permissible to profane the sabbath on the occasion that it coincided with the two most important new moons, Nisan and Tishre, in order to travel to the calendrical authorities with information on the appearance of the lunar crescent. Before proceeding to mention the political and ideological issues relating to this calendrical process, we should note briefly that *M.Rosh Hashshanah* 1:4 includes the detail:

וּבְשֶׁהָיָה בֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קַיָּם, מְחַלְּלִין אַף עַל כֻּלָּן מִפְּנֵי תַקָּנַת הַקָּרְבָּן.

> And when the Temple stood, they violate [the prohibition of] the Sabbath on the occasion of all of the [months], because of the determination of the offering [for the celebration of the new month] (*M.Rosh Hashshanah* 1:4).[29]

The development of the feast in relation to the destruction is clear here: it was, previously, considered of paramount importance to reckon the first of the month exactly, *every month*, due to its observance as a feast, in the Temple, with sacrifices. After the Temple's destruction these sacrifices, naturally, did not happen, and the Sabbath did not need to be compromised on its account. This detail in particular is testimony to the significance of new moons, especially when the Temple stood. As seen regarding earlier times, the ritual of the new moon, at least where the *Temple*

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[27] Alon 1989: 201.

[28] An alternative solution to this problem only emphasises the importance of the issue: Bickerman reported that the Palestinian Talmud describes the doubling of festival days (except the Day of Atonement) in the Diaspora in order to ensure that at least one of the days coincided with the appropriate observances in Jerusalem (*P.T. Erubin* 3) (Bickerman 1984: 66). This may, however, simply be an effort by the Palestinian rabbis to express their authority over others in the Diaspora on the matter of festivals.

[29] Note here Neusner's supplementary notes.

itself is concerned, seems to have taken precedence over sabbath observance. With the Temple destroyed after 70 CE, the opposite was the case.[30]

It seems, moreover, that each new moon was still considered important even after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, despite those of Nisan and Tishre being the only two to retain this special sabbath exemption in the circles of the rabbis; Jacob Neunser described Mishnah *Rosh Hashshanah* as being concerned with "The designation of *each* new month through the year".[31] Although, ritually, the importance of new moon days may have declined somewhat after the destruction, there are several reasons for believing that every new moon throughout the year retained some religious and social significance in the Mishnah. Among these reasons, six are particularly taken up here.

1. The fact that the writers of the Mishnah are still interested in the exact reckoning of each new moon, not just those which determine other feasts, points to the ritual significance of new moon days as ritual events unto themselves.

2. It can also be demonstrated that liturgical observance for *each* new moon clearly survives the two wars of first and second century Judea. As will be shown below, specific liturgy which was to take place at every new moon throughout the year can be identified.

3. It should also be clear that some of the rabbinic "rules of thumb", as Alon called them,[32] such as predicting the approximate number of regular and intercalated months in any one year, and the total amount of intercalated months that could actually succeed one another, required the continuous careful calculation of *each* new moon throughout the year, if they were to be in any way useful. For example, if it was known that six intercalated months never followed one another, then the *only* way in which such a rule would have been useful would be if *each* of the new moons in that

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[30] Ron Feldman, incorrectly in my opinion, argues that the observational luni-solar calendar of the rabbis, described in the Mishnah, prioritises the lunation over the seven-day sabbatical cycle, and that this is evidenced by the encouragement to violate the sabbath on the event of sighting the new moon (Feldman 2004: xvi, 194). In fact, as observed here, the rabbis did *not* always encourage this for all new moons, but as we have seen, only the two most important ones of Nisan and Tishre. Against Feldman's assertion, it is observed that the rabbis, as represented in the Mishnah, actually *discontinued* much of this practice of violating sabbaths, precisely because they only wished the sabbath to be violated out of sheer necessity.

[31] Neusner 1988: 135. My emphasis.

[32] Alon 1989: 110.

succession had been exactly reckoned. Otherwise, such a rule is pointless. Thus, *every* new moon was characterised by the cumbersome procedure of the calendrical court, and each awaited sanctification by the court. Each month the authority of the calendar court was invoked and exercised.

4. The idea of the new moon being a *sanctified* moment has been consistently held in biblical, post-biblical, rabbinic, and even modern Judaism.[33] The social significance of this should not be overlooked.

5. From the discussion below, it emerges that the calendar authorities retained a role of central importance in Jewish society due to the new moon ritual's function as an exercise in, and symbolic expression of, this authority (this area is what I have, above and below, termed the *ideological and political* aspect of reckoning and sanctifying new moons).

6. Finally, the process of civil law required that each new moon be exactly reckoned, so that the dates of events discussed in legal proceedings could be compared. Up to three days into the month, it was permissible to accept evidence with a day's discrepancy, due to potential ignorance regarding the previous month's length (*M. Sanhedrin* 5:3). This exception seems only to have been made regarding the first few days of any month,[34] presuming that after this, news of the intercalation would have been more pervasive. The practicality of coordinating the calendar in this regard is clear: if a court is to function efficiently, it surely must reckon its dates exactly, and the above ruling in tractate *Sanhedrin* suggests that this was indeed a concern; the court needed, at the very least, to keep dates of its own, every month. We do, after all, deal with a society whose wide array of purposes and aspirations were not simply confined to the observance of a small number of festivals.

Before discussing the ideological and political implications in more detail (reason number 5, above) of the requirement for consensus regarding every new moon throughout the year, several additional details to the process of reckoning new months that the Mishnah describes are noted. A large proportion of tractate *Rosh Hashshanh* is dedicated to discussing the treatment of witnesses to the new moon's

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[33] For brief discussions on the history of Jewish new moon liturgy from rabbinic times to the present, see Elbogin 1993: 103-05; Idelsohn 1995: 158-61; Knobel 1983: 101. I have also noted that even in Qumran, where an alternative schematic calendar may have been used, the ritual observance of the beginning of the month is still important (cf. Chapter 5; Parts 3 and 4; Falk 1998).

[34] cf. Stern 2001: 164

appearance at calendrical courts. This discussion departs several times from a treatment of contemporary practice to describe procedures which have changed over time. Several scholars of Jewish calendars agree that the pre-70 CE court of the Sanhedrin, described in the Mishnah, is to some extent a broad reflection of the actual calendrical processes at that time. Such a court seems likely to have been associated with the Temple, and controlled by the priests and/or ruling dynasty.[35] Calendrical matters were decided, including the sanctification of the new moon and the outgoing month's being declared regular or intercalated.[36] At some point after the war which ended in 70 CE, calendrical authority is depicted as transferring to the rabbinic Beth Din.[37] The historical reliability of this, and the extent of early rabbinic authority, will be assessed in the concluding section of this chapter. It is possible that, in light of the Mishnah's portrayal, the destruction of the Temple would have caused a power vacuum which, if the Jewish festivals were to be observed correctly, must necessarily have been filled with consensus of some sort, and the Mishnah describes a line of relative continuity to the end of the second century.[38] If the correct timing of festivals was considered important, and if this timing was also potentially irregular, the vacuum is conceivable because where previously decisions may have been made by the Temple authorities, in later times a non-Temple solution needed to be reached. At least, authority was *invoked*, whether or not a *vacuum* of it can be reliably posited.

M. Rosh Hashshanah describes a previous situation when the calendar court of Jerusalem would accept testimony about the new moon from anybody. This, however, appears not to have been as open an invitation as it may seem: it was most

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[35] As will be suggested in the concluding section, the Mishnaic presentation does, in fact, have much of the same practical implication as several earlier references to the new moon in Jewish sources, due to similar needs and a similar amount of astronomical knowledge.

[36] Stern argues that the Jewish calendar, at least during Hasmonaean and Roman rule, until 70 CE, was a similar calendar to that described in the Mishnah, probably overseen by the ruling dynasty, and then the High Priest up to 70 (Stern 2001: 163). Bickerman described this same duty before 70 CE as a priestly function (Bickerman 1984: 64), as did Herr (1976: 846). Alon repeatedly described the pre-70 calendar court as the Sanhedrin (Alon 1989: 99, 108, 201, 237). An opposing view to that held by these scholars can be found in the PhD dissertation of R. Feldman, who argues that the pre-70 CE calendar court which the Mishnah describes was that of a minority group whose calendar was fundamentally different from the main calendar of first century Judaism, or at least different to the calendar in use in the Temple itself (Feldman 2004: 192).

[37] Bickerman 1984: 64-65.

[38] This is supposing that there was, in fact, a power vacuum at all, and that the priestly class did not continue to exercise some authority, a supposition which is not at all certain, or even likely. It may well be that the rabbis, however, wished to impress upon their readers their own authority over that of the priests. Alon suggested that in post-70 CE Judaism priests still assumed power and influence, both within rabbinic circles, and in opposition to the rabbis as well (Alon 1989: 101).

likely confined to Jews, and evidently was not extended to slaves, on account of the priests' scrupulosity in matters of birth and social status.[39] Apparently after some disruption, however, discussed in Part 2 of this chapter, only those who were known to the authorities had their evidence accepted (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:2). No chronological reference to this change is given in the Mishnah.[40] A possible solution to an unrecognised witness is, however, provided by the Mishnah: if the calendar court does not recognise a witness, the town from which he travelled sends another person who is known to them to testify to his reliability (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:1). Further restrictions are placed regarding the eligibility of a witness to the new moon. A list of invalid persons is given:

הַמְשַׂחֵק בַּקֻּבְיָא, וּמַלְוֵי בָרִבִּית, וּמַפְרִיחֵי יוֹנִים, וְסוֹחֲרֵי שְׁבִיעִית וַעֲבָדִים.

> ...he who plays dice, they who lend on interest, who race pigeons, and who trade in produce of the seventh year, and slaves (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:8).[41]

The unifying principle behind these given by the authors is that in any situation in which a woman is not eligible to give testimony, the above categories of persons are not eligible either. Thus, it is implied that women could not give testimony about the new moon.[42] Also, two close relatives eligible to testify counted only as one in the Mishnaic system (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:7).[43] They are, however, both encouraged to approach the court anyway for the reason that if one of them might be found ineligible, then the other can still testify.

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[39] Herr 1976: 846-7, based on *M. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:7.

[40] The Tosefta, however, informs us that the "heretics" (*minim*) involved were the Boethusians (*T. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:15). This detail is not particularly helpful from a chronological point of view because, first, the Tosefta is a later source, and secondly, information on the Boethusians is rare outside of rabbinic literature. The term may refer to a group, sect, or faction from the late Second-Temple period, possibly associated with the family of Boethus, who rose to the high priesthood under Herod the Great (cf. Heger 2007: 264ff.; Smallwood 1962: 14-34).

[41] The reasoning behind the exclusion of gamblers and pigeon flyers is the same, according to Lipman: that gamblers are thieves, and as pigeon flyers to some extent gamble on the outcome, they are thieves. Gambling was considered thievery on three counts: money is stolen from families, time is stolen Torah-study and performance of mitzvoth, and winnings are stolen from the loser. This does not include, in Lipman's view, amateur "pigeon-fanciers and homing-pigeon breeders" (Lipman 1970: 131).

[42] Lipman pointed out, however, that the purpose of this Mishnah was not to compare the moral status of women and slaves on the one hand, with gamblers on the other; it was for technical purposes only (Lipman 1970: 131).

[43] Two is the usual number of witnesses required for legal testimony in a Jewish court. It is also normal for first degree relatives not to be considered as constituting the requisite two. In fact, many of the rules regarding witnesses and their eligibility to testify about the new moon are the same as general rules for any matter in a Jewish court (see Lipman 1970: 130).

Interestingly, the Mishnah presumes a considerable amount of effort on the part of some of the witnesses to bring news regarding the new moon, and not only that, but there are several suggestions which imply that a great amount of effort should be taken by several *additional* individuals to ensure the safe passage and testimony of a single witness. *Rosh Hashshanah* 1:9 indicates that a journey could be taken on an ass or a palanquin and could have taken up to a night and a day. Presumably it was in the evening on which the sighting took place that this journey began. It is also suggested that such a journey should be taken by several individuals on account of just one witness, and that they should bring food for sustenance, and staves to protect the witness in case of an ambush. Further, when it was permissible to violate the sabbath, this could be done not just by the witness, but by all those accompanying him, whether for aid or protection (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:9). Due to the lack of specificity in this particular discussion in the Mishnah regarding which new moons involved this sabbath exemption, it can be assumed that, at least for the authors of the Mishnah, the understanding was that this rule applied to all new moons before the destruction, and then only those of Nisan and Tishre, after 70 CE, as discussed above.

The Mishnaic Procedure as Ritual

As noted, Mishnah Tractate *Sanhedrin* indicates that the minimum number of judges required to make a decision regarding the intercalation of a month was three (*M. Sanhedrin* 1:2). Only two valid witnesses to the new moon are required for the sanctification by the court, provided that they have satisfactorily completed the examination of the experts (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:7). This small number may reflect the pragmatism of the writers, in that a large number would have been bureaucratically cumbersome, and would actually have impeded smooth calendrical procedure.[44] This pragmatism is evidenced by the fact that, according to the Mishnah, if the court had not proclaimed the new moon as sanctified before nightfall (on the thirtieth day of the month), the outgoing month was automatically considered an intercalated month of thirty days (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 3:1). This rule is interesting in that it indicates that the element of *social coordination*, coordinating the ritual life

[44] Also, as previously noted, this number of witnesses reflects the order of most legal cases in a Jewish court.

of Jews, and the *ritual* aspect of the *procedure* of sanctification, actually took precedence over the correct proclamation of the new moon and the establishment of the exact date of the new moon's appearance.[45] This seems explicable in light of the fact that, if the new moon had not been sanctified by nightfall of the day following its appearance, there would not have been enough time to properly relay the news of its appearance, or to carry out its sanctification on the correct day. Thus, if a decision could not be made on time as to whether or not the new moon had actually appeared on the evening of the twenty-ninth day of the month, for social and religious purposes it was assumed to have appeared on the evening of the thirtieth day. Thus, the ritual life of the community would have been coordinated.

The social implications of this are important. First, while every effort was made to ensure that the new moon's appearance was properly declared, the default procedure in times of uncertainty fell in favour of coordinating the religious life of Jews, and optimum participation in the procedure, rather than continuing the astronomical investigation at their expense. The need for social and religious coordination actually had the potential to outstrip astronomical interest.[46] The social importance of the new moon reckoning procedure itself can also be gauged in relation to this from another point of view: it is related that if more witnesses than are required came forward to testify about the new moon, then they were to be examined anyway, even if the appearance of the new moon was satisfactorily attested to by the first witnesses examined. The reason given in the Mishnah is:

לֹא שֶׁהָיוּ צְרִיכִין לָהֶן, אֶלָּא כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יֵצְאוּ בְּפַחֵי נֶפֶשׁ,

> ...not because they needed their [evidence], but so that they should not go out disappointed (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:6).

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[45] Ritual, as has already been noted, is understood as collective, structured, and formalised behaviour, which involves the symbolic (cf. Chapter 2).

[46] Given the observed propensity for the calendar courts to make arbitrary, rather that accurate, declarations of the new moon in favour of the proper observance of court procedure, we might also view the "rules of thumb" regarding the sequence of "intercalated" and "regular" months as correcting mechanisms for when the authorities had to make such arbitrary decisions. The court would have been aware of how the year needed to be completed in terms of how many of each length of month was possible for relatively harmonious calendation.

It is again evident that elements of the new moon procedure could potentially threaten accurate astronomical calculation, because this excessive questioning of all witnesses, seemingly even to the point of the procedure lasting until nightfall and resulting in the arbitrary and perhaps incorrect declaration of a thirty day month, was given priority. The social role of the sanctification of the new moon takes precedence because the authorities wanted to ensure that witnesses would continuously come forward, and, in connection with this, would go away having satisfactorily taken part in the procedure. Part of this was the provision of meals for those who attended the procedure, examined below (Part 3). The importance of the *procedure itself* and its strictures is emphasised in Mishna *Rosh Hashshanah* 3:1:

> רָאוּהוּ בֵית דִּין וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל, נֶחְקְרוּ הָעֵדִים, וְלֹא הִסְפִּיקוּ לוֹמַר: מְקֻדָּשׁ, עַד שֶׁחָשְׁכָה – הֲרֵי זֶה מְעֻבָּר.
>
> [If] the court and all the Israelites saw [the new moon], the witnesses having been examined, but they had no chance to say "It is sanctified," before it [actually] got dark, lo, this [month coming to an end], is an intercalated month.

The implications of this are clear. Even in cases where there is *no doubt to anyone* that the new moon had appeared, the ritual took precedence over the element of astronomical calculation, and the outgoing month, socially and ritually, was deemed intercalated, even if it was obvious that it was, astronomically, regular.[47]

The succession of days should be recalled to understand the ritual here. If the new moon appeared on the evening of the twenty-ninth day of a given month, witnesses would be examined the *following* morning (of the thirtieth day). If the new moon was sanctified successfully before nightfall on this day (thirtieth), then that day, the day when the witnesses were gathered in the calendar court, was the new moon day proper, and declared the first day of the new month, חֹדֶשׁ. Thus, by the action carried out there and then in the court, the current day would have been transformed at that moment from being the thirtieth day of one month, to the first of the next

[47] Actually, it is conceivable that in a situation in which the crescent moon appeared very clearly and for a long enough period of time for many people to see it, more people would therefore come forward to testify about it, even though, at such moments, the authorities were evidently *not at all* in need of the witnesses' help! The potentially ironic impracticality of such a situation is suggestive of the ritual and symbolic role of these procedures described.

month. Therefore, when the sun set on that day when the ritual took place, the *second* day of the month began. In light of above instruction to automatically declare the outgoing month a thirty-day month if the ritual was not completed by nightfall, another insight into the procedure is now gained. If witnesses had gathered on the thirtieth day, and night fell, it was then the thirty-first day. Ritually, it was therefore problematic to declare the previous day, the day just passed, as the new moon day, because in such a situation, the community would be entering the *second* day of the month, beginning that evening, without having experienced any hours of the first day. Such a situation was surely avoided because, if there were no first day of the month, there could be no חֹדֶשׁ ritual. A declaration such as, "Yesterday was the new moon" would obviously be redundant in many cases if one wished to ritually observe that day! The community, in such a situation, would not pass through a holy day, but merely acknowledge that it had taken place. The provision to arbitrarily declare an intercalated month also suggests that, while the calendar authorities attempted to replicate heavenly movements, especially those of the moon, through ritual on earth, they sometimes prioritised ritual coordination, and ignored astronomical alignment in the strictest sense.

Regarding changes which occurred over time in new moon ritual, another rabbinic retrospective included in the Mishnah is pertinent to this situation:

> בָּרִאשׁוֹנָה הָיוּ מְקַבְּלִין עֵדוּת הַחֹדֶשׁ כָּל הַיּוֹם. פַּעַם אַחַת נִשְׁתַּהוּ הָעֵדִים מִלָּבוֹא, וְנִתְקַלְקְלוּ הַלְוִיִּם בַּשִּׁיר, הִתְקִינוּ שֶׁלֹּא יְהוּ מְקַבְּלִין אֶלָּא עַד הַמִּנְחָה. וְאִם בָּאוּ עֵדִים מִן הַמִּנְחָה וּלְמַעְלָה – נוֹהֲגִין אוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם קֹדֶשׁ וּלְמָחָר קֹדֶשׁ.
>
> At first they would receive testimony about the new moon all day long. One time the witnesses came late, and the Levites consequently were mixed up as to [what] song [they should sing]. They made the rule that they should receive testimony [about the new moon] only up to the afternoon offering. Then, if witnesses came after the afternoon offering, they would treat that entire day as holy, and the next day as holy too (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 4:4).

There is a clear difference between this previous procedure and that of the later rabbinic authorities: when the Temple stood, witnesses were apparently heard only until the time of the afternoon offering on the thirtieth day of the month, because of

the organisation of regular Temple liturgy. This rule was relaxed at some point after 70 CE to allow testimony to be heard until nightfall.[48] This change was practical, in Alon's view, because "...with the Temple gone and the Levitical choir disbanded, the reason for the deadline had disappeared".[49] Because there were probably more procedures in the new moon ritual, such as sacrifices and Levitical hymns, in the Temple than there were in later times, more time was previously needed to fulfil these once the new moon was declared sanctified. Therefore, if it was not sanctified by the afternoon of the thirtieth day of the month, then that afternoon, and the whole of the next day (the day of חֹדֶשׁ proper), were considered holy days. The two-day nature of ancient Jewish new moons is now clearer.[50] After the Temple's destruction, the ritual which followed the examination of witnesses was seemingly not as complicated, the sacrificial cult having been discontinued, and therefore witnesses could be heard until close to nightfall.

Another important detail which indicates the importance of the social aspect of the procedure given in the Mishnah is the possibility for members of the calendar court itself (perhaps calendrical experts) to take the role of the witness. Thus, in the event of none of the witnesses satisfactorily fulfilling the court's criteria, or simply no one outside the court witnessing the new moon, judges in the calendar court itself could step forward and give testimony (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 3:1). This might seem surprising given the lengths to which the court went in the examination of witnesses, and the lengths to which some of the witnesses themselves seem to have gone to give testimony: profaning sabbaths, delaying the new moon's sanctification, occupying much of the court's time merely to pay 'lip-service', when in fact the court probably already satisfactorily knew about the crescent. It is also, in light of this detail, very difficult to imagine that the calendar experts themselves did not watch carefully for the crescent's appearance at the right time, to be prepared should this duty fall on them. It should be clear, therefore, that the procedure went beyond practical needs, and can be viewed as a symbolic exercise of authority and as ritual action.

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[48] The Mishnah attributes this change to Jonathan Ben Zakkai (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 4:4), although Alon suggested, based on evidence from the Tosefta (*T. Rosh Hashshanah* 4:3) that the change may have been even earlier than this (Alon 1989: 111)

[49] Alon 1989: 111.

[50] cf. 1 Samuel 20; Judith 8:6; Chapter 4, Part 1.

To reiterate the point regarding the previous details of procedures for sanctifying the new moon: the existing system had the purpose of coordinating social and religious life in relation to the phases of the moon, but the system also allowed for the authorities to occasionally, and only slightly, ignore those phases, but only if they threatened the smooth running of Jewish liturgical life, or indeed the efficiency of the rabbinic authorities. The above two exceptions to strict astronomical calendation allow optimum social use of the sanctification of new moons. Of paramount importance was the coordination of Jewish ritual life by the calendar court through its exercise in authority. The default decision to proclaim an outgoing month as thirty days, even if this was *astronomically incorrect*, was a provision which allowed for the optimum social impact of the interrogation of the witnesses (beyond immediate need), in the symbolic role the procedure played as an expression of authority, and in its, and Israel's, connection with Yahweh's ordering activity in creation, in this case, in relation to the moon.

The political and ideological nature of the exact reckoning of new moons is now discussed. If, as Gedalyahu Alon argued, the appearance of the crescent on the twenty-ninth or thirtieth day of a month was relatively predictable,[51] then the cumbersome process of the calendrical court, at least as some argue, would seem somewhat redundant. Alon argued that in light of this, one should view the process of sanctifying new moons as an important symbolic exercise in priestly and, later, rabbinic authority, that played a centralising or "centripetal" role in Jewish society.[52] In previous times Jews had probably looked to Judea and the Temple authorities for the regulation of the calendar, and in the early rabbinic period, control over the calendar asserted continuity with the civic and religious authority of previous times.[53] By far the most regular event in coordinating this control was the sanctification of the new moon. This was also the event which potentially involved the participation of Jews at large.[54]

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[51] Alon 1989: 110.
[52] Alon 1989: 237.
[53] Alon 1989: 110. Whether this was actually *done* by the rabbis, or whether this tractate of the Mishnah was part of the rabbinic effort to assert continuity with the pre-70 CE calendrical authorities, over against other groups, is still not entirely clear.
[54] While the decision about intercalating a second Adar to a year in order to rectify the progression of lunar months to the length of solar years was fundamentally important, it was neither as regular (about once every three years) as the procedure at each new moon, nor, perhaps, did it involve the consultation of the people at large. The decision to intercalate the year with a second Adar was made mainly with

As observed, other scholars subsequently doubted Alon's conclusion that Temple authorities, or first and second century rabbis, could predict new moon dates in advance with a degree of accuracy beyond two days.[55] Whether or not the rabbis, or indeed earlier priests, had the ability to accurately predict new moons in advance, and it seems as though they did not,[56] we must still give heed to Alon's observation as to the symbolic exercise in authority that each new moon created, because, as has been shown, this exercise indeed went beyond practical needs, even if it arose out of them. Each month, witnesses would await the appearance of the crescent. Upon sighting, they would make a journey to the authorities, either in Jerusalem or perhaps later in Yavneh, and may bring one, or even several other people to testify with them, testify to their reliability as a witness, or to protect them on their journey. This process already assumes other processes, such on the witness's recognition by the authorities as trustworthy, or indeed the witness's being accompanied by another person to testify as to their trustworthiness; this other person would have previously been deemed trustworthy. In both of these cases is authority respected and invoked. Importantly, it appears to be the case that many witnesses could potentially come forward. *M. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:6 reports, for example, that on one occasion more than eighty came forward. They all travel to the one centralised location: the court of the calendar authorities, and thus would they recognise and maintain that institution as authoritative, and presumably respect the decision of that court, although as will be shown below, the decisions could at times be controversial. Only after the calendar authorities had declared the month sanctified was final news of the new moon disseminated, whether by fire signal or later also by messengers. Both of these relaying systems would again exercise and symbolise the authority of the calendar experts. Thus, much of ritual life was influenced by calendar authorities in this

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the involvement of calendrical experts. While farmers, for example, may have been occasionally consulted regarding the intercalation of the year, insofar as they would testify to the progress of crops and animals (the agricultural season), there was apparently no equivalent systematic and ritualised method for reporting such information, as there *was* regarding the new moon. As Gandz observed, "...to the intercalated year... no holy or festival character whatever was attached, hence there was no sanctification of the intercalated year" (Gandz 1949: 263).

[55] cf. for example, Stern 2001: 102; Herr 1976: 850.

[56] According to Stern, "the most natural and practical was of establishing the appearance of the new crescent is not through calculation, but simply through empirical sighting" (Stern 2001: 102). Further, in Schurer-Vermes it is observed that "...the entire legislation of the Mishnah rests on the presupposition that, without any previous reckoning, each new month began when the new moon became visible" (Schurer 1973: 591).

period, and Jews, it appears, may have constantly waited for that authority to be exercised in order to fulfil Torah correctly.[57] According to Neusner, the holy day, in the Mishnah's symbolic world, awaits sanctification:

> The world thus regains perfection when on the holy day heaven and earth are united, the whole completed and done: the heaven, the earth, and all their hosts. This moment of perfection renders the events of ordinary time, of "history," essentially irrelevant... It is not a return to perfect time but a recovery of perfect being, a fulfilment of creation, which explains the essentially ahistorical character of the Mishnah's division of Appointed Times. Sanctification constitutes an ontological category and is effected by the creator.[58]

The new moon was a moment of sanctification which, although sanctified in heaven, was, throughout the period with which we are concerned, uncertain. And this uncertainty fed on to other moments of sanctification throughout the year. A Jewish way of life is depicted in the Mishnah as having constantly required a central authority in order to be completed, because of this calendrical uncertainty. Previously, this authority had been responsible for a number of duties, and these, for centuries, had been the task of priests and Levites, and the Mishnah sees the continuation of this role in the rabbinic court. Calendar reckoning is, in Alon's view:

> ...one of the important means of keeping Jewish communities of the whole land of Israel united around the national-religious centre, wherever it might be located. Indeed, it was one of the centripetal forces, as it had been before the Destruction, in keeping the scattered diasporas bound to the ancestral homeland.[59]

Perhaps this significance should not be overstated, because it still appears that, as *ritual* occasions, most new moons throughout the year were ultimately subordinated to yearly festivals, and also perhaps to the sabbath, but it should certainly be clear, now, that the Jewish calendar of the first and second centuries CE invoked a certain measure of authority and consensus, most regularly through the need for precise sanctification of new moons;[60] the new moon had its own distinctive significance in

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[57] As Neusner has argued, the worldview of the Mishnaic authors is such that "The world is composed of nature and super-nature. The repetitious laws that count are those to be discovered in Heaven and in Heaven's creation and counterpart, on earth". (Neusner 1994a: 161).
[58] Neusner 1991: 4.
[59] Alon 1989: 237.
[60] The sabbath, of course, was more regular an occurrence, but it remained on a fixed, non-astronomical cycle, and did not require authoritative intervention as such.

Jewish life, which, it appears, was acknowledged by several contemporary Christian authors.[61] More than this, whatever authority it invoked was seen to be mediating what had been sanctified already in heaven itself. Thus, the authority was religious, and fundamentally linked to order, not just in society, but in creation. God had created the moon, on a fixed cycle, and with it the sacred seasons.[62] Society (that is, 'Israel' in the Mishnaic presentation) sought to replicate and properly fulfil these sacred seasons, sanctifying them on earth, as God simultaneously sanctified them in heaven (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:7). The culmination of the procedure for sanctifying the new moon was thus a ritual acknowledging this connection:

רֹאשׁ בֵּית דִּין אוֹמֵר: מְקֻדָּשׁ! וְכָל הָעָם עוֹנִין אַחֲרָיו: מְקֻדָּשׁ, מְקֻדָּשׁ!

> The head of the court [then] says, "It is sanctified." And the whole crowd answer him, "It is sanctified. It is sanctified." (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:7)

[61] See Chapter 7.

[62] This association with creation is acknowledged, as we will discuss in Part 4, in the reading of Psalm104, the psalm of the new moon.

2. SABOTAGING THE NEW MOON

The social significance surrounding new moon days and the process of their reckoning is perhaps best evidenced in the Mishnah by apparently deliberate attempts to *disrupt* the monthly ritual. This would presumably also have disrupted the timing of sacrifices and liturgical life when the Temple stood. Two references in Mishnah tractate *Rosh Hashshanah* bear testimony to the deliberate disruption of the Jewish liturgical calendar specifically at the time of the new moon. In one example it seems that a persistent disruption came from the Samaritans, while in another, an unspecified internal Jewish, possibly sectarian motive seems also to have caused disruption. These two kinds of sabotage which are referred to expose two weak points in the system by which new months were reckoned and sanctified, as well as ways in which cult may have been disrupted. First, news of the appearance of the lunar crescent could be brought by anyone (presumably this means Jewish males),[63] as we noted, due to the importance of its exact reckoning (and presumably also the authorities were confident that their technical interrogation was sufficient).[64] This exposes the first weakness: the process was open to deception from those who wished to sabotage or manipulate it. The Mishnah summarises:

> בָּרִאשׁוֹנָה הָיוּ מְקַבְּלִין עֵדוּת הַחֹדֶשׁ מִכָּל אָדָם; מִשֶּׁקִּלְקְלוּ הַמִּינִין, הִתְקִינוּ שֶׁלֹּא יְהוּ מְקַבְּלִין אֶלָּא מִן הַמַּכִּירִים.

> At first they would accept testimony concerning the new moon from everybody. Once the minin had spoiled matters, they made the rule that they should accept testimony only from those who are recognised (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:1).

For this reason, it appears, the following rule had been observed regarding witnesses in previous times:

> אִם אֵינָן מַכִּירִין אוֹתוֹ, מְשַׁלְּחִין אַחֵר עִמּוֹ לְהַעִידוֹ.

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[63] *M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:1, 8. 2:8 refers to הֶדְיוֹטוֹת, or "ordinary folk". For this term Jastrow provides approximate translations: "private man", "commoner", "ignoble", and "ignorant" (Jastrow 1971: 333).

[64] As Wiesenberg has demonstrated in relation to lunar theory, the criteria for questioning witnesses predominately required the witness's responses to correlate with the authorities' astronomical knowledge. In the one case out of five in which it did not, the object was merely to check the testimony of witnesses against one another (Wiesenberg 1962: 195).

> If they [in Jerusalem] are not going to recognize him, they [in his own town] send another with him to give evidence about him (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:1).

Herr suggested that the party referred to in the town of the witnesses should be understood as a local court.[65] Thus, the intention was to ensure that the court in Jerusalem could make optimum use of witnesses without having to rely on the testimony of men of unknown allegiance or repute, and thus safeguard the process from sabotage. This secondary witness could, Herr suggested, be sent even on sabbaths.[66] Identifying the 'heretics' whose intent it was to disrupt the sanctification of the new moon is problematic, but suggestions have been made. The term מִינִין is often translated as 'heretics' and implies 'kinds', usually in a pejorative sense.[67] While the Mishnah does not specify the identity of the מִינִין here, the Tosefta, commentating on this passage, suggests that the saboteurs in this case were Boethusians (*T. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:15). This conclusion is difficult, as the Tosefta is a third century CE source, dealing, potentially, with a first century BCE or CE situation, but the identification is, at least, plausible.[68] There were evidently disagreements on some finer calendrical points (not major ones like, perhaps, with the Qumran community), between Boethusians and other Jewish groups.[69] It appears that the Boethusians disputed the date of Pentecost. The objection seems to have centred on the interpretation of Leviticus 23:11, regarding the timing of the raising of the *omer*. The group seems, according to Herr, based on the testimony of the Tosefta, to have intentionally interrupted the reckoning of the beginning of the month in order to change the subsequent day of the raising of the *omer*. This points to a general compliance of the group with the calendar of the Beth Yazeq court, as their intended aim, in Herr's words, "...would be possible, however, only if the Boethusians basically followed the calendar of the majority".[70] As such, we can suggest from this

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[65] Herr 1976: 846.

[66] Herr 1976: 846. In the absence of further detail, it is assumed here that this exemption was subject to the same changes over time as other rules regarding travelling on new moons, such that at some stage after 70 CE, the sabbath could be profaned only on the new moons of Nisan and Tishre.

[67] Daniel Boyarin compares the rabbinic discourse of *minut* with early Christian heresiology, and locates the term in rabbinic heresiological discourse of exclusion. As such, the term refers to a variety of 'others' of one kind or another, and not necessarily to one sect or group in particular (Boyarin 2004: 30, 42).

[68] See Heger 2007: 264ff. for a recent discussion on this possible calendar-related conflict.

[69] Herr 1976: 859.

[70] Herr 1976: 859. The aim, after all, seems merely to have been to alter calendation by a single day. If their calendar was fundamentally different, this alteration would be inconceivable.

that the aim of this action was not sabotage as such, as the procedure itself was not opposed by this group, but rather a manipulation of the procedure for the dating of other festivals. However reliable this identification is, the episode does emphasise the importance of reckoning dates correctly, and the role that the new moon played in this reckoning. It also illustrates the fact that deciding upon the intercalation of a month at the new moon was potentially controversial, and involved the exercising of authority and seemingly, perhaps, coercion. These were decisions which were accounted for in the cult, and as such, Jews may at times have been prevented from observing festivals on rival days regarding which there was disagreement, at least in certain contexts.[71]

In another instance, the Mishnah reports that Samaritans had also previously disrupted the Jewish system for relaying information about the appearance of the new moon. This time, however, it was the messaging system of the Temple and calendar authorities announcing news of the new moon by means of flares, subsequent to the court's hallowing of it, which was evidently disrupted. This can be classified as sabotage:

בָּרִאשׁוֹנָה הָיוּ מַשִּׁיאִין מַשּׂוֹאוֹת; מִשֶּׁקִּלְקְלוּ הַכּוּתִים, הִתְקִינוּ שֶׁיִּהוּ שְׁלוּחִין יוֹצְאִין.

> At first they would kindle flares. Once the Samaritans had spoiled matters, they made the rule that agents would go forth (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:2).

The intended meaning of this reference is that it was the announcement about the sanctification of the new month by the calendrical authorities *out from* Jerusalem to the land and beyond, from the geographical description of the process of lighting flares on new moons: from the mounts of Olives in Jerusalem, to 'the whole exile' (i.e. Syria/Babylonia) (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:4).[72] Due, generally, to the potential calendar discrepancy of two days at any given time (excluding, complications

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[71] This kind of controversial situation may well give us additional insight into reports of incidents of unrest in the Temple precincts on the occasions of festivals. The four centuries preceding the final editing of the Mishnah witnessed continual unrest in Judea, and there were many potential causes for such unrest which happened to be focused on the Temple site, but some situations similar to the above were surely among them, at least from time to time. Josephus, for example, suggests that festivals were common occasions for sedition (*BJ* I 88).

[72] Herr 1976: 850. Alon (1989: 237) observed the focus here on Syria and Mesopotamia, but could not reach a conclusion as to the significance of the absence of a flare system which was directed south, towards Egypt.

regarding the adding of a whole month to a year), this particular sabotaging activity would have had a rather limited potential, but one which was, of course, taken very seriously by Jews. Samaritans, or anyone else wishing to disrupt the process, could have carried out this act one or, at most, two nights in advance of the legitimate fires authorised by the Sanhedrin. This was because, as has been observed, the uncertainty regarding the length of the outgoing month, and the exact date of the new moon, was only presumed to lead to inaccuracy of up to a day. Thus Lipman sums up this sabotage:

> The Samaritans would light fires on their Samaritan hilltops one or two nights before the proper day of the month, when the Sanhedrin still had no evidence that the new moon had appeared. That month might be a "full" [intercalated] one; i.e. the new moon would not appear until the end of the thirtieth day, but the premature Samaritan fires confused everyone.[73]

Thus we can sum up the potential disruptive effect of this activity, as it is depicted, as follows: Jews in the Land waited to hear from the calendar authorities whether the month just passed was regular (twenty-nine days long), or intercalated (thirty days long). They learnt this through fire signals, which announced the appearance of the new moon, and were carried out on the evening following the sanctification in Beth Yazeq. Sabotaging this system would have had the effect of making Jews think that the current month just passed was a regular month (one of twenty-nine days), when in fact it was a intercalated month.[74] Thus there was a potential to disrupt the proper order of חֹדֶשׁ liturgy and observance *outside the Temple* by causing it to take place on

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[73] Lipman 1970: 131. While he succinctly explained the process of sabotage, I disagree with Lipman's specific reference to Samaritan hilltops. The Mishnah describes a system, the kind of which one might expect, of named locations for fires (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:4), presumably lit by agents of the court, carrying this out as their specific duty. The ides of erroneous fires on Samaritan hilltops does not make much sense, as surely the officers in change of the fires would not have looked to *Samaritan* hilltops for their signals! This episode suggests a deeper level of infiltration and a greater amount of effort by saboteurs.

[74] In fact Herr observed, following the Tosefta commentary on this Mishnah (*T. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:17; *T. Megillah* 3:15), that *only* in the event of a regular month were flares lit (Herr 1976: 851). Jews, apparently, would have been aware, as we have already argued, of the correct day of the month, at least by the time several days of each month had passed, and certainly would have learnt the correct date by the evening of the thirtieth. At that point they were merely waiting to learn whether or not the outgoing month was intercalated (thirty days). If it was *not*, if the outgoing month was deemed "regular" (twenty-nine days), there were flares to signal this decision; if there were *no* flares, this meant the court had deemed the outgoing month *intercalated.* It should be noted that the detail that flares were lit only on 'regular' months is not included in the Mishnah, but appears in the Tosefta. It is difficult to ascertain whether this knowledge is based on actual procedure or if it is simply an extrapolation of the Tosefta commentators. The implications for sabotage, in either case, remain the same.

the wrong day, which was surely frustrating for Jews at large. On the eve of particularly important months, however, this could have had a more serious disruptive effect, as it may have caused major festivals, even in the Diaspora, to be observed on the wrong days. The potential discrepancy, though, would still have been limited to a single day. The sabotage would also have had a potentially damaging effect on any 'rules of thumb'[75] regarding the sequence of regular and intercalated months, but the authorities may have corrected this in their own astronomical calculations.

A final observation should be made regarding the technicalities of this particular kind of sabotage: the Samaritans, or indeed any other potential saboteurs, would *not* themselves have known in advance whether the passing month was indeed regular or intercalated. This astronomical knowledge was not generally available in the Mediterranean or in the Near East. This meant that there was a reasonable possibility that, if one lit a fire with the intent of sabotage, the effect would actually have been in line with the decision of the Sanhedrin anyway! It would, potentially, have been conceivable for someone to gain access to the court to find out whether or not the new moon had been proclaimed, but this may have been a more complicated task, and it would therefore also point to a great amount of effort in carrying out this sabotage. It might be suggested from these considerations that the sabotage referred to would have to have been sustained and ongoing on a month by month basis in order to guarantee major disruption.[76] The Jewish response to this was, as noted, to send out messengers to announce the new moon's appearance on certain new moons.

In this discussion, the ritual nature of lighting flares to give notice regarding the appearance of the new moon should not be dismissed.[77] We do not possess evidence in sufficient detail to analyse this aspect of the procedure conclusively, but there are some suggestive references to it which should be taken seriously. Regarding the appearance of the fires on new moons, Lipman remarked, "We are told it was a

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[75] Alon 1989: 110.

[76] Herr presented the view that this disruption was unintentional on the part of the Samaritans, and that any interference was due simply to the fact that the Samaritan system was similar to that of the Jews, and that they may simply have, occasionally, come to a different conclusion about the appearance of the new moon (Herr 1976: 851). This view has not been taken up by other scholars, and contrasts with the view presented in the Mishnah itself.

[77] This is seen by Wilke, for example, as a centrally important aspect of new moon ritual (Wilke 1951: 175).

beautiful sight, in addition to its utilitarian value".[78] This may be an exaggeration, as the Mishnah does not say this so clearly, but the authors do hint at the aesthetic aspect of the activity of lighting torches on hilltops:

אֶלָּה מוֹלִיךְ וּמֵבִיא וּמַעֲלֶה וּמוֹרִיד עַד שֶׁהָיָה רוֹאֶה כָּל הַגּוֹלָה לְפָנָיו כִּמְדוּרַת הָאֵשׁ.

> But one waves them to and fro, up and down, until he saw the whole Exile before him lit up like a bonfire (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:4).[79]

It should be understood, Alon suggested, that any reference to Jewish fire signals into Syria, or anywhere outside Palestine, could only reasonably be posited for the period when the Temple stood; it was far-fetched, in his view, to conclude that they were employed so systematically after 70 CE.[80] Herr, nevertheless, argued that when the system of sending messengers was brought in by the calendar authorities, it did not replace the custom of lighting fire signals, but merely supplemented it.[81] Indeed, it is nowhere stated in the Mishnah that the system of fire signal was discontinued. It may be suggested, therefore, that messengers only went forth, as the Mishnah suggests, on six new moons (seven when the Temple stood) when there were other festivals during a particular month, and that the *flares* constituted a relaying system for *each* new moon, throughout the year.

The ritual nature of this activity is plausible, first, because of the evidently symbolic nature of the new moon sanctification procedure as a whole, and secondly, in light of a reference to the limited continuation of the practice in later times. A tradition in the Palestinian Talmud associated with Rabbi Abahu, from the end of the third century CE, informs us that fires were still being lit in the area of Lake Kinneret in Galilee, and that the same custom continued on the mountain top at Safed (*P.T. Rosh Hashshanah* II 58a).[82] Alon wondered if this continuation was out of nostalgia.[83] It is suggested here that if due consideration is given to the symbolic and ritual nature of the procedure for the sanctification of the new moon as a whole, from

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[78] Lipman 1970: 131.
[79] The description in the Mishnah implies that fire signals were maintained "deep into Syria" (Alon 1989: 238).
[80] Alon 1989:
[81] Herr 1976: 851.
[82] cf. Alon 1989: 238-39.
[83] Alon 1989: 239.

start to finish, then this continuity is explicable. The fire signals carried a ritual and symbolic significance that outstripped the logistical needs, as so many other aspects of this process did.[84]

Finally, returning to the issue of sabotage, as we have already noted it was, according to the Mishnaic authors, permissible for Jews to profane the sabbath in order to accompany witnesses with staves and protect them from ambush while on their journey to the calendar authorities (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:9). This reference might also refer to saboteurs of another kind: agents of opponents to either the calendar or Temple authorities, who were intent on attacking witnesses bearing testimony of the new moon and interrupting the sanctification of the new moon, and the calendar, in this way. It should, of course, be accepted that such action may also have been for more mundane reasons, such as simple highway robbery. It is known, admittedly, that such journeys were often fraught with danger at any time in the month or year, but from the two other instances of calendar sabotage already referred to above, it remains a reasonable possibility that such attacks were occasionally for the purpose of interrupting new moon ritual. It can be suggested, at least, that the authors of the Mishnah anticipated witnesses to the new moon to be occasionally attacked; however, sabotage of the new moon as the motivation for such attacks is not possible to prove in this instance.[85]

In order to appreciate the potential social and ideological significance of new moon sabotage, we should bear in mind the 'centripetal' focus which the process may have had for Jews in general. The first instance discussed here, the manipulation of the process by *minim*/Boethusians, evidences the importance, and at times controversy, of the new moon procedure. It also evidences the symbolic aspect of the procedure: witnesses were still interviewed and their testimony relied upon, even though there was a risk of interference. The best way to avoid this problem would

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[84] It might be added, in support of this, that the Mishnah goes into some detail regarding precisely how the flares were to be made, and the manner in which the were to be waved (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:3-4).

[85] The story of the Good Samaritan, in Luke 10:30, for example, illustrates the commonplace danger of robbery for those on journeys in Judea. This kind of danger is also frequently evidenced in the works of Josephus (see *BJ* II 254ff.). Josephus also provides contexts for conflict between Jews and Samaritans, for example, in *BJ* II 232f. These texts provide plausible background for commonplace danger for travellers and calendrical conflict discussed herein. The association of such danger with calendar is speculative, however.

have been for the court to rely only on the evidence of its own calendar experts whom, as suggested in the Mishnah, watched the western sky for the moon, and were ready to stand in as witnesses. This was not generally done, however, and there remained an effort to allow witnesses maximum satisfaction from their participation in the procedure, even in the event of their making the process cumbersome and inaccurate.

Regarding the apparent Samaritan sabotage, we can reconstruct its effects based on the points of importance of the sanctification of the new moon. If this procedure had a centripetal quality, and was a symbolic exercise in authority, in the Temple, or later for the rabbis, then this kind of sabotage would clearly have undermined that authority. Coordination at a basic level, such as with court cases, would have been affected such that a discrepancy of a day would affect testimony in courts. It is known, however, that although this would have been inconvenient, court procedure was developed in anticipation of such discrepancy when receiving testimony. Secondly, rules governing the sequence of intercalated and regular months would have been disrupted. While this could, eventually, have been corrected using the same rules, it would nevertheless have been harmful to precise calendation, especially at certain times of the year, particularly at the end of the year, at which time the year could be rendered too short by a day or two.

The most important effect of this kind of interference was probably religious and symbolic, however, especially when the Temple stood. It would have caused Jews at large to err in their religious obligations, and the significance of this should not be underestimated. If this action of sabotage were successful, then any festival, like Passover, or Yom Kippur, could be celebrated on the wrong day, and this eventuality was entirely at odds with the purpose of observing festivals on specific dates; a worldview which, of course, proliferates in the Hebrew Bible, and in Judaism. It was also the case that the day of the new moon was considered a moment in Jewish life which awaited sanctification, and although, in light of the sabotage at hand, this would not have affected the offering in the Temple on new moons, it would have affected Jewish liturgical response to it outside the Temple. We should recall that dates and times for festivals were seen as owing their origin to an act of creation, and in light of this, interference with the established method of reckoning those dates

amounted to interference with the very order of the cosmos, and damage to what was the ultimate reality for many Jews.

3. 'SPECIAL FOOD CONSUMPTION' ON NEW MOONS IN THE MISHNAH

In relation to earlier material, especially the various versions of 1 Samuel 20, it was noted that חֹדֶשׁ was associated with feasting, or *special food consumption events*. By 'special', events which were contrasted with regular subsistence eating, and associated with specific obligations or rites, were implied. Within this category, continuity of practice can be observed in the Mishnah; the text indeed refers to feasts held in direct connection with חֹדֶשׁ. The first reference here implies that meals were prepared in order to motivate witnesses to the new moon's appearance to come forward to the calendar authorities to give testimony:

> חָצֵר גְּדוֹלָה הָיְתָה בִירוּשָׁלַם, וּבֵית יַעְזֵק הָיְתָה נִקְרֵאת, וּלְשָׁם כָּל הָעֵדִים מִתְכַּנְּסִים, וּבֵית דִּין בּוֹדְקִין אוֹתָם שָׁם. וּסְעוּדוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת עוֹשִׂין לָהֶם בִּשְׁבִיל שֶׁיְּהוּ רְגִילִין לָבֹא.
>
> There is a large courtyard in Jerusalem, called Bet Yazek, to which all the witnesses gather. And there the court examines them. Now they prepare big meals for them, so that they make it a habit of coming (*M. Rosh Hashshanah* 2:5).

This practice, in Stern's view, was to encourage those witnesses who had come forward to do so again upon witnessing future new moons.[86] Herr, in relation to this passage, describes the event as a "festive meal" but does not elaborate on its nature or analyse it any further.[87] Unfortunately this reference itself gives us little other than the mere fact that special meals took place in the court of the calendar authorities on new moon days.[88] It does, however, allow one to link this festive eating directly with central authority in a centralised location, giving a clue as to its social function. Another passage gives further suggestion.

Neusner called Mishnah tractate *Sanhedrin* 8 a "sustained essay" concerned with the definition of "A rebellious and incorrigible son" (בֵּן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֶה) from Deuteronomy 21:20.[89] Specifically, the passage is concerned with deciding at what point a child becomes liable under such a description, and what kinds of actions

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[86] Stern 2001: 158.
[87] Herr 1976: 847. Herr did, however, refer to some later texts which contain more detailed descriptions of these new moon feasts, but dating from the Byzantine period.
[88] The Hebrew סְעוּדוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת at least implied "great" meal; something, seemingly, *out of the ordinary*.
[89] Neusner 1984: 202.

constitute the relevant category of unlawful behaviour. The section naturally falls into two areas of inquiry as it is taken up from Deuteronomy: first, the maturity of the youth in question; and secondly, the nature of his rebellion (*M. Sanherin* 8:1-3). Regarding a youth's liability, the authors are concerned with certain types of eating in this process, as the original text in Deuteronomy contains specific reference to being a glutton and a drunkard (Deuteronomy 22:20). The Mishnah, consequently, provides several examples, and a general guiding principle, of what does *not* constitute being a glutton. The principle is that food eaten "on an occasion which fulfilled a religious duty" does not count towards being judged as a glutton.[90] Thus, we engage here with what is self-evidently 'special food consumption': religious feasts. One such example of special food consumption is given:

אָכַל בְּעִבּוּר הַחֹדֶשׁ;

[if] he ate on the occasion of the intercalation of the month (*M. Sanhedrin* 8:2).

It is here suggested that if a youth of a certain age ate at a special meal on a new moon, he could not be judged a glutton based on his behaviour at these events in particular because he was fulfilling his religious duty. There are two implications: first, some kind of eating event was known by the authors of the Mishnah to be associated with new moons; secondly, by the summarising principle of the case, this eating event constituted the fulfilling of one's religious duty. The previous reference to the meals as special motivation for witnesses can thus be built on, and it can be stated more certainly that what is referred to is a religious feast; one at which the writers excuse what in other situations might be judged as excessive eating and drinking.

A question that needs to be addressed is this: does this refer only to new moons which were "intercalated" (i.e. new moons that were sanctified at the end of a thirty-day month, and thus about six new moons each year)? Or does it refer to the *process* of intercalation (i.e. the process of bearing testimony and the examination of witnesses by calendar authorities in order to make decisions with regard to

[90] Neusner 1984: 203.

intercalation, and therefore *every* new moon)? The verb used is עבור, which Jastrow translates as "intercalation, proclamation of a full month".[91]

There are two considerations which need to be accounted for here. First, it should be clear by now that if a month were actually declared "intercalated", if the outgoing month was deemed not to be twenty-nine, but thirty days long, then the time allowed for observance, which included a special food consumption event, would have been greater: a full day rather than, perhaps, an afternoon. The calendar court would have held session and awaited witnesses on the thirtieth day of a month regardless. If, on this day, the new moon was not sanctified, whether for astronomical or social reasons, the following day was arbitrarily considered to be חֹדֶשׁ. Therefore, a full day, evening to evening, would have been set aside for the appropriate subsequent ritual. During the time when the Temple stood, this was even longer: an afternoon, followed by a full day, both days having been considered holy. This situation, therefore, amounted to a more significant festival, and allowed more time for eating than if a month was considered regular (twenty-nine days), because, if the new moon were sanctified by the court on the thirtieth day, the congregation had only the rest of that same day, perhaps only an hour or two, before חֹדֶשׁ technically ended. This might suggest that *only* on new moons which were sanctified at the end of thirty-day months were there special meals; therefore approximately every second month.[92]

There is, however, a potential problem with this conclusion. The calendar court sat in session awaiting witnesses on the thirtieth day of a month, from that morning, every month. The decision to be made was simple: 'Is today only חֹדֶשׁ, or is it tomorrow (as well as today)?' Witnesses were therefore only actually required on the thirtieth day of any month, not on the thirty-first, because there was never a thirty-

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[91] Jastrow 1971: 1066. The verb can also refer to the intercalation of a year (i.e. the adding of a second Adar to the end of the year with the purpose of balancing the sequence of lunar months with the argricultural/solar year of 365¼ days), although this particular context refers clearly to the intercalation of a month. This term refers to making a month into a full month (מעיבור, "pregnant, full with child, intercalated", cf. Gandz 1949: 264), as such, the year gives birth to an extra month (in an intercalated year), and the month gives birth to an extra day in an intercalated (30-day) month. So בְּעִבּוּר הַחֹדֶשׁ, Gandz suggested, "...signified the duplication of the new moon day", *viz* the occurrence of the second festival day (Gandz 1949: 264, 273).

[92] The terminology might also reflect this. Gandz suggested that when the outgoing month was full (approximately every second month), both days of the new moon were called חדש מעובר, but that this term did not designate ordinary new moon days, which were called בזמנו (Gandz 1949: 273).

first of any month. That day was always declared the first or second of the new month. Never is there an examination of witnesses referred to on this second day following an intercalated month, in any of the sources; the process of examining witnesses is always presumed to be complete by nightfall on the thirtieth day of any month. Therefore, it seems that providing food on the *thirtieth* day was the important thing, because, whether or not a decision was made during this day, this was the day when the witnesses were present. It therefore seems that the above reference to eating on the intercalation of a month may refer to the *process* of decision making as to whether or not a month was intercalated (i.e. the sanctification of the new moon), not just to those specific months which were "intercalated" (i.e. thirty day months): every month, save that of Tishre, which had its special observance, was characterised by both the procedure of the calendar court and its associated special food consumption event.[93]

This detail finds parallel in Targum Jonathan of 1 Samuel 20:27, as observed by Jastrow,[94] in which the translator of the Targum presumes that the sequence of two days of feasting at Saul's new moon table is on account of that being an intercalated month: "*the intercalation of the second month*" (עבור ירחא תנינ). The translator may have approached the text of 1 Samuel 20 with the knowledge that two days of feasting were referred to therein. Leaving aside the original context of 1 Samuel 20, this would seem to have pointed to the outgoing month's having been thirty days, because, in contemporary calendrical practice, this was a situation in which anyone observed חֹדֶשׁ for two days.[95] The first day was always the thirtieth of the month, and the community waited to find out if the second day was also to be a new moon day, in which case this second day would have been observed as חֹדֶשׁ. One other feature of

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[93] Of course, we may, in the above two extracts, be presented with two different contexts. That meal which took place in the calendar court may have taken place quite separately from the one referred to in tractate *Sanhedrin*. In either case, there was, apparently, a food association with each new moon, and it is possible that a greater festivity was attached to new moons which occurred after intercalated months (lasting two days). It is also worth noting that the Mishnah, while often demonstrating an interest in noting changes which occurred regarding calendrical practices, and the exact purpose for these changes, does not explicitly refer to a change to this tradition. The authors merely state that this was the case.

[94] Jastrow 1971: 1066.

[95] This, however, is also the case in the later, contemporary Jewish calendar, in which months of thirty days, even though fixed in advance, are still followed by two new moon days (cf. Gandz 1949a: 157), so it is not clear, on this basis alone, that the section of Aramaic text in question is as early as the Mishnah's completion.

this text should be noted: there does not seem to be any problem for the author regarding the first day of feasting at Saul's table. Indeed aspects of the feast on the first day are referred to several times in the Targum without incident. It is *only* when a second day of feasting is referred to that the translator provides a reason: the intercalation of the outgoing month to thirty days. The Targum, therefore, may provide additional evidence for special food consumption events on every new moon, not just new moons following intercalated months, but the context of this extract is still unclear.[96]

It is clear from the evidence in the Mishnah, the Targum, and the evidence previously examined from Samuel and the book of Judith, that there were special feasts associated with חֹדֶשׁ, that these were associated with each new moon throughout the year, and that they were ritual occasions. Judith, we are told, broke her fast on new moons, and this is referred to in the context of her religious scrupulosity. When contextualising the eating event described as taking place in Beth Yazeq in Jerusalem by viewing it against the background of the procedure for sanctifying the new moon, these conclusions can be corroborated.[97] Although the meals are referred to as a motivator for witnesses to come forward and testify, it should be appreciated that, first, this was seen as a privileged religious duty, and secondly, the duty that was being carried out was, as has been concluded, in several ways redundant in a strictly practical sense. Regarding the latter conclusion, we know that many witnesses were encouraged to give testimony, but were not needed, and indeed that the presence of a great number of them was particularly cumbersome. It has also been concluded that the procedure itself was, in several ways, given precedence over strict astronomical calendation, and from this, that the procedure was structured to facilitate optimum satisfaction for the participating witnesses themselves. It is the background of these considerations that leads to the conclusion that the new moon feast, also, should be viewed in the symbolic sphere of the procedure for sanctifying new moons.

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[96] The reasoning behind the translator's suggestion that it was the intercalation of the *second* month is elusive, although it may well be related to the difficulty in the wording of the original Hebrew text which was examined in chapter 4.

[97] While it is not suggested these that these new moon feasts were at the very centre of Jewish life as a whole, I believe that Feldman's description of them as "snacks as an incentive" (Feldman 2004: 194) grossly understates their significance, and makes no attempt to meaningfully engage with their ritual and symbolic value.

4. LITURGY ON NEW MOONS

According to Jacob Neusner, "The celebration of the appearance of the new moon defines the Halakhic category, Rosh Hashanah",[98] and although, in this section of the present work, the main concern is not tractate *Rosh Hashshanah*, Neusner's idea of *celebration* (as opposed to technical calendar reckoning) is taken up. It has already been stated above that the new moon's importance in the Judaism of the Mishnah was not limited to merely fixing the appropriate times for other feasts, with no significance of its own. On the contrary, some of the liturgy which was to take place in synagogues on חֹדֶשׁ can be reconstructed. What was to be read was directly reminiscent of Temple ritual. Mishnah *Megillah* 3:4-6, in a section which describes Torah readings in synagogues, gives two details about synagogue liturgy on new moons:

לַכֹּל מַפְסִיקִין: לְרָאשֵׁי חֳדָשִׁים, לַחֲנֻכָּה, וְלַפּוּרִים, לַתַּעֲנִיּוֹת וְלַמַּעֲמָדוֹת וּלְיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים.

> At all times they suspend [interrupt the set order of the reading of the Torah]: for new moons, Hannukah, Purim, fasts, set delegations, and for the Day of Atonement (*M. Megillah* 3:4-6).

Regarding the precise content of the reading on new moons, the Mishnah states:

בְּרָאשֵׁי חֳדָשִׁים 'וּבְרָאשֵׁי חָדְשֵׁיכֶם'.

> On the new moons they read, *And on the first days of your months* [Numbers 28:11]

This implies that the list of sacrifices to be carried out in the Temple, Numbers 28:11-15, be read as part of the distinctive liturgy on new moons. Perrot described the occasion for the development of such synagogue reading:

> Now the question raised by such coincidence can only have been heard after the destruction of the Second Temple, at the time of the reorganization and unification of Judaism which featured in the second century of our era, at the time when the synagogues revived by adapting some usages of the former Temple.[99]

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[98] Neusner 1999: 56.
[99] Perrot 1988: 145.

According to Perrot, "feast-day readings" were formerly heard within the Temple precincts of Jerusalem, and liturgical texts such as in Numbers 28-9 were read in public there.[100] It was this liturgical reading, Perrot argued, that was taken over in the synagogue service.[101] The end of the Temple, along with the subsequent establishment of a continuous order of sabbath readings, in Perrot's opinion, occasioned the insertion of special synagogue readings into the Mishnah itself. The problem of overlap between readings on the sabbatical cycle, which was independent of the lunisolar cycle, and older liturgical readings on new moons and festivals of the luni-solar calendar was a relatively new one, on account of the shift of festive readings from Temple to synagogue, and thus the issue is given some resolution in the Mishnah.[102] Perrot thus argued that the practice of special liturgical readings referred to in *M. Megilla* 3 was of "great antiquity", but, due to the centring of these practices on the synagogue, and thus their subsequent juxtaposition with other reading cycles, an order of readings for overlapping occasions, such as sabbaths and new moons, and sabbaths and yearly festivals, was therefore established. We are, consequently, told in the Mishnah that on the occasion of חֹדֶשׁ, the regular reading cycle is interrupted by special reading. Perrot believed that the introduction of older liturgical reading practices from Numbers 28 into the synagogue happened necessarily after the destruction of the Temple, and that the Mishnah treatment is the result of this innovation: the reorientation of this practice from Temple to synagogue.[103]

It appears that in antiquity, as seems natural for such an occasion, חֹדֶשׁ had a Psalm associated with it, but the precise psalm is uncertain. Later Jewish tradition holds that this was Psalm 104.[104] This is plausible in light of the psalm's contents but

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[100] Perrot was not particularly interested in discussing new moons in this work, despite the fact that they are referred to in the texts that he quoted.

[101] Perrot 1988: 145-46.

[102] To avoid confusion, it should be noted here that when Perrot referred to readings on the sabbatical cycle, he did not specifically imply repetitive readings such as from Numbers 28, but rather referred to newly established cycles of *continuous* reading *right through* the Torah, week after week. This is referred to as *lectio continua.* The special readings on new moons and festivals referred to, are, however, apparently older, and were repetitive, month after month, and year after year, respectively, rather than continuous (Perrot 1988: 146).

[103] Perrot 1988: 146.

[104] cf. Elbogin 1993: 106; Idelsohn 1995: 160. The Babylonian Talmud refers to the "Psalm of the New Moon" (*B.T. Sukkah* 54b). Michael Chyutin suggests that the *Songs of Ascents* were at a certain time associated the beginnings of months (Chyutin 2002: 192, 231), although these are identified on account of his own division of the Qumran Book of Psalms in order to align it with a particular reading of the schematic calendar of the Qumran community.

cannot be known with certainty. If this were the case in the second century CE, then the practice may have been another example of Temple liturgy being realigned to a synagogue setting. While the antiquity of the association of Psalm 104 with חֹדֶשׁ must remain somewhat conjectural, certain aspects of the Psalm itself support the tradition's credibility. The Psalm is a praise of Yahweh, particularly in his role as creator and maintainer of the cosmos; he is praised for controlling the cosmic waters, for example, and for defeating Leviathan. There is, in several places, a focus on the heavens in the Psalm: Yahweh has created the heavens, is clothed in majesty and splendour, and wrapped in a robe of light (Psalm 104:1-2). Particularly, he is praised as creating the moon as a marker of festivals (Psalm 104:19).

In conclusion to this section: the focus of the חֹדֶשׁ liturgy in the synagogue was the Temple and its sacrifices, and perhaps also Yahweh's creation and ordering of the cosmos, of which the moon is an important part. The cult of Jerusalem is symbolically at the centre of the event. חֹדֶשׁ remained a sacrificial occasion, and retained the Temple as its symbolic centre; it orientated participants towards the ideal, symbolic Jerusalem. Importantly, the reading of Numbers 28:11-14 or indeed of Psalm 104 should not be seen as simple 'reminders' of what had once been; as retrospective glances at the ritual past. This kind of reading should be seen as *actual* Temple ritual itself, ritual which had formerly been carried out in association with the sacrificial cult, which was relocated from the sanctuary to the synagogue.

5. NEW MOONS IN THE MISHNAH'S UTOPIAN VISION

Finally, we turn to the new moon's role in the symbolic world of the rabbis in terms of its 'utopian' quality. In many of the Mishnaic texts thus far examined, much of the material regarding the sanctification of the new moon is somewhat pragmatic: we are told in numerous instances about how certain traditions used to be carried out when the Temple stood, and how these practices *changed* in response to historical, political, social, and religious circumstances. As such, the material thus far examined is not only considered as utopian, because, *unlike* many other parts of the Mishnah, the writers acknowledge the move away from Jerusalem, and the specific need for *change* in response to new circumstances (even if much of the historical accuracy of the information raises problems of its own). The extracts, as we have seen, are not so much a utopian retrospective, describing the regular function of a perfect Temple cult, as are texts, for example, which discuss the laws of the then unavailable altar. The texts examined thus far bear instructions on how certain Temple practices should be carried *away* from the Temple. They are pragmatic, because, in response to the loss of the Temple, certain ancillary practices, which had been fundamental during Temple times, as also noted, are acknowledged to have been discontinued by the *rabbis themselves*, when they were deemed no longer necessary.[105]

One of the features of the Mishnah, and of several other Tannaitic and Amoraic texts, is its detailed treatment of the Temple cult of Jerusalem. Much of the purpose of the Mishnah's rabbis, in Neusner's view, was to retain the cult of Jerusalem as the focus of Jewish consciousness, despite the destruction of the Temple, and the inaccessibility of the Temple site.[106] It is in this context that two final Mishnaic references to new moon ritual are looked at. For both, the ritual described cannot have been carried out in a second century context, and so they attest to the place of חֹדֶשׁ in the rabbi's symbolic world; in their transmission and study of the old cult of 'Israel' in its minute detail.

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[105] We are reminded of the discontinuation of the violation of sabbaths to bring testimony of the new moon to the court, the relaxation of rules regarding the times when witnesses could be examined, and the apparently unproblematic move of the locus of the ritual described from Jerusalem to Yavneh. Although probably not the 'full truth', these are practical measures, not utopian ones.

[106] Neusner 1979: 147. The sweeping ban on Jews from entering Jerusalem, however, may have been exaggerated, as there is a certain amount of evidence that Jews continued to visit Jerusalem occasionally at least. The full extent of this, however, is uncertain (cf. for example Eliav 2003: 55f.).

According to Neusner, Mishnah *Zebahim* chapter 10 has the purpose of employing a "large construction of rules, handsomely articulated" to make a single point. The point, in his words, is: "...that which is more constant than its fellow takes precedence in the sacrificial order and in eating".[107] The problem which this chapter addresses is quite straightforward: Considering that Numbers 28-9 lists sacrifices to be offered daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly, it naturally transpires that some of these occasions will overlap, such that, obviously, for every special occasion in the cult such as sabbaths or new moons, the ordinary daily offerings must also be offered. Similarly, because the sabbath offerings are on a seven day cycle, independent from the luni-solar rhythm of the monthly and yearly offerings, they could quite conceivably overlap with offerings on any other cultic occasion. The new year, of course, is also a new moon, and the offerings for both occasions, therefore, must be prepared and offered that day. The problem with this potentially complicated situation is actually quite simple as presented by the Mishnah: on the occasion of any of these overlaps, which offerings should be offered first? The answer provided is: whichever is a more frequent offering should be offered first:

> הַתְּמִידִים קוֹדְמִין לַמּוּסָפִין, מוּסְפֵי שַׁבָּת קוֹדְמִין לְמוּסְפֵי רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ, מוּסְפֵי רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ קוֹדְמִין לְמוּסְפֵי רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה,
>
> The continual offerings [daily whole offerings] take precedence over additional offerings. The additional offerings of the Sabbath take precedence over the additional offerings of the new moon. The additional offerings of the new moon take precedence over the additional offerings of the New Year [which also is a new moon] (*M.Zebahim* 10:1).

This Mishnah is related directly by its authors to Numbers 28:23, which intends to solve the problem with the instruction to offer sacrifices on sabbaths, new moons, and yearly festivals in addition to the daily offering, but the author of Numbers does not complete the discussion, as the Mishnah here does. The significance of the new moon in particular in this text is not easily assessed beyond what we already know. It is suggested here that the text evidences the presence of the new moon in the symbolic world, and especially in the utopian Jerusalem cult, of the Mishnaic authors.

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[107] Neusner 1978: 181.

Tractate *Shabuot* contains a discussion similarly utopian in quality, which also demonstrates the presence of new moon ritual in the symbolic world of the rabbis. *M. Shabuot* 1:3-5 is a discussion on the goats offered as atonement sacrifices on new moons, festivals, and the Day of Atonement (cf. Chapter 3, Part 2 herein). It should be recalled that this issue, like the above one, also arises from instructions in Numbers 28-9 regarding offerings to be made in the cult. The question addressed is: what kind of sin do the goats atone for on each type of occasion, and, if the power of atonement is different on different occasions, then can the same goat, theoretically, be offered up on two different types of occasion? It emerges from the discussion, especially in traditions attributed to R. Simeon b. Judah, that goats offered on new moons effect atonement for "...a clean person who has eaten something unclean" (*M. Shabuot* 1:5).[108] The consensus also emerges that the same goats, theoretically, can be offered up on different types of occasions because, as also attributed to Simeon b. Judah:

כֻּלָּן בָּאִין לְכַפֵּר עַל טֻמְאַת מִקְדָּשׁ וְקָדָשָׁיו.

> "All of them are offered up to effect atonement for imparting uncleanness to the sanctuary and its Holy Things." (*M. Shabuot* 1:5)

This stresses the role of the new moon, during the time when the Temple stood, in the program of atonement of 'Israel' in the sanctuary: חֹדֶשׁ had been the most regular source of atonement for the inadvertent sins of the people of Israel as a whole in the Temple, and this is, indeed, indicated to have been the case since the early Second Temple period, in Numbers 28.[109] This also reminds us of one of the major issues which followed the Temple's destruction in 70 CE, and was compounded by the events in the 130s: this source of atonement was no longer accessible. This brings us to the discussion of the 'utopian' nature of a large proportion of the Mishnah, and to its purpose.

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[108] We should note, in reference to this view, that if the goat offered on the new moon has the capacity to atone for those who unintentionally ate unclean food, then it effectively has the role of theologically retaining Jews as members of the people of Israel. The effect of eating unclean foods is a blurring of the separation between Israelites and gentiles (cf. Houston 1993: 13), and the goat atones for this, restoring the status of God's people on all Israelites.

[109] See Chapter 3, Part 2.

In the Mishnah, in Neusner's view, "*Cosmic centre in words is made utopia*".[110] With the Temple destroyed, and the Temple site no longer available, knowledge of it could eventually theoretically be disseminated throughout Jewish society in a highly detailed, codified form: the tractates of the Mishnah. In this context, the new moon remains part of the cultic thought and symbol world of Jews, and, in fact, knowledge of the minute details of it, heretofore restricted to the circles of the priests, is now potentially available.[111] While it has been seen that the rabbis were acutely interested in the procedure for reckoning new months, and sanctifying חֹדֶשׁ, from a pragmatic point of view, this knowledge can now be complemented with the realisation that not only was it the case that rabbis sought to accurately reckon new moons, but that new moons were very much part of the symbolic world and collective memory of rabbinic circles.[112] It will be concluded that while חֹדֶשׁ exhibits a 'centripetal' function in ancient Jewish society, expressed in the Mishnah as particularly focussed around rabbinic circles, it was also an event through which the ritual of the Temple was constantly recalled, and in which the sacrificial program for new moons was to remain codified in memory and liturgy. The perceived community of Israel continued to reckon new moons and sanctify them as had been done in previous times, the Mishnah preserved ideas and rules governing certain particulars of the sacrificial program which had previously been carried out in the Temple, and, importantly, this aspect was enshrined in Jewish liturgy in the tradition which the Mishnah preserves of interrupting the regular reading to read out the new moon's sacrificial instructions, as had previously been done in the Temple.

It now seems clear that for the authors of the Mishnah, חֹדֶשׁ was a Temple-orientated event which recalled several aspects of the Temple's ritual. These were uniquely manifested in practice, through relaying information on the new moon's appearance and investing the calendar court with authority; the sacrificial background, down to the very animals sacrificed, was enshrined in liturgy.

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[110] Neusner 1979: 152.

[111] At least it was available to those who had access to the Mishnah.

[112] Neusner suggested that, like for the later rabbis, the authors of the Mishnah may have held the idea that by studying the procedures and rules of sacrifice, "…it is as if one has made a sacrifice". He did state that this was only made expressly clear in later rabbinic writings, but suggested that it should at least be considered in relation to the Mishnah as well (Neusner 1979: 146 n. 17).

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The goal of the ritual of חֹדֶשׁ described in Mishnah tractate *Rosh Hashshanah* (Part 1 of this Chapter), and its climax, is its sanctification. A moment of sanctification occurs in heaven, at the time of the new moon, and the object was to appropriately sanctify that moment on earth. Regarding sanctification in the Mishnah, Neusner argued:

> Sanctification means two things: First, distinguishing Israel is all its dimensions from the world in all its ways; second, establishing stability, order, regularity, predictability, and reliability of Israel at moments and in contexts of danger. Danger means irregularity, uncertainty, and betrayal.[113]

Regarding this analysis, Neusner argued that "neutral realms" were a focus for the Mishnah, particularly in reference to sanctification:

> Will and deed constitute those actors of creation that work upon neutral realms, subject to either sanctification or uncleanness. These are the Temple and table, the field and family, the altar and hearth, woman, time, space transactions in the material world and in the above world as well.[114]

Israel, in the symbolic world of the rabbis, would appear to pass through such a "neutral realm" at the time of the new moon. The new moon is a sanctified moment which the community passes through, but the exact moment of sanctification is unpredictable, and therefore danger surrounds it. By its very nature it is characterised by irregularity and uncertainty. The community passes through a period of danger, not just from the uncertainty of lunar time, but from outside interference to it as well (as seen in Part 2 herein). The process of sanctifying the new moon is a ritual for transforming time from dangerous and uncertain time into sanctified time. Interestingly, it is not the time *before* the new moon, *viz* the time of the moon's obscuration from earth, that is the source of danger, but that very time *of* the new moon itself, prompting some agreement with Neusner's location of potential danger and sanctification in the *same* "neutral realm"; the same *moment*. The time of danger lasts from the moment on the evening of the twenty-ninth day of a month, precisely

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[113] Neusner 1991: 21-22.
[114] Neusner 1991: 25.

the time from which the new moon may potentially have appeared, to the moment of its sanctification by the court. The purpose of this sanctification, as seen, was also to coordinate the liturgical life of Israel, every month, and particularly months during which major festivals were to take place. The sanctification of the new moon, in this worldview, was fundamental to the ritual life of Jews as a whole, and therefore also played a role in "...distinguishing Israel is all its dimensions from the world in all its ways".[115] In doing so, individual Jews' membership to 'Israel' was also seen to have been regularly maintained by the symbolism of the goat sacrificed as sin offering, atoning for the inadvertent consumption of unclean food, and maintaining status as members of the covenant community. It can be suggested that, based on the old tradition of the goat offering, the liturgical reading of the sacrifices on new moons in the synagogue continued this tradition in early rabbinic Judaism. Upon the new moon offerings, according to this tradition, the goat therefore dispels danger and uncleanness in a time of uncertainty, and also atones for inadvertent uncleanness which is incurred over the outgoing month as a whole.

In this chapter, several practices which evidence the importance placed in the exact reckoning of each new moon throughout the year by the rabbis, and by the Jerusalem authorities as described by the rabbis, have been observed. While exact astronomical calendation was the objective, it was noted that in several instances the procedures of the court were prioritised over it in order for the ritual to be satisfactorily completed. Such priorities existed, it is argued, because the role of the court in calendar reckoning was socially and symbolically important, for the court and for the participants. Much of the ritual, it has been shown, was unnecessary from an astronomical point of view. It is therefore argued, after Gedalyahu Alon, that calendation, and especially the sanctification, was an important symbolic exercise in authority by the court, and played a potentially "centripetal" role in uniting Jews in Palestine and in the Diaspora practically and symbolically around a 'national' and religious centre, when the Temple stood, and into rabbinic times.[116] Evidence for liturgy on new moons, connecting the event with Temple ritual and cosmology has been viewed, and the presence of new moon ritual in the symbolic 'utopian' world of the Mishnaic authors has been noted.

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[115] Neusner 1991: 21-22.
[116] cf. Alon 1989: 237.

Regarding the Mishnah's procedure for sanctifying new moons and its potential continuity with that of earlier times, Neusner commented on the style and content of Mishnah Rosh Hashshanah:

> The procedures for declaring the new month are worked out mainly in narrative style, those of the *shofar*, in analytical. But neither does much more than present some secondary explanations for how thing are done. There is no important and sustainedly developed theme or idea which is essentially independent from Scripture. Even though there are many facts which do not emerge from scripture, the tractate in its fundamental character depends upon Scripture, which it serves as a complement.[117]

While the writers of the Mishnah present us with an extraordinary amount of detail regarding this procedure, especially in comparison to some of the other sources examined thus far in this thesis, there are many areas of uncertainty which remain a hindrance to the full appreciation of the social significance of this Mishnaic system. Perhaps the most difficult issue is in assessing how relevant the Mishnaic system for sanctifying the new moon was to Jews outside of Israel-Palestine, or indeed even outside rabbinic circles. Problems relate to how broadly representative rabbinic views are in relation to their Jewish contemporaries, and how representative they are in relation to previous times; how historically accurate their retrospectives are.[118]

In relation to this problem there are various significant issues to take into consideration. If evidence for Jewish calendation outside the contexts of Qumran and *The Book of Jubilees* is examined, it is generally accepted that the Jewish calendar was lunar based.[119] Presuming that one follows the consensus view that the *schematic* calendar of *Jubilees* was not commonly employed,[120] and even when it was, only in limited contexts, three observations can be made:

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[117] Neusner 1988: 187.

[118] On the former point, Hezser suggests that rabbinic Judaism cannot be seen to be representative of Judaism as such (2005: 352). The historical accuracy of rabbinic retrospectives has been in doubt for some time (cf. Neusner 1980: 177-85). This doubt has become known as the 'hermeneutics of suspicion', as opposed to the 'hermeneutics of goodwill' (cf. Feldman 2004: 173-176; Schwartz 2001: 6).

[119] See, for example, Psalm 104:19; Ben Sira 43:6-8; Philo *Spec. Leg* II 41, 140ff.; Josephus *AJ* III 248; *AJ* IV 78; *1 Enoch* 73:4.

[120] cf. Stern 2001: 11.

1. Much of the remaining evidence for Jewish calendars, both in Israel-Palestine and Diaspora contexts, suggest a lunar, or luni-solar calendar based on the phases of the moon, with the new moon as one of its focal points.
2. Astronomical knowledge in relation to the moon, and particularly the appearance of the new moon, faced the same problems as later rabbinic times. Aside from a fundamental overhaul of calendrical reckoning such as the one that may have taken place at Qumran, no *decisive* solutions to the problem of predicting the *new moon* seem to have been developed between the monarchic period of Israel and Judah and the time of the Mishnah.[121]
3. Two of the sources examined in Chapter 7 of the present work provide some external evidence for the empirical sighting of the moon by Jews in order to reckon cultic times in near contemporary, although polemical, sources: the *Epistle to Diognetus* IV 1-5, and the *Kerygma of Peter* (Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* VI 5 41:1-3).
In light of these three considerations it is suggested that the logistics represented in the Mishnaic calendar described above were similar in other Jewish contexts, and in at least some earlier contexts.[122] It is therefore suggested that the system described in the Mishnah is *broadly* representative of that employed in other Jewish contexts contemporary to the Mishnah, and of earlier Jewish practice.[123] Where Jewish communities were located, those communities often seem to have needed to establish consensus regarding their new moons, and therefore, the sanctification of the new moon had a similar effect, if even at a more limited, local level. Whether this bound communities together at a local or pan-Jewish level is more difficult to prove.

If a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' were to be adopted in relation to the above rabbinic discussions on the new moon (that is, if we were to cast doubt on the text's reliability), what can be said? It appears, at least, that the manner of lunar/luni-solar calendation described in the Mishnah was not exclusive to the rabbis, and so it is conceivable that this aspect of the discussion is not necessarily a purely rabbinic

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[121] cf. Stern 2001: 102.
[122] In support of the antiquity of this kind of system, we can also view neo-Assyrian evidence for the same kind of solution to the same problems (cf. Wacholder and Weisberg 1971: 227-42). The presence of witnesses to the new moon every month is demonstrated in this article to have been similarly employed, and the system similarly structured, in cuneiform and rabbinic documents.
[123] As noted, this has already been suggested, for example, by Stern 2001: 163; Bickerman 1984: 64; Herr 1976: 846.

creation, but rather a broader Jewish method of keeping time and arranging festivals and holy days. If some suspicion is to be cast on the historical reliability of the Mishnaic description, then perhaps it should be focussed first on the mono-centricity of the rabbinic account, and then on the fact that the depicted centre is the *rabbinic court* itself. It is, afterall, unlikely that there was a single, centralised Jewish authority in the ancient world around which all Jewish legal and religious life revolved. Furthermore, there are several reasons to believe that the rabbinic court as described in the Mishnah was not a major Jewish authority at the time of the Mishnah's composition. The idea that *only* the rabbinic court was to declare a month as sanctified to the exclusion of other authorities is difficult to sustain for logistical reasons. It is very likely, especially in Diaspora contexts, that local Jewish authorities made such decisions, as it would have been virtually impossible to rely on a Palestinian court to determine the date of the new moon for Jews who lived in Berenike, for example.

It is suggested here that local, non-rabbinic Jewish authority was more likely to have been invoked in Diaspora contexts when new moons were declared. The rabbinic account of the sanctification of the new moon is likely to have been written partly as an effort by the sages to depict the rabbinic court at the centre of Jewish life, in order to promote rabbinic authority. The depicted continuity with the court of the Sanhedrin is another aspect of this assertion. There were, after all, other Jewish authorities that could well have retained their power and influence from the times when the Temple stood,[124] and it is therefore difficult to imagine a priestly court transferring smoothly and directly to a non-priestly one.

A later rabbinic tradition goes so far as to claim that God respects the decision of the rabbinic court with regard to the declaration of the new moon, the idea being

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[124] It has been acknowledged that priestly groups continued to exert influence over Jewish communities well after 70 CE. As Eliav states, "The sanctuary in Jerusalem and the elements associated with it – its paraphernalia, sacrifices, and priests – did not evaporate from Jewish experience of the Roman and Byzantine periods but maintained great significance for numerous facets of life" (Eliav 2003: 111). There may even be a reflection of such rivalry in the reference to the Boethusians (a presumed priestly group, cf. Smallwood 1962: 14-34), in the Tosefta (*T. Rosh Hashshanah* 1:15; cf. Part 2 herein). According to Alon, "Even in the post-Destruction years, the traditional status of the priests still maintained a hold over considerable segments of the people; nor did the *kohanim* themselves hesitate to demand their age-old privileges" (Alon 1989: 101, 109).

that such decisions rest more with the rabbinic court than they do with God.[125] It is tempting to view this assertion as a reaction to the claims of contemporaries, perhaps priestly groups, regarding their own calendrical authority.

In terms of commonalities with other contexts examined in this thesis, it is clear that the symbolism of חֹדֶשׁ in the rabbinic account continued to be orientated towards Jerusalem, and belonging to the Jewish nation as a whole, to 'Israel'. Such rabbinic writing is essentially a conception of 'Israel' albeit a new one, with its own peculiarities.[126] It continues to demonstrate the intersubjective nature of such perceived groups, and the possible variety of their conceptualisation and expression.

[125] cf. Gandz 1950: 261; *T. Rosh Hashshanah* 1.11-12.

[126] Neusner argued that "A Judaism, that is, a Judaic system, derives from and focuses upon a social entity, a group of Jews who (in their minds at least) constitute not *an* Israel but *Israel*" (Neusner 1994: 41). While I would prefer not to speak in terms of "a Judaism", but rather just Judaism with a multitude of varieties, Neusner does touch upon the cognitive, *conceptual* nature of 'Israel' for the rabbis, which is a useful insight.

Conclusions

Throughout this thesis I have attempted to present all of the sources for the feast of the new moon (חֹדֶשׁ) from monarchic Israel and Judah to the close of the second century CE. The principal contribution of this work has been the collection, presentation, and systematic study of these sources, as well as an assessment of their treatment in scholarship to date. Is is concluded that previous scholarly treatment of the feast has been limited, and has thus not sufficiently or systematically dealt with the history and significance of the feast in the Hebrew Bible, or in ancient Jewish history. The present work is the first, to the author's knowledge, to substantially study the feast in this way.

The broad chronological parameters of the present work have been dictated by a number of factors. First, after reviewing some ancient Near Eastern parallels, I have attempted to identify the earliest context in which the feast's observance can be attested with any certainty. The eighth century BCE has been observed to be an era which, traditionally, was associated with the feast's observance. While we cannot be absolutely certain about this early date, חֹדֶשׁ nevertheless appears reasonably well attested in texts describing the early years of the monarchies of Israel and Judah. Observance is associated with Saul's court, with Elisha in the ninth century, and with three separate prophetic works from the eighth century. Furthermore, the references from Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah bear certain commonalities, particularly in their condemnation of cult practices, in which context the new moon is referred to. This condemnation was observed not to have been indicative of a fundamentally problematic status of the new moon in Israel and Judah at this time, but rather of the opposite: its centrality in the northern and southern cults. An early date is also suggested by the feast's association with older sacrificial forms, such as sacrificial meals. The great significance that the feast has in the first surviving sacrificial codes in which its sacrificial commodities are attested (Ezekiel 46 and Numbers 28-29) suggests a certain antiquity as well. It has also been shown that there is insufficient reason or evidence to posit a problematic association with חֹדֶשׁ from the point of view of the authors of the earlier 'festival codes', as Wellhausen and his successors did. The simplest explanation for the feast's importance from early post-exilic times, as exhibited in Numbers 28:11-15, is that it had *previously* been an important feast, just as the reviewed evidence suggests. I have ended this 'history' with an examination of

the Mishnaic evidence for חֹדֶשׁ, or רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ, because of the unique treatment of the new moon therein, the supplementary information which the text provides, and also because of the text's influence on scholarly reconstruction of earlier Israelite and Jewish calendars.[1] The present work has been most interested in the social role of the feast of חֹדֶשׁ during the times when the Yahwistic Temple in Jerusalem stood, and although the Mishnah owes much of its development and its final form precisely to a period when the Temple did not stand, I have reviewed it herein because of its deep reflection on the place of the Jerusalem Temple in the life, the thought world, and the symbolic world of Jews and in the history of 'Israel', as it is conceived by the Mishnaic authors.

The ritual action associated with חֹדֶשׁ over these centuries, the symbolic content of the feast where possible, and the assumed worldview behind it, have been reviewed. It has also been concluded that in the symbolism associated with the feast and its referents are centrally important conceptions, institutions (or indeed conceptions of them) and beliefs of Jewish life and religion: Yahweh's ordering activity in creation, Temple and the sacrificial cult, and the perception of a singular 'Israel' offering sacrifices to Yahweh in order to secure her covenantal relationship with him. Since the ongoing covenant relationship with Yahweh was so fundamental to Israel's constitution and identity, it is therefore concluded that חֹדֶשׁ, with the above concerns, was also fundamental to Israel's constitution and identity. Although we often encounter an idealised picture of the feast and its role in an idealised Israel, there are three reasons for suggesting that the feast was not exclusively in the realm of ideology, but was, in fact, an aspect of actual ritual practice. First, continuity of references across such a broad expanse of time, as well consistency regarding the feast's main features, makes it unlikely that the festival was confined to the realm of ideology or nostalgia. Secondly, when the new moon is referred to, this is often done so in an incidental and 'matter-of-fact' manner. This incidental manner is indicative of a festival which was not born out of polemic or apologetic, but was normal, and in most cases it appears that readers are expected to treat the new moon as such: a normal, familiar event. Thirdly, when, in the first and second centuries CE, Jewish

[1] For examples of how the Mishnah's treatment influences scholarly reconstruction of first century CE calendrical practice, see Herr 1977: 834-864; Schurer 1973: 588-91.

ritual becomes the subject of discourse between Christians and Jews, Christians readily refer to and describe aspects of new moon observance, and, as has been shown in Chapter 7, the details often broadly reflect those drawn from Jewish sources.

Although the feast's observance can be posited for quite an early period, its specific worldview and symbolism is known mainly from the early Persian period onwards. It has been found in many of the sources that the perceived sacrificing party is Israel. While Israel is a difficult concept to work with, due to its constantly changing ideological and symbolic significance (not to mention the constant changes that affected those individuals who perceived themselves to belong to Israel), and its intersubjectivity in ancient forms of Judaism, it is concluded that it was precisely in the context of ritual, and especially events such as חֹדֶשׁ, where Israel was *actualised.* The ritual, its purpose, and its referents, resulted in the periodic concrete realisation and expression of Israel in an ideal, holy state (in response to the sanctified nature of the new moon day), in the social worlds of the ritual participants. This is an important factor for hypothesising the relationship with the event and ordinary spheres of life, especially in the Jewish Diaspora. I acknowledge that Jews, or anybody else for that matter, operated with a number of *horizons* of belonging or identity. A single person's identity suggests a certain fluidity between several, more fixed, horizons: family, clan, village, city, religious, or 'national', for example. These are referred to as 'horizons' here because they are considered from the perspective of the individual relating to a perceived larger group (cf. Chapter 2). I suggest that participating in חֹדֶשׁ ritual had the potential to return Jews to an *Israelite* identity on a monthly basis, by the actualisation of that concept into concrete expression: the symbolic action at חֹדֶשׁ was often perceived to have been carried out by members of 'Israel', as has been seen throughout many of the sources.

In this actualisation is the potential of ritual to symbolise belonging to a certain 'group', or, I would prefer, feeling of belonging or orientation towards *a perceived community* (cf. Chapter 2). In Hosea, for example, Israel is a faithless wife, whose sacrifices have become an offence to Yahweh. This would seem to be an earlier conception of Israel with a northern focus, but one which was nevertheless associated with Yahweh. In the early Persian period, the conception of Israel as a

whole people being the sacrificer becomes more and more clearly expressed. Moreover, this was probably done to the exclusion of others who would previously have felt themselves constituting that community, or part of it. At Qumran, a distinct conception of Israel also emerges, which is connected with the observance of the feast, particularly in the War Scroll (1QM II, lines 3-4; cf. Chapter 5, Part 3). A different conception of Israel again emerges in the New Testament contexts, wherein the new moon is among several practices which specifically become problematic (Chapter 6). It was witnessed in relation to four second century Christian sources that the new moon was seen as something to be attached to Jews as 'normative literary opponents', as the early church was defined in contradistinction to these opponents (Chapter 7). Here too, in some cases, 'Israel' is 'up for grabs', particularly in the writings of Justin Martyr (cf. Part 2). Finally, it was shown in relation to the Mishnah that Israel was again a concern, and again, we were presented with a picture of Israel which was widely acknowledged to correspond with reality quite problematically (cf. Chapter 8). The new moon, however, is depicted as a monthly centripetal force which draws Israel around first, the court of the Sanhedrin, and secondly, around the rabbinic Beth Din.

Not only do all of the above associations of Israel, or indeed Judaism or Christianity, differ considerably from one another, but in each case it is acknowledged that the conception has a problematic relationship with social reality. In each case where Israel is the subject, we encounter a perceived ideological entity, rather than an ontological reality. This is inevitable given the intersubjective nature of any such conception.[2] This entity, however, is seen (with the exception of the Christian conceptions of Israel) as a body that acts on new moons. New moon observance, it seems, gave Israel concrete expression. Bonds towards immediate surrounding individuals could be acknowledged through participation in special meals, for example (cf. Chapter 4, Part 1), or in shared participation in sacrificial ritual (Chapter 3). Scholars following Durkheim variously adapted his idea of an effervescent social environment to posit the creation and maintenance of 'solidarity' during ritual.[3] Feasting, for example, was seen to play an important role in the "*creation and*

[2] cf. Stevenson 2006: 277.
[3] For example Kertzer 1988.

maintenance of important social relationships".[4] In the context of ritual, these bonds could also be felt towards the symbolically represented conception of a broader, more elusive community: Israel, the collective tradition to which ritual participants could be brought into continuity (after Peter Berger, cf. Chapter 2), and which could therefore be actualised in the context of the ritual. It is therefore conceivable that the eating habits of Judith, for example, on the new moon are connected with this perceived community (cf. Chapter 4, Part 1). If the ritual was of Israel, then the participant could engage with a sense of belonging to Israel by participating in it.

While participation in חֹדֶשׁ ritual had the potential to indicate one's membership of a Jewish community, and therefore to 'Israel', or conversely indicate non-membership (as was one of the issues in the New Testament contexts in Chapter 6, and certainly for the second century Christian writers in Chapter 7), I prefer not to view the feast as a 'badge of identity', simply because that term probably oversimplifies the complex position and function of a religious festival in any society. It also ignores the central content of the feast, which was not primarily concerned with the perceptions of 'others' (so a 'badge' on display), but was rather more inwardly focussed. The feast of חֹדֶשׁ was in numerous ways fundamentally concerned with social cohesion, integration, and the actualisation of Israel before Yahweh, in the right way, in response to the sanctified nature of the new moon day in Yahweh's creation (I realise that this pertains *securely* only to Second Temple times). As such, I suggest that socially, חֹדֶשׁ functioned first in the creation and maintenance of social cohesion, and secondly as a *node of identity discourse*. The latter description is suggested because, in certain contexts, חֹדֶשׁ certainly emerges as a *key* factor, and *focus*, in discussion concerning group identity; it seems to have been, especially in the contexts discussed in Chapter 7, *a focal point of distinctiveness*, as Dunn suggested certain matters of Jewish law were.[5] I agree with Dunn to a large extent. The problem with this terminology is, however, that it assumes *distinctiveness*. While distinctiveness is surely often a factor which causes certain beliefs, formations, or practices to emerge to a discursive forum in inter-cultural situations, I do not believe that distinctiveness is necessarily the only reason for this to happen. For example, have not many scholars

[4] Hayden 2001: 30.
[5] Dunn 1991: 28.

suggested that *the* distinction for Jewish males is and was circumcision? And yet, in *many* contexts in which Jews engaged with others, circumcision was *not exclusive to Jews*. This, of course, does not mean that circumcision, for example, was not important in male Jewish identity discourse, or that it emerged repeatedly in relation to the position of Jews and their culture in relation to, vis-à-vis, others. The same situation can be seen in ancient חֹדֶשׁ observance. Although most likely bearing its own peculiarities from one Jewish community to another, new moon observance of some kind, like circumcision, is acknowledged to have been a feature of non-Jewish societies as well (cf. Philo, *De Decalogo* 96, for example). I therefore conclude that in certain situations, the Jewish new moon festival functioned as a *node of identity discourse*. Such situations can be detected especially in relation to emergent Christianity, such as is evident from the Epistle to the Colossians and that to the Galatians (cf. Chapter 6), or especially in the four second century Christian works examined in Chapter 7. The feast, however, probably did not *always, or necessarily,* play this role in identity discourse. The emergence of חֹדֶשׁ to this role was probably rather dictated by the discursive needs of each context, and again in Philo's context these needs do not always seem to have called upon חֹדֶשׁ in particular.[6] In other situations, however, חֹדֶשׁ was a central node of identity discourse, particularly in relation to the self-identification of early Christians. The feast played this role in quite distinct ways in Berenike, and at Colossae and Galatia as mentioned. But this role was only secondary to the feast's function in the *actualisation* and *momentary concretization* of the concept of 'Israel', which was not dependent on the needs of the inter-cultural context, but was the long term, fundamental concern of the ritual. The socially cohesive character is apparent in the feast's association with the calendar, which was ultimately concerned with the coordination of the social, religious, agricultural, and judicial spheres.[7] The coordination of the majority of Jewish society in Israel-Palestine, and much of that aspect of social and religious life that was distinctively Jewish in the Diaspora, was focussed on the new moon. This can be seen particularly in the Mishnah, wherein חֹדֶשׁ is depicted as a centripetal force, focussed on the Temple and subsequent rabbinic authorities. It was suggested that the reason

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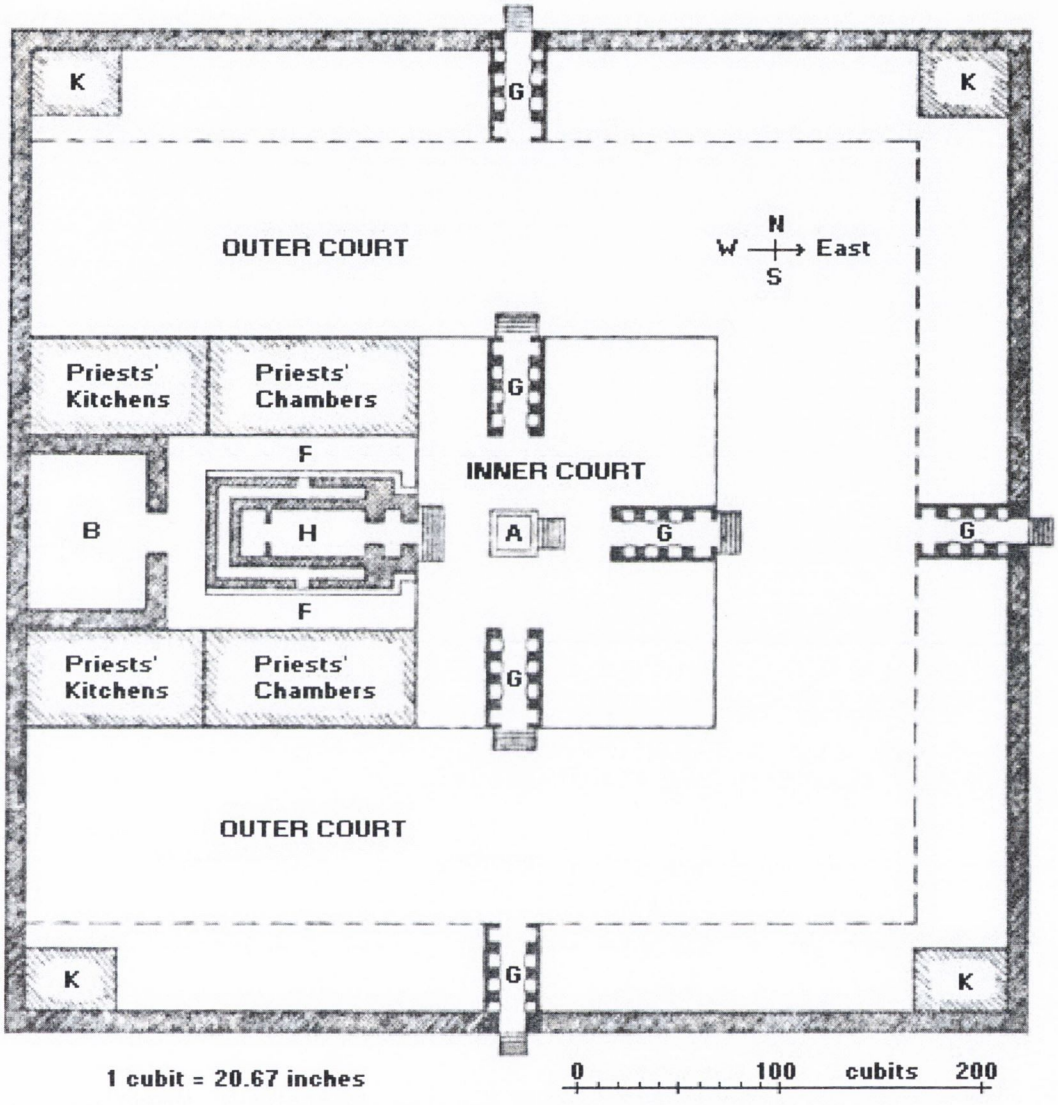
[6] In that particular instance Philo prefers to emphasise the role of the sabbath in the expression of Jewish identity.

[7] As Stern argues, calendar reckoning is "fundamental to social interaction and communal life" (Stern 2001: v).

why the rabbis so depict the new moon was that they intended to depict themselves at the centre of Jewish life, and as such, decisions about the new moon's sanctification are said to have been taken almost exclusively by their court in post-70 CE times. It is more likely that wherever the new moon was a central feature in Jewish calendar reckoning, local authority was invoked. That is not to say that the new moon was merely the cause of a multi-centric dispersion of authority or foci of allegiance and identity. While it certainly was the case that there were many centres of Jewish authority, from Berenike, to Rome, to Asia Minor, to Babylonia, it is suggested that the *symbolic* orientation of the feast facilitated a much broader concept of community than that of the immediate local level, and that the symbolism associated this conception with the moment of ritual: Israel.

FIGURE 1: RECONSTRUCTED PLAN OF THE SANCTUARY FROM EZEKIEL 40-48

From: Van der Nat, A. (2005) http://homepages.luc.edu/~avande1, (last consulted 7 September 2007), based on *New Bible Dictionary*, Eerdman's, 1962.



H. THE HOLY PLACE; A. ALTAR; G. GATEHOUSES; K. KITCHENS;
B. BUILDING, c.f. Ezek. xli,12; F. THE 'FREE SPACE' c.f. Ezek. xli, 9-11.

APPENDIX 1: NEW MOON SACRIFICIAL COMMODITIES IN EZEKIEL AND NUMBERS*

The New Moon in Ezekiel 46:6-7
1 young bull

6 male lambs

1 ram

2 *'êphāh*s of grain (for the bull and ram) + an undisclosed amount for each lamb (presumable less than an *'êphāh* for each)

2 *hîn*s of oil + an undisclosed amount for lambs per *'êphāh*
= 46< litres of grain†
7.6< litres of oil

The New Moon in Numbers 28:11-15
2 young bulls

7 male lambs

1 ram

1 Goat (sin-offering)

1.5 *'êphāh*s of flour mixed with mixed with oil

3.75 *hîn*s of oil (see above)

3.8 *hîn*s of wine
= 34.4 litres of flour
14.44 litres of wine
14.25 litres of oil

* For Hebrew measures of capacity and estimated conversions to metric weights, see Chapter 3, note 136.
† Coversion to litres is only approximate. See previous note.

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