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THE NUMEN OF PENUEL

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GEN. 32 23-33 has long been a *crux interpretum*. There are problems concerning the integrity of the text, the meaning of certain words, and the possible literary sources. But the chief difficulty has always been the character of the story. How is it to be understood? Many exegetes have regarded it as the record of an historic occurrence. Once a man by the name of Jacob wrestled with a god or angel, or dreamed that he struggled with such a being, or prayed so intensely that it seemed to him as if he were fighting, or described an inner moral conflict in terms of physical combat. A nomad chief called Jacob may indeed have lived in Palestine at some time during the Hyksos period (c. 1700—1580 B. C.). His longer name, Jacob-el, may have attached itself to a tribe or its habitat, since it occurs as *Y'qb'ar(l)a* in the list of localities, apparently in Central Palestine, conquered by Thutmosis III (1479—1447 B. C.).¹ He may have become deified after death, seeing that one of the later Hyksos kings, Jacobher, 'Jacob is satisfied(?),' probably bears a name compounded with his, though the spelling is not quite the same on different scarabs.² Recent discoveries have again emphasized the fact

¹ W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, 1893, 162 f. Cp. *לְבָנוֹן*, the name of a valley forming the boundary between Zebulun and Asher.

² *SsRwár R'Y'kb-hr*, but also *Y'bk-hr*, *Y'kp-hr*, *Ykb-hr*. Müller doubts that *hr* comes from *hri*, 'be contented.' W. F. Albright, *JBL*, XXXVII, 1918, 187, suggests that it is *ḥr* 'mountain.' The name of another Hyksos king, 'nt *hrty*, makes this questionable. The meaning is

that Euhemerus was only guilty of a defective generalization. His pretended discovery of the island of Panchaea, where the Olympian gods once reigned as kings, is, of course, a fiction; and his theory is not capable of universal application. But it contains an important element of truth. Men have become gods, as gods have become men. The process of deification is as natural as the process of humanization. Kings of Egypt were worshipped as 'mighty gods' and 'good gods,' and Zoser's architect and grand vizier Imhotep was accorded divine honors after death. But cosmic powers like Re and Osiris were also thought of as kings once ruling over Egypt. In the lists of longlived rulers filling up the spaces of unrecorded history there may have been men as well as gods. In such lists from Babylonia, A. T. Clay³ thought he found a group of actual kings of Erech, including Nimrod (EN MARDĀ), Gilgamesh and Tammuz. It would be rash to deny the possibility that a hero like Gilgamesh (Aelian's Gilgames), in spite of the incredible regnal years, once ruled in Erech, even if Tammuz should prove to have been from the beginning a solar god especially worshipped there, whose name for some reason was introduced to eke out the list; and features borrowed from a solar myth cannot banish from history a Sargon of Agade or a Cyrus of Anshan. Emil Forrer⁴ deems it probable that

uncertain. Albright regards Jacob as originally a weather and fertility god; and it would not be inappropriate to designate a storm-god as an El who pursues, follows on one's heels, overreaches. Hugo Gressmann, *ZATW*, 1910, 6, quotes a letter from Hermann Ranke in which this scholar mentions numerous South Arabian and Akkadian (or Amoritish) names consisting either of an Impf. and el, as Yahzar-el, or only of an Impf. with the mimation, as Yahzirum, concludes that the full names were יַחְזַר־אֵל , יַחְזִיר־אֵל , and יַחְזִיר־אֵל , and stresses the circumstance that in the West Semitic names of the Hammurapi period the Impf. never designates a god. But Ed. Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme*, 249 ff., has called attention to such divine names as Yaghuth and Ya'ûk, and יַחְזִיר־אֵל obviously belongs to the same category. The valley of יַחְזִיר־אֵל was so called after the El who was supposed to have opened it. Jephthah is an abbreviated form of יַחְזִיר־אֵל , the El who opens (the womb).

³ *JAOS*, XLI, 251 ff.

⁴ *MDOG*, 63⁷; *OLZ*, XXXVII, 3, 1924, col. 113 ff.

Tawagalawas, king of *Ahhiyawa* (elsewhere *Ahhiayawa*), who is also designated as king of *Ayawalas* in the inscriptions of the Hittite king Mursilis II (c. 1337—1312), is none else than Eteocles, the Aeolian; and that *Attarissiyas*, who fought with Maduwattas of Zippasla in Caria in the time of Tudhaliyas III (c. 1263—1225) and Arnuwanda (c. 1225—1200), is Atreus, the father of Agamemnon. In spite of the worship of Zeus Agamemnon and the tomb at Amyclae,⁵ Agamemnon may therefore have been the historical ruler of Mycenae who led the Achaeans against Priam of Troy. So far as the supposed original forms of the Achaean names are concerned, Wilhelm Schulze⁶ finds nothing objectionable in these identifications, and Paul Haupt⁷ has presented further reasons in support of them. Contemporary testimony may bring back to us once more the heroes of the Trojan War and some of their predecessors as the fascinating human personalities they long were supposed to be. The researches of Herbert J. Spinden⁸ of the Peabody Museum, Harvard, have made it probable that the great Mexican god Quetzalcoatl was a Toltec king who conquered the Mayas of Chichen Itza c. 1191 A. D. But even if it were less hazardous than it still is to infer from the Egyptian allusions to Jacob that a Canaanitish or Aramaean chief by that name lived in Palestine in the 17th century B. C., a wrestling bout between this person and a god becomes not a whit more plausible, unless indeed this god can also be shown to have been at the time a human being. So far as the record goes, it is evident that, though he appears in the form of a man, he belongs to a different category.

Josephus speaks of Jacob as having had to do with a *φάντασμα*, an apparition, which made use of a voice and words (*Ant.* I, 331 ff., ed. Niese); and employs the same term in describing the divine beings encountered at Mahanaim (*ib.* I,

⁵ Pausanias, III, 19, 6.

⁶ Cp. Forrer, *OLZ*, col. 114.

⁷ *American Journal of Philology*, XLV, 3, 1924, 252 ff.

⁸ Paper read before the Anthropological Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Washington, Jan. 2, 1925; reported in the *New York Times*, Jan. 3, 1925.

325). In view of the later reference to "a divine angel," *θεῖον ἄγγελον*, it looks as if he had purposely introduced the peculiar term to suggest a vision or a dream. For *φάντασμα* means 'ghost' (Mt. 14 26; Mk. 6 49); 'phantom' (Wisdom of Solomon, 17 4, 15); 'vision' (Job 20 8 *וִיזוֹן*). "A phantasma, or a hideous dream" says Brutus in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (II, i, 73). In a very remarkable study of the psycho-physical basis of the nightmare (*der Alpentraum*), W. H. Roscher⁹ interprets Jacob's experience as a case of incubation, induced by the obstruction of the organs of respiration, producing a vivid dream of a struggle like that of mortals with Pan Ephialtes in antiquity or of women with demons in the witchcraft period. There is no reason to doubt that such may be the origin of the nightmare, or that this explanation, upheld by eminent physicians, may throw light upon many obscure phenomena. But the assumption that something of this kind actually happened to Jacob, that he who alone knew what he had dreamed related the strange experience, and that thus the story found its way into one of the literary sources of Genesis is difficult to maintain.

Some students have thought that Jacob only engaged in a long and earnest prayer, as Jerome already supposed. This differs from the theory of a phantasma or violent disturbance in the condition of sleep; yet may be psychologically akin to it. It is not necessary to assume as wide a divergence as Umbreit,¹⁰ following suggestions by earlier interpreters, did. In his reaction against the idea of a physical conflict with Almighty God, he was led to think of a prayer, like that of a modern Christian, involving meditation in the divine presence, confession of sin, desire for pardon and regeneration, and yearning for spiritual communion. Importunate prayer has not always had this character; the methods of prevailing in prayer have not always been the same. It is pertinent to remember the physical and mental excitement, the accompanying gestures

⁹ 'Ephialtes' in *Abh. d. phil.-hist. Classe d. k. sächsischen Ges. d. Wissenschaften*, XX, no. 2, 1906.

¹⁰ *Studien und Kritiken*, 1848, 113 ff.

and violent acts, the objects, spirit, and procedure in some familiar instances. Hannah's behavior leads Eli to think that she is intoxicated; she is a woman of bitter soul, pleading for a child (1 Sam. 1 13 ff.). The prophets of Baal pray from morning till noon, dancing (ΠΙΟΒ) about the altar, cutting themselves after their fashion with swords and lances (1 Kings 18 26 ff.). Moses prays for the privilege of seeing Yahwe's face, and is allowed to see his back (Ex. 33 12 ff.); he rails against his god and begs Yahwe to kill him (Num. 11 11 ff.). Jacob pledges himself to worship the El of Bethel, if he will give him bread to eat and raiment to put on (Gen. 28 29). Appeals to the *amour propre* of the god, clamor for special favors, victory over enemies and material prosperity, threats and cajolery, fasting, weeping, dancing, repetition of formulas, imitative magic, beating of the image and self-mutilation are well-known methods and accessories of prayer. But there is no intimation in the text that Jacob remained behind to pray, that he sought to be heard for his much speaking, or that his limping was perchance due to a self-inflicted injury, any more than that he wrestled in prayer for spiritual blessings.

If it is supposed that Jacob, in telling the story, did not intend to describe an experience on his part involving physical activities and sufferings, but rather to relate a purely spiritual conflict in terms borrowed from the palestra or the pagan shrine, the element of supplication can be dropped and resort be had throughout to figurative language. This was done by Philo who interpreted the tale as an allegory, representing "not a struggle of the body but that in which the soul engages with its antagonists, fighting against the passions and the vices" (*Leg. alleg.* III, 190 ed. Cohn). Jacob's combatant was the Logos, ἄγγελος ὑπηρέτης τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος. (*De mut. nominum*, 87 ed. Wendland); his name Israel meant ὀρῶν τὸν θεόν (*ib.* 81); it was his virtue, dwelling in a mortal body, that for a while became lame (*ib.* 187). Justin also thought that Jacob fought with the Logos (*Dial. c. Thryph.* 125 ed. Otto), though he understood Israel to mean: ἄνθρωπος νικῶν δύναμιν (*ib.* 121); and Clement of Alexandria held that the angel was the Logos, which had not yet appeared in the flesh, and therefore was

unknown by name (*Paed.* I, 7, 57, ed. Migne). There are indeed allegories in the Jewish scriptures, such as e. g. Ps. 80 *et seq.*, but the context clearly reveals their nature. Here the etymology, an important feature of allegoresis, is obviously impossible. Israel cannot be derived from *אֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל*. The blow on the thigh and the tabu remain unexplained. To credit Jacob himself or an early narrator with knowledge of the Logos doctrine is an anachronism. A struggle between reason and the appetites may well be the most solemn and significant fact in human experience; but it can only be arbitrarily read into the text.

In view of these difficulties scholars generally recognize today that, whether Jacob is an historic person or not, the story is a piece of fiction. Even from this standpoint it would be possible to think of it as a dream or a prayer ascribed to Jacob. But dreams seem always to be labeled as such, and while the accounts of a prayer often have a setting that suggests an actual dialogue, there appears to be no analogy for a prayer described in this manner. Nor is there any allegory that even remotely resembles it. It is, therefore, natural that many interpreters look upon it as an aetiological myth. The purpose of such a myth is to explain the origin of a name, an institution, a ceremony, a custom, a condition, or a group of these that arouse the historic interest. The more it can account for, the better. In the present case, the questions to which answers were sought are clearly these: Why is Jacob called Israel? What is the origin of Penuel? How has Jabbok come to have this name? For what reason do the Israelites abstain from eating the 'sinew of the hip'? On these points the tale itself was sufficient to meet the immediate demands for knowledge. In the minds of those who have had the story before them other queries have arisen: Who was the mysterious stranger fighting with Jacob and what was the origin of his name? Why did he fall upon Jacob and why was he unable to defeat him? Why was he afraid of the dawn? Why did he strike Jacob's thigh? What did he mean by calling him Israel? Why did he refuse to give his own name? What was the blessing he conferred? What

was the actual origin of the name Penuel? What was the real reason for the peculiar tabu? What is the age of the myth and when was it committed to writing?

In the main the text appears to have been well preserved. Read **הוּא** for **הוּא** in 23 (Kenn. 129, 152, 190; Sam.) and **הַיְבֹק** for **יְבֹק** (Sam.). We should probably also read **אֵל** for **אֵת**. The two are often confused; in Hos. 12 5 **אֵל** should be corrected to **אֵת** (Nowack, in Kittel, *Bib. Heb.*). Even without the **אֵל** it might have the same meaning, as in Jer. 2 10; Amos 5 5. Translate: "He arose that night . . . and passed on to the ford of the Jabbok." This restores order. In 24 add **כָּל** (Kenn. 173; Sam. G. L. Syr. Ar. Trg. 41⁹ de Rossi). In 29 **וְעַם אֲנָשִׁים** should probably be omitted, and **אֵל** read for **אֱלֹהִים**, and the text should read: **שָׂרִית עִם אֵל וַתִּכַּחַשׁ**, "thou hast fought with an El and prevailed." G has before him the present text, but looks for a parallelism and a promise: *ἐπίσχυας μετὰ θεοῦ, καὶ μετὰ ἀνθρώπων δυνατός.*¹¹ In 31 read **פְּנוּאֵל**, as in 52 (Kenn. 95, 129; Sam.). It was probably pronounced Phanuel. Josephus has *φανούηλος*; cp. also 1 Chron. 4 4; 8 25 G.; Luke 2 28; Par. En. 40 9; 71 8, 9. Early Semitic speech does not seem to have had the p-sound, as is still the case in Arabic; for Syriac, cp. Nöldeke, *Kurzgefasste Syrische Grammatik*, pp. 9f.; Greek transliterations suggest the same for Assyrian. In **פְּנוּאֵל** the old nominative ending has been preserved, as in **שִׁמְוֹאֵל**, **אֲבוּנִיל**, **מְתוּשֶׁלַח**, **קְדוּבַעַל**; in **פְּנוּאֵל**, the genitive ending, as in **אֲבוּיָהוּד**, **אֲבוּיָנִיל**, **מְלִכְיָצֶדֶק**, **תְּנִיבַעַל**.

To those who have sought to discover the literary sources of Genesis the story has offered peculiar difficulties. Astruc ascribed it to his Memoir A. In this he was followed by Eichhorn, though he doubted that 23 and 24 came from the same author; Ugen (to *Eliel harishon*), who assigned 23 to his *Elijah harishon*; and Tuch (*Grundschrift*). Knobel, Dillmann, Delitzsch, and Roscher assigned it to E. J has been preferred by Gramberg, De Wette, Hupfeld, Kuenen, Studer, Well-

¹¹ Jacob's cleverness in dealing with Laban and his prospects in dealing with Esau do not concern the numen of Penuel. **אֵל** in **יִשְׂרָאֵל** suggests **אֵל עִם שָׂרִית**, just as **פְּנוּאֵל** suggests **אֵל**. Aquila renders this **אֵל**, *ισαχας*; Justin, *δυναμς*.

hausen, Riehm, Westphal, Reuss, Moore, Bacon, Bissell, Driver, Wildeboer, Ball, Baudissin, Skinner, Kautzsch, Smend, Steuernagel, Procksch, Cornill, Sellin, and Eichrodt, though some of these scholars have given 24 and 30 to E and 33 to an editor or glossator. The usual criteria fail. Yahwe does not occur at all, not even on the lips of the renamed hero. Elohim is found everywhere, but in a way that would not be impossible even to a writer usually employing the name Yahwe. The words and phrases generally depended on by the analysts are not decisive.

A suggestion by W. Max Müller¹² has led to fresh efforts. He remarked in a footnote that "the main feature of the struggle, the dishonest wrestling trick of the Canaanitish Odysseus, to which his name is due, has been disguised, and the dislocation of the hip of the god foully brought to a fall has been transferred to Jacob." In the hands of Holzinger,¹³ Luther,¹⁴ Eduard Meyer,¹⁵ Bennett,¹⁶ Gunkel,¹⁷ and Kittel,¹⁸ this theory has served as a means for dividing the text between J and E. It is not always certain who the subject is when it is implied in a verbal form, or the object when expressed by a pronoun or pronominal suffix. So far as the language is concerned it would therefore be possible to understand 28 a as meaning: "He (Jacob) saw that he could not prevail over him (the man), and he (Jacob) touched the hollow of his (the man's) thigh."

In favor of this construction it is argued by Luther and Eduard Meyer that the wrestler's trick is in harmony with Jacob's character, that Jacob could not be said to have prevailed if he was the one disabled by his antagonist, that this is suggested by Hosea 12 5 where the angel weeps and begs for mercy, and that there is an analogy in Yahwe's falling

¹² *Asien und Europa*, 1893, 163.

¹³ *Genesis*, 1898, 209 f.

¹⁴ *ZATW*, XXI, 85 ff.

¹⁵ *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme*, 1906, 57.

¹⁶ *Genesis*, 1903, *ad loc.*

¹⁷ *Genesis*³, 1910, 359 ff.

¹⁸ *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I, 1912, 352.

upon Moses and the escape of Moses only through Zippora's touching certain parts of Yahwe with the foreskin of her son. But the wrestler of Penuel, when his probable character is considered, is more likely than Jacob to have resorted to this trick. Jacob may have held his ground even though he was injured. Whether the haggadist to whom we owe the interpolation in Hosea 12 5-7 referred to the angel or to Jacob as weeping is doubtful, and so is the value of his interpretation. Eduard Meyer's understanding of the Zippora incident may be correct, but there is no hint that the god who falls upon Jacob is Yahwe, and Zippora does not strike Yahwe. Gunkel cites these evidences of two recensions: According to 26 a the hip is dislocated by a blow, while according to 26 b it happened accidentally in the wrestling; in 28 f. the giving of the new name is already a kind of blessing, while in 30 it is said that "he blessed him there;" according to 29 Jacob is victorious, while according to 31 he only escapes with his life. Furthermore, 25 and 27 as well as 28 and 30 seem to him to be variants. Yet 26 a only refers to the blow, and 26 b naturally continues by indicating the effect of this blow; the new name is not represented as a blessing, and the blessing is likely to be something quite different; Jacob prevails indeed, but in view of the injury he had sustained and the tactics of his adversary he may well be pleased to have escaped alive. "Let me go, for the day breaketh" certainly does not prevent the narrator from observing that the fight lasted until the break of day; nor does the El's question: "What is thy name?" preclude Jacob from making the same inquiry in his turn. There does not appear to be any valid ground for doubting the unity of the story. The tendency to break up even the shortest passages into smaller fragments, to make the Elohist a mere supplementer, and to confront the Yahwist himself with imaginary earlier sources wrongly interpreted by him, does not inspire the greatest confidence in the current analysis.

There is no suggestion in the text that the numen of Penuel is Yahwe.¹⁹ That Yahwe falls upon Moses and seeks to kill

¹⁹ Ed. Meyer himself recognizes this: "Der Gegner, den Jakob niederzwingt, ist ursprünglich ein ganz anderer als Jahwe," *l. c.*, 277.

him (Ex. 4 24) is no evidence that another god may not have fallen upon another hero; and that the Mal'ak Yahwe refuses to divulge his name to Manoah (Jud. 13 18) does not prove that another divine being may not have declined to reveal his. 1 Kings 18 31 does not refer to this passage, but to Gen. 35 10. Hosea (12 4) speaks of him as a god (מַלְאָךְ, θεός G.). The interpolator (Hos. 12 5-7) calls him an angel (מַלְאָךְ, ἄγγελος). This was in harmony with the growing tendency to transfer to intermediate beings activities it was not felt proper to ascribe to Yahwe or Elohim.

In Gen. 48 16 מַלְאָךְ (Sam.) seems to have been changed to מַלְאָךְ. Later this angel was identified as Michael (*Yalkut Shimeoni*, I, 39, 2. ed., Amsterdam, 1659; *Yalkut hodeš*, fol. 91, col. 4, no. 171; *ib.*, fol. 119, col. 4, no. 101; *Targum Jon.* to Gen. 32 24).²⁰ Philo and Christian exegetes like Justin, Clement of Alexandria and Origen saw in him the Logos. But it also became common among Jewish interpreters to consider him as the angel of Esau עֶשָׂו מַלְאָךְ (Rashi, *al.*) who contends with Jacob for the validation of his birthright. As Jacob meets Esau at Penuel and beholds his face כִּרְאֵת פְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים (Gen. 33 10), it is conceivable that Esau himself was once regarded as the numen appearing at Penuel. Baal ha'turim finds the same numerical value in עֶשָׂו אֱדָם and עֵשָׂו אֱדָם. It would be possible to think of Penuel as the name of the El. It became a personal name (1 Chron. 4 4; 8 25; Luke 2 36). In the Parables of Enoch (40 9; 71 8, 9), Phanuel takes the place of Uriel among the four archangels. Phanuel, like Uriel, seems to represent Nergal-Mars. But Phanuel as the name of an archangel seems to be derived from מַלְאָךְ פְּנִי (Isa. 63 9; Ex. 33 14). Originally Phanuel was a place-name. G. Studer²¹ regarded the numen of Penuel as the god of Canaan, "der Gott des Landes Canaan," defending his territory. There were many gods in Canaan; but no god of Canaan *par excellence*, like Chemosh of Moab or Yahwe of Israel, is known to us. It has been recognized by Frazer, Bennett, Gunkel and Kittel that the combatant was the river-god. If so, the conclusion

²⁰ Cp. W. Lueken, *Michael*, 1898, 16 f.

²¹ *JPTA*, I, 1875, 541.

should be drawn that his name was Jabbok and that Penuel was his shrine.

The reason why Jabbok attacked Jacob was clearly that he wished to protect his territory. In so far Studer was quite right. His was a defensive war by well-timed offensive tactics. He fell upon the invader when the latter had sent his family across the river and was left behind alone on the northern bank. For Jacob he deemed his strength sufficient. But he was unable to defeat Jacob, as an *El*'s power is, after all, limited and he had underrated the ability of his opponent. He did not at first realize with what kind of being he was fighting; and as the wrestling continued and he was not able to throw his adversary, he became afraid of another foe. This danger was great. It is not enough to refer to the fear of the dawn by various night-spectres, as Frazer and Bennett do, or even to Jupiter's plea to Hercules in Plautus' *Amphitryo*, I, 3, 35: "Why dost thou keep me? It is time; I want to leave the city before it becomes light." A river-god has a special enemy in the sun-god whose rays diminish his power, and in the summer threaten to destroy him. When Shemesh rises with healing in his wings, it is on behalf of Jacob (¹⁷), to make his victory complete by curing the injury he has incidentally suffered, as later Jewish interpreters maintained. How such a conflict could be conceived of becomes intelligible in the same degree as it is realized that the *el* belongs to a category of beings who, in popular thought, were quite limited in their powers and that, on the other hand, Jacob himself, whatever his origin, was also looked upon as possessing powers beyond those of ordinary men. While the figure of Jacob is gradually stripped of other supernal elements and becomes purely human, the consciousness that the numen of Penuel is not to be forthwith identified with the supreme deity of a more advanced faith finds expression in the later exegesis which sees in him an angel, a phantom, or an intermediate being like the Logos. Numerous analogies of struggles between gods and heroes have been cited from classical and Oriental lore by commentators. Zeus and Herakles are the first wrestlers at Olympia, Nonnius, *Dionysiaca*, X, 376. Lycophron, *Alexandra*, 41, alludes to

this struggle, and Isaac Tzetzes in a gloss observes that when Zeus saw that he could not prevail, he finally made himself known to his opponent. Reference has already been made to Plautus' version of the struggle between Jupiter and Hercules. One of the most famous victories won by Herakles as a wrestler was that over Achelous, the river-god, in Boeotia, Pausanias, VI, 19, 12. Athena threw a stone at Amphitryon, Pausanias, IX, 11, 3. In the Iliad, it is natural that the Achaean heroes should fight with those of Troy and her allies in single combat, Paris with Menelaus, III, 396 ff., Diomedes with Aeneas, V, 280 ff., Euphoebus and Hector with Patroclus, XVI, 791 ff., and Achilles with Hector, XXII, 326; and that, in the funeral plays, Ajax, Telamon's son, should wrestle with Odysseus, XXIII, 725 ff. Diomedes hurls an enormous stone at Aeneas, strikes the hip (*ισχίον*) where the part turns in the joint which is called *κοτύλη* and breaks it, and besides crushes the two sinews or nerves (*ἄμφω τένοντε*), V, 305 ff. But he also attacks Aphrodite and wounds her in the hand so that the divine blood flows which, to be sure, is a peculiar liquid, V, 330 ff. It is Apollo who first strikes Patroclus, on the stomach and the shoulders, XVI, 791 ff. Achilles has to fight with the river-gods, Xanthos, Simois and Scamander, who are defending their territory against the invaders, XXI, 236 ff. Ares and Pallas Athena, XXI, 391 ff., Aphrodite and Athena, XXI, 424 f., Artemis and Hera, XXI, 490 ff. engage in physical conflict with each other. Von Bohlen²³ referred to nightly combats with higher powers in Ramayana, I, 28, 21, where the Rakhas are most powerful just before the break of day.

²³ *Die Genesis*, 1835, 318; *Das alte Indien*, I, 1830, 225, where *Hidimba*, 4, 46, is quoted. Cp. also Lucian, *Philopseudes*, 14, ed. Jacobitz, 201: "When the cocks began to crow, away flew the moon, Hecate disappeared, and the apparitions (*φάσματα*) vanished;" and Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, IV, 16: "Achilles vanished . . . for the cocks were already beginning their chant." Particularly interesting is the parallel cited by Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, II, 1918, 424 f., from Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, 1723, II, 578: "if a man grappling with Tezcatlipoca in the night should succeed in holding him till day was just about to break he would be granted any boon which he might ask for, provided he let him go before the dawn."

In the course of the struggle Jabbok struck the hollow of Jacob's thigh. Jabbok was a wrestler, and he knew his *métier* with all its legitimate and illegitimate tricks. One of his practices was to strike at the groins. The hollow of the thigh (כף הירך), like that of the hand and the foot, is the concave side. This would be reached by a frontal attack. Rashi suggests that Esau's angel touched this part to see whether he was a man. In all probability Jabbok himself was supposed to have suffered in that part of the body and, therefore, had a preference for assailing it. When he saw that even such a blow did not effectively disable Jacob, he realized that his combatant was no ordinary human being, and asked for his name. But the name, 'the pursuer,' 'the one who follows on the heel and overtakes,' did not hint at his power as a wrestler. The numen of Penuel had not been overcome by a puny mortal, however clever and sly, but by a being like himself, and he gave him the title 'Israel,' 'the El who fights,' for 'he had fought with an El and overcome.' Though mistaken in his etymology, Jerome shows remarkable insight when, in his *Quaestiones in Genesim, ad locum*, he explains: "Quomodo enim princeps ego sum, sic et tu, qui mecum luctari potuisti, princeps vocaberis." If 'a fighting El' is substituted for 'princeps,' that is precisely the sense of the words.

Jabbok was not willing, however, to reveal his name. Jacob, though injured, had only had the sciatic nerve strained, which caused him to limp. He had not been conquered; he had indeed prevailed sufficiently to secure the blessing he demanded. But the name of the El of Penuel was still his secret which he was able to preserve. To know the name of a god may be desirable, as it can be used to advantage. When it is the name of a god who cannot prevail, even though he resort to disgraceful tactics, it may well be asked what purpose this knowledge would serve. Let the stranger refuse to divulge his secret; it is irrelevant. From the standpoint of the story-teller it is enough to hint at the name. He is fond of such allusions. When the local gods of Mahanaim fall upon Jacob (32 2, 3), he says: 'This is a camp (מחנה) of gods,' calls the place Mahanaim, and proceeds (32 8) to divide his men into two camps (לשתי מחנות). As he sends

them to his brother southwards in the direction of the land of Seir (ארצה שעיר), he speaks as if the name of Penuel was already in his mind; פני and פניו are fairly crowded into his message: אכפרה פניו במנחה ההלכת לפני ואחרי כן אראה פניו (32 21), and when he sees him at Penuel it is כראת פני אלהים (33 10). It is no accident that a man is said to wrestle with him; it is a play upon, an explanation of, his name. Whether Jabbok was so called as 'the gusher' from בקק or as 'the embracer' from חבק — חבק — אבק, to folk-etymology he was 'the wrestler.' It accepted the latter derivation: יאבק, contracted יבק; the doubling of the ב is masoretic; G has Ἰάβοχ, Josephus Ἰάβοχος or Ἰόβακος. Hence יאבק, יבק in many Sam. MSS is not original, but correct interpretation. Especially around the probable site of Penuel, *Tulul al dhahab*,²³ Nahr el Zarka winds its tortuous way, circling about like a wrestler. The impressive ruins should be thoroughly explored and excavated. Some of the Syrian river-gods had local shrines. Whether this was true of Arnon 'the roarer,' from רנן,²⁴ Jarmuk 'the persistent one,' from ramaka 'last,' 'continue,' often wrongly identified with Jabbok,²⁵ and the Belus or בעל of Nahr Na'aman, S. of Akka,²⁶ it is certain that Renan²⁷ discovered the sanctuary of Adonis with an inscription to the river-god a distance up Nahr Ibrahim. There was also a sanctuary to Pan near one of the sources of the Jordan. It is possible that the Greeks found a Penuel (or φανουηλ) there and a god reminding them of Pan to whom the territory, Πανεῖον = Baneas, belonged. This instance shows that Roscher was wrong in supposing that the Arcadian forest-god never appears as a river-god. Like him Jabbok is likely to have limped and shared with him some other characteristics. The name of Penuel has been compared with the πρόσωπον

²³ Cp. Selah Merrill, *East of the Jordan*, 1883, 391 f.

²⁴ Cp. Nathaniel Schmidt, 'The River Arnon,' *JBL*, XXIV, 1906, 212 ff. In a letter from De Goeje, this scholar gave his approval to the explanation there given of the name and to the suggestion that Mojib, from wajaba, 'fall with a great noise,' is a translation of מויב.

²⁵ Cp. R. Smend, *ZATW*, XXII, 1902, 137 ff.

²⁶ Cp. Ernest Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, 1864, 263, 515, 752.

²⁷ *L. c.*, 298 ff.

θεοῦ in Phoenicia, mentioned by Strabo.²⁸ It has been suggested that the form of a face was seen in the promontory. This is not improbable. Lieut. W. F. Lynch brought back a famous sketch of Lot's wife,²⁹ and Arabs have often pointed out in various places around the Dead Sea a *bint Lut*. The Garden of the Gods in Colorado is full of strange formations in which imagination has found *πρόσωπα θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων*. There may have been at *Tulul al dhahab*, if that is the site of Penuel, some such figure. It is also possible that in the shrine of the river-god there was an image of Jabbok in human form. The local divinity was not always represented as a man. In Bethel and Dan Yahwe was worshipped under the form of a golden calf (1 Kings 2 28 ff.). That the god appears in this story as a man may be due to the fact that worshippers had from time immemorial gone to Penuel to see the face of the god, פנים לפנים.

The blessing reluctantly given to Jacob was not a parting salutation, a friendly greeting like Laban's (32 1), as Ilgen thought, nor a name or honorary title, as has often been held. When Isaac blessed Jacob (Gen. 27 27), the blessing was a grant of power and prosperity, automatically producing its results and irreversible, though secured by fraud. The blessing Jacob forced from the god of Penuel was no doubt a substantial gift, more valuable than the ברכה that Jacob sent to Esau (Gen. 33 11), or David forwarded to the elders of Judah (1 Sam. 30 26), or Naaman offered to Elisha (2 Kings 5 15). It was more like the blessing Achsa received from Caleb, consisting of *Gulloth illith* and *Gulloth tahtith* (Jud. 1 15), or 'the treaty of peace' which Rab-shakeh advised the Jews to make with Sennacherib (Isa. 36 16; 2 Kings 18 31). The numen yielded to Jacob Penuel and its territory.

In all probability, the real reason why the Israelites of this district and later, under the influence of the story, all Israelites abstained from eating the sciatic nerve was that the former inhabitants ate it. Both the custom and the protest against it

²⁸ XVI, ii, 13, 16.

²⁹ *Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea*,^o 1849, opposite p. 308.

find a natural explanation in veneration of the seat of life and procreative power, similar to that which led Eliezer to put his hand under Abraham's thigh in making an oath (Gen. 24 2). To eat certain parts of the body of an animal (and originally of a man as well) was supposed to impart to the eater the strength especially inherent in them.³⁰ To make them tabu or avoid eating them was either another manifestation of regard or a reaction against the underlying conception. As the custom of using the *membra genitalia* for food gradually disappeared, it is possible that the power assumed to attach to them was transferred, first to the pudic nerve, and then to the sciatic, because of its white color and exceptional thickness, and because injury to it caused lameness and possibly was regarded, in view of its connection with the pudic nerve, as effecting impotence.

This explanation is not subject to the objection raised by Ibn Ezra, and alluded to by Fagius,³¹ against a current identification of *נֵד הַנְּשָׂה* with the *membrum virile*. Yet there may be a basis in original usage for this identification. *נֵד הַנְּשָׂה* does not mean sinew of the hip; *נֵד* is not limited to 'sinew,' and *נְשָׂה* does not mean 'hip.' Edmund Castle suggested that *נְשָׂה* has the same meaning as the Arabic *نساء*. In this he was followed by Le Clerc, Gesenius and most modern scholars. Gesenius, in his *Thesaurus*, s. v., quotes Ibn Sina who clearly designates by it the sciatic

³⁰ According to Herodotus, II, 39, the heads were thrown into the Nile; according to Origen, *Contra Celsum*, V, 35, both heads and shoulders. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*?, 1897, 168, mentions the prohibition against eating the heart among the Ju'fi and against eating the tail of the sheep among the Bali, and calls attention to a trace of the holiness of the *נֵד הַנְּשָׂה* in *Kamil* 552¹². Cp. also W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*. 1894, 379 f. J. G. Frazer, in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, 1907, 142 f., *Golden Bough*, II², 1900, 419, and *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, II, 1918, 423 f., refers to the custom of certain North American Indians to cut out and throw away the hamstrings of the deer they kill.

My colleague, Professor Walter L. Williams, an eminent authority on the genital diseases of animals, calls my attention to the fact that the testicles of sheep are still eaten and sometimes served as 'lamb fry,' and that modern science, in experimenting with various glands of the body, seems to recognize an element of validity in the ancient conception.

³¹ In *Critici Sacri*?, 1698, I, 750.

nerve. When Ibn Sina uses the dual, he refers to the two branches of this great nerve, and not to the two parts of the thigh, as Gesenius thought. Saadia and Abu Said both translate **נִדְ הַנְּשָׂה** عرق النساء ordinarily means vein (including artery), but must have been used to indicate nerve, as these Jewish translators knew well enough what should be removed. We do not know how **נִסָּ** was employed by Arabs in earlier times. It is possible that it has a Jewish origin. G translates **תִּקַּע** ἐνάρασαν, and also **נִשָּׂה** ὁ ἐνάρασαν. Of the daughter-versions Eth. simply calls it *herum*, 'the forbidden'; and Pesh. translates it in v. 33 a **נִדְ אֲדָן דְּנִשָּׂא** and in v. 33 b only **נִנְשָׂא**. **נִנְשָׂא** is an abbreviation of **נִדְנִשָּׂא** which has become so much one single word and a technical term that it has before it in v. 33 a another **נִדְ**. In Mishna (Hullin VII) and Bab. Talmud (Hullin 100 b) **הַנְּשָׂה** is manifestly understood as a participle, **נִדְ הַנְּשָׂה** — *nervus luxatus*. All these Jewish translators and later scholars knew what they meant. They had in mind the sciatic nerve which, according to custom stamped as law, was to be removed; but they referred to it as the nerve which shrank in Jacob's body and caused his lameness, as the story indicated. There is no evidence that they used it as a technical term based on some characteristic it had in the body of the animal. In this connection **נִדְ** could only be understood as 'nerve.' But it also had a wider meaning. The distinction made in modern anatomy between 'nerve,' 'tendon' or 'sinew,' and 'muscle' cannot be projected into earlier times. **جَد** is 'neck,' because it is long and stout; **נִדְ** is a 'tendon' as well as a 'nerve,' because it is long and strong. The consciousness survived, and could never be quite suppressed, that **הַנְּשָׂה** or **נִדְ הַנְּשָׂה** originally referred to the *membrum virile* (**אֲבָרָה**, Rashi, *al.*). The two peculiar characteristics of this member in functioning, elongation and shrinkage, are indeed expressed in the root **נִשָּׂה**. It means both '*se prolongare*' and '*defici.*' This points the way to an understanding of the phrase. There was a transfer from the *membrum virile* to the pudic nerve, and from this to the sciatic nerve.

As to the age of the story a definite dating is impossible. "Jeroboam built Shechem and dwelt therein, and he went from

there and built Penuel" (1 Kings 12 25). Both were old cities rebuilt and no doubt fortified by him. There is no ground for questioning the statement (Jud. 8 9, 17) that Gideon broke down the tower (מגדל) of Penuel to take vengeance on this city for not participating in the war with Midian. When this war took place is uncertain. It is likely, however, to be earlier than the Philistine invasion (c. 1200 B. C.). In the battle against Sisera "Gilead remained beyond Jordan" (Jud. 5 17). Yahwe had a claim on Gilead, but fortified towns like Penuel were indifferent to his call. What were the religious practices in such a sanctuary in the 13th century B. C.? If local gods and goddesses were worshipped by the Israelites west of the Jordan, as is abundantly evident from the Book of Judges, the same was certainly true of Gilead. Heathen customs prevailed, among them probably the halting dance of the devotees before the numen of Penuel; and the eating of certain parts of the animal for reasons connected with the cult. Some Gileadites may have justified the dance by the story that Jacob, struck in the hollow of his thigh by the local god, had limped as the hierodules did in imitation of his condition, and they may have fallen in with the custom of eating what their neighbors ate, at any rate when these had learned to substitute the sciatic nerve for the original object. Other Gileadites may have maintained that it should not be so done in Israel. Israel had taken the place of Jacob. The El who fights, honorably and squarely, had overcome the tricky wrestling god of Penuel who had been obliged to yield his territory. To local pride Penuel was the birth-place of Israel, though Bethel claimed the same honor (Gen. 35 11). Jabbok's name was of no use, nor his ordinances. Even the sciatic nerve must be pulled out and thrown away. In the spread of this tabu the higher morality registered a notable gain. The victory of one god over another was a step toward a greater spiritual conquest. The primitive features of the myth bespeak an early origin. But it may not have become widely known until Penuel was again made an important city by Jeroboam I (c. 953—932 B. C.). The fact that this prohibition did not find a place in either the Ritual Decalogue or the Covenant Code may be another indication of its date. It bears a marked similarity

to the injunction: "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," which is found in both of these documents (Ex. 34 28; 23 19). This is also a protest against a practice originally associated with the cult of some local god. Just as the offering of a kid had for its object the increase of the flock, so the offering of its mother's milk had for its object the increase of the milk supply. It would be strange if Israel, entering a land 'flowing with milk and honey' (Ex. 3 8, *al.*), should not to some extent have followed the custom of the land in offering of these blessings to one divinity or another. Nor would it appear to be in itself more improper than the offering of wine and meal, which were presented to Yahwe. Yet there is no provision in any Jewish law for a libation of milk, and Lev. 2 11 distinctly prohibits the sacrifice of honey. The chief reason for this exclusion from the Yahwe cult is likely to have been the commandment: "Take heed that thou inquire not after their gods, saying: 'How used these nations to serve their gods? even so will I do likewise'" (Deut. 12 30).³² If the authors of the Ritual Decalogue and the Covenant Code had been acquainted with any prohibition against

³² Such advice, in one form or another, was no doubt given more than once before the appearance of the Deuteronomic Code, introduced in 621 B. C., and probably written not long before this date.

It is altogether possible that, already in the nomadic state, some of the Israelitish tribes avoided the use of a she-goat's milk immediately she had cast a kid, or of boiled milk, in order to prevent by sympathetic magic injury to the mother and a consequent decrease of the milk-supply, as Frazer thinks (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, III, 1918, 118 ff.). But the insistence upon the tabu as late as in Deut. 14 21 apparently points to a pagan sacrificial custom having for its object the increase of the milk-supply as well as of the flock, against which a strong protest was needed. The statement by a Karaite Jew that "there was a custom among the ancient heathen who, when they had gathered all the crops, used to boil a kid in its mother's milk and then, as a magical rite, sprinkle the milk on trees, fields, gardens and orchards, believing that in this way they would render them more fruitful the following year (J. Spencer, *De legibus Hebraeorum ritualibus*, I, 272 ff.) may not be sufficient evidence; but, barring the use of the milk, it may rest upon the essentially correct tradition that there is an allusion to a rite connected with the fertility-cult. In the wealth of material collected by Frazer there is no exact parallel to the boiling of a kid in its mother's milk, although it throws much light on the underlying ideas.

eating the sciatic nerve in the hollow of the thigh, they would almost certainly have found a place for it. In their original form both of these compends of law may very well go back to the period of the Judges, as Adalbert Merx³³ has shown, though there unquestionably are later additions. It therefore seems probable that the custom did not begin to spread until after the rebuilding of Penuel by Jeroboam I, and that it did not become general and binding until reflection on the concluding statement in this particular Jacob story invested it with hoary antiquity and the authority of patriarchal precedent, assumed to rest on divine commandment.

“Wer den Dichter will verstehn, muß in Dichters Lande gehn.” He must be willing to go far from home, betake himself to strange realms, tread unfamiliar paths, seek treasures hidden in foreign soil. If he declines, from fear or prejudice, he will not gain the key to understanding and dooms himself to move within the circle of his accustomed thought. The exegete who counts the operations of the human mind in rites and myths as something alien and the attempt to grasp their original meaning as a descent to what is common and unclean, seeking his refuge in allegoresis, will only discover his own philosophy which he has trained himself to seek in the sacred text. The allegorical method of a Philo, a Dio Chrysostomus, or an Origen in dealing with ancient myths may remove some intellectual and ethical difficulties; but it involves the bankruptcy of rational exegesis, as by it anything may mean anything. Without resorting to such fanciful interpretations, it may be pointed out that the custom which this Jacob myth would explain is a significant evidence of moral growth, and that the myth itself suggests a struggle between divine beings who, in the last analysis, are conceptions created by and living in the mind of man, by which his ideal of the highest has been gradually clarified and refined.

³³ *Die Bücher Moses und Josua*, 1907, 38 ff.