

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

A STUDY OF THE FORMULA, "UNTIL THIS DAY"¹

BREVARD S. CHILDS

YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL

IN recent years there has been increased discussion regarding the nature of the etiological story in the OT. This genre of story attempts to explain a given phenomenon or condition, such as an unusual object in nature or a peculiar custom in the cult, in terms of a past event which is described as its causal antecedent.

When A. Alt applied Gunkel's form critical method to the book of Joshua,² he tended to assume in every case that the etiological element in the tradition was the creative force, and that the stories which make up the first part of the book grew out of the reflective imagination of the author in answer to the perennial *Kinderfrage*. In his response to Alt and Noth, J. Bright³ submitted a thesis, which was an extension of Albright's position⁴ and diametrically opposed to that of Alt. He suggested that the etiological factor was never the primary or creative force, but was always attached to an independent historical tradition.

In a recent article Noth⁵ has attempted to clarify the issue by offering a different formulation of the problem, which appears to be a slight modification of Alt's position. Noth is willing to accept the Albright-Bright argument that a genuinely historical tradition might assume an etiological form. But according to Noth, the chief question is not whether the etiology created the tradition or not, but rather how the tradition employed in the story is related to the phenomenon which it seeks to explain. Is the connection between the event and the phenomenon a genuinely historical link, or a later, secondary development? By determining the nature of the link between the tradition and the phenomenon itself, important information is gained, both in regard to the actual development of the etiology, as well as to the relative reliability of the tradition.

¹ An abbreviated form of this paper was read on Dec. 27, 1962 at the SBL meeting. In the discussion which followed Professors M. Greenberg and H. L. Ginsberg informed me of a recent article in modern Hebrew by I. L. Seeligmann, "Aetiological Elements in Biblical Historiography," *Zion*, 26 (1961), pp. 141-69, which I have not as yet seen.

² A. Alt, "Josua," reprinted in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 1 (München, 1953), pp. 176 ff. Alt gives credit to Gressmann for his early recognition of etiological elements in Joshua.

³ J. Bright, *Early Israel in Recent History Writing* (1956), pp. 91 ff.

⁴ W. F. Albright, "The Israelite Conquest of Canaan in the Light of Archaeology," *BASOR*, 74 (1939), pp. 11-23.

⁵ M. Noth, "Der Beitrag der Archäologie zur Geschichte Israels," *Suppl. VT*, 7 (Leiden, 1960), pp. 278 ff.; cf. also, "Hat die Bibel doch Recht?" *Festschrift G. Dehn* (Neukirchen, 1957), pp. 7 ff.

Space is too limited to review in detail the further developments of the discussion,⁶ but it would seem that a certain impasse has been reached. We would agree with Noth that the present need is to take the discussion out of the sphere of general hermeneutical principles, and turn to detailed study of specific areas of the problem.

It has long been observed that one of the most characteristic elements of the etiological story is the use of the formula, *עד היום הזה* ("until this day"). Almost everyone agrees that it is the sign *par excellence* of the etiology. In the light of its importance, it is all the more surprising that no thorough study of the formula has been done.

I

Briefly the statistics: The formula *עד היום הזה* occurs 84 times in the MT.⁷ There are in addition seven occurrences of the expression *עד היום* which is identical in usage and which often has textual support for the fuller form. There are other slight variations such as *עד עצם היום הזה*, or simply *היום*.⁸ In addition, there are related expressions such as *עד־עתה*, *עד היום ההוא*, and *כיום הזה*.

At the outset, it is important to note that the formula is used in two distinct ways: The first usage is in an apparently etiological function, and the second, in a nonetiological idiom to express the *terminus ad quem* of a temporal sequence.

To begin with the latter category: Often the formula is preceded by a prepositional phrase formed with *מן*. E. g., I Sam 12 2, "I have walked before you from my youth until this day" (*מנערי עד היום הזה*).⁹ However, there is a related usage without a *min* clause. In an independent clause, a past action is described which marks the beginning of a sequence. The terminus of this continuing action is then designated by the formula, e. g., Deut 10 8, "At that time Yahweh set aside the tribe of Levi to carry the ark . . . until this day" (cf. Josh 23 9, etc.).

⁶ W. Baumgartner, "Zehn Jahre nordamerikanischer Literatur," *TZ*, 4 (1948), pp. 350 ff.; Y. Kaufmann, *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1953), pp. 73 f., and *ספר יהושע* (Jerusalem, 1959), pp. 28 f.; J. A. Soggin, "Kultätologische Sagen und Katechese im Hexateuch," *VT*, 10 (1960), pp. 341 ff.

⁷ The use of the formula in the LXX is a study by itself and exceeds the limits of this paper. In two important passages the formula occurs in the LXX and not in the MT (Gen 35 4; Josh 24 30). It is highly questionable whether the LXX reading can be used as additional evidence for an etiological form in Gen 35 as A. Alt attempts, *Kleine Schriften*, I, p. 84.

⁸ Gen 22 14, but see the commentaries for the textual problems involved.

⁹ The idiom to describe a range is, of course, not confined to temporal affairs, but is used with a similar function in other areas, such as geographical (Josh 12 1), social (Exod 11 5), etc. The expression is not unique to Hebrew, but has a direct equivalent in Aramaic (A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century*, p. 112, lines 19-20), and a parallel in Akkadian (L. Oppenheim, ed. *The Assyrian Dictionary*, VII, pp. 285 f.).

The formal characteristics of this idiomatic, nonetiological usage can be briefly summarized as follows:

1) The most striking feature is that the formula always occurs within the context of a speech.¹⁰ The formula marks a terminus from the point of view of the speaker. This perspective is sharply distinguished from that of the etiological use in which the formula refers to the time of the redactor and is not contemporary with the events being related.¹¹

2) With few exceptions the verbal action is expressed by the perfect and is to be taken as a frequentative: "We have continued to sin against Yahweh . . . from our youth even to this day" (Jer 3 25). The repeated action distinguishes its usage from the genuine etiology in which a condition is causally linked to a single event in the past.

To summarize the evidence up to this point: The formal elements which are characteristic of the nonetiological idiom allow this usage to be easily distinguished from the genuine etiological.

II

We turn next to the etiological usage of the formula. The clearest examples of the form of the etiological story appear in the etymological etiology.¹² Typical are Josh 7 26, Judg 18 12, and II Chron 20 26. In each case, an event is related, which includes a key word. This, in turn, forms the basis for the actual etymological etiology. E. g., Joshua said: "Why did you bring *trouble* on us? May Yahweh *trouble* you! Therefore the place is called, Valley of *Trouble*" (Josh 7 25 f.). The etiological formulation is introduced with the adverb "therefore" (*עליכן*), which expresses the causative relationship, followed by the verb "to call" (*קרא*) in the perfect as a frequentative. In every case the subject of the verb is a general or impersonal one, and differs from the agent in the preceding event. Finally, the formula modifies the verb: "They call it . . . until this day."

¹⁰ Within this broad category the formula occurs with a great degree of variety. It is found in a blessing (Gen 48 15), communal confession (Jer 3 25), disputation (Exod 10 6), defendant's speech (I Sam 29 8), and as a *Jahwerede* in a threat (Jer 32 31), and invective (Jer 7 25). This would indicate that the formula cannot be localized within any particular genre of literature. The essential thing is that the formula occurs in the forms of direct address.

¹¹ Compare the different perspective in spite of similar vocabulary in I Kings 12 19 and Ezek 2 3.

¹² J. Fichtner's excellent article, "Die etymologische Ätiologie in den Namensgebungen der geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments," *VT*, 4 (1956), pp. 372-96, provides a solid basis for studying the forms of the etymological etiology. Because the formula "until this day" never occurs in Fichtner's first form, no further discussion of it is necessary.

It is noteworthy that there are only a few examples of this pure, unbroken form. The remaining examples offer striking divergencies in form. The most frequent change is the substitution of the waw consecutive imperfect (וַיִּקְרָא) for the perfect (עָלֶי-כֵן קָרָא). In one case (Josh 5 9) the usage is identical and no change in the form as a whole is apparent. However, in all the other examples with וַיִּקְרָא, the pattern has been changed. Often the subject of the verb is no longer general, but is the subject of the previous event (Deut 3 14; II Sam 6 8 = I Chron 13 11;¹³ probably II Kings 14 7). Again, the verb cannot be taken as a frequentative, but must be understood as expressing an aorist action which has been concluded in the past (Deut 3 14; II Sam 6 8; probably I Kings 9 13).¹⁴ In two cases the frequentative has been preserved by introducing the niph'al imperfect (II Sam 18 18; Ezek 20 29; cf. Gen 22 14). Finally, the etymological connection between the event and the naming, which constitutes the actual etiology, is often lacking (Deut 3 14; Judg 1 26; I Kings 9 13; II Kings 14 7).

There is another striking alteration in the form which occurs with great frequency. The concluding formula has been separated from the verb and now modifies a noun or pronoun instead of the verb. This often occurs with an historical subject. The repetitive element expressed in the formula has shifted from the verb to its object (Gen 19 36, 37; 26 33; Judg 1 26; 6 24; 15 19). The effect is to dissolve the causal connection which belongs to the essence of the etiology. The formula becomes rather an archeological note which expresses the extension in time of a past phenomenon into the present.

III

Up to this point our form analysis has been limited to one class of etiology, the etymological. Now we broaden the scope of the investigation to include every occurrence of the formula עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה. What can be said about the forms in which the formula appears?

The form of the etiology which appeared when the etymological etiology was analyzed reappears with only slight modifications in the other etiological stories. In both Josh 14 14 and I Sam 27 6 an event is related. Then a causal connection is made with the familiar adverb עַל-כֵּן or לִכֵּן, followed by the verb in the perfect. The formula modifies the verb which establishes etymologically a geographic relationship. The subject of the verb, although not actually general, is not fixed to one historical moment. Because these are not etymological etiologies, there is no occasion to use the device of word association as the means of linking the event and the etiological formulation. Josh 14 14 differs

¹³ In the Hebrew idiom, formed with וַיִּהְיֶה, followed by a waw consecutive impf., the acting agent of both verbs is always identical.

¹⁴ Cf. the commentaries for a discussion of this difficult verse.

from the pure form only by having an attached motivation clause. In addition, there are two examples of the unbroken etiological form with all the characteristic elements, which vary only in the form of the verb. In both Gen 32 33 and I Sam 5 5 the imperfect form has the frequentative force. The former example carries also a motivation clause.

These few examples would seem to demonstrate the continuation of a similar form outside the class of the etymological etiology. However, the most striking evidence is not the similarity but the divergencies in form found with the formula. We begin with the forms in which the waw consecutive imperfect has replaced the perfect. This change might not at first seem significant, especially since we saw that in one instance (Josh 5 9), the waw consecutive imperfect can serve the same function. However, the evidence, which was still somewhat equivocal regarding the use of וַיִּקְרָא, now assumes a new clarity. There are 27 examples of the formula attached to the waw consecutive imperfect. Of these, 12 are transitive verbs with a direct or indirect object, and 15 are intransitive.¹⁵

We turn first to the transitive verbs. The first difference which emerges is that the main verb in question is no longer frequentative, but without exception is aorist. The action described is clearly terminated in a past historical event (Josh 9 27). Moreover, in every instance the subject of the verb is a definite historical personage, and the same agent as in the previously described event. Usually, the waw consecutive imperfect appears in a series of consecutives (II Kings 10 27; I Chron 4 41, etc.). In other words, the subject of the sentence which contains the formula is no longer general or atemporal, but a specific historical subject.

Secondly, the occurrence of a transitive verb with an object alters the syntax of the sentence in respect to the use of the formula. The problem becomes apparent in Josh 7 26: "they stoned him, and erected over him a great heap of stones until this day." The aorist tense of the verbs and the continuity required by the formula are mutually exclusive. Because the formula no longer modifies the verb, but the object of the verb, it must be now translated "as is the case today." עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה has become equivalent to כִּי־וַיִּהְיֶה הַזֶּה.

Thirdly, the sentence with the formula is not a summary statement which draws the implications of an event and then links it in a causal relation to a present phenomenon. Rather, the verb of the sentence, which is in an historical tense, belongs to the description of the event itself. The formula appears almost as a gloss, and serves as a witness

¹⁵ Transitive: Gen 47 26; Josh 7 26; 8 28, 29; 9 27; 10 27; I Sam 30 25; I Kings 9 21; II Kings 10 27; I Chron 4 41; 5 26; II Chron 8 8. Intransitive: Deut 2 22; Josh 6 25; 13 13; 15 63; 16 10; Judg 1 21; I Kings 12 19; II Kings 2 22; 8 22; 16 6; 17 23; I Chron 4 43; 10 19; II Chron 21 10; 35 25.

to the extension in time of the phenomenon rather than indicating its causality.

The same breakdown in form can be seen in the 15 examples of the formula appearing with intransitive verbs. The verbs, which are waw consecutive imperfect, are not to be taken as frequentative, but as historical past, specifically aorist.¹⁶ Moreover, once the verb has received its proper tense, it becomes apparent that the subject is a specific, historical entity. E. g., I Kings 12 19 should be understood as follows: "Thus Israel (*scil.* the nation at the time of Jeroboam I) rebelled against the house of David . . ." The parallel with the archival note in II Kings 8 22 is striking. The verse has been misunderstood because of the ambiguity in the subject which can be understood either as one specific historical manifestation of the nation Israel, or as Israel in an ethnic sense.

To summarize: Our analysis of the passages in which the formula appears confirms the results discovered in the initial examination of the etymological etiology. The chief signs of a breakdown in form from the pure etiological are a change from a general to an historical subject, the shift in the verb from the frequentative to the aorist, the loss of the causal connection between past event and present phenomenon, and the new rôle of the formula in modifying a noun or adverb.

IV

Up to this point the analysis has focused on the formal side of the problem. Our concern now turns to examine the content of the etiological material connected with the formula.

1. *Etymological etiologies.* The form critical analysis indicated a breakdown of the pure etiological form. There are only a few examples with the formula in which all the elements of the etiological form are

¹⁶ This assertion is not immediately evident, and translators usually employ the perfect tense (e. g., RSV on I Kings 12 19). We suggest that the verb, even when intransitive, must be understood as an aorist for the following reasons: 1) The evidence for the verb ישב is important because of its frequency with the formula (*ocies*). The waw cons. impf. of this verb, whenever it appears without the formula, is always translated as an aorist (cf. Num 21 25; 32 40; Deut 2 12, 21, 23; Josh 19 47; Judg 1 16, 29; etc. The only exception is Ps 29 10). Again, most of the examples of ישב with the formula appear as archeological notes in conquest traditions and register the effect of the conquest on the settlement of the tribes. The same type of note, exactly parallel in language, appears frequently in the same chapters without the formula and is clearly aorist (cf. Judg 1 and Deut 2). Finally, the feminine subject in Josh 6 25 proves that an aorist tense is required in this case, even though a formula is attached. 2) There are four examples of the intransitive verb ויפצעו and one with וייל . The evidence is not as conclusive because of the infrequency with which these employ the waw cons. impf. However, the four examples which appear without the formula are all clearly aorist (I Kings 1 1; II Kings 3 5; 25 21; Jer 52 27).

present. But even in these cases, it is highly questionable whether in its OT usage the naming of the place provided the primary focus to which all the remaining elements of the tradition were subordinated. Josh 5 9 provides an etymological etiology for Gilgal. In spite of the uncertainty of interpreting the phrase, "I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt," the etiology seems only loosely connected with the story of the circumcision in 5 7 ff.¹⁷ Vs. 3 contains another etiological tradition in the name of Gibeath-haaraloth ("hill of foreskins"). Only a fragment of an original tradition remains in vs. 9 and it now shows no basic connection to the deuteronomistic additions which precede.

The case is more difficult in Josh 7 26. According to Alt and Noth the two etiologies with which the chapter concludes provide the point of departure for the entire Achan tradition. This seems unlikely, although the evidence is inconclusive.¹⁸

In the remaining examples of etymological etiologies with the formula, there is not a single clear example in which the etiology provides the main focal point about which the traditions cluster. First of all, the use of the waw consecutive has tended to historicize the tradition. The naming is part of the historical tradition which is being recounted rather than arising as an effect of the event. It is description, not implication. Again, there are several examples which are simply word puns with no serious attempt to establish a causal relationship (Ezek 20 29). Moreover, the essential connection between the event and the etiology has been dissolved. Often the wordplay is lacking when the for-

¹⁷ Cf. M. Noth, *Das Buch Josua*², pp. 25 f.

¹⁸ The following reasons speak against Noth's interpretation: 1) The story culminates in two etiologies, the naming of Achor and the pile of stones as a cairn. These have been fused together. However, only the former has a genuine etiological form, the latter being a secondary usage. Since neither of the etiologies seems dependent on the other, and since they are similar in content, it seems likely that they have been secondarily added to an original tradition. 2) The etymological etiology explains the name "Valley of Achor" from the association with the words of Joshua (vs. 25). However, it is not clear that Joshua's words are in a primary relationship with the traditions of the ban associated with the Achan story. It is possible that in the original tradition the people ascended to the Valley of Achor and stoned Achan and his family. A redactor then added an independent tradition which contained the wordplay on Achor, which would account for the double use of the formula. The fact that the name, which is derived etymologically from Joshua's speech, precedes the speech adds additional weight to the argument that it has been secondarily added by association. 3) If the naming of the place were the center for all the other traditions, one should expect additional signs in the story pointing to this relationship. For example, the naming of Bethel (Gen 28 10 ff.) is an example of an etymological etiology in which the wordplay does provide the center around which all the other elements group. This relationship is made clear by the affinity in content between the background elements (heavenly ramp, messengers, sense of terror) and the etiology (Bethel=house of God). Cf. C. A. Keller, *ZAW*, 67 (1955), pp. 162 ff. This characteristic of the primary etiology is missing in Josh 7.

mula still modifies the verb (Deut 3 14; II Sam 18 18; I Kings 9 13; II Kings 14 7). Frequently, the formula modifies only the object of the verb and establishes no causal relationship whatever (Judg 1 26; 6 24; 10 4). Even where a causal relationship is actually present, the context indicates that the etiology is of minor significance in relationship to the main traditions. So in II Sam 6 8 the naming of Perez-uzzah is a very minor feature in a story which seeks to explain why the ark stayed at Obed-edom (cf. Judg 18 12; II Chron 20 26).

There is one final piece of evidence which must be evaluated in any discussion of the primary or secondary nature of the formula in the tradition. Fichtner¹⁹ has pointed out in his study of the etymological etiologies that this form of giving of names is chiefly to be found in the earliest strata of the Pentateuch, particularly in J. There is a marked decrease in its use in Joshua and Judges. Beginning with the period of the late kingdom and into the exile, there are clear signs of conscious discontinuation of the practice of using etiologies for naming. Fichtner's statistics are illuminating for our study in revealing an important disparity. Even when the statistics are limited to the etymological etiologies, a pattern is clear. The use of the formula appears in the later strata of Genesis, increases in the period of the Judges, and finds its highest frequency in the writings of the deuteronomistic historian.²⁰ This means that in the period in which the use of etymological etiology is dying out, the use of the formula increases in frequency. The implication would be that the formula no longer functions primarily within the etiology, but has assumed a different rôle.

2. *Ethnic and geographic etiologies.* There are twelve examples of etiologies with the formula which can be classified as ethnic. Of these nine are almost identical in form and have to do with the geographic location of tribes.²¹ We have already classified this use as an archeological note and indicated that it lacked the characteristics of a genuine etiology.

Josh 6 25 can also not be considered a genuine etiology which provided the primary element in the chapter. In every case the waw consecutive imperfect form of ישב ("dwell") is to be understood as an aorist.²² Moreover, a comparison with 6 17 makes it clear that the main motivation clause of the sentence is introduced by כי. The phrase, "and she dwelt in Israel to this day," is secondary to the tradition and serves a similar function as the other ethnic traditions mentioned above.

¹⁹ Fichtner, *op. cit.*, pp. 386 ff.

²⁰ Gen 19 37, 38; 26 33; Deut 3 14; Josh 5 9; 7 28; Judg 1 26; 6 24; 10 4; 15 19; 18 12; II Sam 6 8 = I Chron 13 11; II Sam 18 18; I Kings 9 13; II Kings 14 7; Ezek 20 29; II Chron 20 26.

²¹ Deut 2 22; Josh 13 13; 15 63; 16 10; Judg 1 21; II Sam 4 3; II Kings 16 6; I Chron 4 41, 43.

²² Cf. footnote 16.

The form of I Sam 27 6 is genuinely etiological. However, a problem arises in regard to its content. The phrase למלכי יהודה ("kings of Judah") is used without exception for the period following the divided kingdom. Could the story in vs. 5 of David's request for Ziklag have arisen to explain a late monarchial claim on Ziklag by the royal house? This interpretation seems out of the question in the light of ch. 30, in which David's possession of Ziklag is presupposed. We conclude, therefore, that in this case, even though the form which has been used is a genuine etiological one, the formula is not primary to the tradition, but plays a secondary rôle.

The problem is more complex in Josh 14 14. The story reflects the very ancient and complex traditions of Caleb in Hebron (Num 13-14).²³ 14 14 establishes a causal relationship with the preceding story. Noth's analysis is quite plausible in suggesting that the etiological question of why Caleb was in Hebron was a primary factor in the formation of the traditions. However, the evidence for this conclusion of etiological primacy would have to stem from chapters other than Josh 14. In this chapter the formula serves a different function. A comparison with 14 8-9 indicates that the writer is explaining why Caleb received an inheritance "for ever" as a result of his obedience: "because you have wholly followed Yahweh . . ." Vs. 14 returns to this theme and confirms it. Moses' promise of "for ever" has been fulfilled. "Until this day" the land belongs to Caleb "because he wholly followed Yahweh." Josh 14 no longer reflects an ethnic etiology, but a theological doctrine of the deuteronomist. The presupposition for such a theological appropriation is an existing tradition. We leave the issue open as to whether originally the Caleb traditions were collected for etiological interests, but suggest that in Josh 14 the etiological interest has been replaced by a theological one.

3. *Cultic etiologies.* There are six examples of the formula within a general cultic context.²⁴ We have already analyzed the breakdown of form in I Kings 8 8 and II Chron 35 25. The formulae in II Kings 17 34, 41 are closely akin to the nonetiological idiom which marks a terminus, and serves to indicate extension rather than causation.

I Sam 5 5 has retained a pure etiological form, yet again a dislocation in content has occurred. Vs. 5 establishes etilogically an ancient cultic practice: "the priests of Dagon do not tread on the threshold . . . until this day." Numerous parallels from comparative religion reveal that this is a mark of special reverence.²⁵ Yet the actual story which provides the etiology recounts the humiliation of Dagon and forms part of the ark tradition. We infer that in the present story the original

²³ M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, pp. 143 ff.

²⁴ Gen 32 33; I Sam 5 5; I Kings 8 8; II Kings 17 34, 41; II Chron 35 35.

²⁵ Cf. the examples cited by H. Gressmann, *SAT*², II, 1, pp. 19 f.

Canaanite cult etiology has been mutilated and all except the final sentence has been replaced by Hebrew tradition. The highly incongruous effect of the fusion appears to be a conscious device of the author, perhaps for the purpose of ridicule. Again, the evidence is unequivocal that the tradition in vss. 1-4 was independent of the etiological formulation.

The traditions of Gen 32 24 ff. are highly involved. Gunkel observed that at least three etiological motifs were present: the naming of Jacob, the naming of Bethel, and the prohibition to eat the thigh sinew.²⁶ The present story has a fundamental incongruence which Gunkel saw clearly. Vs. 26 states that Jacob's thigh was dislocated. Yet in the description which follows, it is not Jacob, but his antagonist, who begs for release and obtains it only after he blesses Jacob. Jacob receives the name Israel because he has "striven with God and men and been victor." Elliger²⁷ has demonstrated convincingly that this difficulty cannot be resolved by separating the material into literary sources. Rather, the problem lies in the oral tradition. The parallel in Hos 12 further confirms the suspicion that in the original story Jacob overcame the opponent and thereby received his name.

The incongruence in the present text arises from the combination of two additional motifs. The exact sequence of this process is no longer fully clear. The prohibition of the thigh sinew stems from a cultic practice which was introduced into the Jacob cycle and historicized. The indefinite antecedent to the verbs in vs. 26 provided an easy means of linking the two traditions. The addition of vs. 26b changed the actual subject of 26a into the object.

Again, the implications of this text for our study are significant. The formula in vs. 33 has a genuine etiological function of establishing a causal relationship for an existing cultic practice. Yet again, this etiological motif has been secondarily added to the main tradition in the story, which is the naming of Jacob.

4. *Nature etiologies.* There are nine examples of this class of etiology with the formula.²⁸ With the one exception of II Kings 2 22, these all fit into the same pattern. In each case, the breakdown in form evidences that the formula has been secondarily added to independent tradition.

The story in II Kings 2 19-22 at first sight appears to be genuinely etiological. Vs. 22 establishes a causal connection and is not merely a descriptive summary. However, a closer analysis reveals some interesting variations both in the form and content of the story. Most probably the verb *וירפו* in vs. 22 is an aorist. Although Elisha throws salt into the spring, this action merely serves to introduce the main point of the

²⁶ H. Gunkel, *Genesis*⁴, pp. 359 ff.

²⁷ K. Elliger, "Der Jakobskampf am Jabbok," *ZTK*, 48 (1951), pp. 1 ff.

²⁸ Gen 35 20; Josh 4 9; 7 26a; 8 28, 29; 10 27; I Sam 6 18; II Kings 2 22; 10 27.

story, which has to do with the word of Yahweh (vs. 21). The etiological formula confirms that Yahweh's word was effective. Although it is possible that the material of the original story stemmed from a local etiological tale, the material now reflects a particular interest, which is characterized by the phrase "according to the word." The parallels in II Kings 4 44, 5 14, 7 6, and I Kings 17 16 indicate a general theological pattern. These are all miracle stories, illustrating the effect of the word. The etiological formulation in 2 22 again seems to be a secondary addition to independent tradition.

5. *Political etiologies.* There are six examples of political etiologies,²⁹ but in two the Chronicler is recording the traditions of Kings. In every example the main verb is a waw consecutive imperfect and should be translated as an aorist. The case is clear in II Kings 8 22: "and Edom revolted from the rule of Judah (as is the situation today). Then Libnah revolted at the same time." Montgomery's contention that the "then" is a later substitute for a specific datum in the annals is convincing.³⁰ The aorist tense is confirmed by I Chron 5 26, where a frequentative sense is obviously excluded. We conclude, therefore, that in none of these examples is there a genuine etiology involved. Historical traditions, some of which stemmed from the annals of Judah, were later joined to the formula. In every case, the formula was secondary.

6. *Legal etiologies.* There are two examples which belong to this class. In I Sam 30 25 the idiom *מדיום ההוא ומעלה* ("from that day forward") marks the extent of a period in which only the *terminus a quo* has been fixed. The addition of the formula "until this day," which is not part of the original idiom (cf. I Sam 16 13), supplements the indefinite *מעלה* by establishing the *terminus ad quem* up to the time of the redactor. The addition of the formula creates a form of the non-etiological idiom which we discussed at the beginning of the paper. Its function was to mark an extension in time rather than to establish a causal link. The position of the formula within the sentence (Gen 47 25) separates a modifying phrase from its noun, and evidences its secondary character.

7. *Sociological etiologies.* Not one of the three examples³¹ in this class is a genuine etiology. The redactor of earlier tradition affirms that a condition associated with a past event in Israel's history continued to exist also in his day.

To summarize: A study of the content of the etiological material reveals that, in the great majority of cases, the formula, "until this day,"

²⁹ I Kings 12 19=II Chron 10 19; II Kings 8 22=II Chron 21 10; II Kings 17 23; I Chron 5 26.

³⁰ J. A. Montgomery, "Archival Data in the Book of Kings," *JBL*, 53 (1934), pp. 46-52.

³¹ Josh 9 27; I Kings 9 21=II Chron 8 8.

has been secondarily added as a redactional commentary on existing traditions.

V

Keeping these results in mind, we turn to our final question. What is the provenance — the *Sitz im Leben* — of the biblical formula? One of the basic presuppositions of Alt³² and Noth³³ was that the formula should be localized in the etiological story. The purpose of the story was to explain and legitimize a given practice or phenomenon by projecting its origin into the distant past, from which point a direct line of tradition could be traced "until this day." Can this thesis be sustained?

At the outset we encounter a difficulty. In studying ancient extra-biblical sources it is not always possible to recover the original etiological story. Most stories have been preserved in a literary genre which has adapted and altered the material for its own purpose. This is true for most of the Sumerian-Babylonian material. Etiological motifs are present (e. g., in the myth of Enki and Ninhursag,³⁴ and in the Gilgamesh epic³⁵), but the original tradition has been altered. The present literary composition is not primarily etiological in character.

The same difficulty arises with many of the Greek authors.³⁶ Hesiod's *Theogony* abounds in etiological motifs, but everywhere the tradition at his disposal has been reworked and subordinated to his literary purposes. Even Callimachus, who devoted an entire book to the *Aitia*, is of little help as a source of pure etiological tradition. It is only when we come to Greek authors who are content simply to record the popular tradition, such as Herodotus and Pausanias, that a genuine source of etiological tradition is made accessible.

The *Histories* of Herodotus are filled with etiological stories,³⁷ most frequently to explain and justify an existing cultic practice, such as the cult involving human sacrifice to Zeus Laphystios (vii, 197).³⁸ Again,

³² Alt, "Josua," *op. cit.*, pp. 185 ff.

³³ Noth, *Josua*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 f.

³⁴ J. B. Pritchard, ed., *ANET*², pp. 37–41. Cf. the etiological interpretation of T. Jacobsen, *Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, pp. 157 ff.

³⁵ Pritchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 60 ff., especially p. 96, lines 278 ff.

³⁶ The most recent discussion of Greek etiologies is M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*², I, pp. 26–35.

³⁷ W. Aly, *Volksmärchen, Sage und Novelle bei Herodot und seinen Zeitgenossen* (Göttingen, 1921), remains the basic study. A treatment of the entire subject of etiology in the OT would necessitate a differentiation among the various *Gattungen* within the broad category of etiology which would follow the lines indicated by Aly. Particularly the contributions of modern *Märchenforschung* would have to be included (cf. *RGG*³, 4, pp. 581 ff.).

³⁸ M. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung*, pp. 10 ff.

the etiology explains peculiar features of a people such as the "female disease" of the Scythians (i, 105),³⁹ or why the Scythians wear little cups attached to their clasps (iv, 8–10). Moreover, in many of these stories a Greek equivalent to the Hebrew formula appears, such as *ἔτι καὶ ἐς τὸδε*, or *ἐς ἐμὲ ἔτι*. Similar examples appear with great frequency in Pausanias,⁴⁰ and in Apollodorus,⁴¹ Ovid,⁴² and the *Lives of the Prophets*,⁴³ to mention only a few. In other words, Alt was right when he located the formula *עד היום הזה* in the etiology. But is this the only *Sitz im Leben* for the formula, and is it really a parallel to the OT usage?

One of the most characteristic features of the writings of Herodotus is the author's constant reference to his own personal testimony. After repeating a tradition which he has heard, Herodotus frequently passes judgment on its reliability. Of particular interest to us is the manner in which he expresses his judgment as the eye witness. In ii, 154 he concludes an account of the first settlement of foreigners in Egypt with the comment: "The docks and ruined houses of their first homes are still to be seen in my day" (*μέχρι ἐμοῦ*). In ii, 182 he testifies that a statue set up in Cyrene by Ladice was still to be seen "up to my own time" (*ἔτι καὶ τὸ μέχρι ἐμοῦ*). Furthermore, tombs could still be seen (iv, 11), the fetters on which the Athenians were hung were still there "in my day" (v, 77). A column commemorating bravery of an army still stands in the public square (vi, 14).

Although Herodotus does not use a rigidly set formula, a general pattern of usage does emerge in the hundred of examples in which he offers an eyewitness testimony. In every instance, there is some physical phenomenon or practice, the existence of which he verifies empirically. In the great majority of cases, the account in which the object appeared was a nonetiological narrative.⁴⁴ The author reports a tradition and then adds his personal testimony regarding some aspect of the tradition which can still be verified in his own time.

A similar formula, indeed often identical, appears dozens of times in Pausanias. Like Herodotus, Pausanias is concerned to add his personal

³⁹ K. Meuli, "Scythica," *Hermes*, 70 (1935), pp. 128 ff.

⁴⁰ *Description of Greece*: origin of a cult (vii, 5, 8; viii, 23, 7), sacred cave (viii, 42, 12), etymology of a slogan (x, 1, 7). The classic study is still J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece*, 6 vols., (1898). Cf. also Jane Harrison's introductory essay in M. Verrall, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (1890).

⁴¹ Cf. the Loeb edition, J. G. Frazer, ed., i, 6, 3; i, 9, 26.

⁴² *Metamorphoses* ii, 706.

⁴³ C. C. Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets*, p. 34 § 4; pp. 35 f. §§ 4, 8, 15.

⁴⁴ There are a few examples of the testimony formula which appear with genuinely etiological material (ii, 130 and 141). At times it is difficult to determine whether the formula is genuinely etiological and belongs to the primary tradition or is the testimony formula of the later redactor.

witness to his description. He is interested in offering "extant proofs" (*τεκμήρια ἐς τόδε* — i, 41, 8). He testifies that a grave can still be seen (*ἔτι καὶ νῦν* — i, 10, 5), statues are still visible (*καὶ ἐς ἡμᾶς ἔτι* — ii, 3, 7), and a cult ceremony to the Maid still continues (*καὶ νῦν ἔτι* — ii, 22, 3). In the majority of instances, the material is nonetiological in character.

Moreover, a similar formula of personal testimony appears in Polybius,⁴⁵ I Maccabees,⁴⁶ Livy,⁴⁷ and Plutarch.⁴⁸

In our opinion, the use of the formula in the OT is closely paralleled to this latter usage, namely, to the historian's personal witness. Moreover, we suggest that the divergencies from the pure etiological pattern which our form critical study revealed find a direct parallel in this personal testimony form of the redactor. In both instances, the writers are recording independent tradition to which they add the formula secondarily.

If we ask in which historical period was the testimony formula used in the OT, it is evident that the formula reflects the age of many different redactors. The use in Josh 15 63 and 16 10 points to a period not later than the tenth century. In the early historical books the formula belongs to the earliest traditions of the book and seldom belongs to the deuteronomistic framework, although it would be unwise to attempt to identify the age of each redaction. The diversity of age is seen best in the book of Kings.⁴⁹ The sources are frequently identified and the diversity of age is certain. The formula appears in material most likely from the source styled the "Book of the Acts of Solomon" (I Kings 11 41; cf. 8 8; 9 21), from material in the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" (II Kings 8 23; cf. II Kings 8 22; 10 27, etc.), from a collection of prophetic narratives (II Kings 2 2), and only infrequently from the deuteronomistic historian (II Kings 17 23, 34). The Chronicler continues the use of the formula, but it is difficult to determine to which level of the tradition the formula belongs.⁵⁰

We conclude, therefore, that the biblical formula, עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, seldom has an etiological function of justifying an existing phenomenon, but in the great majority of cases is a formula of personal testimony added to, and confirming, a received tradition.

⁴⁵ *Hist.* iii, 26, 2.

⁴⁶ 13 30.

⁴⁷ *Hist.* i, 26, 13.

⁴⁸ *Vit. Them.* 22, 2; *Vit. Arist.* 27, 4; *Vit. Cimon* 19, 4.

⁴⁹ Cf. M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, pp. 108 ff.; A. Jepsen, *Die Quellen des Königsbuches*².

⁵⁰ W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, p. 42.