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## The Universalism of the Spirit of Prophecy in Numbers 11:26-29<sup>1</sup>

### *Univerzalnost preroškega duha v 4 Mz 11,26-29*

*Abstract:* This article attempts to explain and interpret the mention in Num 11:26-29 of the prophesying of Eldad and Medad in the context of the historical-literary formation process of Num 11, the Book of Numbers as a whole, and other texts dealing with the primary history of Israel.

The presented study results suggest that Num 11:4-32 is a coherent story that received its final form in the late Persian period. The passus in Num 11:26-29 is an addition to the already existing story about the murmuring of the Israelites, the quails, and the prophesying of the seventy elders, which was edited in stages. Its presence can be attributed to the universalising rereading presumed in this article as a phase in the text's formation under consideration, which followed the Hexateuchal and the Pentateuchal redaction. This rereading reflects the universalising tendencies present in the theological and social concepts of the post-exilic community of Judah, which was concerned about its identity. In the case of Num 11:26-29, it emphasises the democratisation of prophecy and the universalism of the prophetic Spirit.

*Keywords:* Old Testament, Numbers, prophecy, Spirit, universalism, identity

*Povzetek:* Članek poskuša pojasniti in interpretirati omembo iz 4 Mz 11,26-29 o prerokovanju Eldada in Medada v kontekstu literarnozgodovinskega oblikovanja 11. poglavja 4. Mojzesove knjige, te knjige kot celote in drugih besedil, ki obravnavajo prazgodovino Izraela. Rezultati pričujoče študije vodijo k ugotovitvi, da predstavlja 4 Mz 11,4-32 celovito zgodbo, ki je svojo končno podobo dobila v poznem perzijskem obdobju. Odlomek 4 Mz 11,26-29 je dodatek k že obstoječi zgodbi o stiskah Izraelcev, njihovih bojih in prerokovanju sedemdesetih starešin, ki se je urejala v različnih fazah. Obstoje odlomka lahko pripišemo univerzalističnemu ponovnemu branju (reinterpretaciji), ki ga predpostavljamo kot eno izmed faz v oblikovanju proučevanega besedila – sledila je redakcijam šesteroknižja in peteroknižja. Takšno branje odraža težnje k univerzalnosti, prisotne v teoloških in družbenih konceptih judovske skupnosti v skrbi za njeno

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identiteto po izhodu iz Egipta (eksodusu). V primeru 4 Mz 11,26-29 gre tako za poudarjanje demokratizacije prerokovanja in univerzalizma preroškega duha.

*Ključne besede:* Stara zaveza, 4. Mojzesova knjiga (Numeri), preroštvo, duh, univerzalnost, identiteta

## 1. Introduction

The story of the Israelites' complaining and the gift of the spirit of prophecy in Numbers 11 has already received various interpretations both in terms of the theological message and the history of the formation of the text, which is related to differences in the perception of the historical becoming of the Book of Numbers and the entire Pentateuch, and also of the books that follow it in the Hebrew Bible. The current text of Num 11 is the fruit of redaction and elaboration. It concerns the Israelites' complaints and murmuring against Moses and God, God's anger and Moses' intercession, and God's response in the form of the gift of quails and the spirit of prophecy to the elders of the people.

The seventy elders came to the tent of meeting, and there, as God foretold, they received the spirit that was on Moses, and they prophesied. In contrast, Eldad and Medad received the spirit of YHWH and began to prophesy as well, even though they had not come to the tent of meeting. Contrary to Joshua's objections to the prophesying of Eldad and Medad, Moses expressed the wish: »Would that all YHWH's people were prophets, that YHWH would put his spirit on them.« (Num 11:29b)

The aim of this study is not so much to discuss the relationship of God's spirit with prophecy or the nature of the prophecy of the elders and their prophetic status in comparison with the status and authority of Moses but to attempt to indicate the historically possible process of formation of the text with the mention of Eldad and Medad in Num 11, along with what conditioned it, and to discover the message addressed to the first recipients of the current text.

## 2. Num 11:26-29 in the Structure of Num 11

The text of Num 11 as a larger thematic pericope can easily be separated from the preceding and the following context. Num 10 concludes with a mention of the Israelites' three-day march »from the mount of YHWH« after »the ark of the covenant of YHWH« (vv. 33-36). The beginning of Num 11 is a short, schematic presentation of the people's murmuring as they wandered through the desert (vv. 1-3)<sup>2</sup>. The passage mentions the people's murmuring and complaining, the anger of God, Moses' intercession, the cessation of God's anger, and the etiologi-

<sup>2</sup> The schematic order of this passage and its function as an introduction to the cycle of seven stories about complaints, rebellion and conflict present in the Book of Numbers was indicated by T. Römer (2007, 433-434). In Num 11:1-3, a link is also seen between the image of the ideal situation of the Israelites marching from Sinai (Num 10:11-36) and the story of the grumbling of the people (Num 11:4-12:16) at the beginning of the unsuccessful conquest of the Promised Land from the south side (Num

cal explanation of the name of the place of murmuring (Tabera). The section of Num 11:4-32 provides a more extensive description of the Israelites' complaints and YHWH's solution to the problem. The statement in Num 11:33-34, with the mention of YHWH's anger against the people and the etiology of the place's name (Kibrot-Hattaawa), recalls thematically and terminologically Num 11:1-3, thus closing the entire pericope of Num 11.<sup>3</sup> The last verse of the chapter tells us that the people undertook the next stage of their wandering (v. 35). The theme of Num 12 from the very beginning is the rebellion of Miriam and Aaron against Moses.

The complaining scene described in Num 11:4-32 first gives the reason for the people's complaints. This was food. They wanted meat and had only manna (vv. 4-9). The people's cry ignited the anger of YHWH. It did not please Moses either (v. 10). He then turned to YHWH, bemoaning his fate as a leader and the fact that he was unable to give meat to the people for whom he was concerned (vv. 11-15). YHWH responded to Moses' words by announcing that two things would be given: (1) a spirit for the seventy elders to enable them to bear the burden of the people with Moses (vv. 16-17), and (2) meat for all the people to eat (vv. 18-23). The following verses, in addition to the note that Moses made known to the people the words of YHWH (v. 24a), describe the fulfilment of God's announcements (vv. 24b-32): the gift of the spirit (vv. 24b-30) and meat (vv. 31-32).

There are two parts in the passage about the gift of the spirit (vv. 24b-30). The first (vv. 24b-25) concerns the endowment of prophecy to the seventy elders who came to the tent of meeting. The text mentions the gathering of the elders around the tent (v. 24b), the descent of YHWH and the transmission of the spirit to the elders (v. 25a), and their prophesying (v. 25b). The content of the second part (vv. 26-29) is the episode with Eldad and Medad. According to the biblical text, the spirit rested on Eldad and Medad, and they began to prophesy even though they did not come to the tent (v. 26). A young man said to Moses that Eldad and Medad were acting as prophets (v. 27). Joshua, on the other hand, asked Moses to stop them (v. 28). And Moses expressed the wish that all the people would prophesy through the spirit of YHWH (v. 29). After the words of Moses, it is mentioned in the text that he and the elders went back to the camp (v. 30).

Schematically, the entire section of Num 11:4-32 can be presented as follows:

- vv. 4-15 the complaints of the people and the complaints of Moses
- vv. 16-34 God's reaction
  - vv. 16-24a commands and announcements
    - vv. 16-17 announcement of the gift of the spirit for the seventy elders
    - vv. 18-24a announcement of meat for the people
  - vv. 24b-34 fulfilment of announcements
    - vv. 24b-30 fulfilment of the announcement of the spirit

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13:1–14:45), a kind of programmed opening of the saga of that unsuccessful campaign (Knierim and Coats 2005, 172–173).

<sup>3</sup> Common words: ,anger of YHWH' /,his anger' (*'ap yhw /'appô*), ,burn' (*hârâ /wayyihar*), ,against the people' /,against them' (*bâ'am /bâm*). In Num 11 the same vocabulary is present more in v. 10ba (*wayyihar-'ap yhw m'ôd*).

- v. 24b gathering of the elders around the tent
- v. 25 bestowing of the spirit on the seventy elders
- vv. 26-29 bestowing of the spirit on Eldad and Medad
  - v. 26 the resting of the spirit on Eldad and Medad and their prophesying
  - vv. 27-29 controversy over the prophesying of Eldad and Medad
- v. 30 return of Moses and the elders to the camp
- vv. 31-32 fulfilment of the announcement of meat (quails)

The content-thematic structure of this section of Num 11:4-32 appears ordered and planned. The lamentation of the people and the complaints of Moses provoke God's response through the gift of the spirit of prophecy and the gift of meat. In the structure read this way, the only surprise is the episode with Eldad and Medad (Num 11:26-29).<sup>4</sup> This element is not necessary for the content completeness of the entire section's utterance: granting the spirit to the seventy elders was sufficient for YHWH's announced relief of Moses. At least, for this reason, the passage presenting the episode with Eldad and Medad can be considered the result and evidence of the historical development of the Num 11 text.

### 3. Num 11:26-29 in the History of the Formation of Num 11

In the current discussion on the origin of the Book of Numbers, the opinion appears to be correct that the text of Numbers in its last form is the fruit of both redactional work, especially of the post-exilic redactors of the Pentateuch (and even Hexateuch), and numerous so-called *Fortschreibungen*, that is, successive reworkings, re-readings, revisions, updating and additions to earlier texts.<sup>5</sup> We can see the rise of Num 11 in this context of literary work.

Most commentators see two intertwined stories in Num 11: (1) about the grumbling over the lack of meat, and the miracle of the quails, and (2) about the elders and the spirit bestowed on them. Researchers generally agree on the chronological precedence of the story about complaining and quails, often identifying it as Yahwistic (J). The material about the elders and the gift of the spirit for them would be attached to it a little later (Noth 1966, 75; Seebass 2003, 42-45; Schmidt 2004, 27; Knierim and Coats 2005, 176-178).<sup>6</sup> So, scholars see Num 11 as a narrative that has grown in stages (Noth 1966, 79-81; Knierim and Coats 2005, 176-177).

For R. Achenbach, the literary foundation of this chapter was not an old Yahwistic, but a narrative fragment of the post-exilic reformulation of the legends about the exodus, speaking about the miracle of the quails (Achenbach 2003, 219-235).

<sup>4</sup> Structural distinctiveness of the Eldad-Medad element was noticed and emphasized e.g. by Knierim and George in their reading of the narrative structure of Num 11 (2005, 173-177). For more on other different approaches to this issue, see e.g. Milgrom 1990, 83-84; Achenbach 2003, 220; Seebass 2003, 34-38.

<sup>5</sup> For the main trends in current research on the issue, see e.g. R. Achenbach (2003; 2007, 1-5), H. Seebass (2008, 234-259), T. Römer (2007, 419-445; 2008, 28-34; 2013, 19-20), R. Albertz (2011a, 171-183; 2011b, 336-347), C. Frevel (2013, 6-32; 2014, 255-299), J.L. Ska (2014, 106-108), and also J. Lemański (2014, 148-155).

<sup>6</sup> Otherwise, e.g. B.A. Levine, who prefers to regard Num 11 as a coherent composition, instead of distinguishing diachronically two themes (1993, 327-328).

This story was later reworked in the Hexateuchal redaction (in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC) into a story about murmuring and rebellion. The redactor of the Pentateuch (in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC), in turn, extended this basic narrative by adding another about the relief of Moses by the seventy elders, which, in terms of content and language, is not closely related to the story about the quails and its negative interpretation. Instead, it was composed as a legend about the origins of the council of elders (237). In substance, this legend would include the lamentation of Moses (vv. 10aβ.bβ.11-12.14-15), the command and announcement of YHWH (vv. 16-17), the gathering of the seventy elders at the tent of meeting (v. 24b), the descent of YHWH and the giving of the spirit to the elders (v. 25), and the episode with Eldad and Medad (vv. 26-29), followed by an ending (v. 30). The event's location at the tent of the meeting is to testify to the post-Priestly (post-P) Pentateuchal redaction of the material (Achenbach 2003, 246–251). Furthermore, the idea of the council of elders does not allow the redaction of the story to be dated before the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (251–259). According to R. Achenbach, the history of relieving Moses in Num 11 is part of the reworking that constituted the Torah in the final process of its formation, and the episode with Eldad and Medad (Num 11:26-30) is a necessary haggadic continuation of this story (Achenbach 2003, 262–263).

In the episode with Eldad and Medad, however, suddenly new content elements appear: the names Eldad and Medad, the enlargement of the group of men endowed with the spirit from seventy to seventy-two, the criterion of being among the written, the unjustified absence of Eldad and Medad at the meeting tent. Both these elements and the fact mentioned above that the episode with Eldad and Medad is not necessary for the content completeness of the section's statement on the fulfilment of YHWH's announcement (vv. 24b-34), rather indicate that the fragment about Eldad and Medad is a separate supplement to the already written history.<sup>7</sup> The observations and analyses presented here, as well as other historical-critical research, however ambiguous, lead to the preliminary opinion that the passage about Eldad and Medad is a compositional supplement to the post-Priestly story about the elders and the alleviation of Moses' burden.

#### 4. Analysis of Some Expressions and Motifs from Num 11:26-29

Verse 26 states that the two men remained in the camp and did not go out to the tent of meeting, even though they »were of those who were written« (*bakk<sup>e</sup>tubîm* [v. 26]). The list would therefore include seventy-two elders, but only seventy were gathered around the tent, as commanded by YHWH. Some rabbis believed that Moses had a problem with how to appoint seventy elders from among the people. So first, he chose six from each tribe, so seventy-two in all, and then by drawing lots, two of them were excluded (Sanh 17a; Bemidbar Rabbah 15:18-19)

<sup>7</sup> Some of the arguments for such a position have already been presented by M. Noth (1966, 80), L. Schmidt (2004, 21.27), and also S. Germany (2017,199–200). H. Seebass includes in this addition also v. 25b (2003, 52–53).

(Goldschmidt 1996, 520; Feuer 2020). Eldad and Medad would therefore be those drawn not to be included in the assembly by the tent. According to another interpretation, the term »were written« refers to the entire body of Israel's elders, of whom seventy were selected (Gray 1956, 114). However, if the episode with Eldad and Medad was added by the redactor at a later stage in the development of the text, as stated above, then the supplementation of the number of the gifted elders to make it up to seventy-two can be understood as a literary reflection of a universalising tendency: the spirit was received by two elders from each tribe of Israel. All of Israel was represented by them.

Whatever the reason for Eldad and Medad's absence at the tent of meeting was, »the spirit rested on them (*tānaḥ [nwh] 'ēlêhem hārûaḥ*) /.../ and they prophesied (*wayyitnabb<sup>e</sup>û* [nb' - hitp]) in the camp« (Num 11:26). In the Hebrew Bible, there are references to the mighty coming (*šlh /hyh 'al*) of the spirit of God /YHWH, which introduced a prophetic ecstasy. It was experienced by a group of prophets (1 Sam 10:5-6) and by Saul and his messengers (1 Sam 10:10; 18:10; 19:20.23). However, this prophetic rapture was not permanent, nor was it directed towards transmitting God's message.

The narrative of Elijah and Elisha conveys instead that the spirit accompanied the prophetic activity. It was strongly associated with the person of the prophet and could be inherited. There, too, the spirit does not cause words, but only a demonstration of power (2 Kgs 2:9.14-15) (Albertz and Westermann 1993, 749; Tengström 1993, 413-415; Levison 2003, 518; Palmisano 2019, 88-89). This was not the case with Balaam. »The spirit of God came upon him (*t<sup>e</sup>hî 'ālāyw*), and he uttered his oracle.« (Num 24:2-3)

Some texts identified as post-exilic clearly indicate the relationship between the spirit of God /YHWH and prophecy and testify that the spirit enabled prophesying (2 Chr 15:1; 20:14; 24:20). Prophetic utterances were inspired by the spirit of God (Neh 9:30; Isa 61:1; Zech 7:12; Mic 3:8) (Albertz and Westermann 1993, 749). Through the prophet Joel, God foretold that he would pour out his spirit on all humanity and all would prophesy (Joel 3:1-2).

There are mentions in the Old Testament that the fruit of endowment by the spirit was charismatic giftedness, which allowed some heroes to take on specific tasks and social roles assigned to them by God, especially leadership. Thus, the craftsman Bezalel, of the tribe of Judah, was filled with God's spirit, that it might guide the work on the construction of a desert sanctuary (Exod 35:30-35). The spirit of YHWH stirred Samson and made him very strong (Judg 13:24-25; 14:6.19; 15:14). This spirit also clothed Gideon when he undertook the mission of delivering Israel from the hand of the Midianites (Judg 6:34), and the spirit was with Judge Othniel and Jephthah (Judg 3:10; 11:29.32). The mighty coming of YHWH's spirit upon Saul was first a sign of his appointment as king of Israel, and then also, as later in the case of David, made him able to carry out his royal duties (1 Sam 10:6.10; 16:13-14) (Tengström 1993, 414-415). Isaiah's prophecy in 11:2 mentions that the spirit of YHWH shall rest upon a future ruler, and the text of Genesis communicates that the pharaoh recognised the presence of God's spirit (*rûaḥ 'elōhîm*) in Joseph when Joseph explained the dream and with his

words proved that God spoke through him (Gen 41:38; cf. 41:16) (Tengström 1993, 413–414; Wenham 2000, 394–395).

According to Num 27:18, YHWH instructed Moses to take Joshua, the son of Nun, in whom was the spirit and laid his hand upon him, to transfer leadership (Num 27:15–23). Joshua qualified as Moses' successor because he already possessed the spirit, which can be understood here as his proper disposition toward YHWH (Milgrom 1990, 235; Block 2004, 810). In Deut 34:9, in turn, we read: »Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom (*rûah hokmâ*), for Moses had laid his hands on him.« Thus, YHWH provided Joshua with the spirit of wisdom when Moses laid his hands on Joshua in the investiture of leadership. This spirit was a divine gift, an extraordinary divine endowment to fulfil a divinely ordained role. It had to enable Joshua to lead the people after Moses in accordance with God's expectations.

If that ritual of investiture involving both Moses' hands resulted in the transference of the divine spirit to Joshua, it means that Moses possessed the same spirit of wisdom (Block 2004, 810–811; Grisanti 2012, 813). This fact is confirmed in Num 11 in the words of YHWH, who announces that he will take of the spirit which is on Moses and will put it on the seventy elders of Israel that they may bear the burden of the people with Moses (11:17). As a result of this transmission of the spirit to those seventy elders, they prophesied (*wayyitnabb<sup>e</sup>'û*) and so did Eldad and Medad (*mitnabb<sup>e</sup>'îm*) (Num 11:25–27).

The selection of suitable men who had to bear the burden of the people with Moses is also mentioned in Exod 18:13–27 and Deut 1:9–18. Both texts are about taking over Moses's responsibility of judging the people on more uncomplicated matters and the administration. In the first of these texts, such action is the subject of the wise advice of Moses' father-in-law, and in the second, Moses himself takes the initiative in this regard. It is different in Num 11, where YHWH says what to do, and to ease Moses' burden, he gives the chosen men a spirit that enables them to prophesy. By receiving the spirit that was on Moses, they were given a share in the prophetic authority of Moses.

At the end of Num 11:25, after the words mentioning that the seventy elders prophesied, in the Masoretic text there is the clause *lô' yāsāpû*, which is translated as »they did not continue [doing it]«. This addition could mean that this prophesying was just a transient phenomenon that affected the elders on this occasion only in order to provide divine validation for their selection as leaders in the community (Milgrom 1990, 89; Davies 1995, 110; Levison 2003, 519). In such a case, in what exactly would their participation in bearing the burden of the people consist? What would the leadership of the elders come down to? In the verses mentioning the prophecies of Eldad and Medad (v. 26–29), that comment is not made. It is perhaps more legitimate to follow the testimony of targums and the Vulgate, which in v. 25b instead of *yāsāpû* (from *ysp* – ,add, do again, continue') read *yāsupû* (from *swp* – ,cease, come to an end'), and to translate the clause as »they did not cease« (Noth 1966, 74; Scharbert 1992, 50; Seebass 2003, 31; Römer 2007, 438–439). The text of Num 11 only states that the seventy elders, and likewise Eldad and Medad, prophesied. In any case, that prophetic activity may have been less in administering and

judging than in carrying out specific spiritual and pastoral activities, helping Moses to educate the people and strengthening them in faithfulness to YHWH.<sup>8</sup>

According to Num 11:27, the prophesying of Eldad and Medad caused astonishment and stir. This also provoked a reaction from Joshua, who asked Moses to stop them (Num 11:28). Joshua is there referred to as the son of Nun and Moses's assistant (*m<sup>e</sup>šārēt*) from his youth. Earlier, in the Book of Exodus, he is depicted as Moses' assistant who served in the tent of meeting (Exod 33:11). This could already explain Joshua's involvement in the prophecy of Eldad and Medad in the camp, some distance from the tent of meeting. The Old Testament texts that follow Num 11 in the biblical canon refer to Joshua as the successor of Moses and the leader of the Israelite community (Num 27:12-23; Deut 3:23-28; Josh 4:14), representative of the Israelites before God YHWH (Josh 7:6-9), and also the messenger of his will (Josh 4:10; 8:30-35; 23: 6-11), his servant (*ʿebed yhw*) (Josh 24:29) and the covenant mediator (Josh 24:25-28). The biblical texts do not directly call Joshua a prophet. However, they allow the conclusion that the portrait of Joshua was made historically more and more prophetic. For example, in Josh 24:2, he addressed all the people with a prophetic formula: »Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel«. In 1 Kgs 16:34, the narrator speaks about »the word of Yahweh, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun«, and in Sir 46:1 Joshua is mentioned as »the successor of Moses in the prophetic office (*en prophēteiais*)«. The role of the prophet was assigned to Joshua clearly in the Apocryphon of Joshua from Qumran (2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> century BC). In the prophetised image of Joshua, outlined in these texts, he announces the will of God and interprets history in order to form the addressees of his statements (Blumenthal 2008, 90; Ben Zvi 2013, 85–87; Szamocki 2014, 80–87).

Joshua's protest in Num 11:28 was not due to jealousy that the elders prophesied who were not at the tent of meeting and did not receive the spirit of YHWH as he did, through Moses in a ritualistic ordinance. Moses' question in Num 11:29a: »Are you jealous for my sake?« reveals, however, that in the prophecies of Eldad and Medad, Joshua saw a threat to Moses' authority instead. The author /redactor of Num 11:26-29 thus put in Joshua's mouth words that correspond to the deuteronomistic ideology according to which there is a prophetic succession from Moses (cf. Deut 18:15-22) (Auld 2002, 240; Römer 2007, 438). Since Eldad and Medad began to prophesy independently of Moses, Joshua, who represented the institution of the tent, expressed concern about the disregard for the role of Moses. Moses saw the situation differently. For he expressed the wish that all YHWH's people would be able to prophesy by receiving YHWH's spirit (Num 11:29a). This statement by Moses can be seen as a testimony to a concept of prophecy different from what was indirectly expressed in the attitude and words of Joshua. For a feature of the concept reflected in Moses' utterance is the democratisation of prophecy and the universalisation of the spirit of YHWH, which enables and conditions prophecy.

The thought attributed to Moses in Num 11:29 shows a great deal of closeness to the prophetic announcement in Joel 3:1-2: »I will pour out my spirit on all flesh,

<sup>8</sup> This sort of activity and task was typical for a Mosaic prophet and as such remained in the memories of prophets in the post-exilic period (see e.g. 2 Kgs 17:13) (Scharbert 1992, 50; Ben Zvi 2013, 83).



and your sons and your daughters will prophesy.« However, while Num 11:29 is only about the wish that the entire people of YHWH should prophesy, in Joel 3:1-2, the promise that receiving the spirit of YHWH will enable the people to prophesy is also associated with the abolition of differences in age, gender, and social status. This will begin a new, prophetic existence with a new relationship to God and people (Wolff 1977, 66–67; Seebass 2003, 53).

The Book of Joel received its final form in the late Persian period. During this time, prophecy in Israel was undergoing its transformation and a new phase of development. The biblical texts from that time, especially 2 Chronicles, testify that in addition to the traditional prophecy related to the succession from Moses, there was also a concept of democratised prophecy, founded on charismatic gifting by the spirit of YHWH. Beside the ‚professional‘ prophets, there were temporary prophets who prophesied on certain occasions and in response to various challenges. They took on the role of a prophet for the good of the people when it was needed. That category of prophets could include priests, Levites, laypersons and even non-Israelite kings like Neco and Cyrus (2 Chr 20:14-15; 24:20; 35:20-22; 36:22-23). The spirit of YHWH was the motive force behind their prophetic utterances. The divine inspiration led first of all to the proclamation of a prophetic oracle and God’s will and not to an ecstatic and mantic behaviour. Hence the religious community of the time of Joel spoke more about the role of the spirit in prophecy to emphasise also its divine origin (2 Chr 15:1-2; 20:14-17; 24:20; Isa 61:1; Joel 3:1-2). According to the testimony of 2 Chronicles, the activity of the prophets of that time was also instructive and pedagogical. They encouraged humility and steadfastness, motivated people to be courageous in the face of foreign military threats, and also gave guidance on theopolitics (2 Chr 12:5-8; 15:1-7; 16:7-10) (Barton 1992, 492–494; Knoppers 2010, 395–405). The author/redactor of Num 11:26-29 may have seen the prophecy of Eldad and Medad in these terms. Thus prophesying, they would bear the burden of the people along with Moses (Num 11:17).

## 5. Final Remarks and Conclusions

The observations and analyses made suggest that in Num 11:26-29, we have a literary reflection of the historical confrontation between the two concepts of prophecy mentioned above. The prophesying of seventy elders (11:25) was dependent on Moses and as such, corresponded to the first concept. Moses gathered the elders at the tent of the meeting, where YHWH took of the Spirit that was on Moses (*yašer min-hārûah* ‘*āšer ‘ālāyw*) and put it on them. Joshua is the spokesman for this concept in our text. This was expressed in his reaction to the prophesying of Eldad and Medad and in his request to Moses: »stop them.« In turn, Moses’ answer to this request points to the second concept, which corresponded precisely to the prophesying of Eldad and Medad. Their prophesying was not dependent on Moses. Eldad and Medad were not with Moses at the tent, yet the spirit of YHWH came upon them, and they began to prophesy. In our text, it was Moses who opted for such a prophecy. That is why he said: »Would that all YHWH’s people were prophets, that YHWH would put his spirit on them.« (11:29b)

The passus about Eldad and Medad in Num 11:26-29, as a compositional addition from the late Persian period, is one of the results of the extensive editorial work undertaken by religious writers and redactors to reread and adapt existing and owned sacred texts to a new religious and socio-political context. Num 11:26-29 reflects the confrontation of the concepts of prophecy, and this confrontation was also part of a broader post-exilic debate on the particularism and universalism of God's gifts and blessings (Num 24:1-4; 1 Kgs 8:41-43; 2 Kgs 5) and on exclusivism and inclusivism of the community of the YHWH people (Lev 20:22-26; Josh 2; 6:25; Isa 56:6-7). The idea of the democratisation of prophecy and of the universalism of the prophetic spirit harmonised with the universalism of the gifts of blessing and religious and social inclusivism. Based on these conclusions, it is possible to try to place Num 11:26-29 more precisely in the process of formation of this part of the Bible, which deals with the primary history of Israel.

The analysis carried out allows assuming that before the Num 11:26-27 passage was incorporated into the existing material of Num 11, this already had its post-exilic history of redaction and reworking. The thesis put forward by R. Achenbach appears to be correct in this respect in its basic outline (Achenbach 2003, 221). Namely, in the first half of the 5th century BC, the Hexateuchal redaction (HexRed) composed a story about murmuring and quails. Among other things, it highlights Israel's recurring apostasy and also mentions the presence of strangers in Israel (v. 4). The next phase could be the Pentateuchal redaction (PentRed) in the second half of the 5th century BC. At this stage, the story of Moses' relief by the seventy elders was incorporated into Hexateuch's narrative. The redactors wanted to point out the role of the elders<sup>9</sup> and, first of all, the exceptional prophetic authority of Moses.

The main objective of the redaction of the whole Pentateuch was to define the identity of the post-exilic Jewish community and rising Judaism. That identity was founded in the Torah, received through the mediation of Moses.<sup>10</sup> Hence the redaction combined Deuteronomistic and Priestly ideas and concepts that emphasised the uniqueness of Israel and its exclusive relationship with YHWH. The prophecy was also perceived and characterised in accordance with this redactional orientation. In Num 11, it is, therefore, a prophecy by virtue of the spirit of YHWH received by a certain group of chosen ones - seventy elders - through Moses and in connection with his prophetic charism (Num 11:24-25).

The passage on the prophesying of Eldad and Medad should be connected with another, not so thorough, phase of the formation of texts about the primary history of Israel, which can be more closely described as a universalising rereading or revision (Rel/RevU). The interference in the text made in the context of this relecture would be a consequence of the theological and social debate held in Judah at the end of the Persian period. In discussions about identity, universalising and inclusivist tendencies

<sup>9</sup> It cannot be ruled out that - as R. Achenbach claims - this redactional supplement was a legend about the establishment of the council of elders (Achenbach 2003, 237.249-259). However, a detailed discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>10</sup> Such a perception of the Pentateuchal redaction is suggested for example by E. Otto (e.g. 2000, esp. 247-250; 2002, 125-155; 2013, 384-385) or T. Römer (e.g. 2011, 28-31).

have emerged again. In their perspective, the prophetic charism enjoyed by Moses would also be available to all members of the Judean community. The spirit of prophecy was not reserved only for some representatives of God's people. Hence, the words of such wishes were put into Moses' mouth: »Would that all YHWH's people were prophets, that YHWH would put his Spirit on them.« (Num 11:29) The universalising rereading also left its traces elsewhere in the text collection on the primary history of Israel. We are likely to find them in, for example, Deut 11:30; Josh 8:32-35; 1 Kgs 8:41-43. Verifying the thesis about this universalising rereading or revision requires further in-depth studies of the texts that may be considered its result.

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