second concentrates on the midrash to Deut. 26:8 in the Seder, trying to establish a historical reconstruction capable of isolating the lectio originalis from the lectio conflata to be found in the present text. Among his conclusions is that the text of Isaiah 63:9 (LXX) would presuppose knowledge of a derashah similar to that in the midrash to Deut. 26:8 in the Seder according to its ancient formulation, containing only two negations: "not by means of an angel and not by means of a messenger". The LXX, basing itself on the derashah of Deut. 26:8, would interpret the Hebrew text (according the technique of 'converse translation' which M. L. Klein has shown to be fairly widespread in the targumic tradition) of Isaiah 63:9, whilst contradicting its letter. In this way the LXX would set up a certain polemic against angelological developments concerning the 'angel of the Face' which we find in the book of Jubilees, in The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs and at Qumran. The anti-mediatory formula excluding both an angel or a messenger, to be found in the tannaitic midrashim (e.g. Mekilta Pisha 7 to Ex. 12:12; Pisha 13 to Ex. 12:29; Shabbata I to Ex. 31:12; Sifre Deut 42 to 11:14; 325 to 32:35) would also depend not on Is. 63:9 (LXX) but on the most ancient derashah of Deut. 26:8 of the Passover Haggadah. In fact, Mekilta to Ex. 12:41; 17:5; 19:12 (see also b.Sota 31a) knows of an interpretation of Isa. 63:9 quite different from that in the LXX. Jubilees 15:32 too would be aware and make use of, with slight modifications, the anti-mediatory derashah of Deut. 26:8. But with this difference: Isa. 63:9 (LXX) uses the derashah in a soteriological sense (in relation to the Passover/exodus event), Jub. 15:32 in the context of the election of the people. The application of the 'originating' derashah of Deut. 26:8 to different theological themes and in texts undoubtedly earlier than the tannaitic midrashim, (1) favours a very ancient dating for the derashah to Deut. 26:8 of the Seder; (2) witnesses to a 'fluid' state (the adjective is ours) of the transmission of the derashah, as suits the liturgical character of the text. To sum up, then, the derashah to Deut. 26:8 of the Passover Haggadah would appear to be a pre-Christian tradition, prior to the 1st Century B.C., in its most ancient formulation.

This Jewish anti-mediatory formula seems to have been known to N.T. writers and in early Christian literature (e.g. Ad Diognetum 7,2; Ps. Hippolytus, In s.Pascha 45), where it is taken over and adapted for christological purposes to set forth the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Prof. Pesce promises us another volume on this topic (see Introduzione, p.13; and Osservazioni conclusive, pp. 207-208), and we look forward to its publication.

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Having concluded his many-volumed History of the Mishnaic Law of Purities, Leiden 1974-1977), J. Neusner is hurrying on without interruption with the magnum opus of a systematic commentary and interpretation of the Mishnah/Tosefta. At the present time, Seder Kodashim is in the process of pub-

Seder *Kodashim* is set out in six volumes. The present first three volumes are concerned with the tractates *Zebohim, Menahot, Hullin* and *Bekhorot*, and the following three volumes with the remaining tractates and with a general survey of the "Mishnaic System of Sacrifice and Sanctuary". In contrast to the twenty-two volumes of *Purities*, Neusner has in this Seder made various important changes. Since the main purpose of his enquiry is historical, and he is primarily occupied with the "history of the ideas of the principal and generative document of Rabbinic Judaism" (Vol. I, p. IX), questions of form and redaction criticism are left out of consideration: "Questions of the history of exegesis and of the formation, formulation, transmission and redaction of literature of Mishnah-Tosefta . . . here are not raised. The reason is that the answers to these questions do not materially advance the single inquiry at hand, an investigation of the history of religions and of ideas . . . I believe that in the relevant sections of *Purities* I have solved all the problems I planned to begin with to address, concerning Mishnah's literary character and redaction. I am certain I have no further methodological or substantive contribution to make" (pp. Xf.). The work of form analysis is now transferred exclusively to the translation (it is now explicitly termed "form-analytic translation") and to the commentary. This simultaneously also involves, more still than in *Purities*, limiting the commentary — now defined simply "explanation" — to the individual tractates to what is absolutely necessary to the understanding of the Mishnah, and attaches even less importance than before to introducing traditional interpretations into the discussion: " . . . there is no reason to continue this thankless work of analytical criticism of the prior, harmonistic exegesis of Mishnah" (p. X). And finally, the historical development of the legal concepts is no longer presented separately for each individual tractate but summarised for the whole Seder in the last volume.

This focussing on the historical aim proper has firstly the great advantage that the immense volume of material appears much more concise than in *Purities*: the difference between twenty-two and six volumes illustrates this conspicuously. Without doubt, a great deal in *Purities* was unnecessarily detailed and a great deal also unnecessarily repetitive. The reader will consequently be grateful for this tightening up. Nevertheless, the about turn ("I believe it obvious that the solution of literary questions yields no important historical facts or insights whatsoever", p. XI) strikes me as somewhat too radical, and the abandonment of redaction analysis at least regrettable. The findings relating to the redaction of the complete Seder (summarised in Vol. XXI) are among the most significant and interesting of the issues in *Purities*, and are, I think, far from unimportant to a formulation of the historical problem. In *Purities*, very far-reaching deductions concerning the question of the nature and purpose of the whole Mishnah were drawn from the redaction of the Seder, deductions which deserved and needed to be scrutinized in the light of the other Sedarim. Thus, for example, it does not seem possible to answer the question of why the Mishnah reached redactional completion between A.D. 170 and 200 in exactly the same sense for *Kodashim* as for *Tohorot*. It would be a pity if this and similar questions were left unanswered, and the remaining Sedarim, because of an all too rigorous concentration on the main aim, were to fall behind the demands and standards of *Purities*.
In each of the tractates translated and commented on so far, the material is presented in a very meaningful and logical arrangement. Thus four great complexes can be discerned in Zeḇaḥīm dealing with the problem of intention in sacrifice, concrete prescriptions in regard to the sacrifice of cattle and birds, prescriptions for the altar, and with the question of the position of the altar, as well as of sacrifices offered outside the Temple.

Menahot is also divided into four complexes (intention in food offering, preparation of the food offering, special kinds of food offerings, vows in connection with food offerings) and shows an evident dependence on Zeḇaḥīm; moreover, the problem arises here for the first time of a tractate which in its statement says practically nothing more than what is asserted in the Bible. Ḥullin is above all interesting because the main development of its subject obviously did not take place until after the conclusion of the Mishnah tractate (cf. b. Ḥullin). That is to say, the problem is posed here in particular clarity of why the tractate or the whole Mishnah respectively was redacted between 170 and 200, or, formulated differently, of the relationship between the Mishnah and later rabbinic tradition literature. The tractate is divided into two great complexes (rules of slaughtering unconsecrated animals for use at home or in the Temple; rules on the preparation of food, principally for use at home), wherein the inner logic of the extensive second section remains this time largely obscure. Chapter 9, which seems as far as its subject is concerned not to belong to Ḥullin, displays (chiefly in the "formulary patterns" of the apodoses) close associations with Uqṣīn and perhaps fits in better there than in Tohoret.

Bekhoret is again arranged in four complexes (firstborn of animals; slaughtering a firstling by reason of blemishes; firstborn of man; the tithe of cattle), the last of which forms a thematically independent unity, attached here as an Appendix (R. Sarason — again with the help of formal criteria! — gives an illuminating reason for why this is so, p. 142, no. 1).

Much of what has been achieved in the analysis of the individual tractates will acquire its real worth only when the whole Seder is completed. Volume 6, of which the articles, "From Scripture to Mishnah: The Origins of Mishnah’s Fifth Division" (JBL 98, 1979, pp. 269-83) and "Map without Territory: Mishnah’s System of Sacrifice and Sanctuary" (HR 19, 1979, pp. 103-27), already provide a foretaste, should then prove especially interesting.

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This work was begun as a doctoral thesis in the mid 1960s and was published in 1974. Its appearance was hailed by Roman historians as one of the first attempts to put rabbinic evidence to sophisticated use for the understanding of general Roman history. Enthusiasm for the attempt was justified but has not led Romanists to espouse S.’s conclusions since very few can feel competent to assess the worth of the arguments put forward. S. assumes a detailed knowledge of both rabbinic texts and