

10. Numerical Features of Exodus 21 and 22

Having surveyed the numerical aspects of the Decalogue and a number of narrative and paraenetic texts, I was anxious to know whether the moral precepts and judicial regulations in Exodus 21 and 22 exhibit the same features. The following survey, based on a comprehensive computer assisted logotechnical analysis, will show evidence.

Exodus 21

21:1-3	The Hebrew slave shall serve 6 years and go out free in the 7th	23
21:4	The wife given to him by his master, and her children should remain	17
21:5-6	When the slave prefers not to go out free but to stay with his wife then a ritual must be performed to make him a slave for life	14 (2 x 7) 17
21:7-11	Regulations pertaining to a daughter sold into slavery	51 (3 x 17)
21:12-13	Homicide: a capital offence; manslaughter: asylum is allowed	17
21:14	A willful killer forfeits every form of asylum, even that at the altar	11
21:15-17	Capital offences: assault of parents, kidnapping, dishonouring parents	17
21:18-21	Assault not causing a fatality and the striking of a slave or slave-girl	52 (2 x 26)
21:22-25	Regulations regarding a pregnant woman involved in a fight of men; two legal principles are introduced: the fine and the <i>ius talionis</i>	48
	The 48 words may be explained as deliberate, because it represents the numerical value of the key-word יְנַצֵּחַ , 'they fight' (10 + 14 + 18 + 6) in v. 22 (compare vs. 28-32 and 35-36 below, where we find the same technique). ¹	
21:26-27	How to deal with injuries caused by the striking of a slave or slave-girl	26
	The 26 words divide into 15 (YH) in v. 26 and 11 (WH) in v. 27	
21:28-32	Regulations pertaining to a <i>goring ox</i> causing death	72
	In light of the technique used in vs. 22-25 and 35-36, the 72 words can be explained as based on the numerical value of the key-words in v. 29 שׂוֹר נָתַח , 'goring ox' (21+6+20 + 14+3+8).	
21:33-34	Compensation for the loss of an ox or ass falling in an uncovered pit	25
21:35-36	When an ox kills another ox, the owners <i>shall divide</i> both animals	38
	The 38 words can be explained as a third case of the use of the numerical value of a key-word: in this case, יְנַחֲזֵה , 'they shall divide' (6 + 8 + 18 + 6).	
21:37	Total number of words positioned before <i>atnach</i>	260

Exodus 22

Since there is a *parashah setumah* (S) after 21:36, the layout in Codex L strongly suggests the 21:37 (in BHS) belongs to chapter 22. There is no caesura between this verse and what follows. I put the alternative verse numbering, as it appears in most translations, in brackets.

21:37	Compensation for a stolen ox or sheep	18
22:1-3(4)	Further directives pertaining to this matter	35 (5 x 7)
	These 35 words divide into 9 in v. 1 and 26 in vs. 2-3(4)	
22:4(5)	Restitution for damage caused by a fire in the field	17
22:5(6)	Restitution for the damage to stacked or standing grain	16
22:6-8(7-9)	Directives pertaining to stolen property given in trust Of these 63 words 17 stand in v. 6(7) and 17 after <i>atnach</i>	63 (9 x 7)

¹ For the use of the numerical value of a key-word as structuring device, see the [General Introduction](#).

22:9-12(10-13) What to do concerning stolen cattle given in trust	49 (7 x 7)
22:13-14(14-15) Directives pertaining to borrowed beasts	23
22:15-16(16-17) How to handle a case of the seduction of an unbetrothed girl	23
22:17-23(18-24) Directives pertaining to five wrongdoings	52 (2 x 26)
22:24-25(25-26) About lending money to the poor and taking a cloak in pawn	26
22:26(27) Your neighbour needs his cloak at night! God is on his side!	17
22:27-30 (28-31) Five directives for living as the people of God	40

The moral precepts and judicial rules and regulations in 21-22 are continued in 23:1-19. See my [analysis](#). As has been shown there, the non-narrative paragraphs exhibit numerical features that resemble those found in the narratives and the paraenetic sections of the book.