

Critics Admit Purpose in Writing Affects Selection  
of Material Incorporated

12.62-1

Simpson, Guthbert Aikman, Composition of the Book of Judges (Oxford, 1957)

p. 165 These objections of Eissfeldt's would seem to be based upon the assumption that the authors of the documents of the Hexateuch always included in their respective narratives all traditional material known to them: and, further, that material which was not known to them was neither as ancient nor as valuable as that which they preserved. This is a very dubious assumption, for it ignores the possibility - to use no stronger word - that these authors were writing for a definite purpose, and that they included in their narratives what they regarded as relevant to the accomplishment of that purpose.

p. 166 The interest of the author of the J1 document was thus not of the kind which would lead to the inclusion of a list of names such as that in Gen. 22:20-24. It would have been irrelevant to his purpose. And the possibility that J2 included in his narrative vs 21-24 as well as vs 20 is also remote. For the verses reflect an interest in Israel as a political entity - as one people among many - whereas J2 was concerned with Israel primarily as a religious entity, the people of Jahveh.

And even if Eissfeldt is correct in his view, that the figures whose names<sup>p.167</sup> are given here had come to be regarded not as tribal symbols but as fore-fathers, and so of interest in themselves, this does not affect the argument against the inclusion of the list in L/J1. The names were certainly of interest to someone - they may even have been of interest to J1, supposing he knew them. The point is they were irrelevant to his purpose.