

Num. 25:19 When the plague was over,

Num. 26:1 the LORD said to Moses and to Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, ² “Take a census of the whole Israelite community from the age of twenty years up, by their ancestral houses, all Israelites able to bear arms.” ³ ^aSo Moses and Eleazar the priest, on the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho, gave instructions about them, namely, ⁴ those from twenty years up, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

^a *Meaning of parts of vv. 3 and 4 uncertain.*

The descendants of the Israelites who came out of the land of Egypt were:

...

Num. 26:8 Born to Pallu: Eliab. ⁹ The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, and Dathan and Abiram. These are the same Dathan and Abiram, chosen in the assembly, who agitated against Moses and Aaron as part of Korah’s band when they agitated against the LORD. ¹⁰ Whereupon the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with Korah—when that band died, when the fire consumed the two hundred and fifty men—and they became an example [וְיָהִי לְנוֹסֵף]. ¹¹ The sons of Korah, however, did not die.

HALOT: **נֹסֵף**:

—1. **flag, standard** (with shreds of cloth): Nu 21_{8f} Is 30₁₇ (parallel with תָּרֶן Jr 4₂₁; נֹסֵף נֹשָׂא Is 5₂₆ 11₁₂ 13₂ Jr 4_{6,21} 18₃ 50₂ 51_{12,27}, הַרְרִים נֹסֵף Is 49₂₂ 62₁₀; הָיָה לְנוֹסֵף warning sign **Nu 26**₁₀;

—2. **ensign, standard** (לֹא נֹסֵף 1QM 3:15) נֹסֵף יְיָ name of an altar Ex 17_{15,16} for → נֹסֵף rd. נֹסֵף יָהִ, Is 31₉ (away from נֹסֵף meaning to abandon the flag, → מִן 1 d), נֹסֵף עַמִּים Is 11₁₀; flag Sept. σημεῖον; ? sail Is 18₃ 33₂₃ Ezk 27₇; —Ps 60₆ → הַנֹּסֵף, alt. cj. מִנֹּסֵף. †

DCH: **נֹסֵף** | 21.0.3 n.[m.] **standard**—cstr. נֹסֵף; sf. נֹסֵף—

1. **standard, banner, flag, ensign**, esp. as a mark of royal dignity, * as signal or rallying point (Is 5₂₆ 11_{10,12} 13₂ 18₃ 31₉ 49₂₂ 62₁₀ Jr 4_{6,21} 50₂ 51_{12,27} Ps 60₆ 1QH 14₃₄ 1QM 3₁₅), flag pole on hill (Is 30₁₇), pole supporting bronze serpent (Nm 21_{8,9}), ‘Y. is my standard’ as name of altar (Ex 17₁₅), worshipper as a banner to the elect (1QH 10₁₃).

2. **sail** of ship (Is 33₂₃ perh. Ezk 27₇).

3. **sign, warning**, in ref. to fate of Korah and his company (**Nm 26**₁₀).

George Buchanan Gray, *Numbers* (International Critical Commentary)

And they became a wonder] or warning. The word regularly means a standard; nowhere else in OT does it bear its present meaning; but it is often so used in post-biblical Hebrew; see Levy, s. v.

Jastrow

נֹסֵף | m. (b. h.; נֹסֵף to lift up, cmp. נֹסֵף 1) *flag*. - 2) (cmp. מֹפֵת, אֹת) *sign, wonder, providential event*.

*נֹסֵף || *island*.

נֹסֵף, נֹסֵף, נֹסֵף | m. ch. =h. נֹסֵף I, 1) *flag, sign, miraculous event*. Pl. נֹסֵף, נֹסֵף, נֹסֵף. - 2) (= נֹסֵף) *trial*.

Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (JPS Torah Commentary)

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an example Hebrew *nes*, literally “standard,” equivalent to *’ot*, which can also mean “standard” (see 2:2) or “example, warning” (17:2).¹⁴

RASHI: **They became an example.** Literally, a “banner,” that is, “a sign” (OJPS), as was mentioned at the time: “It was to be a reminder to the Israelites, so that no outsider ... should presume to offer incense before the LORD” (17:5) or ever again raise a challenge about the priesthood.

IBN EZRA: **And they became an example.** As God told Moses, “Let them serve as a warning to the people of Israel” (17:3).

Baruch Levine, *Numbers* (Anchor Bible)

10. *They became a symbol.*

Based on usage, Hebrew *nēs* means “banner, standard,” something raised on high and visible from a distance. The most frequent verb used in association with *nēs* is *nāsā’* “to raise up, lift” (Isa 5:26, 11:12, 13:2, Jer 4:6), and once *hērīm* “to raise up” (Isa 62:10). Most telling is Numbers 21:9, where we read that Moses was told to fashion a metallic serpent and place it atop a *nēs* “standard, pole” for all to see (cf. Jer 4:21) (see Notes to Num 21:9). The sense of “symbol, sign” derives from the visibility of the standard. Gray translates *nēs* as “wonder, warning,” which would express the reactions of those who witnessed the sudden annihilation of Korah’s faction.

Is. 11:10 In that day,
The stock of Jesse that has remained standing
Shall become a standard to peoples [עַמְּדָה לְעֹלָם עֲמִים]—
Nations shall seek his counsel
And his abode shall be honored.

Ezek. 27:7 Embroidered linen from Egypt
Was the cloth
That served you [אֲלֵהֶיּוֹת לָהֶן לְעֵלִיָּהֶן] for sails; BHS: a-a dl, gl

NRSV: serving as your ensign.

Num. 26:8 Born to [יְבִרְתִּי] Pallu: Eliab.⁹ The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, and Dathan and Abiram. These are the same Dathan and Abiram, chosen [יְקָרְבָנִי] in the assembly, who agitated [רָצָה] against Moses and Aaron as part of Korah’s band when they agitated [רָצָה] against the LORD.¹⁰ Whereupon the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with Korah—when that band died, when the fire consumed the two hundred and fifty men—and they became an example [וַיִּהְיֶה לְעֹלָם].¹¹ The sons of Korah, however, did not die.

Baruch Levine, *Numbers* (Anchor Bible)

Here begins an explanatory tangent, or gloss, which continues through Numbers 26:11.

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