

In verses 14-27 the leaders of the various tribes are named again (cf. Nu. ii).

It is stated in x.17 that two-thirds of the Levites set forward, bearing the tabernacle as soon as the first three tribes had gone. This seems at first sight to contradict ii.17 which said, after the departure of six tribes: 'Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp.' The solution is found in x.21, where we learn that after the departure of six tribes the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary: and the other did set up the tabernacle against they came. This would seem to have been a further refinement of detail over the general plan announced in chapter ii. It was decided to send the bulk of the heavy materials of the tabernacle on ahead after the first three tribes, so that when the Kohathites arrived with the sanctuary everything would be ready for its installation.

b. Moses requests the help of Hobab (x.29-32)

Hobab was the brother-in-law of Moses. Probably the Hebrew word hothen, which is generally rendered 'father-in-law', can also be applied to a brother-in-law, although it is not certain whether this would always be true, or only after he succeeded to the leadership of his family, after the death of the actual father-in-law. Cf. Jdg. iv. 11. Raguel (29). Although Hobab's father is usually called Jethro (in Ex. iii. 1 and thereafter in Exodus), he is called Reuel in Ex. ii. 18, where he is first mentioned, and the same name is found here. In Greek transliteration the middle consonant of Reuel, ayin, is frequently represented by a 'g' as in Gaza and in Gomorrah. In the case of Reuel, the English version has followed the Hebrew pronunciation in Ex. ii. 18, and the Greek pronunciation here. Evidently Hobab had stayed with Moses after Jethro's departure (Ex. xviii. 27). Be tu us instead of eyes (31). Impressed with Hobab's knowledge of the desert, Moses asked him to perform a scouting service ofr the Israelites.

It might be asked why the incident is recorded here, after the march is actually under way. The explanation would seem to be that Hobab had intended going a certain distance with the people, before turning aside to his usual haunts. Consequently