THE YAHWIST AND THE REDACTIONAL
LINK BETWEEN GENESIS AND EXODUS*

Christoph Levin

In our dispute about the transition between the books of Genesis and Exodus, we concur on four basic decisions.

(1) Genesis and Exodus as books were separated at a secondary stage. Since the existence of the Priestly source has recently again become generally accepted,[1] and since the threads of this source run through Genesis and Exodus at least, these books must have once formed a literary unity. Genesis and Exodus did not yet exist as separate literary entities at the stage under discussion.[2] The focus here is the connection between the primeval history (Gen 1–11), the history of the patriarchs (Gen 12–36), and the Joseph story (Gen 37–50), on the one hand, and the Moses (Exod 2–4), exodus, and wilderness narratives (Exod 12—Num 20), on the other. To maintain that the transition between the books of Genesis and Exodus is decisive for theories about the Pentateuch goes too far.

(2) The non-Priestly narratives did not originally form a coherent composition. The hypothesis that there was a unified narrative composition extending from the creation of the world through to the conquest of Canaan cannot be maintained. In his contribution, Thomas Römer reminds us that this was already recognized by earlier research. Those aspects of the patriarchal narratives that connect to the national history cannot be reconciled with the narrative

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1. In recent research the serious doubts of Rolf Rendtorff and Erhard Blum have been overlooked. See Rolf Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (trans. J. J. Scullion; JSOTSup 89; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1984); and idem, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990).

2. This is especially true if the Priestly source is seen as the basic document.

about the exodus from Egypt, as Albert de Pury has demonstrated.[3] The literary genre and narrative design of the Joseph story makes its original independence clear.[4] The Balaam narratives are also an independent composition. As regards the independence of the primeval history, I agree with Frank Crüsemann and Markus Witte, with some reservations.[5]

The idea that the Yahwist was a narrator must be abandoned. But we do not need to stress this over and over again. This is not a case of "farewell to the Yahwist," as Konrad Schmid sees it.[6] He, together with others, has failed to take account of the evidence that I have presented. I have shown that the Yahwist was not a narrator but an editor—let us call him the "editor J"—who brought the non-Priestly narrative compositions into the literary cohesion we have today.[7]

(3) The third point on which we agree is the dating. The integration of the separate blocks of tradition represented by the Tetrateuch narrative as a whole was only possible at a later period. In my opinion, the Yahwist has in view the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora.[8] This can be seen from his choice of narrative sources, as well as from his worldwide perspective and his concept of the God Yнwн. As Schmid has stressed, the late date has serious consequences for our

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3. See Albert de Pury, *Promesse divine et légende cultuelle dans le cycle de Jacob: Genèse 28 et les traditions patriarcales* (ÉB; Paris: Gabalda, 1975), and his numerous other articles on this subject. See also Thomas Römer, *Israels Väter: Untersuchungen zur Väterthematik im Deuteronomium und in der deuteronomistischen Tradition* (OBO 99; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); and Konrad Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1999).

4. See, for example, Herbert Donner, "Die literarische Gestalt der alttestamentlichen Josephsgeschichte," in idem, *Aufsätze zum Alten Testament* (BZAW 224; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 76–120.

5. Frank Crüsemann, "Die Eigenständigkeit der Urgeschichte," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift Hans Walter Wolff* (ed. J. Jeremias and L. Perlitt; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981), 11–29; and Markus Witte, *Die biblische Urgeschichte: Redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1–11,26* (BZAW 265; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998).

6. *Abschied vom Jahwisten. Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (ed. J. C. Gertz et al.; BZAW 315; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002); and my review of this volume: "Abschied vom Jahwisten?" *TRu* 69 (2004): 329–44.

7. Christoph Levin, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993). For the English-speaking readership, Ernest W. Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Clarendon; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 161–65, presents a fine outline of the thesis. However, Nicholson misses the basic argument: the redaction-critical distinction between the pre-Yahwistic narrative sources, on the one hand, and editorial additions, on the other (165–67).

8. See Levin, *Der Jahwist,* 414–35 ("Die Botschaft des Jahwisten"); idem, *The Old Testament: A Brief Introduction* (trans. M. Kohl; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 61–70; and idem, "The Yahwist: The Earliest Editor in the Pentateuch" (forthcoming).

view of the religious history of Israel and Judah. About this there is no disagreement between us. If I still adhere to the hypothesis of a Yahwist, this is only a matter of literary history in particular, which is not decisive for the history of Israelite religion nor can be decided by the history of Israelite religion.

(4) The fourth point on which we agree—at least some of us—is the enduring importance of the Documentary Hypothesis. Römer reports that among limited groups of German-speaking scholars it has become the fashion to call the Documentary Hypothesis into doubt. But in his monograph about the final redaction, Jan Christian Gertz shows very clearly that two accounts are present alongside one another in Exod 1–14, which have subsequently been linked together.[9] His results, however, cannot be reconciled with Schmid's view that the call of Moses in Exod 3 is dependent on the Priestly source.[10] The arguments that Schmid and others offer contradict the nature of the material, which is essentially narrative, not redactional. Here I emphatically agree with Thomas Dozeman.[11]

Römer has stressed that the Documentary Hypothesis was developed on the basis of the book of Genesis and was only extended to the other books from that point. It is therefore particularly interesting that Gertz based his proof on the book of Exodus. Earlier research did not find the dominance of the book of Genesis problematic. It is easy to see why. The Documentary Hypothesis can be developed only on the basis of the narratives, and it applies *prima facie* only to the narrative material. By far the greatest part of the laws in the Pentateuch, beginning with Exod 12, were added later. In the first chapters of Exodus, the narrative style is quite similar to that of Genesis. If there is a caesura, we have to look for it not between Genesis and Exodus but somewhere after Exod 14.

If we really come down to it, the controversy between us has to do merely with the redactional linking of the narrative blocks. Schmid and Gertz attribute this to the P source. By doing so, they resurrect a form of the supplementary hypothesis that prevailed during the first half of the nineteenth century. According to this model, P is the earliest literary foundation of the Pentateuch, while the non-P material was added subsequently. In contrast, I maintain that there was a separate redaction within the non-P material.

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9. Jan Christian Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch* (FRLANT 186; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

10. See also the strong arguments of Erhard Blum: "To sum up, in Exodus 3 there is no one single detail to make sure or at least probable that the text is diachronically dependent on the Priestly Pentateuch tradition" ("Die literarische Verbindung von Erzvätern und Exodus," in Gertz et al., *Abschied vom Jahwisten,* 127 n. 5; my translation).

11. See also the appendix to this article: "The Yahwist as Editor in Exodus 3: The Evidence of Language."

Römer, Schmid, and Gertz point out that explicit links between the books of Genesis and Exodus were added only later, after the Priestly source. This argument from silence goes back to Rainer Kessler.[12] But it is untenable. It is certain that texts such as Gen 15 and 46:2–4 are later than P.[13] The same is true of most of the promises to the patriarchs, beginning with the key text of Gen 13:15–17.[14] The promises to the patriarchs presuppose the link between between Genesis and Exodus. Consequently, they cannot be used as evidence to argue that the link did not previously exist. All these texts are irrelevant for our question. With regard to the relationship of Gen 46 to Exod 3, Dozeman has raised the necessary critical questions.

Gertz falls back upon the famous image with which Wellhausen described the procedure of the Pentateuch redaction: "It is as if Q [i.e., P] were the scarlet thread on which the pearls of JE are hung."[15] But Wellhausen was wrong. Everyone who considers the role of the Priestly source in the history of the patriarchs is familiar with the problem: that a continuous thread is in fact lacking. Rolf Rendtorff has emphatically pointed this out.[16] Even if we accept Schmid's suggestion that the Priestly source did not include a Joseph story, the problems about the Priestly presentation of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob remain unsolved. Moreover, Moses is never introduced by the Priestly source. It is significant that Schmid's reconstruction breaks off at the crucial point: the transition to the story of the exodus. Gertz, despite his concentration on the transition, is forced into highly speculative assignments as regards Gen 50. In his analysis there is a significant *petitio principii,* which can be described as: "There *must* be a Priestly thread in the Pentateuch to have created the coherence of the whole." He himself admits that the only text in Gen 50 that is certainly P consists of verses 12–13 and 22b. This follows the general consensus of research, as Schmid's list

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12. Rainer Kessler, "Die Querverweise im Pentateuch: überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der expliziten Querverbindungen innerhalb des vorpriesterlichen Pentateuchs" (Th.D. diss., University of Heidelberg, 1972).

13. Christoph Levin, "Jahwe und Abraham im Dialog: Genesis 15," in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift Otto Kaiser* (ed. M. Witte; 2 vols.; BZAW 345/1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 1:237–57.

14. It is essential that the promise of Gen 13:15–17 is pronounced at Bethel, i.e., in the very same place where Abraham's tent previously had been (see 12:8). The return to Bethel (see 13:3) was necessary only because in 12:10–20 Abraham went to Egypt. This excursus causes Abraham to anticipate the fate of the later people of Israel. Gen 12:17, 20 verbally foreshadows the story of the plagues in Egypt—in a form composed already of P and non-P. See my "Jahwe und Abraham im Dialog," 240–41.

15. Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (trans. J. S. Black and A. Menzies; Edinburgh: Black, 1885; repr., Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 332 (my addition).

16. See Rendtorff, *Problem.*

shows. When Gertz assigns verse 4 to the Priestly source, because it is indispensable as a bridge, the result is a crass contradiction to verses 12–13. There are sound reasons, therefore, why I have attributed the redactional bridge formed by Gen 50:14 and 26a, as well as Exod 1:8, to the editor J.[17]

The textual gap in the Priestly source, which Gertz tries in vain to close, does not speak against the literary unity of the P document. That unity is indicated by the well-known correspondence between creation and Sinai, as well as by the covenant theology that extends from Noah to Moses, through Abraham and Jacob.[18] But P has not come down to us unscathed.[19] It therefore cannot simply be understood as the basic document. The fact that the sequence of the whole narrative as we have it today holds together is due to the existence of a second continuous source parallel to P. From Gen 12 it took over the literary lead, just as P took the lead in the primeval history.[20] Besides the document P, the document J also existed. The Tetrateuch thus does not hang on a single thread but on a cord plaited together from two strands. This cord makes it possible for the work as a whole to avoid falling apart when one of the two threads is torn, or missing, which is several times the case. If Gertz had undertaken his investigation of the final redaction on the basis of the patriarchal narratives, he would have arrived at different basic assumptions.

To come back to Römer's survey of the research history: Kuenen was right when he stated that parts of the non-Priestly text "must … be derived from a single work which we may call the *Yahwistic* document … and which we may indicate by the letter J."[21] Wellhausen, Budde, Smend, Fohrer, and others were right in differentiating literary strata within this document.[22] Gunkel was also right when he ascribed the collecting of the material to several Yahwists, who

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17. The argument is to be found in my *Der Jahwist,* 297–321.

18. Levin, *Old Testament,* 101–9 ("The Priestly Source").

19. In most parts of the patriarchal narratives only fragments of the former P source have survived; see Gen 16:3aβγ, 16; 21:2b, 4–5; 25:19–20, 26b; 30:22a; 31:18*; 37:2aα, b; 41:46a; 46:6–7. Traces of the thread of the source can be found in Gen 11:27, 31–32; 12:4b–5; 13:6, 11b–12aα; 19:29abα; also in Gen 26:34–35; 28:1–9; also in Gen 47:28; 49:1a, 29–32, 33aα, b; 50:12–13.

20. In Gen 12–50, the fragments of the Priestly thread (see previous note) have been woven into the tapestry of the Yahwistic narratives. By contrast, in Gen 1–11 the Yahwistic text has been fitted into the closely structured Priestly framework. See Levin, *Old Testament,* 110–14 ("The Pentateuch Redaction").

21. Abraham Kuenen, *An Historico-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch* (trans. P. H. Wicksteed; London: Macmillan, 1886), 140.

22. Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (4th ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963), esp. 207; Karl Budde, *Die biblische Urgeschichte* (Giessen: Ricker, 1883), esp. 244–47; Rudolf Smend, *Die Erzählung des Hexateuch auf ihre Quellen untersucht* (Berlin: Reimer, 1912), 16–30 and passim; and Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (trans. D. E. Green; Nashville: Abingdon, 1968).

follow one another in today's text.[23] Noth was right when, along the same lines, he stressed the existence of different blocks of tradition.[24] Von Rad, not least, was right in seeing the Yahwist as an author and theologian,[25] for the J source has a clearly detectible kerygma, in spite of the diversity of the narrative material.

The method by which to integrate all these insights is redaction criticism, which distinguishes within the J document between the given narrative cycles on the one hand and the editor J on the other. As everywhere else, the theology does not emerge on the level of the ancient tradition but can be traced back to the literary intention of an editor. Von Rad himself saw the Yahwist as a theologian belonging to the "late" period—influenced, however, by the biblical presentation of history, he defined this late period as the early monarchy.[26] Von Rad also neglected to distinguish clearly between tradition and redaction:[27] he overestimated the possibility of oral tradition, as did the transmission-historical research then dominant. When in 1961 his pupil Hans Walter Wolff focused on the question about the kerygma of the Yahwist, he inadvertently demonstrated that the results require a redaction-historical approach instead.[28] This solution has been pursued step by step since the 1960s, beginning with the work of Rudolf Kilian in 1966[29] and Volkmar Fritz in 1970.[30] I myself have succeeded since 1978 in extending this investigation to the whole of the Tetrateuch and have been able to describe the editorial profile of the editor J, his language, his method, his sources, his audience, and his theology.[31] So let us understand the J

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23. See Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (trans. M. E. Biddle from the 3rd ed., 1910; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997).

24. Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (trans. B. W. Anderson; Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1972).

25. Gerhard von Rad, "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch," in idem, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken; New York: McGraw, 1966), 1–78.

26. Ibid., 68.

27. This is also the problem with the "Yahwist" of John Van Seters. See, for example, his *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). Van Seters sees the Yahwist not as an editor but as a history writer using traditions. He makes no clear distiction between traditional and editorial text. Therefore, the editorial profile is rather indistinct, including a lot of material that earlier research rightly viewed as being non-Yahwistic, such as "Elohistic" and Deuteronomistic texts.

28. Hans Walter Wolff, "Das Kerygma des Jahwisten," in idem, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (TB 22; Munich: Kaiser, 1973), 345–73.

29. Rudolf Kilian, *Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen literarkritisch und traditionskritisch untersucht* (BBB 24; Bonn: Hanstein, 1966).

30. Volkmar Fritz, *Israel in der Wüste: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der Wüstenüberlieferung des Jahwisten* (Marburg: Elwert, 1970).

31. See my *Der Jahwist,* esp. 389–98 ("Die Quellen des Jahwisten"), 399–413 ("Die Sprache des Jahwisten"), and 414–35 ("Die Botschaft des Jahwisten").

document as the work of an editor. In this way justice is done to earlier research, and there is no need for clumsy expedients. Welcome back, Yahwist!

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APPENDIX

THE YAHWIST AS EDITOR IN EXODUS 3: THE EVIDENCE OF LANGUAGE

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The pre-Priestly continuity between the books of Genesis and Exodus is best seen from the perspective of Exod 3. The narrative of the burning bush and the divine speech that commissions Moses includes numerous cross-references to the book of Genesis, on the one hand, and to the narratives about the crossing of the Sea of Reeds and the wandering of the Israelites in the desert, on the other. One must first, of course, cut out the many late expansions of the chapter.[32] The remaining text then bears striking linguistic and stylistic similarities to the editorial expansions that the editor J has added to both the non-Priestly primeval history and the patriarchal narratives. Therefore, it is highly probable that the editor J wrote this text, too.

The narrative of the call of Moses obviously disrupts the oldest thread of the Moses-stories, which begin with Exod 2:1. With Moses' return to Egypt, the narrative of his flight to Moab comes to an end, thus forming what can be seen as a perfect literary join: "In the course of those many days the king of Egypt died. So Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on an ass, and went back to the land of Egypt" (Exod 2:23aα; 4:20).[33] This narrative sequence is now disconnected. Probably the interpolation goes back to the editor J.

As often in Genesis, the editor J used a given tradition to put his message on stage. The story of the finding of a cultic place, which forms the core of Exodus 3, originally formed a literary fragment of its own. The original shape may have been as follows:

> (1) Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro…, and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came … into the desert. (2) … And he looked, and lo, a bush was burning, yet the bush was not consumed…. (4) … God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here am I." (5) Then he said, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

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32. See the analysis of Exod 3 in my *Der Jahwist,* 326–33. It is indispensable to make this distinction quite clear. One should not argue with the many late additions of the chapter, some of which are obviously influenced by Deuteronomistic theology and some of which may be younger than P.

33. Translation following RSV.

Because the cultic place is not given a name, the origin of this tradition remains uncertain. Maybe some part of the original text has broken off.

The literary additions that make the text as we have it start with the editor J. He shaped the chapter like one of the well-known scenes of encounter with God to be found in the patriarchal narratives (e.g., Gen 16; 18; 28; 32), thus making it one of the key scenes of his outline of history. The oldest expanded form reads as follows (the editorial text of J given in italics):

> (1) Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, *the priest of Midian;* and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came …[34] into the desert. (2) And *the angel of YHWH appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush;* and he looked, and lo, a bush was burning, yet the bush was not consumed. (3) *And Moses said, "I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burning."* (4) *When YHWH saw that he turned aside to see,* God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here am I." (5) Then he said, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." … (7) *Then YHWH said, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry* … (8) *and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land* … (16) *Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, YHWH the God of your fathers has appeared to me, … saying, …* (17) *… I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, … to a land flowing with milk and honey….* (18) *… And you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, Yhwh, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, we pray you, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Yhwh our God. …* (21) *And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty,* (22) *but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her who sojourns in her house, jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing, and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters; thus you shall despoil the Egyptians." …* (4:18) *Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me go back, I pray, to my kinsmen in Egypt and see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."*

The editorial offspring of the expansion is evidenced by language. There are quite a number of striking similarities with the narratives of the books of Genesis as well as with some narrative parts of the books of Exodus and Numbers. What is important is that those parallels are also editorial. This makes it highly probable that one and the same hand has been writing. Here are the examples:

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34. The later, non-Yahwistic expansions are marked by ellipses. See further Levin, *Der Jahwist,* 330–32.

(1) Exod 3:2: "And the angel of Yнwн appeared to him (וירא מלאך יהוה אליו)." Compare Gen 12:7: "Then Yнwн appeared to (וירא יהוה אל־) Abram, and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land' "; Gen 16:7: "The angel of Yнwн (מלאך יהוה) found her [Hagar] by a spring of water in the wilderness"; Gen 18:1: "And Yнwн appeared to him (וירא אליו יהוה) [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre"; and Gen 26:2: "And Yнwн appeared to him (וירא אליו יהוה) [Isaac], and said, 'Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you.' "

(2) Exod 3:3: "And Moses said, 'I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burning.' " This kind of monologue counts as a stylistic device of the editor J.[35] Compare Gen 18:12: "So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?' "; Gen 21:7: "And she [Sarah] said, 'Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would suckle children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age' "; Gen 28:16: "Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely Yнwн is in this place; and I did not know it'"; and Gen 32:21: "For he [Jacob] thought, 'I may appease him with the present that goes before me.' "

(3) Exod 3:4: "When Yнwн saw that (וירא יהוה כי) he turned aside to see." Compare Gen 6:5: "Yнwн saw that (וירא יהוה כי) the wickedness of man was great in the earth"; and Gen 29:31: "When Yнwн saw that (וירא יהוה כי) Leah was hated, he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren."

(4) Exod 3:7: "Then Yнwн said, 'I have seen the affliction (ראה ראיתי את־עני) of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry (צעקתם שמעתי)' "; also v. 17: "I will bring you up out of the affliction (מעני) of Egypt, to a land flowing with milk and honey." Compare Gen 4:10: "And Yнwн said [to Cain], 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying (צעקים) to me from the ground' "; Gen 16:11: "And the angel of Yнwн said to her [Hagar], 'Behold, you are with child, and shall bear a son; you shall call his name Ishmael; because Yнwн has given heed to your affliction (שמע יהוה אל־עניך)' "; Gen 18:20–21: "Then Yнwн said, 'Because the outcry (זעקת) against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, I will go down to see (וארא) whether they have done altogether according to the outcry (הכצעקתה) which has come to me; and if not, I will know' "; Gen 19:13: [The angels to Lot,] "Because the outcry (צעקתם) against its people has become great before Yнwн"; Gen 29:32: "For she [Leah] said, 'Because Yнwн has looked upon my affliction (ראה יהוה בעניי); surely now my husband will love me' "; Gen 29:33: "And [Leah] said, 'Because Yнwн has heard (שמע יהוה) that I am hated, he has given me this son

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35. Except for the editorial stratum of the Yahwist, monologues of this kind are very rare in the Old Testament. On this point, see ibid., 411.

also'"; Exod 1:11–12: "Therefore they [the Egyptians] set taskmasters over them to afflict them (ענתו) with heavy burdens. But the more they were oppressed (יענו), the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad"; and Exod 14:10: "And the people of Israel cried out (ויצעקו) to Yʜwʜ" (cf. 15:24–25; 17:4; Num 11:2).

(5) Exod 3:8: "I have come down (וארד) to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land (ארץ טובה ורחבה)." Compare Gen 11:5: "And Yʜwʜ came down to see (וירד יהוה לראת) the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built"; Gen 18:21: "I will go down to see (ארדה־נא ואראה) whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know"; Gen 26:22: "And he moved from there and dug another well, and over that they did not quarrel; so he called its name Rehoboth (רחבות), saying, 'For now Yʜwʜ has made room (הרחיב יהוה) for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land (בארץ)' "; and Exod 34:5: "And Yʜwʜ descended (וירד יהוה) in the cloud and stood with him [Moses] there. And he proclaimed the name of Yʜwʜ."

(6) Exod 3:16: "Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'Yʜwʜ the God of your fathers (יהוה אלהי אבתיכם) has appeared to me (נראה אלי)'" (cf. v. 2); also v. 18: "Yʜwʜ, the God of the Hebrews (יהוה אלהי העבריים), has met with us (נקרה)." Compare Gen 24:12: "And he [Abraham's servant] said, 'O Yʜwʜ, God of my master Abraham (יהוה אלהי אדני אברהם), grant me success (הקרה־נא) today, I pray you'" (cf. vv. 27, 48); Gen 27:20: "He answered, 'Because Yʜwʜ your God (יהוה אלהיך) granted me success (הִקְרָה)'"; and Gen 28:13: "And behold, Yʜwʜ stood above it and said, 'I am Yʜwʜ, the God of Abraham your father (יהוה אלהי אברהם אביך) and the God of Isaac.' "

(7) Exod 3:21–22: "And I will give this people favor in the sight of (ונתתי חן בעיני) the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her who sojourns in her house, jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing, and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters; thus you shall despoil the Egyptians." Compare Gen 6:8: "But Noah found favor in the eyes of (מצא חן בעיני) Yʜwʜ" (cf. Gen 19:19); Gen 18:3: [Abraham to Yʜwʜ,] "If I have found favor in your sight (מצאתי חן בעיניך), do not pass by your servant" (cf. Gen 30:27; 32:6; 33:8, 10, 15; 47:29; Exod 34:9; Num 11:11); Gen 24:35: [Abraham's servant to Betuel and Laban,] "Yʜwʜ has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, menservants and maidservants, camels and asses"; Gen 26:14: "He [Isaac] had possessions of flocks and herds, and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him"; Gen 30:43: "Thus the man [Jacob] grew exceedingly rich, and had large flocks, maidservants and menservants, and camels and asses"; Gen 39:4: "Joseph found favor in his [master's]

sight (וימצא יוסף חן בעיניו) and attended him"; Gen 39:21: "But YHWH was with Joseph and gave him favor in the sight of (ויתן חנו בעיני) the keeper of the prison"; and Exod 12:36: "And YHWH had given the people favor in the sight of (ויהוה נתן את־חן העם בעיני) the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they despoiled the Egyptians."

(8) Exod 4:18: "Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, 'Let me go back, I pray, to my kinsmen (אחי) in Egypt (אשר־במצרים, cf. v. 7) and see whether they are still alive (העודם חיים)' "; see Gen 4:9: "[Cain to YHWH,] 'Am I my brother's keeper?' (השמר אחי אנכי)"; Gen 13:18: "Then Abraham said to Lot, 'Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen; for we are kinsmen (אנשים אהים אנחנו)' "; Gen 29:15: "Then Laban said to Jacob, 'Because you are my kinsman (אחי אתה), should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?' " (cf. Gen 33:9); Gen 37:26–27: "Then Judah said to his brothers, 'What profit is it if we slay our brother (אחינו) and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh (אחינו בשרנו הוא).' And his brothers heeded him"; Gen 45:26: "And they [the brothers] told him [Jacob], 'Joseph is still alive (עוד יוסף חי)' "; Gen 45:28: "And Israel said, 'It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive (עוד יוסף בני חי); I will go and see him before I die' "; Gen 46:30: "Israel said to Joseph, 'Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive (עודך חי)' "; and Exod 2:11: "When Moses had grown up, he went out to his people (אחיו) and looked on their burdens."

Summary

These cases prove that Exod 3 forms an integral part of the outline of the history of the people of God. That outline starts with the primeval history and includes both the history of the patriarchs and the history of the exodus. It is highly probable that the common language points to common authorship: to the editor J who has chosen, connected, and commented upon the individual narratives that would eventually form the fundamental document of the Tetrateuch. Redaction criticism allows us to recognize that earlier scholarship was correct after all. The core of the non-Priestly narrative material forms an independent literary document (in the sense of the Documentary Hypothesis): the so-called "Yahwist."

vocalized text:

(1) Exod 3:2: "And the angel of Yʜwʜ appeared to him (וַיֵּרָא מַלְאַ֨ךְ יהוה אֵלָיו)." Compare Gen 12:7: "Then Yʜwʜ appeared to (וַיֵּרָ֤א יהוה אֶל־) Abram, and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land' "; Gen 16:7: "The angel of Yʜwʜ (מַלְאַ֣ךְ יהוה) found her [Hagar] by a spring of water in the wilderness"; Gen 18:1: "And Yʜwʜ appeared to him (וַיֵּרָ֤א אֵלָיו יהוה) [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre"; and Gen 26:2: "And Yʜwʜ appeared to him (וַיֵּרָ֤א אֵלָיו יהוה) [Isaac], and said, 'Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you.' "

(2) Exod 3:3: "And Moses said, 'I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burning.' " This kind of monologue counts as a stylistic device of the editor J.[35] Compare Gen 18:12: "So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?' "; Gen 21:7: "And she [Sarah] said, 'Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would suckle children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age' "; Gen 28:16: "Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely Yʜwʜ is in this place; and I did not know it'"; and Gen 32:21: "For he [Jacob] thought, 'I may appease him with the present that goes before me.' "

(3) Exod 3:4: "When Yʜwʜ saw that (וַיַּ֥רְא יהוה כִּ֣י) he turned aside to see." Compare Gen 6:5: "Yʜwʜ saw that (וַיַּ֣רְא יהוה כִּ֥י) the wickedness of man was great in the earth"; and Gen 29:31: "When Yʜwʜ saw that (וַיַּ֤רְא יהוה כִּי) Leah was hated, he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren."

(4) Exod 3:7: "Then Yʜwʜ said, 'I have seen the affliction (רָאֹ֥ה רָאִ֛יתִי אֶת־עֳנִ֥י) of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry (שָׁמַ֖עְתִּי)' "; also v. 17: "I will bring you up out of the affliction (מֵעֳנִ֣י) of Egypt, to a land flowing with milk and honey." Compare Gen 4:10: "And Yʜwʜ said [to Cain], 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying (צֹעֲקִ֥ים) to me from the ground' "; Gen 16:11: "And the angel of Yʜwʜ said to her [Hagar], 'Behold, you are with child, and shall bear a son; you shall call his name Ishmael; because Yʜwʜ has given heed to your affliction (שָׁמַ֥ע יהוה אֶל־עׇנְיֵֽךְ)' "; Gen 18:20–21: "Then Yʜwʜ said, 'Because the outcry (זַעֲקַ֛ת) against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, I will go down to see (וְאֶרְאֶ֔ה) whether they have done altogether according to the outcry (הַכְּצַעֲקָתָ֛הּ) which has come to me; and if not, I will know' "; Gen 19:13: [The angels to Lot,] "Because the outcry (צַעֲקָתָם֙) against its people has become great before Yʜwʜ"; Gen 29:32: "For she [Leah] said, 'Because Yʜwʜ has looked upon my affliction (רָאָ֤ה יהוה בְּעׇנְיִ֔י); surely now my husband will love me' "; Gen 29:33: "And [Leah] said, 'Because Yʜwʜ has heard (שָׁמַ֣ע יהוה) that I am hated, he has given me this son also'"; Exod 1:11–12: "Therefore they [the Egyptians] set taskmasters over them to afflict them (עַנֹּת֖וֹ) with heavy burdens. But the more they were oppressed

(וַיַּעֲנוּ), the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad"; and Exod 14:10: "And the people of Israel cried out (וַיִּצְעֲקוּ) to Yнwн" (cf. 15:24–25; 17:4; Num 11:2).

(5) Exod 3:8: "I have come down (וָאֵרֵד) to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land (אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה וּרְחָבָה)." Compare Gen 11:5: "And Yнwн came down to see (וַיֵּרֶד יהוה לִרְאֹת) the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built"; Gen 18:21: "I will go down to see (אֵרֲדָה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה) whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know"; Gen 26:22: "And he moved from there and dug another well, and over that they did not quarrel; so he called its name Rehoboth (רְחֹבוֹת), saying, 'For now Yнwн has made room (הִרְחִיב יהוה) for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land (בָאָרֶץ)' "; and Exod 34:5: "And Yнwн descended (וַיֵּרֶד יהוה) in the cloud and stood with him [Moses] there. And he proclaimed the name of Yнwн."

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prison"; and Exod 12:36: "And Yhwh had given the people favor in the sight of (וַיהוה נָתַן אֶת־חֵן הָעָם בְּעֵינֵי) the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they despoiled the Egyptians."

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