

3 Genesis in Source and Redaction Criticism Today

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THE LONGUE DURÉE OF PENTATEUCHAL RESEARCH

Research on the Pentateuch began in the eighteenth century with the book of Genesis. This has had noticeable consequences for the current literary-historical analysis of both the Pentateuch as a whole and Genesis in particular. It is clear that the question of the sources and redactions in Genesis cannot be answered without the whole Pentateuch in view. However, the exact impact of the earliest questions of Pentateuchal research upon the research approaches of later generations, even in areas in which the directions of inquiry have clearly shifted, is rarely considered. In its beginnings, Pentateuchal research was defined entirely by the question of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. It focused particularly on Genesis and its depiction of the "pre-Mosaic period." With the advent of historical thought in theology and the detachment from the dogma of verbal inspiration, an answer appeared almost automatically: Moses could have relied on reports from contemporary witnesses from earlier time periods. Thus, "Moses, the inspired author" became "Moses, the informed historian," who collected, edited, and compiled documents handed down to him from ancient times. With this paradigm shift, the influential search for "documents" or "sources" had begun. Jean Astruc, the "grandfather of all documentary hypotheses," explained the formation of Genesis through the secondary combination of two continuous documents and ten others preserved only in fragments. Moses, trying to maintain their integrity, neatly placed them side by side in four columns.¹ Only through a later redaction were these columns pushed together,

¹ Jean Astruc, *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroît que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le Livre de la Genèse* (Brussels: Fricx, 1753; repr., Paris: Noësis, 1999; ed. Pierre Gibert). On Astruc, see Jan C. Gertz, "Jean Astruc and the Quellenscheidung in the Book of Genesis," in *Sacred Conjectures: The Context and Legacy of Robert Lowth and Jean Astruc*, ed. John Jarick (Sheffield: T&T Clark, 2007), 188–201.

resulting in chronological discrepancies, perturbing repetitions, and the shift between “Elohim” (God) and the Tetragrammaton “YHWH” as the names for God. In this way, Astruc could (1) make Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch historically plausible, (2) explain the contradictions and doublets, and (3) exonerate Moses of accusations of sloppy or flawed work.

Well over 250 years later, the field has long since abandoned the picture of Moses as an author or compiler of sources. Nevertheless, in contrast to the scholarship on the other writings of the Hebrew Bible, documentary hypotheses continue to dominate in Pentateuchal research and seem to be part of the field’s DNA. This focus may at times restrain scholars from considering other explanations for phenomena in the text. Thus, a field that has been searching for “documents” from its beginnings questions only secondarily (if at all) whether repetitions like the three narratives of a matriarch’s endangerment by sexual assault from a foreign ruler (Gen 12:10–20; 20:1–18; 26:1–11) could have been the result of commentating additions or a deliberate literary configuration rather than simply the transmission of parallel traditions. The attempt – for the sake of the biblical witness’s reliability – to exonerate Moses from accusations of negligence has also left its mark on recent research. This can be found in the often-uncritical assumption that the earliest biblical authors composed “good” and “sound” texts, unlike later redactors or the compilers of the source documents. This is the only way to explain why an appreciation of the text’s final form entered Pentateuchal research only indirectly, through avenues of literary approaches.² This process has not yet been completed, as seen from the field’s occasional, genuine discussions concerning whether and in what respect the present form of the Pentateuch is “unreadable.”³

Jean Astruc had confined his search for source documents to the “pre-Mosaic period,” spanning the texts from the creation of the world in Genesis 1 to the birth of Moses in Exodus 2. This documentary model developed from Genesis was later extended to the other books of the Pentateuch, tying the term “document” to the idea of continuous

² E.g., Jan P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis*, SSN 17 (Assen: van Gorcum, 1975); Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

³ On this debate, see the contributions in *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures of Europe, Israel, and North America*, ed. Jan C. Gertz et al., FAT 111 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 197–292 (“Part Two: Can the Pentateuch Be Read in Its Present Form? Narrative Continuity in the Pentateuch in Comparative Perspective”).

historical or source writings spanning the entire Pentateuch. Thus, the eighteenth-century beginnings of Pentateuchal research have deeply shaped broader research concerns. To the present day, Genesis (especially the Primeval History in Genesis 1–11) is often regarded as paradigmatic for the entire Pentateuch, even when the textual evidence speaks clearly against the extension of literary-historical assumptions into the other books.⁴ The conclusion, already burgeoning with Astruc and Johann Gottfried Eichhorn,⁵ that a single hypothesis could not adequately explain the complicated situation in the Pentateuch as a whole has been and can still easily be overlooked. This also applies to counterproposals that criticize the scholarly concentration on Genesis and then, in turn, hastily transfer their rejection of a documentary hypothesis for the following books of the Pentateuch to the book of Genesis itself. In both cases, the danger arises of a model of formation proven in one specific text prefiguring the results of analysis on other texts and excluding more appropriate explanations from the outset. Generally, advocates of documentary, supplementary, or fragmentary hypotheses counter this danger by respectively incorporating elements of the other, competing models. From early on Julius Wellhausen, the “Nestor” of the (“Newer”) Documentary Hypothesis, recognized throughout the course of source differentiation numerous redactional transformations and elaborations of the source documents, more or less confirming the “supplementary hypothesis.”⁶ He also credited some pivotal texts to the source documents’ compilers, regarding them as the actual authors.⁷ Ultimately, Wellhausen reckoned with later and latest additions that were “the final sediment settled at the surface of the whole debris.”⁸ This “literary process”⁹ was far more

⁴ See Martin Noth’s infamous verdict on the book of Numbers: “If we were to take the book of Numbers on its own, then we would think not so much of ‘continuing sources’ as of an unsystematic collection of innumerable pieces of very varied content, age and character (‘Fragment Hypothesis’). [...] It is, therefore, justifiable to approach the book of Numbers with the results of Pentateuchal analysis elsewhere and to expect the continuing Pentateuchal ‘sources’ here, too, even if, as we have said, the situation in Numbers, of itself does not exactly lead us to these results” (Martin Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary*, trans. James D. Martin, OTL [London: SCM Press, 1968], 4–5).

⁵ Johann G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 5 vols., 4th ed. (Göttingen: Rosenbusch, 1823–24), 2: 59.

⁶ Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, 4th ed. (1885; repr. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963), 314–15.

⁷ E.g., *ibid.*, 94–95.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 207.

complicated than the “mechanical mosaic hypothesis (*Mosaikhypothese*)” that he rejected and dismissed as “crazy”.¹⁰ This should be emphasized because in the current debate, the individual formation models differ primarily in how they weight the ratio of sources to redactions. This has led to a very wide spectrum of conceptions. Here is one example of a current “mosaic hypothesis”: according to the “Neo-Documentarians,” the four sources of the Pentateuch were combined by a compiler who essentially limited himself to “mechanically” weaving together previously independent sources that had been written and transmitted without knowledge of one another.¹¹ On the other side of the spectrum stand models for the formation of the Pentateuch (and thus Genesis) that attribute the largest body of text to a gradual process of continuous updating and only reckon with a very narrow corpus of sources, or have bidden farewell to the classical assumption of source texts altogether.¹² Insofar as both sides like to invoke Julius Wellhausen, the current debate is invariably also a disagreement over his legacy.

¹⁰ The two previous citations come from a letter from Wellhausen to Adolf Jülicher of November 18, 1880, in which he argues against a kind of document hypothesis that does not reckon with editorial adjustments and extensions by later redactions. See Julius Wellhausen, *Briefe*, ed. by Rudolf Smend (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), no. 94.

¹¹ This primarily concerns a group of exegetes around Baruch Schwartz and his students. On the research approach and “self-designation” as “Neo Documentarians,” see, for example, Jeffery Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses: Prophecy, Law, and Israelite Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–35. On the description of the operating principle as “mechanical” see *ibid.*, 91 fn. 50. For the exemplaric analysis of a text from Genesis see Baruch J. Schwartz, “How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37,” in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr and David L. Petersen, VTSup 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 263–78. For a detailed discussion of the basic assumptions of the “Neo-Documentarians” cf. Konrad Schmid, “The Neo-Documentarian Manifesto: A Critical Reading,” *JBL* 140 (2021): 461–79.

¹² See with all their radical differences the positions of Christoph Levin, *Der Jahwist*, FRLANT 157 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); trans. *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*, trans. John Bowden (London: A&C Black, 2005); Christoph Berner, *Die Exoduserzählung: Das literarische Werden einer Ursprungserzählung Israels*, FAT 73 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010). Berner characterizes the formation of the exodus narrative – a range of text in which the Documentary Hypothesis for a long time went almost as unchallenged, as in Genesis – as a “process of ‘midrashic’ self-interpretation” (*ibid.*, 7) and promotes the “complete farewell to the Documentary Hypothesis, which as a paradigm rooted in nineteenth-century thought is simply outdated” (*ibid.*, 449).

FROM CONSENSUS TO CRISIS

In the last third of the nineteenth century, the ("Newer") Documentary Hypothesis as established by Karl Heinrich Graf, Abraham Kuenen, and Julius Wellhausen among others began its triumphant march, with its validity virtually unquestioned until the 1970s.¹³ For the Hexateuch (the Pentateuch plus Joshua), the Documentary Hypothesis works from four formerly independent literary works: the Yahwist ("J," from the German *Jahwist*), from the Southern Kingdom of Judah in the ninth century BCE; the slightly younger Elohist ("E"), from the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the eighth century BCE; Deuteronomy ("D"), originally connected to King Josiah's reforms in the seventh century BCE; and the exilic/early-postexilic Priestly Writing ("P"), from the sixth century BCE. The Yahwist owes its name to its consistent use of the personal name for God "YHWH," while the Elohist uses the general term "Elohim" until the revelation of the name of God in Exod 3:14. These four sources were then compiled by redactors through a multi-staged process and subjected to further independent expansions. The hypothesis was particularly persuasive because of Wellhausen's connection of the literary analysis to the religio-historical thesis that, so far as he could demonstrate, the identified sources represented specific stages in the history of ancient Israel.¹⁴ It also represents a case of a relatively simple hypothesis being able to explain the basic features of such a complicated work of literature with little conjecture. As mentioned, Wellhausen knew (unlike some of his self-proclaimed heirs) that the focus upon four primary sources and their gradual combination heavily oversimplified the process of literary growth.¹⁵

In the years that followed, literary-critical means were used in the attempt to understand this process more precisely. However, these

¹³ Karl H. Graf, "Die s.g. Grundschrift des Pentateuchs," in *Archiv für wissenschaftliche Erforschung des Alten Testaments* 1/4 (1869): 466-77; Abraham Kuenen, *An Historico-critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch*, trans. Philip H. Wicksteed (London: Macmillan, 1886); Wellhausen, *Composition*.

¹⁴ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin: Reimer, 1883; 6th ed. 1927; repr. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001); trans. as *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies (Edinburgh: A&C Black, 1885; repr., Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994). Wellhausen described a literary division of sources without historical inquiry as a boring "game of ninepins." See Wellhausen, *Briefe*, no. 94.

¹⁵ See Wellhausen, *Composition*, 207: "J and E likely experienced several editions themselves [J¹ J² J³, E¹ E² E³] and were combined together not as J¹ and E¹, but rather as J³ and E³. This similarly applies to JE [i.e., the combination of J and E], Dt and Q [i.e., P], before they were incorporated into their respective larger wholes."

attempts did not lead to a satisfactory and generally recognized conclusion, so that in 1938 Gerhard von Rad noticed a certain exhaustion:

No one will ever be able to say that in our time there has been any crisis in the theological study of the Hexateuch. On the contrary, it might be held that we have reached a position of stalemate . . . So far as the analysis of source documents is concerned, there are signs that the road has come to a dead end . . . On the other hand, in the examination of isolated passages . . . we must frankly admit that we have by no means done all that might have been done. But in this field, too, controversy has ceased, and it may be said without exaggeration that scholars, especially the younger ones, are weary of research in hexateuchal studies.¹⁶

Yet three decades later, von Rad concluded the last edition of his Genesis commentary with the oft-cited challenge for "a comprehensive new analysis of the Pentateuchal narrative material, which we urgently need."¹⁷ What had happened? An immediate occasion for this challenge was his analysis of the Joseph story in Genesis 37–50, which had long been one of the classic examples for the "J" and "E" source divisions. In contrast, von Rad had observed that the Joseph story, which had been designated by him as a "novella," clearly stands out from the patriarchal narratives and that "it is from the beginning to end an organically constructed narrative, no single segment of which can have existed independently as a separate element of tradition."¹⁸ In spite of this assessment, von Rad adhered to the source differentiation in the Joseph story (and beyond). Yet, he also had to admit that the small discrepancies in Gen 37–50 could easily be explained through glosses and later interpolations, and that this led to an increased rejection of the division of Gen 37–50 into separate sources. Only the demanded "new analysis of the Pentateuchal narrative material" could bring about a decision. After all, von Rad's characterization of the Joseph story as a literary masterpiece could hardly be

¹⁶ Gerhard von Rad, "The Form Critical Problem of the Hexateuch," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, ed. von Rad, trans. E. W. Trueman Dickens (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966; repr., London: SCM Press, 1984), 1–78, here 1; trans. of "Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs [1938]," in von Rad, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, TB 8 (Munich: Kaiser, 1958), 9–86, here 9.

¹⁷ Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks, rev. 3rd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1972), 440.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 347. This passage is also in earlier editions of the commentary, but without the aforementioned postscript.

reconciled with its distribution between the Yahwist and the Elohist.¹⁹ Yet if the Yahwistic and Elohist sources could not be verified in this section, both Pentateuchal sources would lose their necessary ties between Genesis and Exodus. The Documentary Hypothesis could only be saved through complicated contrivances – such as the supposition that the redactor had substituted the Yahwistic and Elohist accounts of the tribes of Jacob's descent into Egypt with a previously independent Joseph story.²⁰

The evidence from the Joseph story is by no means the only reason why the Documentary Hypothesis has been heavily criticized since the 1970s, however. Between von Rad's two positions concerning the state of Pentateuchal research lies a pervasive reformulation of the Documentary Hypothesis by von Rad himself and by Martin Noth.²¹ Although it is difficult to reconcile their positions with one another, clearly it is less the original shape of the Documentary Hypothesis than its modification and connection with form-critical inquiry through Noth and von Rad that has reopened old questions and, through further discussion, led to a broad differentiation of research positions.

QUESTIONS NEW AND OLD

When we ask about additional reasons for the serious challenge to the previous consensus, the following points become of particular interest in view of the formation history of Genesis: (1) the connection of the individual traditions to a larger narrative work; (2) the rejection of an Elohist source; (3) the original character of the Priestly texts; and (4) the theological and literary profile of the Yahwistic texts.

¹⁹ See R. Norman Whybray, "The Joseph Story and Pentateuchal Criticism," *VT* 18 (1968): 522–28; Herbert Donner, "Die literarische Gestalt der alttestamentlichen Josephsgeschichte [1976]," in Donner, *Aufsätze zum Alten Testament aus vier Jahrzehnten*, BZAW 224 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 84: "One cannot have it both ways, with the Joseph story as a novella and as part of the Pentateuchal sources J and E."

²⁰ Donner, "Gestalt."

²¹ von Rad, "Problem"; Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, trans. Jane Doull, JSOTSup 15 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981); trans. of *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I: Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1943); Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, trans. Bernard W. Anderson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972); trans. of *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948).

“Genesis is a Collection of Legends”

The famous introductory sentence to Herman Gunkel’s *Genesis* commentary²² not only initiated the form-critical studies of Genesis,²³ but also had consequences for the field in source and redaction criticism. Two questions with far-reaching consequences emerged from the identification of the individual narratives in Genesis as “legends.” Legends are the oral form of historical tradition. The characterization as legends, thus, raised the question of the texts’ oral precursors and initial compositions. Legends are likewise individual traditions, standing by themselves and being passed down accordingly. Thus, the arrangement of the legends in a particular narrative sequence is not predefined by the legends themselves but relies upon the creative will of their compiler. Here arises the second question, of how the Pentateuchal narrative’s individual legends were linked together and then elaborated through the addition of further characters and narrative content. Gunkel had characterized “J” and “E” as narrative schools through which the oral traditions were collected and written down. According to von Rad, however, this line of inquiry could not explain “the co-ordinating power of the writer’s overall theological purpose, and the gathering of the separate materials around a very small nucleus of basic concepts” in the historical narrative of the Yahwist.²⁴ Instead, the Yahwistic narrative was an elaboration of the so-called small historical credo (e.g., Deut 26:5b–9). With that, pre-monarchic Israel brought to life the fundamental themes of its sacred history (the patriarchal period, the oppression in Egypt, and the exodus from Egypt together with the entrance into the land of Canaan) at the Festival of Weeks in Gilgal (e.g., Josh 3–4). In the Solomonic period, the Yahwist expanded the credo with the Sinai tradition, originally from a covenant festival at Shechem (e.g., Deut 31; Josh 24), elaborated on the patriarchal narratives, and prefixed the Primeval History. His theological interest concerned the verification that the Solomonic Empire was the fulfillment of all of YHWH’s promises. All

²² Herman Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), vii; trans. of *Genesis übersetzt und erklärt*, HKAT 1.1; 3rd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910).

²³ See Chapter 4 of this volume.

²⁴ von Rad, “Problem,” 51; see also what follows. In von Rad’s argumentation, the Elohist merely plays a subordinate role: “The process by which E and P are superimposed on J . . . is a purely literary question . . . The form of the Hexateuch had already been finally determined by the Yahwist. The Elohist and the priestly writer do not diverge from the pattern in this respect: their writings are no more than variations upon the massive theme of the Yahwist’s conception, despite their admittedly great theological originality” (*ibid.*, 74).

promises concerning nationhood, blessing, and land possession given to Abraham according to Gen 12:1–3, as the core, programmatic text for the Yahwist, had been made a visible reality under Solomon, while the promised “great name” had been awarded to David (Gen 12:2; 2 Sam 7:9). Noth modified this thesis by ascribing the formation of the Pentateuchal narratives to the process of coalescence of the traditions as well as their tradent groups. Thus, he concluded that the general outline of the Yahwist and Elohist should be traced back to an older, shared *Grundlage* (“G”) from the cultic context of the twelve-tribe confederation in pre-monarchic times.²⁵

The strongest point of this reformulation of the Documentary Hypothesis is how it locates the literary development of old material in the institutions of ancient Israel. Yet, this is exactly where the fundamental assumptions could not be maintained. Neither the theory of a sacred twelve-tribe confederation (“amphictyony”) nor the reconstruction of a Festival of Weeks at Gilgal and a covenant festival at Shechem hold up to scrutiny. The hypothetical construction of an ancient Israelite amphictyony was already being opposed early on, since the biblical depiction of the pre-monarchic period shows no knowledge of a central sanctuary for the twelve tribes, the Ark is described not as a cult place but as a cult object, and the number of tribes at “twelve” finds inconsistent attestation across Old Testament texts.²⁶ The texts cited for the anchoring of the particular Pentateuchal themes in Gilgal and Shechem (Josh 3–4; Deut 31; Josh 24), like the idea of a covenant and the credo formulations, belong to the context of Deuteronomy in the late monarchic or early exilic periods.²⁷ Thus, the assertion that the fabric of the Pentateuchal narratives had been interwoven already in the pre-monarchic period within the context of cultic celebration was thoroughly refuted.

There was also a methodological objection raised in an influential study from Rolf Rendtorff:²⁸ the Documentary Hypothesis takes the composite nature of the Pentateuch as its point of departure and seeks to explain its genesis through the literary-critical identification of source

²⁵ Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 38–41.

²⁶ Christoph Levin, “Amphictyony,” *EBR* 1: 1044–47.

²⁷ Lothar Peritt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*, WMANT 36 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1969); for an overview, see Christoph Koch, “Covenant II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament,” *EBR* 5: 900–8.

²⁸ Rolf Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of the Transmission in the Pentateuch*, trans. John J. Scullion, JSOTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); trans. of *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch*, BZAW 147 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976).

documents. In contrast, questions of transmission history initiated by Gunkel and continued by von Rad and Noth had begun with the individual narratives and then worked outwards through their further developments. According to Rendtorff, a methodologically consistent history of transmission must set the source theory aside and instead inquire about how the smallest units had developed into the larger composition. He saw this consistent transmission history leading to the conclusion that the Pentateuch consists of larger, relatively self-contained literary units, with only a few, very late lines of connection in between: the Primeval History (Gen 1–11), the patriarchs (Gen 12–50), the exodus from Egypt (Exod 1–15), Sinai (Exod 19–24; Exod 32–34), the wilderness sojourn (Exod 16–18; Num 11–20), and the conquest of the land (Numbers and Joshua). These were, according to Rendtorff, first connected through texts of Deuteronomic character.²⁹

“The Elohist as Narrator: A Misguided Path of Pentateuchal Criticism?”

From early on, the theory of the Elohist source was considered a weak spot in the Documentary Hypothesis. The Elohist contained neither a proper beginning nor a proper end. The texts designated as “Elohistic” provided no continuous narrative thread, and no unified theology could be identified. Wellhausen had already understood a precise division between “J” and “E” to be impossible.³⁰ Nevertheless, he reconstructed an Elohist thread by looking for connections between distinct, supposedly Elohist text blocks like Gen 20–22, 28:10–22, and 37:3–11. Paul Volz and Wilhelm Rudolph labeled this treatment as a “misguided path of Pentateuchal criticism” and supported the counterhypothesis that the Elohist portions belonged partly to the Yahwist and partly to later additions to the Yahwist.³¹ This proposal did not initially take hold, largely due to an intense objection from Noth. As Volz and Rudolph pointed to the fragmentary state of the supposed “E” source, Noth countered with evidence of a redactional

²⁹ Already by 1972, Rainer Kessler – in his Heidelberg dissertation, published only in 2015 – had found evidence that the cross-references in the non-P material were later additions and could not be taken as evidence for an “early” Yahwist or Elohist (Rainer Kessler, *Die Querverweise im Pentateuch: Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der expliziten Querverbindungen innerhalb des vorpriesterlichen Pentateuchs*, BEATAJ 59 [Frankfurt: Lang, 2015]).

³⁰ Wellhausen, *Composition*, 32–35, 207 et passim.

³¹ Paul Volz and Wilhelm Rudolph, *Der Elohist als Erzähler: Ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik! An der Genesis erläutert*, BZAW 63 (Giessen: Toepelmann, 1933).

procedure that only incorporated parts of the Elohist source into the Yahwistic work and led to a significant loss of text.³² This caused subsequent discussion to refer to “fragments” of the Elohist writing.³³

In the long term, these fragments were hardly able to escape the wake of the supplementary hypothesis. This becomes apparent through the fate of both classical arguments for differentiating between Yahwist and Elohist, the alternating use of the generic term for a deity “Elohim/El” and the personal name “YHWH” and the repetitions of particular stories. Critics of the Elohist hypothesis reject the shift in names for God as an unpersuasive criterion for source division, and even most supporters have heavily relativized or outright rejected its significance.³⁴ For example, the story of Jacob’s Ladder in Gen 28:10–22 – a text of fundamental importance for the emergence of the Elohist hypothesis³⁵ – very clearly shows an intentional shift between “Elohim” and “YHWH.”³⁶ The reader knows from the outset that it is about an appearance of YHWH (v. 13a), while Jacob first recognizes this during his dream. He begins with seeing heavenly beings (“messengers of God/*Elohim*,” v. 12). Only when YHWH introduces himself by name (v. 13b) does Jacob know which deity is present (v. 16) at the previously unknown sanctuary (v. 11, 17). Since the narrative is the founding legend for the sanctuary in Beth-El, he speaks of the “House of God” (*bêt ʿĕlōhîm*) after he wakes up. The actual highlight of the narrative is in the fact that YHWH is the God (*ʿĕlōhîm*) of Jacob (vv. 20–21).

The fact that repetitions of whole narratives need not necessarily be ascribed to parallel narrative threads as per the Documentary Hypothesis can be shown in the narratives of the threat to the matriarch. The episode is told three times, with the threats to Rebekah and Sarah by Abimelech (Gen 20:1–18 “E”; 26:1–11 “J”) considered to be doublets. Within the text generally ascribed to the Yahwist, the episode also appears with the threat to Sarah by Pharaoh (Gen 12:10–20). Obviously, a narrative plot

³² Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 20–37.

³³ Hans Walter Wolff, “Zur Thematik der elohistischen Fragmente im Pentateuch,” *EvT* 29 (1969): 59–72; trans. as “The Elohist Fragments in the Pentateuch,” *Int* 26 (1972): 158–73.

³⁴ Erhard Blum, “Der vermeintliche Gottesname ‘Elohim’,” in *Gott Nennen. Gottes Namen und Gott als Name*, ed. Ingo Dalferth and Philipp Stoellger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 97–119.

³⁵ See Hermann Hupfeld, *Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung* (Berlin: Wiegandt & Grieben, 1853), 38–40. Gen 28:10–20 is one of the few texts in which the separation of the supposedly interwoven J and E threads is carried out in almost complete agreement by different source critics.

³⁶ See the recent analysis of Gen 28:10–20 in Erhard Blum, “The Jacob Tradition,” in Evans et al., *The Book of Genesis*, 181–211, esp. 197–203.

may be taken up multiple times within a literary work without one needing to speak of doublets. The supposedly Elohist Abimelech episode in Gen 20:1–18 is a late reflection on whether there is also a “fear of God” in foreign lands (v. 11). This question was essential for the diaspora and is debated by taking up the thread of the endangered matriarch from Gen 12 and 26. Thus, the episode draws upon the “doublets” in Gen 12 and 26 and presupposes its readers’ familiarity with both texts.³⁷ Similarly, a plethora of new analyses reach the conclusion that the core Elohist texts are either an integral component of the texts ascribed to the Yahwist, or that they supplement these texts and, in some cases, the priestly texts.³⁸ However, these findings can be explained much more plausibly through a supplementary hypothesis than with the assumption of a secondary connection of source documents formerly transmitted independently from one another.

“Neither Source nor Edition”: The Janus-Faced Priestly Writings

The identification of the Priestly Source is regarded as one of the few anchors of Pentateuchal research, with the definition of the P texts practically undisputed since Theodor Nöldeke 150 years ago.³⁹ Yet, conceptions of the Priestly Source diverge significantly in their details, such as the literary differentiation within the priestly texts, the scope of the core priestly texts, the source’s datings and literary character (as a formerly independent work or redactional layer), as well as its relationship to the non-P texts. These questions are interlocked with one another, and the debate is correspondingly complex.⁴⁰ The prevailing

³⁷ Matthias Köckert, “Abraham: Ahnvater, Fremdling, Weiser: Lesarten der Bibel in Gen 12, Gen 20 und Qumran,” in *Das Buch der Bücher – gelesen: Lesarten der Bibel in den Wissenschaften und Künsten*, ed. Steffen Martus and Andrea Polaschegg, Publikationen zur Zeitschrift für Germanistik 13 (New York: Lang, 2006), 139–69.

³⁸ John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975); Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985); Westermann, *Genesis 37–50: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986); Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, WMANT 57 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1984); Timo Veijola, “Das Opfer des Abraham – Paradigma des Glaubens aus dem nachexilischen Zeitalter,” *ZTK* 85 (1988): 129–64; Levin, *Jahwist*; David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

³⁹ Theodor Nöldeke, “Die s.g. Grundschrift des Pentateuchs,” in Nöldeke, *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments* (Kiel: Schweser, 1869), 1–144. The characterization of the Priestly Source as “neither source nor redaction” comes from Erhard Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, BZAW 189 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 221–85.

⁴⁰ See Friedhelm Hartenstein and Konrad Schmid, eds., *Abschied von der Priesterschrift? Zum Stand der Pentateuchdebatte*, VWGTh 40 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015); Sarah Shectman and Joel Baden, eds., *The Strata*

consensus until the 1970s, with P being a formerly independent source document that has been almost completely preserved, was first challenged by Frank Moore Cross and Rolf Rendtorff.⁴¹ Both vigorously argued for P as a redactional layer that integrated older writings into its work. Scholars such as John Van Seters and Erhard Blum have taken up this position,⁴² while the majority in the field maintain the “classical” position of a formerly independent Priestly Source. Yet, the evidence in the priestly texts is actually ambiguous, as can best be seen from Genesis: in the Primeval History in Gen 1–11, P provides a coherent and independent text with a clear theological and compositional profile. Likewise, the continuous intertwining of the non-priestly and priestly passages in the Flood Story (Gen 6–9) is best explained through a source model. No editor would have unnecessarily caused the present factual tensions that show no concern for clean editing.⁴³ On the other hand, the P texts in the ancestral narratives in Gen 12–36 and in the Joseph story in Gen 37–50 do not provide a coherent narrative by themselves and appear incomplete without knowledge of the non-P tradition. This changes once again with the exodus narrative in Exod 1–14, in which the theological profile of the priestly depiction of the call of Moses, plagues, and departure can only be identified when disregarding the non-P texts. Thus, it might be adequate to describe P as a compositional layer that had first formulated its own tradition – for instance, in the Primeval History or in the exodus narrative – and then connected it with the older non-P texts.⁴⁴ Given the extreme sparsity of priestly texts in Gen 12–50, it should also be considered that the P account in Gen 12–50 was based on the non-priestly corpus. P would then be seen in this section as a redaction that, following an independently formulated Primeval History, furthered a redacted history of the patriarchs and Joseph with its own depiction of the formation of the Israelites in Egypt and the ensuing Mosaic period.⁴⁵

of the Priestly Writings. Contemporary Debate and Future Directions, ATANT 95 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2009).

⁴¹ Frank M. Cross, “The Priestly Work,” in Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 293–325; Rendtorff, *Problem*.

⁴² John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1992); Blum, *Komposition*; Blum, *Studien*.

⁴³ On the Priestly Source in Gen 1–11, see Jan C. Gertz, *Das erste Buch Mose (Genesis): Die Urgeschichte Gen 1–11*, ATD 1, 2nd. ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021) [English translation forthcoming in HCOT, Leuven: Peeters].

⁴⁴ Blum, *Studien*, 221–85, esp. 278–85 on P in Gen 1–11.

⁴⁵ Jakob Wöhrle, *Fremdlinge im eigenen Land: Zur Entstehung und Intention der priest-erlichen Passagen der Vätergeschichte*, FRLANT 246 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012]. Cf. already Jan C. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der*

Another approach to the priestly texts in Genesis ultimately emerged from study of the so-called Holiness Code in Lev 17–26. Conceptually and linguistically, it is equally close to P and Deuteronomy, and can be seen as a redactional harmonization of both conceptions in order to complete the formation of the Torah. Since traces of this redaction can also be found scattered across the Pentateuch (e.g., Gen 17:9, 13–14* ; Exod 12:14–20; Exod 31:12–17; Lev 11:41–45) and since it is centered on the Holiness Code, it has been referred to as the “Holiness School.”⁴⁶ Recently, the hypothesis has been raised for Genesis that the first creation account in Gen 1:1–2:3, the arrangement through the *Toledot* formula (“These are the generations of N.N.”; Gen 2:4a; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2), the covenant with Abraham in Gen 17, and a number of other redactional verses all stem from the Holiness School. Its authors largely relied on material from the Priestly Source and connected it with Israel’s older epic traditions (JE).⁴⁷ However, the feasibility of this hypothesis’s presupposition of a literary-critical division of the texts commonly assigned to P into (scarce and insubstantial) P and (extensive) Holiness School should be questioned, as should whether the food laws in Lev 17 (H) and the allowance of meat consumption for humans in Gen 9:4–6 come from the same source. Rather, Lev 17:3–7 seems to be a revision of the P text in Gen 9.⁴⁸

Finally, what remains to be investigated are P’s absolute and relative chronologies. According to the Documentary Hypothesis, P is the latest

Exoduserzählung. Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch, FRLANT 186 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 391.

⁴⁶ Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch. A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus*, FAT II/25 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

⁴⁷ Jacob Milgrom, “H_R in Leviticus and Elsewhere in the Torah,” in *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception*, ed. Rolf Rendtorff and Robert A. Kugler, VTSup 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 24–40; Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 12–18; Arnold, “The Holiness Redaction of the Primeval History,” *ZAW* 129 (2017): 483–500; Arnold, “The Holiness Redaction of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 17),” in *Partners with God: Theological and Critical Readings of the Bible in Honor of Marvin A. Sweeney*, ed. Shelly L. Birdsong and Serge Frolov, Claremont Studies in Hebrew Bible and Septuagint 2 (Claremont: Claremont Press, 2017), 51–61; Megan Warner, “The Holiness School in Genesis?” in *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature: The Legacy of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond*, ed. Roy E. Gane and Ada Taggar-Cohen (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 155–74 (focusing on the ancestral narratives).

⁴⁸ For the (substantial) uniformity of the P part of Gen 1–11 and the conceptual coherence of this section, foundational for the overall breakdown of P, see Gertz, *Das erste Buch Mose*, 9–11 *et passim*; for the relationship between Gen 9,1–4 and Lev 17 see Nihan, *Torah*, 412–13.

source and dates back to the time of the consecration of the Second Temple in the late sixth century BCE. Nevertheless, some scholars date P to the monarchic period due to its archaic language.⁴⁹ It has correctly been observed that the rituals depicted in P and its conceptual ideas stem in part from the cultic practices of the First Temple. Yet, P's exhibition of several linguistic and factual contacts with Deuteronomism, Deutero-Isaianic texts, and Ezekiel should not be ignored. P presupposes the cult centralization stipulated by Deuteronomy in the late pre-exilic period. The monotheism represented by P in Gen 1 is first found in the Hebrew Bible in Deutero-Isaiah. The universalism of the priestly creation account and Table of Nations in Gen 10 reflect the intellectual and political circumstances of the Achaemenid empire. In this respect, P represents a priestly knowledge base that grew over the centuries and was codified in the early postexilic period. Regarding relative chronology, the old preconception that considered most non-P texts as unquestionably pre-priestly has largely been abandoned. Indeed, the narrative substance of the non-P texts is considered older, but their arrangements are often more recent than P and Deuteronomy. As one example, Gen 15 was long considered one of the bedrocks of Genesis (if only because of its supposedly archaic rite requiring Abraham to walk through a row of halved animals). Yet now, the text is frequently dated to many centuries later. The "archaic" rite has become a controversial theological text that presupposes P in Gen 17 and belongs to the context of a dispute based on the example of Abraham regarding the distinctive identity of Judah in the late Persian period.⁵⁰

"The Elusive Yahwist"

In the mansion of the Documentary Hypothesis, the Yahwist has invariably occupied the *bel étage*.⁵¹ According to von Rad, the Yahwist created

⁴⁹ See Erhard Blum, "Issues and Problems in the Contemporary Debate Regarding the Priestly Writings," in Shectman and Baden, *Strata of the Priestly Writing*, 31–44, here 31–33 (with further literature). Regarding the problems of "linguistic dating" see Blum, "The Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts," in Gertz et al., *Formation of the Pentateuch*, 303–25.

⁵⁰ See Matthias Köckert, "Gen 15: Vom 'Urgestein' der Väterüberlieferung zum 'theologischen Programmtext' der späten Perserzeit," *ZAW* 125 (2013): 25–48; Jean-Louis Ska, "Some Groundworks on Genesis 15," in Ska, *The Exegesis of the Pentateuch: Exegetical Studies and Basic Questions*, FAT 66 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 67–81.

⁵¹ On the history of research and the state of the debate, cf. Thomas C. Römer, "The Elusive Yahwist: A Short History of Research," in *A Farwell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation*, ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid, SBLSymS 34 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2006), 9–27.

a work that may be considered “one of the greatest accomplishments of all times in the history of thought.”⁵² Together with the History of David’s Rise and the Succession Narrative, the Yahwist’s work was an expression of a historical process of thought that ancient Israel developed long before the Greeks, and into a completely distinct form. In all of this, the Yahwist was a product of the “freethinking era of Solomon.”⁵³ In the current discussion, however, nearly everything concerning the texts traditionally ascribed to the Yahwist has been available for renegotiation: age and scope, internal coherence and theological conception. Thus, the amounts of text characterized in the field as Yahwistic vary substantially. At best, the common thread has been the supposition that it was the first overall draft of the Pentateuchal narrative. The alteration in dating has been particularly incisive. John Van Seters considers the majority of the Abraham traditions in Gen 12–25 to have stemmed from the exilic period, with Abraham, first mentioned outside of the Pentateuch in Ezekiel (Ezek 33:23–29) and Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 41:8–9; 51:2), as a role model for exilic Israel.⁵⁴ Against Albrecht Alt or Gerhard von Rad, the promises to the patriarchs were not the precipitation of experiences from the early, nomadic days of Israel written down in the monarchic period. Rather, they came about from historical-theological reflections that were responding to the experiences of exile and giving new confidence to a dejected people. The Yahwist was thus a historian akin to Greek historiographers like Herodotus and Hellanicus, who in the exilic period compiled Israel’s various foundation legends and whose work was later subject to a priestly revision. Christoph Levin sees the Yahwist similarly, but in some respects also very differently.⁵⁵ For him, the Yahwist was a diasporic redactor working with various older sources. In the ancestral narratives, he polemicized against the Deuteronomic stipulation that YHWH only be worshiped at the one legitimate sanctuary (e.g., Deut 12 vs. Gen 12:7–8; 13:8). Also differing from Van Seters, Levin’s P was a formerly independent work combined with the Yahwistic narrative by a redactor. According to Levin, with this connection the formation of the text was – even in Genesis – far from complete.

⁵² von Rad, *Genesis*, 25.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 29. The memorable phrase “Solomonic Enlightenment” first appears in Gerhard von Rad, “Der Anfang der Geschichtsschreibung im Alten Israel [1944],” in von Rad, *Gesammelte Studien*, 187; trans. as “The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel,” in von Rad, *Problem*, 203.

⁵⁴ Van Seters, *Abraham*.

⁵⁵ Levin, *Jahwist*.

While Van Seters and Levin both agree with previous research that the overall design of the Pentateuchal narrative can be traced back to the Yahwist, this has otherwise been heavily questioned in recent years. For Genesis, this primarily concerns the Primeval History in Gen 1–11 and the book's connection with the exodus narrative.⁵⁶ The broad thematic and compositional coherence of the traditionally Yahwistic texts in Gen 1–11 on the one hand and their rather loose connection to the Yahwistic patriarchal history on the other has led to the theory of an originally independent non-P Primeval History.⁵⁷ Others, however, attribute the traditionally Yahwistic texts to a post-priestly redaction that used older material to revise the priestly Primeval History.⁵⁸ Further on, there has been intense discussion on whether there was a "Yahwistic" transition from the Joseph story to the exodus narrative or if P, coming later, first connected the patriarchal and exodus narratives.⁵⁹ In the latter case, the non-P ancestral and Moses/Exodus narratives would be considered competing conceptions of Israel's origins.⁶⁰ Yet one can assume the non-P

⁵⁶ Already by 1961, Samuel Sandmel presented the theory that J "never was a long, connected document" and emphasized the differing character of the four primary sections of Genesis, the Primeval History and the narratives of the three patriarchs (Samuel Sandmel, "The Haggada within Scripture," *JBL* 80 [1961]: 105–22, here 115).

⁵⁷ See already Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), 159–67. The seminal study on this topic: Frank Crüsemann, "Die Eigenständigkeit der Urgeschichte: Ein Beitrag zur Diskussion um den 'Jahwisten'," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: FS Hans Walter Wolff*, ed. Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Perlitt (Neukirchen-Yluyn: Neukirchener, 1981), 11–29. See also Blum, *Komposition*, 349–61; Carr, *Reading*, 234–48; Markus Witte, *Die Biblische Urgeschichte: Redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1–11,26*, BZAW 265 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 192–205; Jan C. Gertz, "The Formation of the Primeval History," in Evans et al., *The Book of Genesis*, 107–36.

⁵⁸ Joseph Blenkinsopp, "A Post-Exilic Lay Source in Genesis 1–11," in *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion*, ed. Jan C. Gertz, Konrad Schmid, and Markus Witte, BZAW 315 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 49–61; Andreas Schüle, *Der Prolog der hebräischen Bibel*, ATANT 86 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2006); Albert de Pury, "P⁵ as the absolute Beginning," in *Les dernières Rédactions du Pentateuque, de l'Hexateuque et de l'Ennéateuque*, ed. Thomas Römer and Konrad Schmid, BETL 203 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 99–128, here 113–18; Martin Arneht, *Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt . . . Studien zur Entstehung der alttestamentlichen Urgeschichte*, FRLANT 217 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

⁵⁹ See Jan C. Gertz, "The Relative Independence of the Books of Genesis and Exodus," in *Book-Seams in the Hexateuch I: The Literary Transitions between the Books of Genesis/Exodus and Joshua/Judges*, ed. Christoph Berner and Harald Samuel, FAT 120 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 55–72 and cited literature. Already Frederick V. Winnett, "Re-examining the Foundation," *JBL* 84 (1965): 1–19, proposed that the combination of the non-P ancestral narrative and the non-P exodus narrative postdated P.

⁶⁰ Konrad Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments*,

authors' familiarity with both traditions, though P would have been the first to connect the ancestors with Moses for a continuous historical scheme.

WAYS OUT OF THE CRISIS?

The field is currently far removed from a consensus, whether it pertains to the formation of the Pentateuch or of Genesis. In English-speaking scholarship, and especially North American research, the Documentary Hypothesis still finds broad representation in its modified form by Noth. Additionally, the circle of Neo-Documentarians in Israel and the United States has returned to the mechanical source separation that had already been forcefully rejected by Wellhausen.⁶¹ Meanwhile especially in continental European research, in addition to variants of a modified version of the Documentary Hypothesis, models are increasingly supported that reckon with compositions of varying sizes that developed independently and at different times and were joined through redactional brackets into even larger units. Lastly, synchronic approaches must also be mentioned, which differ wildly in their specifics and are all generally subsumed under the term "Literary Criticism."⁶² These approaches, initially predominant in English departments, share a view of the biblical texts as unitary works of literature. They generally lack a historical dimension, instead understanding the texts' end-forms as works of art and focusing on their internal structural features and literary strategies. For diachronic research, these contributions are nevertheless of great

WMANT 81 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999); trans. as *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible*, trans. James D. Nogalski, Siphut 3 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010); Jan C. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch*, FRLANT 186 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

⁶¹ See above, p. 56 and fn. 11. Cf. furthermore Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, AYBR (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

⁶² Here a terminological ambiguity must be acknowledged. The expression "literary criticism" and the corresponding German term "Literarkritik" originally referred to the historical-diachronic question of the text's formation history and the reconstructed sources and redactions. Since the 1970s, the meaning of the English expression has shifted. The historical-diachronic approach is commonly designated "literary-historical criticism," while synchronic or text-immanent approaches fall under "new literary criticism." For an overview, see David J. A. Clines, "Contemporary Methods in Hebrew Bible Criticism," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. Vol. III/2: The Twentieth Century – From Modernism to Post-Modernism*, ed. Magne Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 148–69.

interest, since they broaden the view for the idiosyncrasies of biblical narratives and show that not every repetition and supposed linguistic imperfection indicates a literary seam. A particularly apt example is the analysis of the Jacob's Ladder story in Gen 28 by Jan P. Fokkelman.⁶³ It has been significantly influential for subsequent diachronic analyses that reject the classical division between Elohist and Yahwistic versions of the text and instead postulate a basic text with several additions.⁶⁴

Given the variety of differing approaches, it may appear daring to conclude with an overview of possible sources and redactions in Genesis. Nevertheless, the course of the discussion may allow for some insights to be gained and the contours of a picture to be revealed that may at least help differentiate between certainties and uncertainties and identify open questions regarding the formation of the book.⁶⁵ Very important is the early insight that neither Genesis nor the Pentateuch as a whole can be measured by a single stick. Supporters of documentary, supplementary, and fragmentary models each integrate components of their competing models, as they should. Moreover, regarding formation history, a distinction must be made between the larger units of the Primeval History, the ancestral narratives – and here between the Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob narratives – and the Joseph story. In the Primeval History the two-source theory (P and non-P) has basically been proven, although some texts may be attributed to later redactions. The P texts in Gen 1–11 unmistakably exhibit a larger priestly conception of Israel's history that stretches at least until God's revelation on Sinai, yet there is much reason to suppose that the non-P Primeval History was a formerly independent composition. Moving further, the oldest corpus of ancestral narratives is found in the Jacob/Esau/Laban story in Gen 25–33* and stems from the Northern Kingdom of Israel. It was presumably combined with the Southern Kingdom narratives of Isaac and Abraham after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BCE. The Isaac story is conspicuously concentrated within Gen 26 and largely consists of variants to the Abraham and Sarah narratives, with the threats to the matriarch (Gen

⁶³ Fokkelman, *Narrative Art*, 46–81.

⁶⁴ See above, p. 63 on Gen 28.

⁶⁵ The following outline is kept so short that I refrain from using references. Relevant arguments may be found in the aforementioned works by Blum, Gertz, Kratz, Levin and Schmid, which can differ greatly in their details and approaches. For a summary, see Gertz, "Tora und Vordere Propheten," in *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, ed. Jan C. Gertz et al., 6th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 193–312; trans. from 3rd ed. (2008) as *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, ed. Jan C. Gertz et al. (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 235–382.

12; 20; 26) and the covenant with Abimelech over well rights (Gen 21; 26) probably having originated with Isaac. It seems that these stories were assumed by Abraham as the later, more popular, and more important figure. The core of the Abraham narratives is found in the Abraham/Lot Cycle (Gen 13:1–13*, 18; Gen 18–19*; 21:1–7*). Geographically, it comes from the area of Hebron and thus from Judahite territory. The main stock of the Abraham narratives, however, was filled out later and presupposes the connection to the Jacob narratives. The great attractiveness of Abraham as a role model in post-exilic times becomes apparent with the diversity of late additions such as the courting of Rebekah (Gen 24), Abraham's intercession for Sodom (Gen 18) and Abimelech (Gen 20), as well as the Binding of Isaac (Gen 22). Written in quintessential novelistic style, the story of Joseph and his brothers in Gen 37; 39–50* is a formerly independent narrative vis-à-vis the ancestral history and the exodus narrative. The literary ties are all secondary, but the party responsible for the connection of the larger portions is currently a topic of intense debate. Was it the work of a "late" Yahwist before the connection with the Priestly Source? Did P integrate the non-P blocks into its work? Or does the connection trace back to a redactor who combined P with the non-P literary works? The findings regarding the Priestly Source in Gen 12–50 are also difficult to assess. It is possible that a formerly independent Priestly Source offered only a reduced version of the ancestral narratives and the Joseph novella, presupposing its readers' familiarity with the non-P texts. Yet it is also possible that the Priestly Source in Gen 12–50 is better spoken of as an editorial or compositional layer.

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