

Source Criticism in the Primeval History of Genesis: An Outdated Paradigm for the Study of the Pentateuch?¹

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I.

I will start with a preliminary remark on the terminology. As far as I understand the discussion, the expression “source criticism” is used in the English-speaking discussion to refer to the historical-critical method in general. In contrast, the German term *Quellenscheidung*, which I had in mind when framing my topic, has a more specific meaning. In the context of the critical study of the Bible the term *Quellenscheidung* explicitly refers to a specific model of the formation of the Pentateuch, namely the so-called Documentary Hypothesis – even though in the German-speaking discussion *Literarkritik* is sometimes equated with *Quellenkritik* or *Quellenscheidung*. The terms *Quellenscheidung* and *Quellenkritik* emerged in historical research in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Roughly speaking, *Quellenkritik* is concerned with evaluating the historical validity of a written document. In the process of *Quellenscheidung*, on the other hand, the various sources or documents within a given text are identified. Only after they have been isolated from the context in which they were handed down to the historian can they serve as sources of historical research.

The fact that there is a paradigm of historiography at work is evident with respect to the founders of the various Documentary Hypotheses in Pentateuch scholarship. It results from a special interest in the *historia mosaica* in the early stages of modern biblical scholarship. Jean Astruc may serve as a good example.² While for Protestant Orthodoxy Moses was the one inspired author of

¹ English translation by Laura Artes (Heidelberg).

² JEAN ASTRUC, *Conjectures sur la Genèse: Introduction et notes de Pierre Gibert* (Paris: Noésis, 1999). The original version, which was anonymously published in 1753 at Brussels, reads as follows: “Conjectures sur les Mémoires originaux dont il paroît que Moyse c’est servi pour composer le Livre de la Genèse.” For a discussion of Astruc’s analysis see Jan Christian 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. J. Jarick; Sheffield: T&T Clark, 2007), 188–201.

the Pentateuch, Jean Astruc saw Moses as the inspired historian. In his view Moses collected and filed the historical documents (*Quellen*) – or rather: the reports of eyewitnesses – that were handed down to him. According to Astruc, those who later handed down the Mosaic text are responsible for the apparent disorder in the Pentateuch. Therefore, Astruc and his successors defined the task of pentateuchal analysis as bringing order to the chaos by separating the disarranged sources from one another and rearranging them.

In some sense Julius Wellhausen was in line with the approach of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historians.³ He was interested primarily in reconstructing the history of Israel and its religion. In order to do so he identified sources within the Pentateuch and evaluated them historically. In short, Wellhausen applied the methods of *Quellenscheidung* and *Quellenkritik*. Therefore the success of his version of the so-called New Documentary Hypothesis can essentially be found in the historical synthesis in which he presented the results of his analysis of the Pentateuch. Hence it is no surprise that the criticism of the New Documentary Hypothesis coincides with the challenge to the classical model of the history and religion of ancient Israel – a model resulting itself largely from an understanding of the Hebrew Bible as a valid source of historical reconstruction. Perhaps one should look at the current dissent in pentateuchal studies from a different perspective and ask the following question: does the present uncertainty with regard to the reconstruction of the political, religious, and social history of Israel allow for an uncontroversial reconstruction of the history of Israelite literature? For my part I do not consider it a coincidence that those models of the formation of the Pentateuch and of other parts of the Hebrew Bible that operate to a great extent or even exclusively on the basis of text-immanent argumentation and solely from a literary perspective do not reach a consensus comparable to that of Wellhausen's combined works, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs* and *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*.⁴ Hence one will have to object to the opinion expressed from time to time claiming that the solution to this dilemma is found in a "pure" literary analysis free from inquiry into the cultural-historical context of the literature of ancient Israel. Moreover, from a methodological perspective this opinion is questionable, since the seemingly pragmatic separation of literary and historical inquiry is based on a conception of biblical literature that implies a number of theological and historical presuppositions.

³ For Wellhausen's historiographical intentions, see Lothar PERLITT, Vatke und Wellhausen (BZAW 94; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1965); Douglas A. KNIGHT, ed., Julius Wellhausen and His "Prolegomena to the History of Israel" (Semeia 25; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983).

⁴ Julius WELLHAUSEN, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (3rd ed.; Berlin: Reimer, 1899); IDEM, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (6th ed., 1927; repr. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001).

In addition to the historical objection, an approach concerned with the esthetics of literature is increasingly pursued, which does not encourage the search for documents or sources in the Hebrew Bible either.⁵ Gunkel's focus on the small literary units alone brought about a declining interest in the separation and reconstruction of source documents. And yet Gunkel's approach seemed consistent with the established Documentary Hypothesis. The criticism of the Documentary Hypothesis formulated by a redaction-historical reading of the Pentateuch that focused on questions related to the process of text composition therefore had a more profound impact.⁶ Instead of assuming a compilation of documents, the undeniable polyphony of the Pentateuch is now explained through a model of parallel as well as consecutive literary compositions. Additionally, the formation of the Pentateuch is no longer ascribed to compilers and editors but instead to authors and composers. From this perspective the notion of sources in the narrow sense is hard to maintain. The designation "sources" now refers to texts and traditions taken up by an author and integrated into a literary work. For better illustration, I will now turn to the flood narrative in Gen 6–9.

II.

The starting points of every analysis of Gen 6–9 are two related observations: the repetition of nearly all elements of the flood narrative causing tensions in the story line, on the one hand, and the designation of identical facts with different terms on the other. Early on, two different text layers were therefore identified. Ever since the fundamental analyses of Hermann Hupfeld, Eberhard Schrader, Karl Budde, and Hermann Gunkel, there has been substantial agreement regarding the scope of these layers, which only recently has partially been renounced.⁷ More or less uncontroversial also is the ascription of one of these text layers to the former so-called *Grundschrift* of the Pentateuch,

⁵ Hermann GUNKEL, "Die israelitische Literatur," in *Kultur der Gegenwart* 1,7: *Orientalische Literaturen* (ed. P. Hinneberg; Leipzig: Teubner, 1906), 51–102.

⁶ Erhard BLUM, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984); IDEM, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990).

⁷ Herrmann HUPFELD, *Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung* von neuem untersucht (Berlin: Wiegandt & Grieben, 1853); Eberhard SCHRADER, *Studien zur Kritik und Erklärung der biblischen Urgeschichte: Gen Cap. I–XI* (Zürich: Meyer & Zeller, 1863); Karl BUDDE, *Die Biblische Urgeschichte (Gen 1–12,5)* (Gießen: Ricker'sche Buchhandlung, 1883); Hermann GUNKEL, *Genesis übersetzt und erklärt* (3rd ed.; HKAT I/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910).

namely the Priestly document that goes from Gen 1 to Exod 40 at least.⁸ Moreover, irrespective of the controversy about the literary-historical profile of the Priestly stratum, the assessment that the Priestly version of the flood represents a coherent and self-contained narrative is commonly shared.⁹ With regard to the non-Priestly text, it is beyond doubt that it does not form a complete narrative, for at least the construction of the ark is not described even though it is presupposed. Besides, it is undisputed that the non-Priestly text stratum features a specific linguistic, theological, and tradition-historical profile, which it has in common with other non-Priestly texts of the primeval history. If I ended my short presentation of the state of the art right at this point, no one would guess that there is profound disagreement in pentateuchal scholarship with respect to the analysis of the flood narrative. And yet, what is true for biblical scholarship in general applies here as well: uncontroversial observations in the texts do not necessarily lead to self-evident explanations that are beyond dispute.

Apart from the theory of one single author of Gen 6–9 that is still set forth occasionally,¹⁰ there are essentially three explanations for the literary findings: 1) Two formerly independent versions of the flood narrative were fused together by an editor.¹¹ 2) A non-Priestly flood narrative was augmented by

⁸ Usually the scope of P is identified as follows: Gen 6:9–22; 7:6–7, 11, 13–16, 17a*, 18–21; 8:1, 2a, 3b–5, 13a, 14–19; 9:1–17. Classification varies especially with respect to Gen 7:7, 17a, 22*, 23a; 8:3a.

⁹ Amongst the critics of the theory of P as a formerly independent source document see for this assessment BLUM, *Studien*, 282 with n. 206. For an opposing view see Lutz SCHRADER, "Kommentierende Redaktion im Noach-Sintflut-Komplex der Genesis," *ZAW* 110 (1998): 489–502.

¹⁰ See e.g. Benno JACOB, *Das Buch Genesis* (Berlin: Schocken, 1934; repr. Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 2000), 183–258, 954–959; Umberto CASSUTO, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis II: From Noah to Abraham, Genesis VI 9 – XI 32* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964), 3–140; Gordon J. WENHAM, "The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," *VT* 22 (1972): 342–45. The attempts to read the flood narrative as a coherent account testify to the successful work of the redaction. For a detailed critique see John A. EMERTON, "An Examination of Some Attempts to Defend the Unity of the Flood Narrative in Genesis: Part One," *VT* 37 (1987): 401–20; IDEM, "An Examination of Some Attempts to Defend the Unity of the Flood Narrative in Genesis: Part Two," *VT* 38 (1988): 1–21.

¹¹ Recently: Horst SEEBASS, *Genesis I: Urgeschichte (1,1–11,26)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996), 199–242, esp. 228–231; David M. CARR, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 48–62; Markus WITTE, *Die biblische Urgeschichte: Redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1–11,26* (BZAW 265; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 130–46, 171–84; Jan Christian GERTZ, "Beobachtungen zum literarischen Charakter und zum geistesgeschichtlichen Ort der nichtpriesterschriftlichen Sintfluterzählung," in *Auf dem Weg zur Endgestalt von Genesis bis II Regum* (ed. M. Beck and U. Schorn; BZAW 370; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 41–57.

Priestly editors.¹² 3) A Priestly *Grundschrift* was augmented by non-Priestly editors.¹³ An overview of older and more recent analyses reveals that each of the three explanations shows a certain affinity to one of the models of the formation of the Pentateuch, although they are not necessarily bound to this specific model. Besides, the boundaries between these explanations are fluid. This is especially true for the explanation mentioned second, which reckons with a Priestly editor. Even distinguished exponents of this theory concede that the Priestly text stratum in Gen 6–9 represents a coherent and self-contained version of the flood narrative. Therefore it is assumed that the Priestly editor knit together a non-Priestly flood narrative as well as data taken from a ספר התולדות with his own Priestly flood tradition.¹⁴ Thus in this approach the differences to the conventional Documentary Hypothesis are with regard to the flood narrative only gradual and refer mostly to the model of the formation of the Pentateuch at large. Meanwhile, the third explanation deserves special attention. Essentially, it consists of the former *Grundschriftmodell* (Supplementary Hypothesis) that has been replaced by the New Documentary Hypothesis. At present the Supplementary Hypothesis is experiencing a certain renaissance and therefore will be reviewed more closely. If I am correct, the following arguments are presented:¹⁵ 1) The non-Priestly text does

¹² See Paul VOLZ, "Kurzer Anhang über den Priesterkodex," in Paul VOLZ and Wilhelm RUDOLPH, *Der Elohist als Erzähler: Ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik an der Genesis erläutert* (BZAW 63; Gießen: Töpelmann, 1933), 135–45, esp. 140–42; John VAN SETERS, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 160–69; Rolf RENDTORFF, "L'histoire biblique des origines (Gen 1–11) dans le contexte de la redaction 'sacerdotale' du Pentateuque," in *Le Pentateuque en question* (ed. Albert de Pury; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1989), 83–94; BLUM, *Studien*, 278–85.

¹³ See Friedrich TUCH, *Commentar über die Genesis* (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1838), 137–86. The following works bear witness to a renaissance of Tuch's Supplementary Hypothesis suggested for the flood narrative as well as the entire primeval history: Jean-Louis SKA, "El relato del diluvio: Un relato sacerdotal y algunos fragmentos redaccionales posteriores," *EstB* 52 (1994): 37–62; Reinhard Gregor KRATZ, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments* (UTB 2157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 259–61; 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 Christian Gertz, Konrad Schmid, and Markus Witte; BZAW 315; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 49–61; Erich BOSSHARD-NEPUSTIL, *Vor uns die Sintflut: Studien zu Text, Kontexten und Rezeption der Fluterzählung Genesis 6–9* (BWANT 165; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005); and JESCHKE SCHÜLE, *Der Prolog der hebräischen Bibel: Der literar- und theologiegeschichtliche Diskurs der Urgeschichte (Genesis 1–11)* (ATANT 86; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2006), 247–354; Martin ARNETH, *Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt Studien zur Entstehung der alttestamentlichen Urgeschichte* (FRLANT 217; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 43–92, 169–200.

¹⁴ See BLUM, *Studien*, 282.

¹⁵ For the following see BOSSHARD-NEPUSTIL, *Sintflut*; SCHÜLE, *Prolog*, 247–354 and ARNETH, *Adam*, 43–92, 169–200. For a detailed discussion see GERTZ, *Beobachtungen*.

not feature a coherent story line. 2) The non-Priestly text can easily be understood as an addition to the Priestly Document, yet in the present form of the text provides the structure for the whole. 3) The notion of a non-Priestly supplementary layer reduces the number of hypotheses, since it works without the assumption of a third entity, the redaction, and dispenses with the reconstruction of a source text that no longer exists. Thus providing a more simple explanation, it should be preferred to the more-complex hypothesis of a redactional fusion of two versions of the flood narrative. 4) The whole chronology of the flood narrative represents a later addition. For this reason the contradictions in the chronology cannot serve as proof for two formerly autonomous versions.¹⁶ The first three arguments are closely connected insofar as they exclusively feed upon the criticism of the conventional distinction of two versions of the flood narrative. The fourth argument adds a new aspect to the discussion.

The chronology is a topic of its own, which is why I will focus on the first three arguments only. With respect to the chronology only this much shall be said here: by assigning the observed chronological inconsistencies to an editor, the difficulties are shifted but thereby not solved. In fact, the chronological information within the Priestly text is coherent – as long as one keeps the following in mind: 1) The Priestly document has a special interest in having the end of the flood coincide with New Year's day (Gen 8:13). 2) It reckons with a lunisolar year = 364 days (lunar year with 354 days + ten-day epacts) for the duration from the beginning of the flood on the seventeenth of the second month (Gen 7:11) to the leaving of the ark on the twenty-seventh of the second month of the following year (Gen 8:14–19). 3) In contrast, the months are counted according to a schematic calendar containing 360 days (cf. Gen 8:4–5): there are 150 days between the beginning of the flood on the seventeenth of the second month and the ark running aground on the seventeenth of the seventh month. Following the Egyptian and/or Persian example, four leap days might have been added to this calendar. Thus it is evident that the Priestly chronology is based on different systems, yet the parallel use of the schematic 360 (+ four) day calendar and the lunisolar year is not an isolated phenomenon.¹⁷

With those few remarks on the issue of chronology, I will turn to the first three arguments. The observation that the non-Priestly fragments do not fit into a seamless narrative is not new. Usually it is argued that the non-Priestly account of the construction of the ark was omitted when the two versions

¹⁶ For this argument see KRATZ, *Komposition*, 237–38.

¹⁷ Matthias ALBANI, "Israels Feste im Herbst und das Problem des Kalenderwechsels in der Exilszeit," in *Festtraditionen in Israel und im Alten Orient* (ed. E. Blum and R. Lux; Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie 28; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006), 111–56, esp. 137–38.

were joined together. What looks like a stopgap solution at first can actually be justified quite well. No doubt the construction of the ark is an integral part of the flood narrative. Also, the first mention of the ark preserved in the non-Priestly text bears an article (Gen 7:1), which suggests that the ark has previously been introduced. However, the gap in the non-Priestly text is not a conclusive argument against the assumption of an independent non-Priestly version. Methodologically, it cannot be ruled out that parts of the text were left out by an editor.¹⁸ From an empirical perspective, it is rare that a source document can be completely reconstructed from a secondary text. I will get to this in a moment. In our case, the omission of parts of the text can be explained as part of an overall conception and is further supported by the fact that the remaining text still bears traces of the omitted piece. Moreover, it is an old observation that the Priestly instructions for the construction of the ark in Gen 6:9–22 correspond with those for the construction of the tent-sanctuary in Exod 25–40*.¹⁹ If this correspondence were to remain intact after the two versions had been combined, the omission of the non-Priestly account of the construction would be more or less inevitable.²⁰ Further evidence is provided by the remark found in the non-Priestly text, stating that “Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made” (Gen 8:6). Without doubt this remark assumes a preceding account of the construction of the ark. In the present context, however, the cross-reference does not match, since the Priestly text does not mention a “window” (חלון). Therefore, the construction presupposed in Gen 8:6 is quite certainly not identical with the one narrated in Gen 6:9–22 (P). A similar case is the non-Priestly reference to the “roof” (מכסה) in Gen 8:13b, which is also not mentioned by P. However, in this case an explicit cross-reference is lacking (cf. LXX: ἣν ἐποίησε). Certainly, in the present text, Priestly and non-Priestly terminology can be identified, including Priestly צהר in Gen 6:16 (P) and non-Priestly חלון in Gen 8:6b (non-P), as well as Priestly פתח in Gen 6:16 (P) and non-Priestly מכסה in Gen 8:13b (non-P). However,

¹⁸ In antiquity, the task of text transmission tended to be carried out by expanding or exactly reproducing given texts. Although it is possible to speak of a tendency, it is *no more* than a tendency. Abbreviations of given texts are well documented. In most cases these abbreviations can be ascribed to the ideological interest of the authors or editors or else can be explained as a side effect of the harmonization of different texts or traditions. See on this topic David M. CARR, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁹ JACOB, *Genesis*, 187; Thomas POLA, *Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift: Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von Pg* (WMANT 70; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995), 286–90, 367; Norbert Clemens BAUMGART, *Die Umkehr des Schöpfergottes: Zu Komposition und religionsgeschichtlichem Hintergrund von Gen 5–9* (HBS 22; Freiburg: Herder, 1999), 531–59.

²⁰ BAUMGART, *Umkehr*, 416.

the fact that this rather complicated identification is necessary indicates that it is hardly original.

I will now turn to the second argument. It consists of two observations: 1) The non-Priestly text can easily be understood as an addition to the Priestly text. 2) In the present context the non-Priestly text provides the structure for the whole. Let us have a look at the non-Priestly reference to the window in Gen 8:6 once again, since it represents a good example for the non-Priestly text working as an addition to the Priestly text. It serves the purpose of introducing the subsequent bird scene, which has no equivalent in the Priestly narrative. At the same time, it becomes apparent that the additional nature of the non-Priestly text does not rule out the possibility that it draws on material taken from an originally independent version of the flood narrative. The bird motif can be traced back to the eleventh tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic (XI, 145–54), to which the non-Priestly version of the flood narrative as well as the non-Priestly texts of the Primeval History in general reveal a considerable closeness. Thus the old insight that editors usually draw on material of written and oral traditions is confirmed. Yet how exactly are we to imagine this in our case? It is not very likely that an editor with a certain interest in history of religion would have taken selected scenes from his copy of the Akkadian original and incorporated them in the flood narrative as well as into the rest of the primeval history. The selection of motifs as well as the differences from the original – such as the succession of birds – rather suggest a different (Hebrew) version of the flood narrative. Since the allusions to the Epic of Gilgamesh are neither confined to the eleventh tablet nor to the flood narrative, we ought to reckon with a non-Priestly primeval history that was influenced by the Gilgamesh Epic as well as by other Mesopotamian material, and that in turn provided material to the composer of the non-Priestly additions to P. It is worth noting that the Priestly passages of the flood narrative can be described as additions to the non-Priestly text as well. Thus, in the present context, the Priestly text (Gen 7:7–9) borrows the distinction between clean and unclean animals from the non-Priestly text (Gen 7:2–3), yet only mentions the clean animals entering the ark.²¹ Unless one prefers to introduce the hypothesis of another addition to P or the assumption of a rearrangement of the text, one has to conclude that in this case the Priestly text works as an addition.

I will proceed by addressing the overall structure of the text and its supposed orientation on the non-Priestly texts.²² Regardless of the difficulties surrounding the identification of a structure that accounts for all the structural characteristics in the present text, the following can be stated: the most prominent structural feature is the double framing of the flood narrative by the non-

²¹ BLUM, *Studien*, 282.

²² Sometimes this theory is modified to the effect that it is the Priestly *Grundschrift* that dictates the structure. See SCHÜLE, *Prolog*, 259.

Priestly passages in Gen 6:5–8 and Gen 8:21–22, on the one hand, and the Priestly texts in Gen 6:9–22 and 9:1–17, on the other. In this way the prominent introduction and closing of the flood narrative can be assigned to the Priestly and non-Priestly versions respectively. With this in mind, it is hard to maintain the claim that the structure of the whole follows the structure of either of the two versions alone. An additional observation can be made. The *toledot* formula generally introduces a new passage. In the flood narrative, however, the non-Priestly account provides the introduction, thus displacing the Priestly *toledot* formula in Gen 6:9–10. In the present context, instead of marking the beginning of a new passage, the *toledot* formula highlights the break in the two-part prologue. Apparently, an older structure provided by the Priestly narrative is superimposed by the structure of the present text. This observation correlates with findings in the epilogue. In the non-Priestly narrative in Gen 8:21–22, YHWH promises never again to curse the ground, yet instead to endure the wickedness of humankind and to maintain the blessing of the earth. Unmistakably this promise refers back to the first prologue in Gen 6:5–8. Featuring a rhythmic structure, Gen 8:21–22 is highlighted as the climax and – in line with the characteristic *Achtergewicht* (weight of the stern) of folk narratives – marks the end of the storyline that begins in Gen 6:5–8. In the present context, however, it is followed by the highly significant passage Gen 9:1–17. Due to its close connection to Gen 6:9–22, it can hardly be separated from the flood narrative. Therefore, in the present context, blessing and covenant constitute the final act of the flood narrative, thus replacing YHWH's promise in Gen 8:21–22 and transforming it into a caesura within the text. Here again previous text boundaries are superimposed by the structure of the present text. This time, however, the older structure is provided by the non-Priestly text. The conclusion is obvious: the present form of the text is based on two older versions, each with its own structural characteristics. Taking the *toledot* formula in Gen 6:9 as an indicator, one of them can be traced back to the Priestly code – although the assumption of a *toledot* book used by a Priestly redactional layer is possible as well. In view of YHWH's promise in Gen 8:21–22, the existence of a non-Priestly version of the flood narrative can be affirmed.

	Gen 6: 5–8	Gen 6: 9–10	Gen 6: 11–22	Gen 7: 1–8:22	Gen 8: 21–22	Gen 9: 1–17
Non-P	Prologue	---	---	Flood	Epilogue (cf. 6:5–8)	---
P	---	<i>Toledot</i> Formula: Introduction of the Flood Narrative	Prologue	Flood	---	Epilogue (cf. Gen 6:9–22)
Present Text	Prologue in Heaven (Part I)	<i>Toledot</i> Formula: Cesura	Prologue on Earth (Part II)	Flood	Caesura	Epilogue

Finally, I will address the third argument, which states that the assumption of a non-Priestly supplementary layer reduces the number of hypotheses and therefore should be preferred to the more complicated hypothesis of a redactional fusion of two versions of the flood narrative. Recently, the reference to Ockham's razor has enjoyed a certain popularity in biblical scholarship. At this point I cannot recapitulate the debate between William of Ockham and Walter Chatton and their successors. Since several additions to the Priestly text are generally assumed, identifying the Supplementary Hypothesis as the "simpler" hypothesis does not seem fully convincing. Moreover, it must be pointed out that the reference to Ockham's razor is reasonable only when two competing hypotheses share the same explanatory potential. A more complex hypothesis that accounts for the facts in a better way can therefore be preferred to a simpler one. In light of the observations just mentioned, this seems to be the case for the flood narrative: assigning the non-Priestly texts and the obvious tensions to a redaction of the Priestly flood narrative leads to significant problems. Therefore the model of two sources can be credited with the greater explanatory power with regard to the formation of the present flood narrative. The textual layers identified in the analysis above can be described as two versions that were originally self-contained and independently handed down.²³ This does not, however, necessarily rule out the possibility that one version was familiar with the other. In combining the two versions to form the present flood narrative, the editor worked skillfully and successfully toward a coherent text. Overall these findings resemble those of Gen 1:1–4:26.²⁴

III.

I will have to leave it at those few remarks concerning the flood narrative. In my opinion the largely uncontroversial observations in the text are best explained with the assumption of two versions of the narrative that have been knit together. Now the question is: what is gained with this statement for the discussion of the Documentary Hypothesis or the so-called New Documentarians? The answer might be disillusioning: little.

1) The plausible assumption of two versions of the flood narrative does not imply the notion of "documents" in the sense suggested by the Documentary Hypothesis. This is shown by Erhard Blum's analysis of the Priestly texts, which he describes as a compositional layer that incorporates its own texts

²³ See, e.g., WITTE, *Urgeschichte*, 130–46 (P) and 171–84 (non-P).

²⁴ See Jan Christian GERTZ, "Von Adam zu Enosch: Überlegungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte von Gen 2–4," in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog* (ed. M. Witte; BZAW 345/1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 215–36.

and traditions into its editorial work.²⁵ The same applies *vice versa* for a similar model for the non-Priestly texts suggested by Eckart Otto and Martin Arneith.²⁶

2) The non-Priestly version was only partially incorporated into the present composition. Hence it is evident that the common assumption, according to which editors only added to their sources but did not rearrange or abridge them, is too optimistic. In any case, the notion that two if not three comprehensive and essentially complete documents can be traced in the Pentateuch should be handled with care. That the Priestly texts apparently have been preserved more or less completely is the exception rather than the rule.

3) This assessment applies to the possibility of a reconstruction of the incorporated texts and traditions as well. For the Priestly texts the reconstruction can be accomplished rather easily, which is due to the fact that these texts feature distinct contours, a clear structure, and several cross-connections. The latter also allows for identification of the Priestly narrative beyond the boundaries of individual themes and books of the Pentateuch. With respect to the non-Priestly texts, this is much more difficult.

4) A glance at two other texts reveals that the precise reconstruction of material incorporated in a given text is successful only in rare cases. For instance, the Deuteronomistic Law is widely acknowledged to be based on the Covenant Code. Nevertheless, someone only familiar with Deut 12–26 would find it impossible to reconstruct the Covenant Code. That is true even for such texts as the one concerned with the release of Hebrew slaves in Deut 15:12–18. It doubtlessly draws on Exod 21:2–11; however, without the knowledge of the Covenant Code the reconstruction of the incorporated text can be done only very roughly.²⁷ As for the second example, I would like to point to the Synoptic question. It is beyond dispute that Matthew and Luke incorporated both the Sayings Source Q and Mark into their gospels. With respect to the reconstruction of documents in the Pentateuch, the following consideration is of interest:²⁸ the reconstruction of the Sayings Source Q, which is lost as an autonomous document, is surrounded by uncertainty – despite its double and independent representation in Matthew and Luke. Besides, there are strong voices assuming that the Sayings Source has not been fully incorporated in

²⁵ BLUM, Studien, 221–85.

²⁶ Eckart OTTO, “Die Paradieserzählung Genesis 2–3: Eine nachpriesterschriftliche Lehrerzählung in ihrem religionsgeschichtlichen Kontext,” in “Jedes Ding hat seine Zeit ...”: Studien zur israelitischen und altorientalischen Weisheit (ed. A. A. Diesel et al.; BZAW 241; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), 167–92; ARNEITH, Adam.

²⁷ See Norbert LOHFINK, “Fortschreibung? Zur Technik von Rechtsrevisionen im deuteronomistischen Bereich, erörtert an Deuteronomium 12, Ex 21,2–11 und Dtn 15,12–18,” in Das Deuteronomium und seine Querbeziehungen (ed. Timo Veijola; Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft 62; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 127–71.

²⁸ See Michael WOLTER, “Reconstructing Q?” ET 115 (2003–2004): 115–19.

the gospels. Fortunately the other source, the gospel of Mark, has been handed down to us. Thus it can serve as an example showing that a reconstruction of Mark from Matthew and Luke alone would hardly be possible.

I will sum up very briefly: ancient editors or composers oriented themselves toward traditions – this is the truth inherent in the notion of “sources.” However, drawing on texts and traditions did not stop these editors and composers from abridging and restructuring the material – this is the fundamental difficulty of all *Quellenscheidung* and the truth inherent in the Supplementary Hypotheses.