

THE VISION OF THE PRIESTLY NARRATIVE

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# THE VISION OF THE PRIESTLY NARRATIVE

Its Genre and Hermeneutics of Time

*by*

Suzanne Boorer

SBL Press



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**Atlanta**

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Boorer, Suzanne, 1954– author.

Title: The vision of the priestly narrative : its genre and hermeneutics of time / by Suzanne Boorer.

Description: Atlanta : SBL Press, [2016] | Series: Ancient Israel and its literature ; number 27 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016021820 (print) | LCCN 2016022681 (ebook) | ISBN 9780884140627 (pbk.: alk. paper) | ISBN 9780884140641 (hardcover: alk. paper) | ISBN 9780884140634 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: P document (Biblical criticism) | Bible. Pentateuch—Criticism, interpretation, etc.

Classification: LCC BS1181.6 .B66 2016 (print) | LCC BS1181.6 (ebook) | DDC 222/.1066—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016021820>

Printed on acid-free paper.



Time present and time past  
Are both ... present in time future,  
And time future contained in time past

T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton," "The Four Quartets"

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project had its seminal roots in an extended essay on the theology of the Priestly narrative many years ago when I was an undergraduate; ever since then the use of time in this material has been an ongoing curiosity to me. I would like to thank, therefore, all those who have mentored me and/or inspired in me a fascination for the Old Testament texts and their theological perspectives over the years from then until now, including (but not limited to) Tony Campbell, Brevard Childs, Gene Tucker, and Carol Newsom.

My thanks also go to my colleagues for putting up with me during the time it has taken to write this book and in particular my Old Testament colleague, Jim Trotter.

I would like to express my appreciation for the generous amounts of study leave granted to me by Murdoch University and the Perth Theological Hall, without which I would never have completed this book.

Finally, my thanks go to SBL Press for publishing this book and in particular the editors of the *Ancient Israel and Its Literature* series, initially Steven McKenzie and then, especially, Thomas Römer, who heroically read my manuscript twice and offered helpful suggestions.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästinavereins
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BKAT	Biblische Kommentar, Altes Testament
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
<i>BRev</i>	<i>Bible Review</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZABR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
DBAT	<i>Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament</i>
Dtr	Deuteronomist/Deuteronomic
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary

FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GDNE	Gorgias Dissertations: Near East Series
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HerBS	Herders biblische Studien
HS	Holiness School source
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
ITC	International Theological Commentary
J	Yahwist
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBTh	Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JPSTC	Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KST	Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>NIB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Bible</i> . Edited by Leander E. Keck. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2004.
<i>NIDB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by Katherine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–2009.
non-P	non-Priestly material
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis

ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>OtSt</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
P	Priestly material
Pg	Priestly <i>Grundschrift</i> , the independent P narrative
Ps	secondary P, supplement to Pg
PT	Priestly Torah
R	Redactor
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions
Siphrut	Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures
StBib	Studia Biblica
SymS	Symposium Series
TB	Theologische Bücherei: Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert
<i>TDOT</i>	Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry. <i>The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by John T. Willis et al. 15 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1974–2006.
<i>TRu</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Supplementum
WAWSup	Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZABR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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## INTRODUCTION

It is generally agreed that it is relatively easy to distinguish Priestly material (P)<sup>1</sup> from non-Priestly material (non-P) in Genesis–Numbers (Joshua).<sup>2</sup> However, when it comes to identifying the overall theology of the Priestly material, or what it might be primarily about, there is much more contention. A range of views have been proposed, primarily in articles<sup>3</sup> and sections in books whose primary concern is mostly with one section of P<sup>4</sup> or with source/redactional issues or with defining the extent or possible levels within P.<sup>5</sup> Philip Jenson’s statement that “there have been surprisingly few full-scale theological studies of P in spite of the fact that it is the

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1. When referring to Priestly material in general, I will use the siglum P.

2. E.g., the comment by Christophe Nihan (*From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study of the Composition of the Book of Leviticus*, FAT 2/25 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 20): “Still today, the distinction between ‘Priestly’ and ‘non-Priestly’ material ... on the basis of its distinctive language, syntax and theology, remain one of the few unquestioned results of Pentateuchal criticism.”

3. See, e.g., the classic articles of Karl Elliger, “Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung,” *ZTK* 49 (1952): 121–43; Norbert Lohfink, “The Priestly Narrative and History,” in *Theology of the Pentateuch: Themes of the Priestly Narrative and Deuteronomy*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 136–72 (originally published as “Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte,” *Congress Volume: Göttingen, 1977*, VTSup 29 [Leiden: Brill, 1977], 189–225).

4. See, e.g., Erich Zenger, *Gottes Bogen in den Wolken: Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Theologie der priesterschriftlichen Urgeschichte*, SBS 112 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983); David Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 43–140.

5. See, e.g., Erhard Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, BZAW 189 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992); Ludwig Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift*, BZAW 214 (New York: de Gruyter, 1993); Thomas Pola, *Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift: Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von Pg*, WMANT 70 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995); Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*; Philippe

most clearly definable source”<sup>6</sup> is still more or less applicable today. It is this issue of the meaning of P as a whole, at least at some level that includes the P narrative material, that will form the focus of this study, in the hope that such an exploration will throw a little more light on the big picture of what might lie at its heart hermeneutically and theologically.

### 1.1. HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

#### 1.1.1. Preliminary Considerations

Perceptions of the overall theology of P as a whole are inevitably affected, at least to some extent, by the complex debates surrounding the definition, nature, extent, and dating of the priestly material. The primary issues around which these debates have centered are as follows.

Does this Priestly material constitute, at least at some level, a once “independent” document; that is, a “source” that originally stood separately before later being combined with the non-P material by a later redactor(s)?<sup>7</sup> If so, did P know and draw on some of the non-P material

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Guillaume, *Land and Calendar: The Priestly Document from Genesis 1 to Joshua 18*, LHBOTS 391 (New York: T&T Clark, 2009).

6. Philip Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World*, JSOTSup 106 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 26. Jenson attributes this to the observation that “much of the challenge and difficulty of the Priestly material is how so many disparate concepts and institutions can be held together as a more or less coherent whole” (92). Of course, whether the Priestly material can be viewed as a coherent whole, and at what level, is an issue that is taken up in the following discussion.

7. See, e.g., Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, trans. Bernard W. Anderson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 8–19; Elliger, “Sinn und Ursprung”; Sean McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, AnBib 50 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971); Lohfink, “Priestly Narrative,” 144–47; Suzanne Boorer, “The Kerygmatic Intention of the Priestly Document,” *ABR* 25 (1977): 12–20; Ralph Klein, “The Message of P,” in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Peritt (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 57–66; Walter Brueggemann, “The Kerygma of the Priestly Writers,” in *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions*, ed. Hans W. Wolff and Walter Brueggeman, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 101–13; Zenger, *Gottes Bogen*, 32–36; Peter Weimar, “Struktur und Komposition der priesterschriftlichen Geschichtsdarstellung,” *BN* 23–24 (1983–1984): 81–162; Klaus Koch, “P-Kein Redaktor! Erinnerung an zwei Eckdaten der Quellenscheidung,” *VT* 37 (1987): 446–67; Volkmar Fritz, “Das Geschichtsverständnis der Priesterschrift,” *ZTK* 84 (1987): 426–

to compose its own account or not?<sup>8</sup> Or does P represent a redaction of

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39; J. A. Emerton, "The Priestly Writer in Genesis," *JTS* 39 (1988): 381–400; Ernest W. Nicholson, "P as an Originally Independent Source in the Pentateuch," *IBS* 10 (1988): 192–206; Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 221; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 78; Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*, LAI (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 108; Antony F. Campbell, "The Priestly Text: Redaction or Source?" in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel: Für Norbert Lohfink*, ed. G. Braulik, Walter Gross, and Sean McEvenue (Freiburg am Breisgau: Herder, 1993), 32–47; Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift*; Pola, *Ursprüngliche Priesterschrift*; Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, esp. 46–47; Carr, "Scribal Processes of Coordination/Harmonization and the Formation of the First Hexateuch(s)," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research*, ed. Thomas Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, and Baruch Schwartz, FAT 78 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 63–83; Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 292–96; Baruch J. Schwartz, "The Priestly Account of the Theophany and Lawgiving at Sinai," in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*, ed. Michael V. Fox et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 103–34; Graeme I. Davies, "The Composition of the Book of Exodus: Reflections on the Theses of Erhard Blum," in Fox, *Texts, Temples, and Traditions*, 71–85; Michaela Bauks, "La signification de l'espace et du temps dans l'historiographie sacerdotale," in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History*, ed. Thomas Römer, BETL 147 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 29–45; Christian Frevel, *Mit Blick auf das Land die Schöpfung erinnern: Zum Ende der Priesterschrift*, HerBS 23 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000); Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, trans. P. Dominique (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 147 (note: in this later work he speaks of the "relative independence" of P, but in his earlier work he saw P as a redaction; see n. 8); Albert de Pury, "The Jacob Story and the Beginning of the Formation of the Pentateuch," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation*, ed. Thomas Dozeman and Konrad Schmid, SymS 34 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 51–72, esp. 62, 68–69; Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*; Guillaume, *Land and Calendar* (although he tends to incorporate some texts traditionally attributed to J into his Pg); Joel Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, FAT 68 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 197–207; Thomas Römer, "The Exodus Narrative according to the Priestly Document," in *The Strata of the Priestly Writings: Contemporary Debates and Future Directions*, ed. Sarah Shectman and Joel Baden, ATANT 95 (Zurich: TVZ, 2009), 157–74, esp. 158; Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, trans. Linda Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 147–48.

8. The majority of scholars who hold the position that at some level there once existed an independent or separate Priestly narrative as listed in n. 7 also hold that P knew the non-P material; see especially McEvenue, *Narrative Style*, 23–25; Lohfink,

the non-P material, whereby the non-P material was incorporated by the P redactor(s)?<sup>9</sup>

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“Priestly Narrative,” 146–47 n. 31; Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift*; Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 147; Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 47, 60–61, 90, 92, 117; Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 292–96. The main exception is the position held by Schwartz (“Priestly Account”) and Baden (*J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 197–207), who maintain that the P source did not know the non-P material (J and E). Another exception is Guillaume (*Land and Calendar*, 7, 46, 145) who relegates the material he perceives as non-P, (which is not in places the same as the material traditionally attributed to non-P), “whether it is pre-Pg, post-Pg, or displaying Deuteronomistic traits” (7), to secondary P [Ps]. Moreover, there is some debate with regard to the delineation of the specific non-P texts that are earlier than P; this will be taken up in the later discussion in §1.2.3.

9. See, e.g., Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 293–325, esp. 306–7, 317–21; Sting Tengström, *Die Toledotformel und die literarische Struktur der priesterlichen Erweiterungsschicht im Pentateuch*, ConBOTS 17 (Lund: Gleerup, 1981); Jean Louis Ska, “La Place d’Ex 6:2–8 dans la narration de l’exode,” *ZAW* 94 (1982): 530–48; Ska, “Quelques remarques sur Pg et la dernière rédaction du Pentateuque,” in *Le Pentateuque en question: Les origines et la composition des cinq premiers livres de la Bible à la lumière des recherches récentes*, ed. Albert de Pury, MdB 19 (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1989), 95–125 (but note that in his later work he speaks of the relative independence of P; see n. 7); Rolf Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch*, trans. J. Scullion, JSOTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 156–70, esp. 169–70; Marc Vervenne, “The ‘P’ Tradition in the Pentateuch: Document and/or Redaction? The ‘Sea Narrative’ (Ex 13:17–14:31) as a Test Case,” in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies: Papers Read at the XIIIth IOSOT Congress, Leuven 1989*, ed. C. Breckelmans and J. Lust, BETL 94 (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), 67–90; John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 322–42; Van Seters, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus–Numbers* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 100–112; Van Seters, *The Pentateuch: A Social-Science Commentary*, Trajectories 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 164–77; Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law*, trans. Allen Mahnke (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); Thomas Dozeman, *God at War: Power in the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 89, 104–9, 135. However, Dozeman in a more recent article (“The Priestly Wilderness Itineraries and the Composition of the Pentateuch,” in Dozeman, *Pentateuch: International Perspectives*, 256–88, esp. 282–83, 287) admits that there are signs of an independent P source lying behind the P itineraries in Exodus and Numbers. Israel Knohl (*The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995]) presents a different model but one that lies close to this redactional one. Although he advocates a Priestly Torah (PT), this is fragmentary, and he attributes many of the Priestly narrative texts to his Holiness School (HS),

If there was once an independent, or more precisely, separate, document, what specific Priestly texts constituted it? Almost all who adhere to P as a separate document identify a basic coherent Priestly narrative, a Priestly *Grundschrift* (Pg), which is distinguished from later P-like material that supplemented Pg (Ps or H/HS) or the combination of Pg and non-P material (H/HS or post-P redaction).<sup>10</sup> Still, which particular texts make

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which is made up of layers of redaction that both edited the PT texts and combined them with the non-P material. In this he is followed, albeit to a lesser extent, by Jacob Milgrom (*Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3B [New York: Doubleday, 2000], 1334, 1338, 1343–44); Milgrom, “HR 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).

10. When speaking of the Priestly *Grundschrift*, the independent P narrative that many scholars have distinguished, I will use the siglum Pg. For the Priestly *Grundschrift*, see scholars listed in n. 7. An exception is Sigmund Mowinckel (*Tetrateuch-Pentateuch-Hexateuch: Die Berichte über die Landnahme in den drei altisraelitischen Geschichtswerken*, BZAW 90 [Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964], cited in A. Graeme Auld, *Joshua, Moses and the Land: Tetrateuch-Pentateuch-Hexateuch in a Generation since 1938* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980], 27–31), who simply takes P as a whole without worrying about possible levels and supplements.

Ps stands for secondary P and has been used traditionally for priestly material that supplemented Pg. More recently, with the recognition that the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26) is later than Pg, with texts similar to it found outside Lev 17–26 especially in Exodus and Numbers (labeled H or HS [for Holiness School]), some scholars see H as supplementing Priestly material only: e.g., Baruch Schwartz, “Introduction: The Strata of the Priestly Writings and the Revised Relative Dating of P and H,” in Shectman, *Strata of the Priestly Writings*, 1–12; Jeffrey Stackert, “The Holiness Legislation and Its Pentateuchal Sources: Revision, Supplementation, and Replacement,” in Shectman, *Strata of the Priestly Writings*, 187–204; William Gilders, “Sacrifice before Sinai and the Priestly Narrative,” in Shectman, *Strata of the Priestly Writings*, 57–72.

For H/HS as supplementing and combining P and non-P material, see, e.g., Eckart Otto, “The Holiness Code in Diachrony and Synchrony in the Legal Hermeneutics of the Pentateuch,” in Shectman, *Strata of the Priestly Writings*, 135–56; Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 545–71. For post-P redaction, see, e.g., Jan Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch*, FRLANT 186 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Reinhard Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Numeribuches im Kontext von Hexateuch und Pentateuch*, BZABR 3 (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003); Thomas Römer, “Israel’s Sojourn in the Wilderness and the Construction of the Book of Numbers,” in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld*, ed. Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim, and Brian Aufer, VTSup 113 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 419–45; Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*,

up this Pg?<sup>11</sup> If a redaction, does this Priestly material consist of fragmentary comments or a redactional layer with a specific perspective(s)?<sup>12</sup> Or is the nature of P neither a source nor redaction, but something in between; that is, a *Komposition* (KP) that incorporates non-P material (KD) but has traits of deliberate coherence between P texts at least in places and reveals a consistent theological rationale across the P texts that have been added to the non-P material?<sup>13</sup>

If perceived as an independent source or a deliberate redaction layer, where might this original document or intentional redaction layer or *Komposition* have ended? Do the texts in P-style in Joshua represent the conclusion of an originally independent narrative source (Pg) or intentional redactional layer?<sup>14</sup> Or does Pg or P as redactional layer or *Komposition* conclude rather with the death of the Mosaic generation, including at least Num 13–14\*; 20\*; 27\*; or perhaps Deut 34\*?<sup>15</sup> Or does it conclude earlier than this, at some point in the Sinai pericope?<sup>16</sup>

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25–30, 571–72. See also Christophe Nihan, “The Priestly Covenant: Its Reinterpretations and the Composition of P,” in Shectman, *Strata of the Priestly Writings*, 87–134.

11. There is a range of views regarding the precise definition of Pg in terms of the particular texts to be included, especially with regard to its extent; see, e.g., the definitions of Pg by various scholars set out in the appendices in Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 220–24, and Guillaume, *Land and Calendar*, 193–95; and see the later discussion in §1.2.2.

12. For fragmentary comments, see, e.g., Rendtorff, *Problem of the Process of Transmission*, 156–70. For a redactional layer, see, e.g., Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 293–325; and Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 322–42; Van Seters, *Pentateuch*, 164–77.

13. Blum, *Studien zur Komposition*.

14. For the former, see, e.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The Structure of P,” *CBQ* 38 (1976): 275–92, esp. 287–89; Lohfink, “Priestly Narrative,” 145; Ernst Axel Knauf, “Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichten der Deuteronomisten,” in Römer, *Future of the Deuteronomistic History*, 101–18; Guillaume, *Land and Calendar*, 156, 161, 166; and most recently, Carr (*Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 295–97) suggests that Pg once concluded with the settlement in the land. For the latter, see, e.g., Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 322–42 (Van Seters sees the conclusion of his P redaction in Judg 1); Dozeman, *God at War*, 89, 104, 135.

15. For Num 13–14\*; 20\*; 27\*, see, e.g., Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 151; Ska, “Le récit sacerdotal: Une ‘histoire sans fin’?” in *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers*, ed. Thomas Römer, BETL 215 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 631–53; Ed Noort, “Bis zur Grenze des Landes? Num 27,12–23 und das Ende der Priesterschrift,” in Römer, *Books of Leviticus and Numbers*, 99–119; Joel Baden, “Identifying the Original Stratum of P: Theoretical and Practical Considerations,” in Shectman, *Strata of the*

When are these Priestly texts, whether perceived as a source constituting a basic narrative, Pg, or as a redaction, or *Komposition*, to be dated? In the preexilic period or the exilic/early postexilic period (pre-520 BCE) or later, that is, during the Second Temple period?<sup>17</sup>

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*Priestly Writings*, 13–29, esp. 22–23; Suzanne Boorer, “The Place of Numbers 13–14\* and Numbers 20:2–12\* in the Priestly Narrative (Pg),” *JBL* 131 (2012): 45–63.

For Deut 34, see, e.g., Noth, *History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 10; Elliger, “Sinn und Ursprung,” 121, 128; Ronald E. Clements, *God and Temple: The Idea of the Divine Presence in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 109; Terrence Fretheim, “The Priestly Document: Anti-Temple?” *VT* 18 (1968): 314; McEvenue, *Narrative Style*, 19; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 320; Brueggemann, “Kerygma of the Priestly Writers,” 102; Zenger, *Gottes Bogen*, 36–43; Weimar, “Struktur und Komposition,” 85; E. Cortese, *Josua 13–21: Ein priesterschriftlicher Abschnitt im deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk*, OBO 94 (Fribourg: Presses Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); Blum, *Studien zur Komposition*, 181–82; Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift*, 265, 271; Frevel, *Mit Blick auf das Land*.

16. See, e.g., Eckart Otto (“Forschungen zur Priesterschrift,” *TRu* 62 [1997]: 1–50, esp. 35; “Holiness Code,” 135), who concludes Pg in Exod 29\*; Pola (*Ursprüngliche Priesterschrift*, 298, 364), Bauks (“Signification de l’espace,” 30–37), de Pury (“Jacob Story,” 63–65), and Reinhard Kratz (*The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*, trans. J. Bowden [London: T&T Clark, 2005], 103, 111, 113), who end Pg in Exod 40\*; Erich Zenger (“Die Bücher der Tora/des Pentateuch,” in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, ed. Erich Zenger, 5th ed., KST 1.1 [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004], 164), and Thomas Römer (*The So-called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical, and Literary Introduction* [London: T&T Clark, 2005], 82, 178–80; “Exodus Narrative,” 160; “Israel’s Sojourn,” 424–27), who end Pg in Lev 9; and Matthias Köckert (“Leben in Gottes Gegenwart: Zum Verständnis des Gesetzes in der priesterschriftlichen Literatur,” in *Gesetz als Thema Biblischer Theologie*, ed. Ingo Baldermann and Dwight R Daniels, *JBTh* 4 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989], 29–61), Nihan (*From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*), who end Pg with Lev 16.

17. For the preexilic period, see, e.g., Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972); Weinfeld, *The Place of the Law in the Religion of Ancient Israel*, *VTSup* 100 (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Avi Hurvitz, “The Evidence of Language in Dating the Priestly Code: A Linguistic Study in Technical Idioms and Terminology,” *RB* 81 (1974): 24–56, esp. 55; Menahem Haran, “Behind the Scenes of History: Determining the Date of the Priestly Source,” *JBL* 100 (1981): 321–33; Ziony Zevit, “Converging Lines of Evidence Bearing on the Date of P,” *ZAW* 94 (1982): 481–511, esp. 510; Schwartz, “Priestly Account,” 103–34. Knohl (*Sanctuary of Silence*) dates his PT and much of his HS (though not all) to the preexilic period; and Milgrom (*Leviticus 17–22*, 1345) dates P and H to the preexilic period but HR to the exilic period.

For the exilic/early postexilic period, see, e.g., Elliger, “Sinn und Ursprung,” 141–

It is to be expected that the particular conclusions drawn with regard to all these questions regarding the definition, nature, extent, and dating of P have some influence on the views that have been put forward regarding the interpretation of P (however conceived) as a whole; and indeed in some cases, the perception of what P is concerned with overall has influenced the answers given to these questions.

For example, Frank Cross's view that the central goal of the Priestly work is "the reconstruction of the covenant of Sinai and its associated institutions"<sup>18</sup> reflects his position that the Priestly stratum (of the Tetrateuch) is a redaction that incorporated JE since it is in the JE material only, and not in P texts, that there is a covenant at Sinai. Those who see P as an originally independent or separate document see no covenant at Sinai: it is the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17, preceded by the Noahic covenant in Gen 9\*) that is significant in P.<sup>19</sup> Another example, this time in relation to the issue of the definition and extent of P, is seen in the view of Sigmund

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43; Clements, *God and Temple*, 111, 122; Peter Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.*, OTL (London: SCM, 1968), 86; Fretheim, "Priestly Document," 313; McEvenue, *Narrative Style*, 186; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 325; Lohfink, "Priestly Narrative," 147–48; Boorer, "Kerygmatic Intention"; Klein, "Message of P," 58; Brueggemann, "Kerygma of the Priestly Writers," 159; Weimar, "Struktur und Komposition," 86–87; Fritz, "Geschichtsverständnis der Priesterschrift," 427; Blenkinsopp, *Pentateuch*, 238; Pola, *Ursprüngliche Priesterschrift*; Davies, "Composition of the Book of Exodus," 84; Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 139; Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 252–55, 292, 297–98, 303; Crüsemann, *Torah*, 283; Frevel, *Mit Blick auf das Land*; Bauks, "Signification de l'espace"; Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 161; de Pury, "Jacob Story," 69–70; Römer, "Israel's Sojourn," 436; Römer, "Exodus Narrative," 158, 163, 169; Otto, "Holiness Code," 135; Saul Olyan, "An Eternal Covenant with Circumcision as Its Sign: How Useful a Criterion for Dating and Source Analysis?" in Dozeman, *Pentateuch: International Perspectives*, 347–58; and Schmid, (*Old Testament*, 148, 151) places P in the Persian period but prior to 525 BCE, admitting that at its earliest it was exilic.

For the Second Temple period, see, e.g., J. G. Vink, "The Date and Origin of the Priestly Code in the Old Testament," in *The Priestly Code and Seven Other Studies*, ed. J. G. Vink, *OtSt* 15 (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 1–144; Blum, *Studien zur Komposition*, 333–60; Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift*, 259–61; Van Seters, *Pentateuch*, 180, 183; Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 394, 614; Guillaume, *Land and Calendar*, 187.

18. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 325.

19. See Walter Zimmerli's classic article, "Sinaibund und Abrahambund: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Priesterschrift," in *Gottes Offenbarung: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament*, TB 19 (Munich: Kaiser, 1963), 205–16.



Mowinckel, for whom the fulfillment of the promise of the land is the primary theme and climax of the Priestly material.<sup>20</sup> This reflects his view that his independent P document (within which he does not distinguish levels of text such as Pg and Ps) includes Num 32; 33:50–34:29; 35:9–15; Josh 4:19; 5:10–12; 9:15b–21; 12–19; 21, which are texts that look toward and then recount the coming into and distribution of the land; to some extent he has included these texts because he thinks that the emphasis on the promise of the land throughout P must reach its conclusion and fulfillment.<sup>21</sup> In stark contrast, for Martin Noth, whose Pg contains none of these texts from the second half of Numbers or Joshua, the land promise is of little or no significance for Pg as he perceives it; rather, it is the setting up of the cult at Sinai that is all important, and once the cult was set up anything after that was not significant.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, those who conclude Pg in the Sinai material obviously tend to emphasize that the goal and purpose of Pg is the setting up of the cult (or at least the tabernacle).<sup>23</sup> An example with regard to the issue of dating is the tendency that can be observed among those who date the P material (or more accurately Pg) in the exilic period as seeing the Sinai material within it as a program for the future.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, Ludwig Schmidt, who dates Pg in the fifth century BCE, after the construction of the Second Temple, sees Pg as justifying and legitimating the hierocracy of the Second Temple.<sup>25</sup>

It will be helpful to keep this interrelation between these complex issues and overall interpretations of P in mind in the following review of the various views of the interpretation of P as a whole that have been proposed, and the positions held with regard to these issues will be noted

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20. Mowinckel, *Tetrateuch-Pentateuch-Hexateuch*, cited in Auld, *Joshua, Moses and the Land*, 27–31.

21. See Auld, *Joshua, Moses and the Land*, 30.

22. According to Noth the narrative unfolding of the land promise in Pg is merely following inherited (JE) tradition. Martin Noth, *The Chronicler's History*, trans. Hugh G. Williamson, JSOTSup 50 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 138; Noth, *History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 240–42.

23. See the scholars listed in n. 16.

24. E.g., Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 325; Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 140; and see Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 159 n. 117.

25. Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift*, 259–61. The interplay of interpretation and dating is almost inevitably circular with regards to this material: often a perceived interpretation is surmised as fitting most appropriately in a certain era, and vice versa, i.e., a perceived era may inform interpretative conclusions.

where appropriate. However, it must also be said that this interrelation between perceptions of P's theology overall and positions regarding the definition, nature, extent, and dating of P is, in many cases, only partial. On the one hand, among those who follow similar positions with regard to these issues, there can be a range of hypotheses regarding the overall theological horizon of P.<sup>26</sup> For example, although Noth attributes little or no significance to the land promise in his interpretation of P as a whole, some others who have basically followed Noth's definition of Pg and in particular its conclusion with the Mosaic generation (Deut 34\*) before the book of Joshua, have highlighted the promise of the land as not only significant, but as the key point within Pg's theological horizon, albeit as a future hope.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, at times those with differing views, especially with regard to the nature of P as source, redaction, or *Komposition*, can come to not dissimilar conclusions with regard to P's overall theological intent.<sup>28</sup> For example, Erhard Blum's discussion of the theology of his P *Komposition* (KP) overall seems to be based on P texts almost entirely, with little reference to the non-P material (KD) incorporated, and could almost just as easily be a discussion of Pg as an independent document. This is supported by the fact that the interpretation of Pg by Christophe Nihan, who adheres to an originally independent Pg that he sees as concluding with Lev 16, unlike Blum's KP that concludes in Num 27\*, is nevertheless very close to that of Blum's interpretation of his KP and indeed could be perceived as a development of it. All this will be borne out in the following survey of views.

### 1.1.2. Survey of Views of the Interpretation of P as a Whole

The various positions regarding the interpretation of P as a whole fall into three main categories: those who see P's primary concern contained in the Sinai material, those who focus on the land, and those who seek to interpret P by integrating in some way the theme(s) of the Sinai material

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26. This is largely due to which aspects of the text are weighted most heavily.

27. See, e.g., Elliger, "Sinn und Ursprung"; Brueggemann, "Kerygma of the Priestly Writers."

28. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that, because the style of P texts is so distinctive, those who see P as a redaction or *Komposition* incorporating the non-P material tend to focus on the P texts specifically in unfolding the theology overall.

with the theme of the land. Consequently, the following survey of views is arranged according to these categories.<sup>29</sup>

### 1.1.2.1. Sinai

The majority of scholars see P's primary concern as residing in the Sinai material.

Noth sees the goal of his originally independent Priestly narrative (Pg<sup>30</sup>) as the Sinai story; it is to this "ideal' cultic order," the ideal sanctuary and God's relationship to it, embodying the proper worship of God, that P as a whole is oriented.<sup>31</sup> Its "purpose was ... to present a program for the future, or else to offer a corrective of prevalent views with the object of helping to bring about a reform or in the expectation that such a reform would one day take place."<sup>32</sup>

Although Cross perceives P as a redaction of the non-P (JE) material, his view of the theology of this exilic document as a whole (JEP), which

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29. The various views within each category will be ordered chronologically. This survey is necessarily selective, aiming to include the most significant.

30. Although Noth does not specifically label the Priestly narrative (as distinct from secondary P supplementation), he outlines in *History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 17–19, as Pg, this is what scholars after Noth called such a P narrative. Noth sees his Pg as exilic concluding in Deut 34\* but maintains that, since Pg is only following inherited tradition outside Sinai, especially in the texts after Sinai, these are not significant for the theology of P; therefore the theme of the land is not important in P's theology as a whole. See 242 n. 634, and n. 22 above.

31. *Ibid.*, 240; see further 240–46, esp. 243, 246.

32. *Ibid.*, 243. Prior to Noth, Gerhard von Rad interpreted P as concerned with the *legitimation* of those ordinances that constitute Israel (*Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch: literarisch untersucht und theologisch gewertet*, BWANT 65 [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1934], 187–88). Noth rejects this view in favor of seeing Pg as programmatic. Similar views to that of Noth are expressed by Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 92–93, 102; and Fretheim, "Priestly Document." Although Vink ("Date and Origin," 1–44), unlike Noth, includes Lev 1–16, texts from the second half of Numbers, and some texts in Joshua, in his P; he also perceives his Priestly Code in programmatic terms relating to the cult. However, in dating his P later than Noth, Ackroyd, and Fretheim, who see P as exilic, that is, in the late Persian period, he maintains that P was written to provide the framework for the renewal of the cult that would bring about the reconciliation between the ruling classes in Samaria and the Palestinian community between whom tension existed due to the activity of Nehemiah.

concludes with Deut 34\*, is not all that dissimilar from that of Noth.<sup>33</sup> He, too, focuses on the Sinai material as of primary concern and interprets this in programmatic terms: it outlines “a program written in preparation for and in hope of the restoration of Israel.”<sup>34</sup> His interpretation is slightly different, however, because although he focuses mainly on the cultic elements of the Sinai material, he links these with the Sinai covenant (found in the non-P material), which he sees as God’s ultimate covenant and self-disclosure. This covenant and the rest of the cultic material set at Sinai (which includes P laws in Leviticus) make possible YHWH’s “tabernacling” in Israel’s midst, and this alone could fully redeem Israel: “The entire cultic paraphernalia and cultus was designed to express and overcome the problem of the holy, transcendent God visiting his pervasively sinful people.”<sup>35</sup> In short, “The Priestly school desired to reconstruct the institutes of the normative Mosaic age as a model for the future cultic institutions and covenant theology of Israel.”<sup>36</sup>

Erik Zenger basically follows Noth in seeing Pg as an independent document that ends in Deut 34\*.<sup>37</sup> He focuses especially on the links between the story of the nation Israel and the primeval history, in particular the creation account (Gen 1:1–2:4a) and the Noahic covenant (Gen 9:1–17).<sup>38</sup> He sees the primary concern of Pg in terms of the sanctuary as the means of God dwelling in the midst of Israel, mediating communion of the people with the creator God and between one another.<sup>39</sup> This is the goal and completion of creation: “For P as a whole composition the erecting of the holy tent for the people freed from creation destroying slavery is the goal of creation.”<sup>40</sup> In relation to this, the motif of God’s glory, linked with the bow in the clouds of the Noahic covenant, is significant. Within the sanctuary the fullness of the glory of YHWH is revealed; indeed, “the

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33. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 298–99, 307, 320–21, 325.

34. *Ibid.*, 325.

35. *Ibid.*, 299.

36. *Ibid.*, 320.

37. Zenger, *Gottes Bogen*. However, it should be noted that in Zenger’s later work (*Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 94–96) he sees P concluding with Lev 9.

38. Zenger, *Gottes Bogen*, 170–72.

39. *Ibid.*, 163, 172.

40. *Ibid.*, 181, and see 163–64 (unless otherwise stated, all translations of modern and ancient sources are my own). This parallels ancient Near Eastern texts where the building of a temple for the creator God completes, stabilizes, and renews and revives creation (173).

sanctuary is an instrument by which the creator God accepts and carries out his divine glory announced in the ‘bow in the clouds’ after the flood.”<sup>41</sup> Zenger also acknowledges the elements of sin and death in the story of the nation (Num 13–Deut 34\*) but sees this as a metaphor for the “real” story of Israel that needs to be seen in the context of the foundation of Israel “in the arc of events ‘creation–Sinai’ ... set once and for all.”<sup>42</sup> This foundation continues to stand and therefore means that there is ultimately life and not utter destruction: as he states “life in the face of the experience of death” dominates the horizon of Pg.<sup>43</sup> Ultimately, then, it is the sanctuary and the associated glory of the creator God in the midst of Israel that is for Zenger Pg’s primary concern: “Israel’s way can succeed in the ‘life dwelling’ of the creator God ... through an Israel which allows him ‘to dwell’ in its midst (Exod 29:45f) he wills to complete the creation.”<sup>44</sup>

Peter Weimar adheres to an exilic Pg as an independent document that ends in Deut 34\*, and his position is very similar to that of Zenger.<sup>45</sup> For Weimar also Pg’s primary concern is the sanctuary as the dwelling of YHWH, which he sees as the fulfillment of creation, and the associated glory of YHWH. Both humankind, created in the image of God, and the sanctuary as representing the heavenly prototype provide the manifestation or form of representation of the reality of God in the world: “the sanctuary ... is ... the place where the life producing freeing reality of YHWH ... is experienced in an exemplary way.”<sup>46</sup> The dwelling of YHWH with the people through the sanctuary is the high point of the instructions (Exod 29:45–46), and this is the fulfillment of the essential goal of the covenant with Abraham, which is the promise to be their God (Gen 17:7–8; see also Exod 6:7a): in the expression of this promise lies “the inner point on which everything turns” within the whole Priestly construction.<sup>47</sup> The setting up of the sanctuary as the dwelling of YHWH completes the creation and at

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41. *Ibid.*, 175.

42. *Ibid.*, 163.

43. *Ibid.*, 138.

44. *Ibid.*, 163.

45. Weimar’s Pg, however, is much smaller than Noth’s Pg; e.g., he includes within his original Pg in Exod 25–31 only 25:8–9; 26:1–29; 26:30; 29:45–46; see Peter Weimar, “Sinai und Schöpfung: Komposition und Theologie der Priesterschriftlichen Sinaigeschichte,” *RB* 95 (1988): 340–46. See also Weimar, “Struktur und Komposition.”

46. Weimar, “Sinai und Schöpfung,” 353; see also 350–51.

47. *Ibid.*, 356–57.

the same time, given the parallel with the Noahic covenant,<sup>48</sup> the “new creation.” At the same time, it introduces a process that aims at the transformation of the whole world, since it is the place from which the possibility of life-offering freedom radiates. The glory of YHWH plays an important role (Exod 16–Lev 9\*) within the function of the Sinai story in the framework of the whole of Pg: it is not static and perennial but a dynamic process in which the exodus God communicates and opens up new possibilities for life.<sup>49</sup> In short, it is “the symbol of the saving-guiding presence of God.”<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the creation of the people of YHWH is begun in the exodus and fulfilled with the erection of the sanctuary at Sinai, and this freed Israel becomes an example of the goal of the whole creation.<sup>51</sup>

Blum, although speaking in terms of a postexilic P *Komposition* (KP) that incorporates non-P material (KD) and concludes in Num 27\*, also sees the key to the interpretation of KP as a whole in terms of the presence of God.<sup>52</sup> Almost all the texts he cites as important in unfolding his interpretation of KP as a whole are traditionally Priestly (P) texts,<sup>53</sup> and therefore his reflections on the meaning of KP as a *Komposition* are not different in any significant way from reflecting on P per se without the non-P material. This is because, as Blum states, though KP integrates non-P (KD) traditions with its own, it is KP’s own (P) texts that guides the reception of the whole.<sup>54</sup> For Blum, then, the *Leitthema* of KP is the “closeness of God [*Gottesnähe*],” or “the longing of the creator for communion/community [*Gemeinschaft*].”<sup>55</sup> What holds together the whole of KP is the basic question of God’s communion with humankind. This is articulated in the Sinai material in relation to Israel in terms of the presence of God, holiness, and so on. But the significance of this Sinai material is seen only in the context of the creation and the subsequent narrative, with its various institu-

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48. Weimar parallels the clouds of the Noahic covenant with the glory of YHWH in the cloud in the Sinai pericope; see *ibid.*, 371.

49. *Ibid.*, 380–81.

50. *Ibid.*, 372.

51. *Ibid.*, 385.

52. Blum, *Studien zur Komposition*, 287–332.

53. Although Blum does include the whole of Leviticus, including the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26), in his KP. The texts that he puts most weight on in his interpretation of KP are almost all traditionally P texts: e.g., Gen 1:31a; 6:11–13; 9:1–6, 8–17; 17; Exod 14:4, 17, 18; 16; 24:15–18; 25–31; 35–40, esp. 29:42–46; Lev 1–10; 11–26; Num 1–10.

54. *Ibid.*, 287.

55. *Ibid.*

tions, leading up to it, which consists of a continuum of breakings and new beginnings in which God acts in response to the disturbances of the good creation by its creatures and especially humankind.<sup>56</sup> Thus, Blum argues, the relation between God and humanity in the “very good” creation (Gen 1:31a) before the flood is one where God’s longing for communion/community with humankind is expressed in God’s creating humankind in his image and where there is the possibility of an unbroken nearness to God (Enoch “walks with” God, Gen 5:22, 24). With the introduction of violence and the consequent new order after the flood, there is then a distance between God and humanity (e.g., Abraham “walks before” God, and God “goes up” after the theophany to Abraham, Gen 17).<sup>57</sup> With the narrative of Abraham’s line (within humanity), then, there is a progressive overcoming of this distancing and a drawing near of God, “a progressive constituting of the nearness of the God of Israel.”<sup>58</sup> The dynamic of this is seen in the progressive unfolding of the Abrahamic covenant and in particular the promise to be their God, marked by the periodization of the name (Elohim, El Shaddai, YHWH) and the progressive unfolding of the people’s encounter with the glory of YHWH—at the sea (Exod 14:4, 17, 18), in Exod 16 (where there is a distance in the cloud), at Sinai for Moses only (Exod 24:15–18), with the erection of the sanctuary where the glory of YHWH is known in the midst of the camp (Exod 40:33–38), and with the inauguration of the sacrifices (Lev 9:22–24). This nearness of God requires a protective space, and it is the sanctuary and its cult that provide this, as the means for YHWH to take up his dwelling among humankind in Israel and to meet his people (Exod 29:42–46) in fulfillment of the covenant promise to be God for Israel, that is, to be in communion with them. The holiness of God requires grades of holiness, in space (sanctuary), time (Sabbath), and personnel (priests). The section Exod 25–Num 10 presents the constitution of the people of God, as a people in the midst of whom the holy God dwells.<sup>59</sup> Noting the correspondences between the sanctuary and creation, Blum sees the sanctuary as the continuation of the work of

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56. *Ibid.*, 330.

57. *Ibid.*, 289–93.

58. *Ibid.*, 294.

59. *Ibid.*, 295–305. Blum divides his discussion of the constitution of the people of God into four sections: constitution of the sanctuary (Exod 25–40); establishment of the service of God (Lev 1–10); the purity and holiness of the people of God (Lev 11–26); constitution of the pure camp (Num 1–10).

creation, or the fulfillment of creation but, unlike Zenger, not of the created world of Gen 1; it is in the postflood world that Israel is to build the sanctuary, and it is in this postflood world after the coming of violence that God and humanity are to draw near in the space protected by means of the sanctuary. It is in this sense that it is a type of “new creation,” where the constituting of Israel as the people of God, who in part participate in the “reality of God,” is in a sense a “creation within the creation.”<sup>60</sup> Moreover, essential for Israel’s relationship with God is its knowledge of God, and the material after Sinai shows the catastrophes Israel suffers as a consequence of forgetting God—albeit alongside the portrayal of the absolute loyalty of God.<sup>61</sup> However, the overall concern of KP is the way in which, with Israel, the creator creates for himself a “home” in his creation, within a community, whose fullness of life can counter and limit to some extent the violence but which still remains as part of Noahite humanity. In Israel, communion with God is made possible, but it requires the sanctuary and cultic institutions as protection. In this way, the postflood creation reaches its goal: the dwelling of God within Israel.<sup>62</sup>

For Frank Crüsemann, P, which includes the Levitical laws, including the Holiness code, is an exilic/early postexilic redaction.<sup>63</sup> He also maintains that “the heart and centre” of the Priestly writings is the establishment of the shrine and the forms of conduct associated with it that represent God’s indwelling within his creation and that P is essentially concerned with the presence or closeness of God.<sup>64</sup> However, he also believes that P is concerned to show that life before God and in accordance with God’s will is possible without the functioning cult described at Sinai, which allows life to be lived in the direct presence of God, and without possessing the land, as in the situation of the diaspora. Although a “second new world” or “second creation” came into being at Sinai, neither the world nor Israel can be reduced to this: “the world without a cult and without such a presence of the creator in it is not really Godless,” and “we cannot reduce the Priestly writings to the Sinai law.”<sup>65</sup> In the narrative leading up to Sinai, P unfolds a series of laws or institutions that do not presume the existence of

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60. *Ibid.*, 311.

61. *Ibid.*, 329.

62. *Ibid.*, 331–32.

63. Crüsemann, *Torah*, 277–327.

64. *Ibid.*, 290, 303.

65. *Ibid.*, 290 and 291.



the Sinai cult, and these make it possible to live life completely before God (Gen 17:1). These are: capital punishment and corruption of blood (Gen 9:2–7); covenant and circumcision (Gen 17); endogamy (Gen 27:46–28:9); Passover (Exod 12); and the Sabbath.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, in observing the Sabbath, Israel is “as close to the actual form of God as it is possible to be without the shrine” and by participating in its rhythm, “Israel, which does not live in the presence of God, can catch sight of God himself.”<sup>67</sup> Moreover, P’s account of the exodus is concerned with Israel’s separation out from the other nations in terms of the establishment of God’s closeness to them, a relationship that is independent of the possession of land.<sup>68</sup> In all these ways, according to Crüsemann, P speaks to the Jewish diaspora.

Baruch Schwartz, who perceives P as an independent preexilic source that includes the laws, sees the aim and climax of the Priestly narrative in the arrival of the divine glory (כבוד) to dwell permanently among the Israelites, with everything in the Sinai pericope subordinated to this.<sup>69</sup> It is the immanence of the divine presence and “ever-present, indwelling deity” that is P’s primary concern, and this is contingent on the establishment and maintenance of the tabernacle cult and its permanent institutions.<sup>70</sup>

Ralph Klein sees P as an exilic independent document with its “central imperative ... to be the obligation to reestablish a cultic community consisting of three institutions: tabernacle, priesthood and sacrificial system.” Thereby Israel “would experience the living presence of God and go forth into God’s future.”<sup>71</sup> Klein, however, also puts some emphasis on the P motif of God’s remembering of the Noahic and Abrahamic covenantal promises, maintaining that hope lies in “God’s memory.”<sup>72</sup> Indeed, in an earlier article, Klein maintains that the memory of God plays a critical role in P’s theology and is central to its message: “The various and

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66. Ibid., 290–301.

67. Ibid., 300.

68. Ibid., 301–10. Moreover, since the cult, and therefore the presence/nearness of God, is constituted at Sinai outside the land, before Israel is in the land, the loss of land does not affect Israel’s relationship with God (304). In addition, central to P’s cultic law is atonement and forgiveness, since only with this is it possible to have life in the presence of the holy God (310–22).

69. Schwartz, “Priestly Account,” 133.

70. Quote from *ibid.*, 133–34; see also 137.

71. Ralph Klein, “Back to the Future: The Tabernacle in the Book of Exodus,” *Int* 50 (1996): 274.

72. Ibid., 275; see also 273.

many-sided aspects of P's theology are triggered by the catalytic power of God's memory."<sup>73</sup> God's memory is a catalyst that makes real the salvation implicit in the everlasting (Noahic and Abrahamic) covenants, which includes deliverance, God's dwelling with his people, and the promised land. Therefore God's memory was exilic Israel's hope.

For David Carr, who also adheres to an exilic independent P source, "the constitution of Israel as a cultic community surrounding the tabernacle" is central to his Pg.<sup>74</sup> The link of the tabernacle and its cult to creation is important: P is dominated by the narrative span extending from creation to cult, with Gen 1, the building of the ark, and the covenants with Noah and Abraham foreshadowing and leading up to the Sinai material.<sup>75</sup> Carr, like Klein, also alludes to the memory of God, stating that "the world has certain created and covenantal structures. God has always remembered. Now Israel, standing at the brink of possible return to the land and reestablishment of its cult, must remember as well."<sup>76</sup>

Albert de Pury, whose Pg is an exilic independent document that concludes in Exod 40\*, perceives the ultimate purpose of the Priestly writer's contribution as a whole as residing "in establishing that true worship of YHWH has been revealed to Israel."<sup>77</sup> Israel is the nation chosen to worship God under the name YHWH and to keep the only sanctuary where God resides. But this is set within a universal perspective, that is, within "a history of God's universal project."<sup>78</sup> Thus, all humanity participates in the Noahic covenant and knows God as Elohim; the descendants of Abraham, including nations of Ishmaelite/Arabic and Edomite descent, participate in the Abrahamic covenant, including its promise of land and to be their God, and know God as El Shaddai; and finally, Israel is singled out as keeper of YHWH's sanctuary where YHWH dwells among humankind.<sup>79</sup> Therefore Israel has a priestly role in relation to the other nations:

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73. Klein, "Message of P," 63.

74. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 137.

75. *Ibid.*, 120–31.

76. *Ibid.*, 140.

77. In seeing Pg as an independent exilic document ending in Exod 40, he follows Pola. See de Pury, "Jacob Story." For the quotation, see Albert de Pury, "Abraham: The Priestly Writer's 'Ecumenical' Ancestor," in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Bible; Essays in Honor of John Van Seters*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Thomas Römer, BZAW 294 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 172.

78. De Pury, "Jacob Story," 69; and see de Pury, "Abraham," 172.

79. De Pury, "Abraham," 172–76.

“the only specific task of the sons of Israel will be to live before the face of YHWH, that is, to take care of the cult and to be the priests of humanity.”<sup>80</sup> In other words, Israel has a mission among the nations, which is fundamentally “to build and keep the sanctuary ... that will allow YHWH to reside among the sons of Israel and, through them, among humankind.”<sup>81</sup>

Christophe Nihan adheres to a postexilic independent P that concludes in Lev 16.<sup>82</sup> His interpretation of P represents a combination of the views of Blum and de Pury. Perceiving the Sinai material as the purpose of P’s account, he sees Exod 25–40\* as relating to Gen 1 and Exod 14\* according to the common ancient Near Eastern pattern where creation, victory over mythical enemies, and the building of a temple are closely intertwined.<sup>83</sup> Within this, the motif of YHWH’s glory is important: it is manifested at the sea in Exod 14\* and comes to a place of rest in Exod 40:34.<sup>84</sup> P’s particular interpretation of this pattern highlights Israel’s important role within God’s creation, namely, drawing from Blum, that “it is in Israel that the original proximity between God and man [*sic*] is partially restored,” and it is in these terms that the whole P account in Genesis–Exodus\* can be analyzed.<sup>85</sup> The postflood creation is inferior to the original creation: there is a distance between God and his creation, with the immediate relationship with the creator God that the preflood ancestors could experience no longer possible. However, it is to Israel, to whom the promise to be their God is given (Gen 17:7; Exod 6:7) and fulfilled (Exod 29:45–46; 40:34–35), by means of Israel’s sanctuary, that the divine presence symbolized in the glory returns and within whom it dwells; this is reported in Exod 40:34, which “corresponds to the restitution of the divine presence in Israel after

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80. De Pury, “Jacob Story,” 68; and see de Pury, “Abraham,” 172.

81. De Pury, “Jacob Story,” 67–68. It should be noted that Michaela Bauks (“Signification de l’espace”; “Genesis 1 als Programmschrift der Priesterschrift (Pg),” in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History*, ed. A. Wénin, BETL 155 [Leuven: Peeters, 2001], 333–45) also ends her exilic independent Pg in Exod 40\*, specifically Exod 40:34, with the glory of YHWH filling the tabernacle, which she sees as the climax of Pg. For her, Pg is definitely not land-centered but rather a working out of the divine program in Gen 1 and revolving around the themes of revelation and blessing/sanctification.

82. Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*.

83. *Ibid.*, 30, 59–61.

84. *Ibid.*, 60.

85. *Ibid.*, 61.

the flood.”<sup>86</sup> In this way, “the order initially devised by God at the creation of the world can now be partly realized.”<sup>87</sup> This means, in line with de Pury, that Israel has become a priestly nation among the nations of the world: Israel, to whom the name YHWH is exclusively disclosed, is designated to serve him in his sanctuary, “thus making possible a more direct relationship between God and man [*sic*] in the postflood era.”<sup>88</sup> It is in Israel’s sanctuary that YHWH dwells and can be encountered as in the preflood creation. This means, then, that “it is Israel’s cult which guarantees the permanence of the divine presence, and hence the stability of the cosmic order”; Israel’s redefinition as “a cultic community or a priestly nation” accounts for the conclusion of P being within the Sinai material and not with the conquest of the land.<sup>89</sup>

According to Nihan, Lev 1–3; 8–9; 11–16 play an important role within this and indeed “function as the grand climax of the overall process running through the Priestly account of Israel’s origins.”<sup>90</sup> These chapters, with their ritual teachings, complete Israel’s transformation into the priestly nation in relation to the other nations of the world. They also complete the restitution of the divine presence in Israel’s sanctuary and therefore the process that redefines Israel such that there is “a cosmic order more in conformity with the original order existing before the flood.”<sup>91</sup> Leviticus 1–9\* relate to Israel as a priestly nation in that it is only Israel among the nations that is able to worship adequately the creator God who resides in its sanctuary (Exod 40:34–35) by presenting the appropriate sacrifices. Moreover, with the offering of the first sacrifices, not only is a new order instituted in which the relationship between Israel and YHWH is medi-

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86. *Ibid.*, 65.

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Ibid.*

89. *Ibid.*, 65 and 66. Nihan, in line with Köckert and Bauks, goes on to argue, on the basis of a conception of the land as *’hzh* (rather than *nḥllh*) whereby Israel is entitled to right of use (rather than possession), that the land given to the Israelites in Exod 6:2–8 is no different from that given to the patriarchs in P, and therefore entering the land is basically a return to the situation existing in the age of the patriarchs as resident aliens (rather than a conquest). Therefore the new thing introduced in the exodus in P is not related to the promise of the land but has to do with the constitution of Israel as a priestly nation, a cultic community devoted to YHWH’s service. Therefore, P ends in the Sinai material. See *ibid.*, 66–68.

90. *Ibid.*, 609.

91. *Ibid.*; see also 610

ated by the priesthood, but Moses and Aaron can now enter the tent of meeting (Lev 9:23), in contrast to Exod 40:35, where, because of the glory filling the tabernacle, they are not able to enter it. In addition, the glory of YHWH is manifested to all the people (Lev 9:23–24).<sup>92</sup> This represents a further stage in the partial restoration, in Israel's cult, of the original community between God and humankind in the original creation.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, Nihan argues, the sacrificial cult is an improvement for the animals of the situation after the flood where the killing of animals freely is allowed (Gen 9:2–3), since in this revelation of the legitimate way of sacrificing animals the violence involved in killing is partially compensated by offering these animals ritually. Thereby, in Israel there is “a relationship between God, men [*sic*] and animals superior to that characterizing post-diluvian mankind [*sic*],” and as such “Israel is closer (though not equivalent!) to the original creation.”<sup>94</sup> Leviticus 11–16 take this process further regarding the restoration of the original cosmic order in terms of the divine presence and Israel as a priestly nation. In particular, it is in Lev 16 that “the restitution in Israel's sanctuary of the divine presence in the original creation reaches its expected conclusion.”<sup>95</sup> The ritual of Lev 16 is one of re-creation, a reenactment of God's primeval victory in the creation of the world and therefore a reestablishment of the cosmic order, that “makes possible God's permanent presence in Israel” and therefore “his presence among his creation.”<sup>96</sup> This is given concrete expression in the revelation of the divine presence in the cloud to Aaron in the inner sanctum; this represents the culmination of the drawing near of the divine presence in that the cloud moves from Mount Sinai (Exod 24:15b–18a) to the tent of meeting (Exod 40:34–35) to the inner sanctum (Lev 16). This then “forms the structural opposite to his [God's] withdrawal from his own creation after the flood in Gen 9 (Gen 9:13–17<sup>97</sup>).”<sup>98</sup> Moreover, this ritual of the purification of the sanctuary and the community “guarantees that God will permanently stay among Israel” and among creation.<sup>99</sup> In short, for

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92. *Ibid.*, 233, 610.

93. *Ibid.*, 610.

94. *Ibid.*, 236–37, and see 611.

95. *Ibid.*, 380.

96. *Ibid.*, 631 and 381.

97. See the cloud imagery.

98. *Ibid.*, 381, and see 613.

99. *Ibid.*, 381.

Nihan, the revelation of the sacrificial cult (Lev 1–16\*) “comprised nothing less than the outcome of a process of reconciliation between God and his creation that started after the flood.”<sup>100</sup>

#### 1.1.2.2. Land

Although most scholars see P’s primary concern as residing in the Sinai material, there are a handful of scholars who see the promise of the land, whether as fulfilled or as future hope, as the key to the interpretation of P.

Karl Elliger, who adheres to an exilic independent Pg ending in Deut 34\*, although acknowledging that the dwelling of God with his people plays an important role in the theology of Pg, denies that it is of central significance within, or the central topic of, P as a whole.<sup>101</sup> Methodologically he states that, since the narrative of Pg contains many high points (exodus, Passover, sanctuary, etc.), it is not helpful to focus on any one of these since they are all important but to seek to discern the whole course or trend of Pg, or its goal, as a whole.<sup>102</sup> He sees this in terms of the promise of possession of the land of Canaan. He interprets the highest expression of the promise to be their God (Gen 17:7–8) as “the grant of the land of Canaan” and the promise of the land of Canaan as the essential core point of the covenant with the fathers (Exod 6:4, 8).<sup>103</sup> The content of this covenant is not fully realized at Sinai; from there God gives Moses instructions regarding bringing the people to Canaan.<sup>104</sup> The theme of Canaan dominates Pg’s presentation up to the end. It does

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100. Ibid., 611. Nihan (391) sees his P as the founding account (*Ursprungslegende*) of the postmonarchical, poststate temple community in Jerusalem and as functioning as an ideal to which the Second Temple community could refer as a model, as well as in part legitimating the Second Temple cult. The view of Schmid (*Old Testament*, 147–52) is similar. The covenant with Noah guarantees the eternal existence of the world, and the covenant with Abraham guarantees that God will always remain close to Israel. There are three concentric circles, the world, the ecumenical Abraham circle, and Israel, where only Israel is given complete knowledge of God, and, through the gift of sacrificial worship, possesses the means for partial restoration of the very good order of creation in Gen 1.

101. Elliger, “Sinn und Ursprung,” esp. 128, 130, 131. He also denies the view that P is primarily a legitimation of the Jerusalem cult (128, 130).

102. Ibid., 134–35.

103. Ibid., 134; see also 137.

104. Ibid., 138.

not conclude with possession of the land of Canaan because of the people's rebellion "against the goal of the divine plan itself" (Num 13–14\*) and Moses's and Aaron's doubt (Num 20\*), but the promise of the land remains unshakable.<sup>105</sup> God's will for Israel is "the possession of the land of Canaan according to its whole extent for all time," and the sin that leads to death is "the unfaithful doubt in God's power to carry through his will."<sup>106</sup> The Sinai revelation is important in so far as it shows what a fulfilled covenant in Canaan will entail: "a free people in its own land does not on its own constitute it, but requires God in the sanctuary in the midst of the people."<sup>107</sup> In short, the essential goal of the divine ordering of history (*Geschichte*) is "the possession of the land of Canaan as the material and ideal basis on which the life of the people and as a matter of course the cult as its most important function can properly unfold."<sup>108</sup>

Suzanne Boorer, seeing Pg as an exilic independent document ending in Deut 34\*, argues that Pg has schematized the history of Israel from exodus to exile as the journey of the Mosaic generation toward, and up to, the edge of the land of Canaan, with the Sinai material in particular corresponding to the period of the monarchy and the material after Sinai corresponding to the exilic period.<sup>109</sup> Each of the stages of Israel's history, especially the monarchy and the exile, are in this way presented as the unfolding of the Abrahamic covenant promises, and in particular "as stages on the way to the fulfillment of the covenant promise of everlasting possession of the land of Canaan."<sup>110</sup> In this way, each period of Israel's history and some of its traditions are validated. For example, the monarchical period, when Israel as a state lived in the land with its temple traditions and with Judah, at least toward the end, as the prominent state is reflected in the Sinai material, which is portrayed as a stage on the way toward the promised land. Therefore Israel's time in the land during the monarchy was only temporary; that time in the land was not the fulfillment of the

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105. *Ibid.*, 137; see also 140.

106. *Ibid.*, 141.

107. *Ibid.*, 140.

108. *Ibid.*, 129. Elliger (143) sees Pg as a comforting and warning witness to the exiles of the powerful and grace-full God of the promise, the lord of world history and Israel's history, who remains steadfast to the goal of a great nation freed for the everlasting possession of the land of Canaan and to be God to this nation.

109. Boorer, "Kerygmatic Intention," 12–14.

110. *Ibid.*, 16.

Abrahamic covenant promise of everlasting possession of the land of Canaan but only a step in that direction. Moreover, its temple traditions reflected in the Sinai material are validated for that time as a stage on the journey forward to the ultimate goal of the land. Similarly, the situation of exile is yet another step forward toward the fulfillment of the everlasting possession of the land and not a negation of the land promise. All these stages were divinely ordained as God's unfolding of the everlasting Abrahamic covenant, and these covenant promises still stand, in particular the promise of everlasting possession of the land of Canaan, which has not yet been fulfilled but will be in the future. This is the hope held out to the exiles; the exile is not a negation of the land promise but only a stage on the way to its ultimate everlasting fulfillment.<sup>111</sup>

Walter Brueggemann, who also adheres to an independent exilic P concluding before Joshua, finds in Gen 1:28, with its motifs of land and blessing, the formula that sums up P's intention.<sup>112</sup> This recurring formula (Gen 8:17; 9:1, 7) he associates with other P texts that concern land (e.g., Exod 6:2–4), and concludes that the “thread running through P ... concerns the promise of and gift of land as a blessing.”<sup>113</sup> Spoken as a radical message to the exiles, “re-entry into the promised land” is P's central affirmation, with P's cultic material, that allows for the meeting of the holy God with a sinful people, functioning to ensure that the land to be reentered is not abused and so that expulsion from the land will not occur.<sup>114</sup> Since the promise of the land links back to Gen 1:28, he maintains that this land promise that is about to be actualized “is ordained in the very fabric of creation.”<sup>115</sup> In short, Brueggemann sees “the kerygmatic key to the Priestly theology is that the promise of the land of blessing still endures and will be realized soon.”<sup>116</sup>

Philippe Guillaume adheres to an independent Pg which concludes in Josh 19\* and is postexilic (ca. 485 BCE), but his Pg is defined largely on the

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111. *Ibid.*, 16–18.

112. Brueggemann, “Kerygma of the Priestly Writers,” 103.

113. *Ibid.*, 109.

114. *Ibid.*, 112.

115. *Ibid.*

116. *Ibid.*, 113. More recently, Frevel (*Mit Blick auf das Land*), adhering to an independent exilic P and arguing for the view that P ends in Deut 34\*, sees the conclusion of P as looking back to creation and forward to Israel's hoped for reentry into the land.



basis of arguments in relation to the sabbatical calendar rather than using the methodology of source criticism.<sup>117</sup> He maintains that the primary concern of Pg is with the land and, as “a charter for calendar reform,” with time.<sup>118</sup> He sees these concerns as stated from the outset in Gen 1:1, which begins with time (בראשית) and ends with land (ארץ), as does the entire narrative of Pg, which begins with time (Gen 1:1–2:4a, which he interprets not in cosmological terms but as the aetiology of the Sabbath with the aim of “setting up of a new rhythm serving as the basic unit of a different calendar”) and ends with land (Josh 18:1).<sup>119</sup> After creation, the divine activity is not completed until all aspects of the sabbatical calendar are delineated in the ongoing narrative of Pg and “until every human group is settled on a viable territory, which takes place in Josh 18.”<sup>120</sup> For Guillaume, in contrast to Elliger, Boorer, and Brueggemann, it is the fulfillment of the land promise that is central to Pg rather than the land promise as a future hope. He maintains that the “lack of land for the sons of Israel provides the only crisis, sustaining narrative tension from Genesis to Joshua” where finally Israel settles in the land. Interpreting the reference to the creating of the land (ארץ) in Gen 1:1 as referring to territory or agricultural land rather than the cosmic earth, he maintains that the commission in Gen 1:28 is gradually fulfilled in the course of Pg.<sup>121</sup> The generations (תולדת) of Adam concludes with filling the land with violence that corrupts the land, making the land unsuitable for multiplication on it.<sup>122</sup> The consequent flood

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117. Guillaume, *Land and Calendar*. For an outline of the texts contained in Guillaume’s Pg, which in places contains some texts traditionally attributed to non-P (J), see *ibid.*, 193–95.

118. *Ibid.*, ix; see also 127–28.

119. Quote from *ibid.*, 42; see also 35–42. Guillaume (121) sees these themes of time and land announced in Gen 1:1 as “finding their most concrete explanation in the sabbatical year and the Jubilee” (Lev 25\*). Indeed, the “Jubilee is the nexus of the sabbatical calendar and the land” (121, and see 122).

120. Quote from *ibid.*, 45. Guillaume (*ibid.*, 62–68) even interprets the sanctuary material primarily in terms of what he sees as its calendrical function. He follows Pola in ascribing only the “residence” (משכן) to Pg (Exod 25:1–2; 35:22–23\*, 25; 36:8–13; 40:17, 34b). He sees this residence as having no cultic function and, although seeing its function in terms of enabling YHWH’s presence among his people, tends to see its primary role in supplying the last element of the description of the fully intercalated sabbatical calendar.

121. Quote from *ibid.*, 176; see also 126, 128, 133, 160.

122. *Ibid.*, 128, 133.

“purged antediluvian violence in order to sustain the creational order”; the very good nature of creation is not lost in the flood.<sup>123</sup> The תולדות of Noah’s sons lists the peoples and their various lands (Gen 10): “the various ethnic groups portion out the land of Gen 1:1 into their lands.”<sup>124</sup> Shem’s תולדות, however, ends with a lack of land (Gen 11:26). The concern of Pg in Gen 12–50\* is who gets land tenure, with Abraham buying burial tenure in Canaan (Gen 23), Ishmael associated with Canaan and North Arabia, and Esau moving to Seir.<sup>125</sup> “Every descendant of Terah is granted territory (Gen 13:12; 25:16–17; 36:6–8, 43) but Jacob’s seed fructifies and fills the wrong land (Gen 47:27; Exod 1:7).”<sup>126</sup> Therefore, Jacob’s sons remain the last landless group when enslaved in Egypt.<sup>127</sup> The exodus is more about land than liberation: “Land remains the aim of the entire Exodus, which only ends when the sons of Israel enter the land of Canaan.”<sup>128</sup> The wilderness is “no-land,” the absence of land. This absence of land is made bearable by YHWH filling the residence (משכן) (Exod 40:34). Thus the absence of land for Shem’s lineage in Jacob “is further developed through the wilderness theme which Pg uses constantly to keep the land in the sights of the entire narrative.”<sup>129</sup> Moreover, no festivals or rituals were celebrated in the wilderness; they are prescribed for performance in the land (see Lev 23\*; 25\*, where the land theme is important).<sup>130</sup> Israel’s time in the wilderness, that is, “outside space,” extends to forty years because of the congregation’s misinterpretation of the empty land as adversity rather than goodness (Num 13–14\*).<sup>131</sup> The census in Num 1, whose purpose is civil in that it identifies who is entitled to a share in their family’s land tenure, has occurred, and the land has been surveyed in order to “distribute the available population across the various areas according to their agricultural potential.”<sup>132</sup> Therefore, it can be said that the main theme of Pg in Numbers (and Deuteronomy) is land: “entry into Canaan is looming large on the agenda ... [but] the slander of the good land prevents immediate

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123. *Ibid.*, 169.

124. *Ibid.*, 129.

125. *Ibid.*, 130–32, 134.

126. *Ibid.*, 160.

127. *Ibid.*, 133.

128. *Ibid.*, 136.

129. *Ibid.*, 137.

130. *Ibid.*, 137–41.

131. *Ibid.*, 137; see also 147.

132. *Ibid.*, 143, 147.

entry and requires adequate purgation.”<sup>133</sup> Finally in Joshua, in spite of the delay, Israel enters and settles in the empty land (Josh 4:19\*; 5:9–12; 14:1, 2\*; 18:1\*; 19:51\*). Thereby, “the last Semite branch is finally endowed with land tenure.”<sup>134</sup> Hence “humanity, in its entirety, finally fulfils the initial commission [in Gen 1:28] (Josh 18:1; 19:51).”<sup>135</sup>

### 1.1.2.3 Sinai and Land

Finally, a few scholars have sought to integrate in some way the themes of Sinai and the land.

Ronald Clements perceives exilic P as a program for the restoration of the community so that they could again become a nation and possess the land of Canaan, with YHWH’s glory in their midst, all of which they have lost.<sup>136</sup> Maintaining that P cannot be reduced to one of these aspects, he states that “the aim of the Priestly writing is a threefold one, to show how Israel might yet again become a nation, possess its land, and receive the divine presence in its midst.”<sup>137</sup>

Joseph Blenkinsopp sees P as an independent exilic document extending into Joshua.<sup>138</sup> In reaction to scholars who emphasize either Sinai and the divine presence or the land, he states that, “what ... requires recognition is the intrinsic association between land and divine presence in P.”<sup>139</sup> He supports this in terms of his perception of the structure of P, identifying three key points where the finishing work formula (Gen 2:1, 2; Exod 39:32; 40:33; Josh 19:51) and the execution formula are found together, thus denoting the completion of successive stages; namely, the creation of the world (concluding in Gen 2:1–3), the construction of the sanctuary (concluding in Exod 40:33, and see Exod 39:32), and the establishment of the sanctuary in the land and the division of the land between the tribes

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133. *Ibid.*, 148.

134. *Ibid.*, 165.

135. *Ibid.*, 160.

136. Clements, *God and Temple*, 109, 111, 121.

137. *Ibid.*, 113.

138. Blenkinsopp, “Structure of P” Blenkinsopp in his later work (*Pentateuch*, esp. 118–20, 185–86) maintains that P is an independent document; however, in this earlier article he does not commit himself either way on this issue (“Structure of P,” 280). The texts he sees as P in Joshua are: Josh 4:9, 19; 5:10–12; 9:15–21; 11:15, 20; 14:1–5; 18:1; 19:51; 21:1–8; 22:10–34; 24:33 (see “Structure of P” 288–89).

139. Blenkinsopp, “Structure of P,” 278–79.

(concluding in Josh 18:1; 19:51). The strong parallels between the creation and the setting up of the sanctuary and the echoing of ancient Near Eastern myths of the cosmogonic victory of the deity that leads to the building of a sanctuary show that “P emphasizes the building of the sanctuary as the climax of creation.”<sup>140</sup> P then ends in Joshua with “the setting up of the same sanctuary in the occupied land of Canaan.”<sup>141</sup> The further intertwining of creation, sanctuary, and land is seen in parallels, not only between the formulas associated with the creation, the sanctuary, and the setting up of the sanctuary in the land, but also between the creation of the world and the allotment of the land.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, the “intrinsic association between sanctuary ... and land explains why P brings together possession of land and divine presence in the promissory covenant.”<sup>143</sup> This intrinsic link between sanctuary or presence of God and land is the key to P’s message concerning the occupation of the land and its distribution among the tribes; that is, that “the essential goal of securing the land is the reestablishment of the legitimate cult,” for “occupation of the land is a prerequisite for fulfilling the demands of the holy life.”<sup>144</sup> Thus, as Blenkinsopp comments in a later work, P “begins with the creation of the world as a cosmic sanctuary and ends with the setting up of the sanctuary in the promised land.”<sup>145</sup>

Norbert Lohfink adheres to an independent exilic Pg that extends into Joshua.<sup>146</sup> Although the main aim of this complex article is to explore the nature (or genre) of Pg as paradigmatic or turning history back into myth,<sup>147</sup> it contains within it an interpretation of Pg overall. Lohfink sees the role of promise and fulfillment in the whole sweep of Pg as all pervasive.<sup>148</sup> He sees Gen 1:28 as programmatic for the whole of Pg: “Here, in the blessing of humanity in Gen 1:28 God sketches a project for the whole chain of

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140. *Ibid.*, 286.

141. *Ibid.*, 289.

142. *Ibid.*, 290

143. *Ibid.*, 290.

144. *Ibid.*, 289 and 291.

145. Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet*, 104.

146. Lohfink, “Priestly Narrative.” Lohfink includes Josh 4:19\*; 5:10–12; 14:1, 2\*; 18:1; 19:51 in his Pg (145 n. 29). Cf. Lohfink’s earlier article (“Original Sins and the Priestly Historical Narrative,” in *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 96–115), where he ends Pg with the death of Moses (Deut 34\*).

147. See §3.1.1 for a full discussion of Lohfink’s views regarding this.

148. Lohfink, “Priestly Narrative,” 165.

events that is subsequently described.”<sup>149</sup> This blessing is repeated (Gen 9:1, 7; 17:2, 6; 28:3; 25:9, 11; 48:3–4), revised in Gen 9:2, and fulfilled in Gen 47:27; Exod 1:7; and Josh 18:1. That is, Gen 1:28 is fulfilled with regard to the multiplying of humanity and its spreading over the earth in Gen 47:27 and Exod 1:7 with the multiplying of the sons of Jacob. Once this blessing of procreation is dealt with in Exod 1:7, the promise of the land determines the narrative (see Exod 6:2–8). This land promise for Israel, as an extension for what is said to all humanity, is fulfilled in Josh 18:1 where it states that the land lay subdued (כבוש, which according to Lohfink denotes possession) before them.<sup>150</sup> The remaining element of Gen 1:28 regarding human rule over the animals is revised in Gen 9:2 within a world that is second best to the original creation.<sup>151</sup> This element does not point to anything outside Pg. Neither is there any hint of a promise that has not been fulfilled in Pg. Not only are the promises of descendants (multiplying) and land fulfilled in Pg, but the promise that YHWH will be God for them “is fulfilled at Sinai when God takes up a cultic residence in the midst of Israel.”<sup>152</sup> Therefore all the promises in Pg are fulfilled within the narrative, and there is nothing beyond what is described within Pg.<sup>153</sup> Paralleling Pg to Atrahasis, Lohfink sees the Pg narrative as presenting two dynamic phases that move to their corresponding static phase: the first has to do with the whole world and all of humanity; the second is exemplified in Israel. The second dynamic phase has the same task as that proposed in Gen 1:28; that is, each nation, exemplified in Israel “must grow to its

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149. Ibid., 165; and see 154, 166. Lohfink (165–66 n. 83) cites Brueggemann but criticizes him for reading into Gen 1:28 too immediate a statement concerning Israel and its hope to return from exile into its land.

150. Ibid., 167.

151. Ibid., 167, 169. In another article, Lohfink (“The Strata of the Pentateuch and the Question of War,” in *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 207) connects Gen 9:2, as a precondition for the sacrificial cult, to that which makes possible God’s presence among his people. See discussion below.

152. Lohfink, “Priestly Narrative,” 169 n. 169. Admittedly, Lohfink in this article plays down somewhat this promise to be their God and its fulfillment at Sinai, referring to it only in a footnote, but as we will see in the later discussion it figures more prominently in two of his other articles (“Strata of the Pentateuch,” and “God the Creator and the Stability of Heaven and Earth: The Old Testament on the Connection between Creation and Salvation,” in *Theology of the Pentateuch*, 116–35), where he sees it as equally important to the land promise and its fulfillment.

153. Lohfink, “Priestly Narrative,” 169.

proper number, and then each nation must take possession of the land assigned to it.”<sup>154</sup> All this is achieved within Pg’s narrative, as is the fulfillment of all three Abrahamic promises. Indeed,

The stability of the world, which God has brought to its perfected form in two stages, is guaranteed by the double covenant. The covenant with Noah guarantees the stability of the world itself, and the covenant with Abraham establishes the number of people, their possession of the land, and the presence of God in the sanctuary in the midst of Israel.<sup>155</sup>

Since these are eternal covenants made by God, their validity is not dependent on humanity. Therefore if a generation excludes itself and is punished, the next generation can “return to the stable final state of the world”; in other words, “the world can fall repeatedly from the perfect form into the imperfection of becoming and must tread the paths of the dynamic phase again.”<sup>156</sup> The exiles to whom Pg is addressed have fallen away, and therefore their hope lies in this “vision of a static world,” what “the world has already received from God,” rather than on a new and unknown eschaton.<sup>157</sup> “The ideal shape of the world is known, it already existed before. From the point of view of God it is always present, and all that is necessary is to return to it.”<sup>158</sup>

In two other articles, Lohfink also links together the themes of land and God’s cultic presence, in continuity with the article just outlined but in slightly different ways than the link made there between divine presence and land primarily through the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant promises. In “The Strata of the Pentateuch and the Question of War,”<sup>159</sup> Lohfink sees Josh 18:1 as important not only because it fulfils Gen 1:28, but also because in this verse “the themes of land and presence are brought to a conclusion.”<sup>160</sup> His exploration of the issue of war in relation to Pg then leads him to focus on the cult and the presence of YHWH in the glory (כבוד). He connects the postflood war between humans and animals in the context of blessing (Gen 9:2) with the cultic sacrifices and

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154. Ibid.

155. Ibid., 171.

156. Ibid., 171 and 172

157. Ibid.

158. Ibid.

159. Lohfink, “Strata of the Pentateuch,” esp. 200–210.

160. Ibid., 200

therefore sees it as “the condition that makes possible for God to plan and create the congregation of Israel as shaped by cultic worship and hence by the presence of God among his people.”<sup>161</sup> Moreover, he argues that in Pg war is eliminated, envisioning a society that functions without violence (except presumably the violence between humans and animals ritualized in the cult, which itself solves the problem of human violence): “Pg thinks in terms of a society, and therefore a structure of the world that ... functions, or could function, without the use of violence. It is a world that has become peaceful through worship, and that can be kept peaceful through the power of ritual.”<sup>162</sup> In contexts where war is replaced, such as the event at the Reed Sea, and the story of Israel’s sin and punishment (Num 13–14\*), there is a connection with the presence of the glory (כבוד) of YHWH. At the Reed Sea, YHWH gets glory, the glory appears in Exod 16\* and remains permanently at the sanctuary where the sacrifices make possible the presence of the כבוד that Israel lives under, and from the כבוד proceeds destruction of all that is sinful (Num 13–14\*).<sup>163</sup> But even though the emphasis is on the presence of YHWH here, the land is still important. The problems of human violence are solved through the cult, and overall, “Israel will soon be able to resume life on its own land, and it is to exist as a society centered on the sanctuary and on the practice of the cult there.”<sup>164</sup> In “God the Creator and the Stability of Heaven and Earth: The Old Testament on the Connection between Creation and Salvation,” Lohfink sees the content of salvation in Pg as twofold: “the land of Canaan and the special relationship between God and Israel.”<sup>165</sup> The land promise is not just possession of the land but the people’s peaceful life in the land.<sup>166</sup> Genesis 1:26–28 sets the agenda: humanity as many peoples that spread over the earth, with each nation possessing their own territory. In Josh 18:1, this is achieved for Israel as an example, and this signifies creation reaching its successful outcome.<sup>167</sup> However, there is another aspect to this in Pg, namely, “the immanence of the transcendent God in a creation extended

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161. *Ibid.*, 207.

162. *Ibid.*, 204.

163. *Ibid.*, 207.

164. *Ibid.*, 210.

165. Lohfink, “God the Creator,” esp. 120–33, 126.

166. *Ibid.*

167. *Ibid.*, 128.

by human labor: the encounter with God in cultic worship.”<sup>168</sup> Not only land possession, but the cultic presence of God (Josh 18:1), made possible by human labor in setting up the tabernacle as “essentially a creative transformation of the world,” fulfills creation.<sup>169</sup>

For Schmidt, who dates his independent Pg document ending in Deut 34\* to the postexilic period, both the Sinai material and the land are important.<sup>170</sup> He maintains that P presents the epoch of Moses as the “canonical time (so to speak) in which YHWH created the basis for the existence of Israel as a community.”<sup>171</sup> However, it provides the basis not only for Israel as a cultic community, but also for their possession of the land of Canaan. The reason why the fulfillment of the land promise as originally intended (Exod 6:8) is not narrated in P is because Israel did not come into the land in this “canonical” time of Moses, because that generation rejected the gift of the land, and Moses and Aaron failed. Therefore, although P does not have a presentation of the taking of the land, this does not mean that the land is unimportant. Pg’s Second Temple audience is already a cultic community who have the land, and therefore Pg is effectively an etiology of Israel as a cultic community living in the land.<sup>172</sup>

Thomas Pola, whose exilic independent Pg ends in Exod 40\* with the erection of the tabernacle (משכן), attempts to combine the Sinai משכן and the associated divine presence with the land theme by the unusual move of equating Pg’s Sinai with (Ezekiel’s) Zion and therefore maintains that this Sinai account contains within it the fulfillment of the promise of the land.<sup>173</sup>

Finally, Jean Louis Ska, who sees P as exilic, relatively independent, and concluding in Num 27, thinks that a way around the dichotomy between those who focus on the Sinai cult as P’s primary concern and

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168. Ibid.

169. Ibid., 132.

170. Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift*.

171. Ibid., 265.

172. Ibid., 257, 259, 265.

173. Pola, *Ursprüngliche Priesterschrift*. Note that Pola does not see the tent of meeting material as part of his Pg. See the critique of Pola’s position by Nihan (*From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 66 n. 240). The perspective of Van Seters (*Pentateuch*, 164–67) should be mentioned at this point. Van Seters points out the strong emphasis in P on the theme of the promise of the land and its fulfillment (175, 186) and also the importance of the deity’s presence as represented in his “glory.” (187). However, since he sees P as a redaction that comments on J (and Dtr) material, he does not attempt to integrate these themes in any way.



those who see P's real agenda in terms of the land is to be found in P's theology of "glory."<sup>174</sup> YHWH's glory has a "double nature ... as the concrete, effective presence of YHWH both in Israel's history and in Israel's cult."<sup>175</sup> Ska, therefore, wants to add a second aspect to Blum's concept of the nearness of God: it denotes not only God's residing in the midst of his people (Exod 6:7; 29:45–46) but also God's acting in history (Exod 14\*; 16\*; Num 13–14\*; 20\*).<sup>176</sup> For P, the cult is inseparable from history, and therefore the inauguration of the cult is not an end in itself, since with YHWH's glory guiding history the promise of the land (Exod 6:8) cannot fail. "Thus the 'glory' unites both dynamic and static aspects of P's theology—the tension with regard to the future (the possession of the land) and God's presence near his people in the sanctuary."<sup>177</sup>

### 1.1.3. Conclusions

The issue of the primary concern of P, or the meaning of P as a whole, is an area where the last word has not been uttered and therefore represents a potentially fruitful area of exploration. This is not least because, although the views outlined here offer many valuable insights, they tend to focus on a particular, albeit important, aspect of P, either the Sinai material or the narrative frame and particularly the land promise within this, and have some difficulty in accounting for the shape and details of P as a whole. Those that attempt to integrate the Sinai material with the land promise have advanced the discussion in a helpful direction. However, the explorations are somewhat sketchy, comprising only brief discussions in articles (e.g., Blenkinsopp, Lohfink) or as part of a different, albeit related, or larger, project (e.g., Clements, Schmidt, Pola, Ska). It is my intention to attempt to plumb the depths of this issue of the overall meaning or

174. Ska, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 157–58.

175. *Ibid.*, 158. YHWH's glory is referred to in Exod 14:4, 17–18, where YHWH glorifies himself; in Exod 16:10, where YHWH's glory appears in relation to providing manna; in Exod 24:16–17, where it covers Mount Sinai; in Exod 40:34–35 (cf. 29:43), where the glory takes possession of the tent of meeting; in Lev 9:23, where it is manifest with the inauguration of the cult; in Num 14:10, where it appears in relationship to the punishment on the generation that rejected the land; and in Num 20:6, where it is related to giving water to thirsty Israel; and the glory moves with the tabernacle to accompany and guide Israel on the way to the promised land. See *ibid.*, 157–58.

176. *Ibid.*, 158 n. 111.

177. *Ibid.*, 158.

theological horizon of P more, not only by revisiting the interrelation of elements within the structure and trajectory of P as a whole, but in particular through seeking to unfold the genre and hermeneutics of this material.<sup>178</sup> It is the latter that I believe has the most potential for shedding fresh light on what this material is primarily concerned with, what it might have sought to accomplish as a whole, and how it might have impacted, or functioned for, its original audience.

## 1.2. ESTABLISHING THE PARAMETERS

In order to explore in more depth the overall meaning of P, it is necessary to establish some parameters within which this investigation will take place, given that views regarding P's overall theology can be potentially influenced by perceptions of the definition, nature, extent, and (to a lesser extent) dating, and vice versa.<sup>179</sup>

### 1.2.1. An Originally Separate Source (Pg)

I will maintain, with the majority of scholars, that there once existed a coherent Priestly narrative (Pg) that was originally an independent, that is, separate, document.<sup>180</sup>

The main arguments for seeing Pg as an independent or separate document, along with counterarguments to the objections that have been put forward to seeing Pg as an independent source by those who maintain that P is a redaction or *Komposition*, are as follows.<sup>181</sup>

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178. Lohfink's classic article, "Priestly Narrative," of course, makes an important contribution in this area and will be taken up, and dialogued with, in §3.1.1.

179. This is the case sometimes, but not always, as seen in the survey of views discussed above.

180. See Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 46. See further n. 7 for a list of scholars who hold to this.

181. Those who have delineated detailed arguments in favor of seeing P as independent or separate, against the counterarguments of those who see P as a redaction or *Komposition*, include: Lohfink, "Priestly Narrative," 146–47 n. 31; Zenger, *Gottes Bogen*, 35–36; Koch, "P-Kein Redaktor!"; Emerton, "Priestly Writer in Genesis"; Nicholson, "P as an Originally Independent Source"; Nicholson, *Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century*, 205–18; Campbell, "Priestly Text"; Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift*, esp. 1–34; Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 46–140, esp. 45–46; Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 292–97; Schwartz, "Priestly Account," 105–9; Davies, "Composi-