

FAREWELL TO THE PRIESTLY WRITING?

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The Current State of the Debate

Edited by

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Contents

Foreword.....	vii
Abbreviations.....	ix
The Priestly Writing as a Source: A Recollection Christoph Levin.....	1
Once Again: The Literary-Historical Profile of the P Tradition Erhard Blum.....	27
Genesis 5: Priestly Redaction, Composition, or Source? Jan Christian Gertz	63
The Literary Character of the Priestly Portions of the Exodus Narrative (Exod 1–14) Christoph Berner.....	95
From the Call of Moses to the Parting of the Sea: Reflections on the Priestly Version of the Exodus Narrative Thomas Römer	135
The Priestly Writing and Deuteronomy in the Book of Leviticus: On the Integration of Deuteronomy in the Pentateuch Eckart Otto.....	165
The Holiness Legislation and the Pentateuch: Tradition- and Composition-Historical Aspects of Leviticus 26 Christophe Nihan.....	193
Bibliography.....	235
Contributors.....	263

Ancient Sources Index.....265
Modern Authors Index.....280

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Foreword

Identifying the Pentateuch's Priestly Code as an originally independent source is one of the most prominent and recognized results of historical biblical scholarship. The success of this hypothesis is due to three basic observations, which have been described and expressed many times ever since biblical criticism's beginnings. First, there are the notable doublets of certain narrative materials. Second, the theological conception of אלהים is a characteristic of these writings, which, like the first feature of doublets, is essentially limited to Genesis and the first part of the book of Exodus. And third, linguistically and theologically peculiar concepts have greatly supported the identification of Priestly text segments. Particularly striking is how frequently these first two observations overlap, with traditions of doublets often using אלהים terminology in one of the versions.

However, the last forty years have witnessed significant developments in discussions of the Priestly literature in the Pentateuch. Since the work of Frank Moore Cross and Rolf Rendtorff, P's character as an independent source has been questioned, and since the work of Lothar Perlitt and Thomas Pola, the problem of its literary ending has become increasingly controversial. In current research, one can no longer presume that the Priestly texts were a formerly independent source, nor that P extends from Gen 1 to Deut 34.

Regardless of how one assesses these debated questions, it remains true that the response to them will impact one's model of the Pentateuch's composition in fundamental ways. Many foundational judgments regarding the Pentateuch's development, as well as ancient Israel and Judah's history of religion and theology, depend on literary-critical assessments of the Priestly texts. Both the older and newer documentary hypotheses have considered it the Grundschrift of the Pentateuch, and some more recent approaches to the Pentateuch's composition argue that it either inaugurates or at least propagates the canonical portrait of a transition from the ancestral to the exodus narratives. The Priestly Code is thus at

the center of crucial literary-historical theories about the formation of the Hebrew Bible.

Whether one maintains, abandons, or modifies the hypothesis of the Priestly Code, the essays in this volume offer observations and arguments in favor of each of these positions, which should inform scholarly decisions in either direction.

The present volume contains proceedings from the conference “Farewell to the Priestly Code? On the State of the Pentateuchal Debate,” part of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament section at the Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie, which took place in Stuttgart-Hohenheim on 17–19 May 2012.

We thank the speakers Christoph Levin (Münich), Erhard Blum (Tübingen), Jan Christian Gertz (Heidelberg), Christoph Berner (Göttingen, now Kiel), Eckart Otto (Munich), Christophe Nihan (Lausanne), and Thomas Römer (Lausanne and Paris) for their contributions that supply a picture of the current state of discussions about the Priestly texts in the Pentateuch. We also thank Wesley Crouser, Paavo N. Tucker, Henry Heitmann-Gordon, and David Cloutier for translating the essays from the German original, which was published as *Abschied von der Priesterschrift? Zum Stand der Pentateuchdebatte* in 2015 by the Evangelische Verlagsgesellschaft in Leipzig. Finally, our thanks go to Samuel Arnet, Jordan Davis, and Hans Decker, who prepared the manuscript, and to SBL Press, especially Bob Buller and Nicole L. Tilford, and to the editors of the *Ancient Israel and Its Literature* for accepting this book for their series.

Friedhelm Hartenstein and Konrad Schmid
Munich and Zurich, July 2022

Abbreviations

ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AnBib	Analecta biblica
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BA	La Bible d'Alexandrie
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
Ber. Rab.	Bereshit Rabbah
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovanien- sium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BThSt	Biblich-theologische Studien
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten (und Neuen) Testa- ment
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissen- schaft
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology

ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
<i>EstBib</i>	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	Kautzsch, Emil, ed. <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Translated by Arther E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBS	History of Biblical Studies
<i>HeBAI</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
<i>HEN</i>	<i>Henoch</i>
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IEKAT	International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament
KeH	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
<i>JAJ</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
<i>JBT</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie</i>
<i>JDT</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für deutsche Theologie</i>
JPSTC	Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary Series
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTPh</i>	<i>Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie</i>
Jub.	Jubilees
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis

ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Studies
RGG	Betz, Hans Dieter, ed. <i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> . 4th ed. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–2007.
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
SamPent	Samaritan Pentateuch
SBAB	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
Sem	<i>Semitica</i>
ST	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
StudBib	Studia Biblica
SymS	Symposium Series
TB	Theologische Bücherei: Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert
TDOT	Botterweck, G. Johannes, and Helmer Ringgren, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
TP	<i>Theologie und Philosophie</i>
TRE	Krause, Gerhard, and Gerhard Müller, eds. <i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977.
TRu	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
TT	Theologisch Tijdschrift
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
VGTh	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAR	<i>Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

ZBK.AT	Zürcher Bibelkommentare Alten Testament
ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

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