

FAREWELL TO THE PRIESTLY WRITING?

SBL Press

ANCIENT ISRAEL AND ITS LITERATURE

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Number 38

SBL Press



FAREWELL TO THE PRIESTLY WRITING?

The Current State of the Debate

Edited by

Friedhelm Hartenstein and Konrad Schmid

Translated by

Wesley Crouser, Paavo N. Tucker,
Henry Heitmann-Gordon, and David Cloutier

SBL Press



SBL PRESS

Atlanta

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Originally published as *Abschied von der Priesterschrift? Zum Stand der Pentateuchdebatte*. ©2015

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2022948061

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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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