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The Elusive Yahwist: A Short History of Research

Thomas Christian Römer

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Thomas Christian Römer. The Elusive Yahwist: A Short History of Research. Dozeman, Thomas B. and Schmid, Konrad. A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation, Society of Biblical Literature, pp.9-27, 2006. <hal-03820315>

HAL Id: hal-03820315

<https://hal.science/hal-03820315v1>

Submitted on 19 Oct 2022

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A FAREWELL TO THE YAHWIST?

The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation

Edited by

Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid

Society of Biblical Literature
Atlanta

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THE ELUSIVE YAHWIST: A SHORT HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Thomas Christian Römer

I. INTRODUCTION

The current scholarly debate on the Torah is characterized by a quite paradoxical situation. On the one hand, a growing number of authors, especially in Europe, have given up the classical Documentary Hypothesis as a relevant model for explaining the composition of the Pentateuch, including the theory of a distinct Yahwistic source or author (J). Even scholars still holding to this model, such as Horst Seebass, for instance, must concede: “Among all source critical-theories about the Pentateuch, J is the most unstable one.”¹ On the other hand, recent textbooks or publications for a larger audience still present the Documentary Hypothesis as a firmly established result of source criticism and historical exegesis, and the so-called “J” source, in particular, continues to play a preeminent role in the presentation and discussion of the theory.²

Typically such textbooks and introductions will present J as the oldest document of the Pentateuch, written under the reign of Solomon, and containing already the narrative structure of the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch), starting with the creation of humanity and ending with the conquest of the promised land. In this model J is thus defined as the first historian or the first theologian in the Hebrew Bible.³ Although this conception is presented as the traditional view on J, a critical survey of scholarship on J reveals that it actually corresponds only to a rather late development of the theory under the influence of G. von Rad. For this reason the first part of this paper will be devoted to a brief state

1. “Unter den quellenkritischen Hypothesen des Pentateuch ist die des J die unstabilste” (Horst Seebass, “Jahwist,” *TRE* 16[1987]: 441–51).

2. See, for instance, Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O’Brien, *Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003).

3. Peter F. Ellis, *The Yahwist, The Bible’s First Theologian: With the Jerusalem Bible Text of the Yahwist Saga* (Chicago: Fides, 1968).

of the question of J. The aim of the paper is not to offer an exhaustive history of pentateuchal research⁴ but to focus on the major modifications occurring in the definition of J in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. After this short overview the second part of the paper will be devoted to a closer analysis of the different conceptions connected with the Yahwist,⁵ which will demonstrate the elusive character of this scholarly construct.

2. THE LIFE, OR LIVES, OF THE YAHWIST: FROM BIRTH TO DEATH—OR TO RESURRECTION?

2.1. THE BIRTH OF THE YAHWIST

The Yahwist was fathered in the eighteenth century through the work of Henning Bernhard Witter (1711) and Jean Astruc (1753). Both authors, working on the book of Genesis and trying to explain the different divine names, came to the conclusion that the Pentateuch was compiled from different documents.⁶ Astruc distinguished several documents, especially a document “A” speaking of God as “Elohim” and a document “B” using the divine name “Jehova.” In his 1780 *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Eichhorn distinguished, apparently independently from Astruc, two sources for the book of Genesis: an

4. Many of those have been written recently, see, for instance, Félix García López, *El Pentateuco: Introducción a la lectura de los cinco primeros libros de la Biblia* (Estella: Verbo Divino, 2003); Cees Houtman, *Der Pentateuch: Die Geschichte seiner Erforschung nebst einer Auswertung* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994); Otto Kaiser, “The Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History,” in *Text in Context: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Studies* (ed. A. D. H. Mayes; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 289–322; Ernest Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998); Thomas Römer, “La formation du Pentateuque: Histoire de la recherche,” and Christophe Nihan and Thomas Römer, “Le débat actuel sur la formation du Pentateuque,” in *Introduction à l’Ancien Testament* (ed. T. Römer et al.; MdB 49; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2004), 67–84, 85–113; Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction à la lecture du Pentateuque: Clés pour l’interprétation des cinq premiers livres de la Bible* (Brussels: Lessius, 2000); John Van Seters, *The Pentateuch: A Social Science Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Erich Zenger, “Theorien über die Entstehung des Pentateuch im Wandel der Forschung,” in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (ed. E. Zenger; 5th ed.; Studienbücher Theologie 1/1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), 74–123.

5. For presentations of J, see, besides the article of Seebass mentioned above, Albert de Pury, “Yahwist (“J”) Source,” *ABD* 6 (1992): 1012–20; Jean-Louis Ska, “The Yahwist, a Hero with a Thousand Faces: A Chapter in the History of Modern Exegesis,” in *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (ed. J. C. Gertz et al.; BZAW 315; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 1–23; and Peter Weimar, “Jahwist,” *Neues Bibel Lexikon* 1 (2001): 268–71.

6. Henning B. Witter, *Jura Israelitarum in Palestiniam terram* (Hildesheim, 1711); Jean Astruc, *Conjectures sur la Genèse (1753): Introduction et notes de Pierre Gibert* (Paris: Noësis, 1999).

“Elohim document” and a “Jehova document.” Both are, according to Eichhorn, limited to the book of Genesis. The rest of the Pentateuch consists of various documents from the time of Moses. In his fourth edition (1823), Eichhorn gave up the notion of Mosaic authorship for the Pentateuch and attributed the gathering and the grouping of the main documents of Genesis and of the other books to a compiler.⁷ Since he limited the Jehova and Elohist documents to the book of Genesis and postulated the existence of other documents for the following books, Eichhorn’s conception of the formation of the Pentateuch came very close to a fragmentary theory, such as it was defended by Alexander Geddes in 1792.⁸

The next step in the creation of the Yahwist can be found in the work of Karl David Ilgen on the sources of the Pentateuch, of which only the first part dealing with the book of Genesis actually appeared.⁹ Ilgen locates the sources of the Pentateuch in the temple archives of Jerusalem. He distinguishes seventeen different sources and attributes these sources to three “compilers” or “writers” whom he labels according to their use of the divine name: the first and the second Elohist, and the Jehovist (Ilgen does not speak of a “Yahwist,” since the usual pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton in his time was “Jehova”). As Eichhorn before him, Ilgen was aware that the use of the divine name was not sufficient to attribute the texts to one of these three writers. He thus added further criteria such as repetitions and differences in ideology, style, and vocabulary.¹⁰

After de Wette’s isolation of Deuteronomy as an independent source, which could be dated in the seventh century B.C.E., the work of H. Hupfeld constitutes a major advance toward the establishment of the “new Documentary Hypothesis.” In his 1853 book, which deals again with Genesis, Hupfeld confirms Ilgen’s idea of two Elohist (an earlier E, which would become later the Priestly source, and a second, later E) as well as a “Yahwist” (which he labels “Jhwh-ist”). The Yahwist is for Hupfeld the youngest document of the three. The first Elohist is the *Urschrift*, which the redactor of the Pentateuch takes as

7. Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament I–III (1780–83)* (4th ed.; Göttingen: Rosenbusch, 1823). In English one may consult *Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament: A Fragment Translated by G. T. Gollop* (from the 3rd German edition; n.p.: privately published, 1803).

8. Alexander Geddes, *The Holy Bible: Or the Books Accounted Sacred by Jews and Christians; Otherwise Called the Books of the Old and New Covenants I* (London: Davis, 1792).

9. Karl David Ilgen, *Die Urkunden des jerusalemischen Tempelarchivs in ihrer Urgestalt, als Beitrag zur Berichtigung der Geschichte der Religion und Politik* (Halle: Hemmerde & Schwetschke, 1798).

10. On Ilgen, see Bodo Seidel, *Karl David Ilgen und die Pentateuchforschung im Umkreis der sogenannten Älteren Urkundenhypothese: Studien zur Geschichte der exegetischen Hermeneutik in der späten Aufklärung* (BZAW 213; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993).

the basis and within which he incorporates as completely as possible the later Elohist as well as the Yahwist.

2.2. THE YAHWIST AS OLDEST SOURCE OF THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS

The transformation of the Yahwist into the oldest source of the Pentateuch occurred when the so-called first Elohist was gradually acknowledged to be not the earliest source but the latest in light of the research of Eduard Reuss and Karl Heinrich Graf.¹¹ This new paradigm was essentially taken over by Abraham Kuenen and Julius Wellhausen. Interestingly, Kuenen's Yahwist is again defined on the basis of observations made by the Dutch scholar on the book of Genesis: "We also find in *Genesis* ... another set of narratives or pericopes, which are connected together, and which often run parallel to E in matter, though departing from it in details and language. This group must be derived from a single work which we call Yahwistic document."¹² As is well known, Kuenen and Wellhausen were very close and influenced each other considerably. In his *Composition of the Hexateuch* as well as in his *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*,¹³ Wellhausen laid the foundations of the Documentary Hypothesis for at least the next century. However, and this point is often overlooked, Wellhausen himself had a limited interest in the Yahwist. He was most skeptical about the possibility of sorting out this source by means of literary-critical analysis. On the contrary, one frequently finds in his work (especially in the *Composition of the Hexateuch*) the statement that J and E are so closely interwoven that it is not only impossible but even unnecessary to separate both documents.¹⁴ He thus prefers to speak of a "Jehovist," a term that classically designates now the combination of the Yahwistic and Elohist documents. Yet for Wellhausen even this "Jehovist" is *not* a coherent work, in contrast to Q (that is, our P source); rather, it passed through different hands before coming to its present form. One

11. For more details, see Robert J. Thompson, *Moses and the Law in a Century of Criticism since Graf* (VTSup 19; Leiden: Brill, 1970).

12. Abraham Kuenen, *Historisch-critisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des Ouden Verbonds I* (Leiden: Engels, 1861); English translation: *A Historical-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch* (trans. H. P. Wicksteed; London: Macmillan, 1886), 140. According to Ska ("The Yahwist," 9), Kuenen was the first to create the term "Jahwist."

13. Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (1899) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963); Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (sixth ed.; 1927; repr., Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001); English translation: *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (trans. J. S. Black and A. Menzies; 1885; Scholars Press Reprints and Translations Series; repr., Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).

14. Wellhausen, *Composition des Hexateuchs*, 35.

should therefore distinguish at least three different editions of J (J¹, J², J³) and three different editions of E (E¹, E², E³).¹⁵ Interestingly, the problematic results arising from his analysis of J were used against Wellhausen by those among his contemporaries, such as August Dillmann, who were critical of the new Documentary Hypothesis. Wellhausen did not attempt to provide a precise dating for the composition of J. He limited himself instead to locating the Jehovist in the Assyrian period and affirmed: “One cannot give precise information for a period earlier than the century before 850–750.... It was only at this time that literature flourished.”¹⁶ In fact, since Wellhausen was primarily interested in reconstructing the evolution of the Israelite religion from a natural, familiar, and local form of the cult to a regulated, hierarchical, and priestly controlled form of worship (with the Deuteronomistic reform as intermediate state), the Jehovist represented for him the first real document on the original state of Israelite religion. The attempt to distinguish systematically between J and E was, in his eyes, both methodologically unsure and, to a certain extent, even historically pointless. Finally, it should also be noted that for Wellhausen, as for scholars before him since Witter, Astruc, and Ilgen, Genesis played a major role in describing the “Jehovistic history book.” Wellhausen concluded: “The story of the patriarchs ... characterizes this document the best.”¹⁷

As Wellhausen before him, Kuenen often treated J and E together. He also differentiated further between two major blocks in the Hexateuch, “the Deuteronomistic-prophetic sacred history (D + JE)” and “the historico-Priestly work (P),” both of which existed independently until the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.¹⁸ As a matter of fact, many scholars at the end of the nineteenth century were not interested in distinguishing precisely between J and E. This is also the case, for instance, with Willy Staerk, who was one of the first to emphasize a major tension within the Jehovistic work. He pointed out two different conceptions of Israel’s possession of Canaan: a “naive and popular one” (in his own terms), which is found in the patriarchal narratives; and a second one, more developed and based on a concept of salvation history (“eine reflektierte und heilsgeschichtliche Konzeption”), which can be found in the exodus tradition.¹⁹ Staerk was actually much more interested in this opposition than in the profile of the Jehovist.

15. Ibid., 7 and 207.

16. Julius Wellhausen, *Grundrisse zum Alten Testament* (ed. R. Smend; Munich: Kaiser, 1965), 40.

17. “Die Patriarchengeschichte ... charakterisirt [*sic*] diese Schrift am besten” (Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 7, German edition).

18. Kuenen, *Historical-Critical Inquiry*, 313.

19. Willy Staerk, *Studien zur Religions- und Sprachgeschichte des alten Testaments* (2 vols.; Berlin: Reimer, 1899), 1:50–51.

Nevertheless some attempts were also made to describe the “personality” of the Yahwist, as for instance in the work of Bernhard Luther,²⁰ who praised the Yahwist as a literary genius and a strong personality.²¹ Luther’s Yahwist comes very close to the ideals of liberal Protestantism, since he is opposed to everything cultic and shares the ethical concerns of the preexilic prophets. Heinrich Holzinger and Samuel Rolles Driver also tried to establish lexicons of the Yahwist on the basis of his vocabulary and his style.²² However, these approaches, which presuppose the unity and the literary homogeneity of J, were quite at odds with the results attained by other scholars, such as Charles Bruston, Karl Budde, and Rudolf Smend senior.²³ The latter scholars followed in general Wellhausen concerning the lack of homogeneity of J, and they tried to identify more precisely discrete editions of the Yahwistic document, even to the point of postulating the existence of two more documents behind J.²⁴ The attempt to identify pre-J documents remained popular during the first half of the twentieth century (Otto Eissfeldt; Georg Fohrer; Robert H. Pfeiffer).²⁵

2.3. THE YAHWIST AND THE *FORMGESCHICHTE*

The diachronic differentiation of the Yahwistic source was also adopted by Hermann Gunkel in his commentary on Genesis,²⁶ where he distinguished two

20. Bernhard Luther, “Die Persönlichkeit des Jahwisten,” in Eduard Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme: Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen* (Halle, 1906; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), 106–73.

21. *Ibid.*, 169.

22. Heinrich Holzinger, *Einleitung in den Hexateuch: Mit Tabellen über die Quellenscheidung* (Freiburg: Mohr, 1893); Samuel R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (9th ed.; 1913; repr., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960).

23. Charles Bruston, “Les deux Jéhovistes,” *RTP* 18 (1885): 5–34, 429–528, 602–37; Karl Budde, *Die biblische Urgeschichte (Gen 1–12,5)* (Giessen: Ricker, 1883); Rudolf Smend Sr., *Die Erzählung des Hexateuch auf ihre Quellen untersucht* (Berlin: Reimer, 1912).

24. See also Cuthbert A. Simpson, *The Early Traditions of Israel: A Critical Analysis of the Pre-Deuteronomic Narrative of the Hexateuch* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948).

25. Otto Eissfeldt, *Hexateuch-Synopse: Die Erzählung der fünf Bücher Moses und des Buches Josua mit dem Anfänge des Richterbuches* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962 [1987]); see in English: *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965): he distinguishes the Yahwistic source in J and L (“lay source”); Georg Fohrer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (11th ed.; Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1969): he speaks of N (nomadic source) instead of L; Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948) separated the Yahwistic source of the patriarchal narratives into J and S (“Southern Source”). For more details, see Nicholson, *Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century*, 43–45. Today Jacques Vermeylen defends the existence of a “proto-J” who wrote during the reign of David; see his “Les premières étapes littéraires de la formation du Pentateuque,” in *Le Pentateuque en question* (ed. A. de Pury and T. Römer; 3rd ed.; MdB 19; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2002), 149–97.

Yahwists for the primeval history (J^c [a Yahwist using the divine name *elohim*] and Jⁱ [a Yahwist using the Tetragrammaton], as well as no less than three other Yahwists for the patriarchal narratives (two parallel sources J^a and J^b, and a Yahwistic redactor J^r). This meticulous distribution of J into numerous Yahwistic fragments conflicts with Gunkel's statement that it is impossible to define more precisely the relation of these different Yahwists: "It is relatively insignificant what the individual hands contributed to the whole because they are very indistinct and can never be identified with certainty."²⁷ It is well known that Gunkel was actually not interested in source criticism and the reconstitution of written documents. His main concern was the investigation of oral tradition, which, he believed, generated all the narratives of the book of Genesis. In contrast to the composition of P, which Gunkel considered to be the work of an author, the different Yahwists (as well as the Elohist school) were just collectors, very much like the Grimm brothers of his time, whose work was apparently well known to Gunkel.²⁸ The Yahwistic collectors neither organized nor altered the stories that they transmitted and that, besides, had already been gathered into cycles (*Sagenkränze*). As Gunkel states, these Yahwistic collectors "were not masters but rather servants of their subjects."²⁹

2.4. THE YAHWIST AS AUTHOR AND THEOLOGIAN

Gunkel's notion of several collectors has retained little influence in the contemporary study of the Yahwist. The current conception of the Yahwist is for the most part the invention of Gerhard von Rad. What is more, the Yahwist of von Rad would probably never have been conceived without the strong influence of Karl Barth's dialectical theology. In his 1938 essay on the form-critical problem of the Hexateuch,³⁰ von Rad resurrected the Yahwist as an author, a theologian, and the architect of the Hexateuch. He conceded that J "was certainly a collector, and as such had an interest in preserving the ancient

26. Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis übersetzt und erklärt* (3rd ed.; HKAT 3/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910); English translation: *Genesis* (trans. M. E. Biddle; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997).

27. Gunkel, *Genesis*, lxxiii, English edition.

28. Gunkel was probably unaware of the fact that a great number of their tales did not stem from storytellers they were listening to; they took them over from already-existing literary collections; see, for instance, Ernst Axel Knauf, *Die Umwelt des Alten Testaments* (Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar: Altes Testament 29; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1994), 226.

29. Gunkel, *Genesis*, lxiv, English edition.

30. Gerhard von Rad, "Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch," in idem, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (ed. R. Smend; 4th ed.; TB 8; Munich: Kaiser, 1971), 9–86. English translation: "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch," in idem, *The Problem of the*

religious motives of his material.”³¹ Yet von Rad blames Gunkel for his “complete failure to take into account the co-ordinating power of the writer’s [= J] overall theological purpose.”³² Against Gunkel, and probably against the history of religion school in general, von Rad wrote: “The Yahwist speaks to his contemporaries out of concern for the real and living faith, not as more or less detached story-tellers.”³³ Von Rad is also the first to find a very precise location for the Yahwist by associating him with the time of Solomon, which he characterizes as a period of “enlightenment.” As a writer of the Solomonic court, J offers a theological legitimation of the new state created by David and consolidated by Solomon. But J is not only Israel’s first (and probably greatest ever) theologian; he is also the creator of the Hexateuch. As such he takes over the old Israelite creed, which is attested in Deut 26:5–9, Josh 24:2–13, and elsewhere. The creed included the motifs of the descent to Egypt, the liberation from Egyptian oppression, and the settlement in the land. On the basis of this credo, J composed the Pentateuch by inserting the Sinai tradition between the exodus and the settlement and by prefacing his work with the addition of the primeval history. The creation of the Hexateuch by J occurred through a further development, which von Rad considers “perhaps the most important factor of all,” that is, the “integration of the patriarchal history as a whole with the idea of settlement.”³⁴ By this combination of two independent traditions, the Yahwist altered the purpose of the divine promises to the patriarchs, which were originally related to the establishment of the patriarchs in Canaan without a connection to the exodus-settlement tradition. Von Rad’s recognition of the original difference between the patriarchal narratives and the settlement tradition was based on the work of Kurt Galling, who emphasized the ideological differences between the two traditions and attributed their literary combination to L (the so-called “lay” source) and J.³⁵

Von Rad’s conception of the Yahwist profoundly influenced M. Noth, whose source-critical identification of J was to become canonical.³⁶ Yet Noth

Hexateuch and Other Essays (trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966; repr., London: SCM, 1984), 1–78.

31. Von Rad, “Problem,” 69, English edition.

32. *Ibid.*, 51.

33. *Ibid.*, 69.

34. *Ibid.*, 60.

35. Kurt Galling, *Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels* (BZAW 48; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1928), see esp. 56–63.

36. Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948); English translation: *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (trans. B. W. Anderson; Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1972; repr., Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981).

also differed from von Rad on several major issues.³⁷ First, Noth gave up the idea of a Hexateuch: since he considered the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua as belonging to the Deuteronomistic History, he claimed that the hand of the Yahwist was not to be found in Joshua. Therefore Noth had to postulate that the end of the Yahwist was lost when the Deuteronomistic History was linked with the pentateuchal sources.³⁸ Second Noth claimed that the Yahwist as well as the other sources of the Pentateuch “cannot be regarded as ‘authors.’”³⁹ According to Noth, J did not invent the literary connection between the major themes of the Pentateuch (guidance out of Egypt, guidance into the arable land, promise to the patriarchs, guidance in the wilderness, revelation at Sinai). This connection preexisted in a common *Grundlage* (basis), whether oral or written, which was shared by both J and E. The only creative act of J was the addition of the primeval history to the themes already present in this *Grundlage*. Nevertheless, at the end of his book Noth himself contradicted this introductory statement by concluding that all the pentateuchal sources should be traced to the work of authors instead of being ascribed to schools.⁴⁰ In fact, Noth himself appears to have hesitated as to how the nature of the J source should be precisely defined.⁴¹ He was also aware that the patriarchal tradition was only poorly connected with the following themes of the Pentateuch. In this context, Noth even observed that this connection appears only explicitly in “the traditio-historically late passage Gen 15.”⁴² In addition, Noth also suspected the Joseph story to be a late insertion between the patriarchal narratives and the exodus story.⁴³ But since the themes of the Pentateuch (excepted the primeval history) had already been combined before the Yahwist, according to Noth, the different theological profiles of

37. See, for instance, Campbell and O’Brien, *Sources of the Pentateuch*, 7–10. Contrarily to Noth, von Rad was not much interested in the concrete problems of source criticism.

38. Noth, *History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 16 and 72.

39. *Ibid.*, 2.

40. *Ibid.*, 228.

41. As John Van Seters argues in a forthcoming book, of which he kindly communicated me some chapters, Noth astonishingly described the Yahwist as being very different from the Deuteronomist.

42. Noth, *History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 200. Like von Rad, Noth quotes positively Galling: “the theme of the patriarchal history, as Kurt Galling has already seen quite correctly, was only secondarily placed before the following themes” (46). See also the comments of Nicholson, *Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century*, 84–85, and Konrad Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1999), 8–10.

43. *History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 202. Noth considers the Joseph story “a traditio-historically late construction.”

the patriarchal and the exodus traditions were automatically relegated to the oral prehistory of the Torah.

In North America Noth's conception of J was further developed in the work of Frank Moore Cross with his own conception of the ancient "epic sources" that supposedly underlie the Hebrew Bible. Cross agreed with Noth that J is based on older traditions, some of which were already written. But for Cross the older material could be characterized more precisely as epic traditions, which the Yahwist transformed into prose accounts. The story of the conflict at the sea provides an example. The poem in Exod 15 is part of the epic tradition, according to Cross, which still reflects the Canaanite mythic pattern of the divine battle against the sea. The Yahwist transforms this epic into a prose narrative through the composition of Exod 14.

The conception of the Yahwist that has appeared in textbooks since the 1950s is mostly a combination of the views of von Rad and Noth, which, in North America, has been further combined with Cross's notion of an old demythologized epic tradition. Thus, to give only a few examples, Robert Pfeiffer praised the "superb literary form" of the Yahwist and ascribed to him the "injection of the future conquest of Canaan into the patriarchal stories by means of divine promises and significant itineraries."⁴⁴ Peter F. Ellis described J as "the theological opus of an ancient genius ... the earliest monumental theologian in history."⁴⁵ And in a 2003 *Commentary on the Bible* David Noel Freedman still "adheres to the common, if somewhat conservative, view that J dates from the United Monarchy ... and finds the complete fulfillment of the promise to the fathers not in the original settlement under Joshua but in the conquests and kingdom of David."⁴⁶

2.5. THE DEATH OF THE YAHWIST

The challenge to the conception of the Yahwist as an author writing in the tenth century B.C.E., and more broadly to the whole Documentary Hypothesis in general, rapidly gained ground by the end of the 1970s. Of course, there were some important forerunners, such as the Danish scholar Bentzen, who claimed already in his 1949 introduction: "There is a widespread distrust in the Documentary Hypothesis." The reason according to Bentzen was the "strong

44. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 156. Ellis also highlighted J as author and theologian (*Yahwist*, 23–24).

45. Ellis, *Yahwist*, viii.

46. David Noel Freedman, "The Pentateuch," in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (ed. J. D. G. Dunn and J. W. Rogerson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 25–31, 27.

tendency to separate Gen. from Ex.–Num. as originally different complexes of tradition.”⁴⁷ Quite similarly, Winnett argued in a 1965 article that the book of Genesis is the work of a “late J,” who wrote in the early Persian period and composed the book of Genesis by using older documents (an “early J” for Abraham and Jacob and an “E” document for the story of Joseph). According to Winnett, it was P who, still later in the postexilic period, supplemented the work of the “late J” and prefixed it to the “Mosaic tradition.” P also separated the book of Deuteronomy from the Deuteronomistic History and reworked it as the conclusion for the entire Pentateuch.⁴⁸

The hiatus between the patriarchs and the exodus story was also a main argument of Rolf Rendtorff, who claimed in his 1976 monograph that Old Testament scholars never had a clear idea about the Yahwist, which led him to the conclusion that the whole Documentary Hypothesis should definitely be abandoned.⁴⁹ Rendtorff took over Noth’s idea of independent pentateuchal themes but argued that these themes and traditions had been put together at a much later stage by redactors who were influenced by Deuteronomistic language and theology. As Staerk before him, Rendtorff insists on the fact that the Moses story does *not* presuppose the theme of the promise of the land made to the patriarchs. Analyzing the story of Moses’ call, Rendtorff comments: “The land is introduced here as an unknown land... there is not a word which mentions that the patriarchs have already lived a long time in this land and that God has promised it to them and their descendants as a permanent possession. Following the terminology of the land in Genesis, those addressed here would be the ‘seed’ for whom the promise holds good. But they are not spoken to as such.”⁵⁰ Rendtorff’s ideas were taken over by E. Blum, who replaced the Yahwist and the Documentary Hypothesis by a theory of two main “compositions” (D and P), which created two different accounts of Israel’s origins during and after the Babylonian exile, by incorporating into their work older, originally independent stories and collections of laws.⁵¹

47. Aage Bentzen, *The Books of the Old Testament* (vol. 2 of *Introduction to the Old Testament*; (Copenhagen: Gads, 1949), 60.

48. Frederick V. Winnett, “Re-examining the Foundations,” *JBL* 84 (1965): 1–19.

49. Rolf Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (BZAW 147; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976); English translation: *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (trans. J. J. Scullion; JSOTSup 89; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990). See also Rolf Rendtorff, “The ‘Yahwist’ as Theologian? The Dilemma of Pentateuchal Criticism,” *JSOT* 3 (1977): 2–10.

50. Rendtorff, *Problem of the Process*, 128.

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

2.6. THE REBIRTH OF THE YAHWIST

For other scholars, who were equally convinced that the classical documentary theory had to be abandoned, the “old Yahwist” had indeed to die, but only to enable a new Yahwist to rise rejuvenated from his ashes. Martin Rose followed the observations developed by H. H. Schmid in his book on the “so-called Yahwist,” where he had pointed out the Deuteronomistic influence on the vocabulary and ideology of the texts that Noth had attributed to J.⁵² Rose transformed J into a Deuteronomist of the second or third generation and considered his work in Genesis to Numbers as a prologue and—simultaneously—a “theological amendment” to the Deuteronomistic History.⁵³ Quite similarly John Van Seters considered the Yahwist to be a later expansion of the Deuteronomist’s work.⁵⁴ But, in contrast to Rose, Van Seters’ Yahwist is above all an antiquarian historian who freely composes his work, rather than integrating older documents that one could reconstruct, except in the case of the Jacob and Joseph stories.⁵⁵ Following Winnett, Van Seters argues that J is a contemporary of Second Isaiah and shares his universal perspective. Like von Rad, Van Seters attributes the integration of the patriarchal tradition and the exodus to J,⁵⁶ but for Van Seters this development took place only at the end of the exilic period. In the Deuteronomistic History the combination of the two traditions is still lacking.⁵⁷

Christoph Levin⁵⁸ also locates J in the exilic period, later than the book of Deuteronomy but nevertheless earlier than the Deuteronomistic History. J

52. Hans Heinrich Schmid, *Der sogenannte Jahwist: Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Pentateuchforschung* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976).

53. Martin Rose, *Deuteronomist und Jahwist: Untersuchungen zu den Berührungspunkten beider Literaturwerke* (ATANT 67; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981); for the same approach, see in English Frederick H. Cryer, “On the Relationship between the Yahwistic and the Deuteronomistic Histories,” *BN* 29 (1985): 58–74.

54. John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1992); idem, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994). For the primeval history, Van Seters suggests that J is directly dependent on the Babylonian version of the flood, which is conserved in the Epic of Gilgamesh (see also his *Pentateuch*, 119–20).

55. According to Dozeman: “the Yahwist of Van Seters has nothing to do with the Yahwist of the documentary hypothesis”: Thomas B. Dozeman, “Geography and Ideology in the Wilderness Journey from Kadesh through the Transjordan,” in Gertz et al., *Abschied vom Jahwisten*, 173–89, 188.

56. See Van Seters, *Pentateuch*, 153–54.

57. John Van Seters, “Confessional Reformulation in the Exilic Period,” *VT* 22 (1972): 448–59.

58. Christoph Levin, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

represents the perspective of a more popular form of religion, as well as the concerns of the Diaspora. For this reason Levin argues that J defends the diversity of the cultic places where Yhwh may be worshiped, as opposed to the authors of Deuteronomy, who wish to limit the location of the cultic site. According to Levin, J is foremost a collector and a redactor; he is the first to combine his older sources into a narrative, which covers (more or less) the extent of the Pentateuch.⁵⁹ Levin actually combines a fragmentary theory with a supplementary theory in his description of the work of the Yahwist, since more than half of the non-Priestly texts of the Pentateuch are supplements, which numerous redactors added to the combined Yahwistic and Priestly narrative. Finally, alongside the work of scholars such as Rose, Van Seters, and Levin, other authors continue to advocate the traditional view of J as a work of the monarchical period (thus, in addition to Freedman, also Nicholson and Seebass).

This overview already reveals that the current state of the debate about the Yahwist is rather confused. Several scholars have buried him; others, on the contrary, remain loyal to the “old” Yahwist of von Rad and Noth, while still others have attempted to rejuvenate him. To make things even more complicated: a closer look at the advocates of the Yahwist reveals that not everyone defends the same conception of J; quite the contrary.

3. THE VARIOUS IDENTITIES OF THE YAHWIST

3.1. REDACTIONAL PROCESS, SCHOOL, OR AUTHOR?

The present survey has already demonstrated that there has never been any real consensus about the meaning of the symbol J. For Wellhausen, J was not homogeneous but had developed through various stages. Wellhausen also argued that in many cases J and E could not be distinguished clearly from each other, an observation that prompted him to use the term “Jehowist,” under which he subsumed virtually almost all pre-Deuteronomic and pre-Priestly texts of the Hexateuch. Ernest Nicholson currently defends a quite similar idea about J when he argues: “Not all that can be attributed to J ... was written at one sitting, so to speak.”⁶⁰ In a sense, Gunkel extended and made even more radical

59. In a recent article Levin still argues, as in his book, that the end of J may be lost; see Christoph Levin, “Das israelitische Nationalepos: Der Jahwist,” in *Große Texte alter Kulturen: Literarische Reise von Gizeh nach Rom* (ed. M. Hose; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004), 63–86, 74. In a recent reconstruction of J, which Prof. Levin kindly sent to me, he identifies, however, the end of J in Num 25:1 and Deut 34:5, 6*.

60. Nicholson, *Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century*, 195. See quite similarly Otto Kaiser, *Die erzählenden Werke* (vol. 1 of *Grundriß der Einleitung in die kanonischen und deuterokanonischen*

Wellhausen's view, since he understood J as a school of collectors who were interested in transmitting faithfully the oral traditions of the Hebrew Bible. Noth is rather hesitant to describe the profile of J, an observation already significant in itself. Nevertheless, he comes very close to Gunkel in his idea of a common basis (*Grundlage*) underlying J and E. Noth concluded that at the time when J wrote his documents the different themes of the Pentateuch (excepted the primeval history) had already been combined, and J merely took over this earlier synthesis of traditions.

This idea of a Yahwistic school (or of different Yahwists) stands in complete opposition to the conception of J as a personality (B. Luther), a notion that blossomed in the work of von Rad. With von Rad the Yahwist has become not only an author but also above all a theologian.⁶¹ For Van Seters, J is also an author, but he lives five centuries later and is more a historian than a theologian. For Levin, J is a redactor; his Yahwist shares the exilic location with Van Seters's Yahwist, but Van Seters would never agree with the idea of J as a redactor.⁶² And in addition there continues to be a bewildering diversity in the historical location of J: today one may find proposals for virtually each century between the tenth and the sixth centuries B.C.E.⁶³

3.2. THE PROBLEM OF THE YAHWIST'S EXTENT AND PROFILE

The same diversity of views exists with respect to the extent and the profile of the Yahwist. For an extended period of time there was consensus that the Documentary Hypothesis did not apply to a Pentateuch but to a *Hexateuch*. The attempts to locate the end of J in Judges or even in Samuel and Kings never found much support.⁶⁴ However, since the J source emphasized the importance of the patriarchal narratives and the divine promises of the land, it was assumed that the J source would end with the fulfillment of these promises in the book of

Schriften des Alten Testaments; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1992), 63, who considers "J" as a long redactional process starting in the ninth and ending in the fifth century B.C.E.

61. See also Hans Walter Wolff, "Das Kerygma des Jahwisten," *EvT* 24 (1964): 70–98.

62. John Van Seters, "The Redactor in Biblical Studies: A Nineteenth Century Anachronism," *JNSL* 29 (2003): 1–19.

63. Tenth century: von Rad ("Solomonic enlightenment"); ninth century: Wellhausen; eighth century: Seebass; seventh century: H. H. Schmid; Philip J. Budd, *Numbers* (WBC 5; Waco, Tex.: 1984), xxiv–xxv; sixth century: Van Seters, Levin.

64. Karl Budde, *Die Bücher Richter und Samuel, ihre Quellen und ihr Aufbau* (Giessen: Ricker, 1890); Immanuel Benzinger, *Jahvist und Elohist in den Königsbüchern* (BZAW 21; Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1921); Gustav Hölscher, *Geschichtsschreibung in Israel: Untersuchungen zum Jahwisten und Elohisten* (Skifter utgivna av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund 50; Lund: Gleerup, 1952).

Joshua. This is why von Rad was displeased with Noth's invention of the Deuteronomistic History, since this theory deprived the Yahwist of its end. Noth was indeed forced to claim that this end had been lost, and it is still this position that is advanced today by Levin. Another possibility for the advocates of an exilic or postexilic Yahwist is to consider his work as a prologue to the Deuteronomistic History (Rose, Van Seters). Does this mean, therefore, that J tried to establish a narrative that begins with Genesis and ends with Kings? And, if this is the case, who then was responsible for the concept and/or publication of the Pentateuch as a discrete document or collection of documents?⁶⁵

There is also no consensus regarding the definition of J's style. Since Hans Heinrich Schmid underscored the close literary relationship between the Yahwist and the Deuteronomistic style and theology, some scholars have proposed that J must be closely related to the Deuteronomistic school (Rose, Cryer). Others, on the contrary, claim that the Yahwist has nothing to do with the language and concerns of this school (Levin, Seebass). Thus for Van Seters, even though J may use some Deuteronomistic vocabulary and expressions, which he took over from the Deuteronomistic History, his theology should definitely not be described as "Deuteronomistic."⁶⁶ Recently Levin has sought to produce a list of J's favorite expressions,⁶⁷ yet one finds in this list words such as אַח, טוֹב, מַאֲד, רָאָה, and so on. Levin argues that these very common terms appear in typical Yahwistic combinations, but one may ask if his demonstration is really more convincing than the ideas of his forerunners.

3.3. THE PROBLEM OF THE "MESSAGE" OF J

Finally, there is also considerable disagreement regarding the problem of the theology or the "message" proper to J. For Wellhausen, J and E reflected the folk religion of the kingship period; they were witnesses to the first stage in the evolution of the Israelite faith. Levin also considers J a representative of popular religion, but this time no longer during the monarchy, since his J now advocates the concerns and the ideology of the Judean diaspora during the exilic period. For Noth, J's only contribution to the formation of the Pentateuch was the addition of the primeval history, to which Noth even declared: "The entire weight of the theology of J rests upon the beginning of its narrative."⁶⁸ Whereas Budde

65. According to Van Seters, the Torah was produced by the priestly caste (*Pentateuch*, 213); on the other hand, he argues that P can also be found in the book of Joshua (186–87).

66. John Van Seters, "The So-called Deuteronomistic Redaction of the Pentateuch," in *Congress Volume: Leuven, 1989* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 43; Leiden: Brill, 1991), 58–77.

67. Levin, *Jahwist*, 399–408.

68. Noth, *History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 238.

attributed to the Yahwist a “nomadic ideal,” the Yahwist of von Rad celebrates on the contrary the accomplishment of the promise of the land under the reigns of David and Solomon. Accordingly, one of the most important texts found in J for von Rad is the blessing of Gen 12:1–3,⁶⁹ which indicates to him that “The Yahwist bears witness to the fact that history is directed and ordered by God.” He explains, With “David’s great feats ... [came] ... almost overnight ... the fulfillment of God’s ancient decrees” formulated in the land promises made to the patriarchs.⁷⁰ Whereas von Rad thought that the Yahwist wrote Gen 12:1–3 on the basis of older accounts, Levin argues on the contrary that the Yahwist was the inventor of the promises to the patriarchs.⁷¹ But unlike von Rad, who saw in the land promises the legitimation of the “Solomonic empire,” Levin’s Yahwist is legitimating Jewish life outside the land, especially in presenting the patriarchs as strangers in the land in which they are living. Van Seters and Rose describe the message of J as universalistic. In addition, Rose’s J sounds very Protestant since he insists on God’s absolute sovereignty and on humankind’s intrinsic sinfulness.⁷²

Yet there is one aspect shared by all of these descriptions of J’s message or theological program, namely, the almost systematic tendency to elucidate it primarily, if not sometimes exclusively, on the basis of the patriarchal narratives. This observation brings us to one last issue in the scholarly discussion on J.

4. THE YAHWIST AND THE LINK BETWEEN PATRIARCHS AND EXODUS

It is a well-known fact that the entire Documentary Hypothesis, including the notion of a Yahwistic document, was essentially elaborated through analyses of the book of Genesis. Significantly, in spite of the various conceptions of J over the past two centuries that have been surveyed in this paper, the book of Genesis has remained the basis for the study of J. The recent reconstruction of the Yahwistic history by Christoph Levin reveals that 82 percent of the J document is concentrated on Genesis. Given such a concentration of J, one wonders whether the so-called Yahwist should not be limited to Genesis, as was already suggested by Winnett and more recently by Kratz.⁷³ This alternative did

69. Noth agrees with von Rad that Gen 12:1–3 is a passage formulated by J, but he considered this text as much less important for J’s theology (see *History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 237 with n. 622).

70. Von Rad, “Problem,” 71 and 73, English edition.

71. Levin, *Jahwist*, 412.

72. Martin Rose, *Une herméneutique de l’Ancien Testament : Comprendre – se comprendre – faire comprendre* (MdB 46; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2003), 376–77.

73. Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments: Grundwissen der Bibelkritik* (Uni-Taschenbücher 2157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000),

not encounter much success, however, since the other important feature of J on which almost all his defenders agree is that he was the artisan of the first Penta- or Hexateuch; more specifically, J is generally seen as the first document or author who combined the traditions on the patriarchs with those of Moses.⁷⁴ But in this regard, one should recall that Noth, while writing his commentary on Numbers, was actually quite aware of this issue. He admitted that if one were to analyze the composition of the book of Numbers without the model of the Documentary Hypothesis, “we would think not so much of ‘continuous’ sources as of an unsystematic collection of innumerable pieces of tradition of very varied content.”⁷⁵

As we have already seen, the ideological hiatus between the patriarchal narratives and the exodus story has been taken into account from the beginning of historical-critical exegesis. In 1899 Willy Staerk paid attention to the difference between the patriarchal and the exodus traditions and demonstrated that outside the Hexateuch these traditions were not connected before the seventh or sixth century B.C.E. He also argued that, even if the Jehowist did combine both traditions, he did not suppress their different, if not conflicting, conceptions of Israel’s claim to the land in Genesis and in the rest of the Hexateuch.⁷⁶ Kurt Galling confirmed the original independence of the exodus and the patriarchs. He attributed to the first Yahwist (which he identifies with the “lay document,” or L) the creation of the patriarchal narratives as a universalistic prologue to the Moses story. But once J was dated in the tenth century, scholars became less interested in the gap between the patriarchs and the exodus. The main concern was to describe the literary profile or the theology of J; the issue of the pre-Yahwistic traditions underlying this document was not a major concern.

However, this issue became significant once again when the Yahwist of von Rad and Noth came under attack. For Rendtorff, the hiatus between the two major themes was a strong argument against the classical documentary theory. The hiatus was also emphasized by Albert de Pury; according to him, the Jacob and the Moses stories were two different origin myths, as can be seen in particular in Hos 12. The combination of both myths was probably later than the composition of the Deuteronomistic History, which has no interest in the patriarchal tradition.⁷⁷ For these scholars who relocated the Yahwist from Solomon’s

249–330. Kratz limits J to Gen 1–36*; he labels “E” the original exodus-story running from Exod 1* to Josh 12*.

74. A notable exception is Noth, for whom this blending happened already before J.

75. Martin Noth, *Numbers* (trans. J. D. Martin; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 4.

76. Staerk, *Studien I*, 50–51.

77. See especially Albert de Pury, “Le cycle de Jacob comme légende autonome des origines d’Israël,” in Emerton, *Congress Volume*, 78–96; idem, “Hosea 12 und die Auseinandersetzung um die Identität Israels und seines Gottes,” in *Ein Gott allein? JHWH-Verehrung und biblischer Mono-*

reign to the Babylonian exile, J was still the one who elaborated the literary connection between Genesis and Exodus, but in this new perspective the traditions of the patriarchs and the exodus were necessarily independent until the sixth century.

In regard to the current debate about the formation of the Pentateuch, one should agree with David Carr's statement: "The main literary-critical division in the pre-P Pentateuch materials is not between a J and an E source... [It] may be between the Moses story and its backward extension through the composition of an early form of Genesis."⁷⁸ The importance of this division has recently led Erhard Blum to modify his theory about the formation of the Pentateuch, since he envisages now that the Pre-priestly "D composition" did not comprise Genesis and began with the story of Moses' birth and call.⁷⁹ There is indeed a growing consensus about the relatively "late" origin of the combination of Genesis and the following books, but the question of the "author" of this combination is still open. Was the Priestly writer the first to link the patriarchs with the exodus (see already Winnett and now especially K. Schmid, Gertz, Otto, Witte);⁸⁰ Did the Deuteronomists create this link (Ska⁸¹)? Or was there a seventh-century (Zenger) or an exilic (Kratz) "Jehovistic" redactor?⁸² Or should one still retain the traditional solution attributing this link, and together with it the first edition of the Pentateuch, to a "Yahwist"? In our view, the last solution is

theismus im Kontext der israelitischen und altorientalischen Religionsgeschichte (ed. W. Dietrich and M. A. Klopfenstein; OBO 139; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 413–39; idem, "Le choix de l'ancêtre," *TZ* 57 (2001): 105–14. See further Thomas Römer, "Deuteronomy in Search of Origins," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. G. N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville; SBTS 8; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 112–38; Bernhard Lang, "Väter Israels," *Neues Bibel Lexikon* 3 (2001): 989–93; and Folker V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel's Identity* (JSOTSup 361; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

78. David M. Carr, "Genesis in Relation to the Moses Story: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History* (ed. A. Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press; Peeters, 2001), 273–95.

79. Erhard Blum, "Die literarische Verbindung von Erzvätern und Exodus: Ein Gespräch mit neueren Forschungshypothesen," in Gertz et al., *Abschied vom Jahwisten*, 119–56.

80. Winnett, "Re-examining the Foundations"; Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus*; Jan Christian Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch* (FRLANT 186; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999); Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumsrahmens* (FAT 30; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 261–64; Markus Witte, *Die biblische Urgeschichte: Redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1–11,26* (BZAW 265; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998).

81. Ska, *Introduction à la lecture du Pentateuque*, 280–88.

82. Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 100–105; Kratz, *Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments*.

the less attractive one. Nicholson, who defends the traditional view, argues: “We are bound to ask what idea pre-exilic Israel can have of its own history if it had not yet joined together its memories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with those of Moses and the exodus.”⁸³ To this we respond: we are first bound to ask if the Pentateuch offers any sort of indication for a thoroughgoing Yahwistic document connecting Genesis with Exodus at a pre-Priestly stage.

83. Nicholson, *Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century*, 130.