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The Exodus in the Book of Genesis

Thomas Römer

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The Exodus in the Book of Genesis*

THOMAS RÖMER (LAUSANNE, PARIS)

1. Starting point: Recent Research on the Pentateuch and the Hypothesis of two Initially Competing Myths of Origin

More than thirty years ago, the scholarly consensus on the composition of the Torah was shattered to the extent that the “new documentary hypothesis,” prevalent until the seventies of the past century, is nowadays defended in its canonical form only by very few scholars. Published in 1975 and 1976, the studies of John Van Seters, Hans Heinrich Schmid and Rolf Rendtorff¹ provoked a crisis in Pentateuchal research, which was unparalleled since Wellhausen and urged scholars to reflect anew on the dominant models. In Anglo-Saxon and French biblical research, a severe leaning towards synchronic methods has developed (structuralism, semiotics, reader-response criticism etc.) in a reaction to this crisis, and since some years a growing number of studies taking as their subject exclusively the so-called “final form” of a text or of a book occur also in scholarly publications written in German. The holistic methods are an understandable reaction against the kind of literary criticism (widespread especially in German exegesis) that strives mainly to reconstruct a hypothetical *Urtext* and its following redactions, while the hermeneutical questions are left aside completely or are only marginally touched upon. Nevertheless, the historical-critical dimension of the research remains, in my view, un-

* This article is based on a manuscript that was first published in German: Thomas Römer, “Exodusmotive und Exoduspolemik in den Erzvätererzählungen,” in Ingo Kottsieper, Rainer Schmitt and Jakob Wöhrle (eds.), *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt: Festschrift für Rainer Albertz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament, 350; Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2008), 3–20, and on a lecture given at the *Svenska Exegetiska Sällskapet* in Uppsala, September 2009. I would like to thank the organizers for their kind invitation and their hospitality.

¹ John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975); Hans Heinrich Schmid, *Der sogenannte Jahwist: Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Pentateuchforschung* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976); Rolf Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 147; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1976).

avoidable for the study of the Pentateuch as well as for the whole of biblical exegesis in general. Diachronic analysis remains a crucial aspect of the scientific understanding of the Hebrew Bible. Admittedly, within the framework of the documentary theory the historical aspect has often privileged literary analysis at the expense of material, sociological, and anthropological factors.

Since the 1980's the new orientation of Pentateuchal research partly integrated these issues in its agenda. Especially influential was the theory of E. Blum,² who considered the Torah as a combination of two larger compositions: a D composition and a P composition. As for the idea that the whole Pentateuch can simply be separated into Deuteronomistic (or Yahwistic) and priestly texts, we should recall that the priestly texts, whose existence can hardly be disputed, remain a matter of a heated debate concerning the contents of the so-called "Grundschrift." (For instance, if the extent of the original P-document was limited from Gen 1 to Lev 16 as recently argued by Christophe Nihan,³ how should one then characterize the texts in the book of Numbers?)

One may nevertheless argue that the distinction between priestly and non-priestly material remains a safe starting point for Pentateuchal criticism;⁴ this statement requires some qualification, however, that *non-priestly* does not always mean *pre-priestly*. The other question is to know whether it is possible to group all the pre-priestly texts under one homogenous label. This opinion is adopted by those scholars, who continue to speak about a Yahwist or a "D composition" (as defined by Blum in 1984⁵). However, as the following examples will show, very different conceptions of J or the D composition have been suggested. For Van Seters, J is an author from the end of the exilic period who composed his text with great freedom as a prologue to the Deuteronomistic history.⁶ Con-

² Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum AT & NT, 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984); *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 189; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1990).

³ Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, (Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 2:25; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

⁴ The only exception to this opinion is Georg Fischer, "Zur Lage der Pentateuchforschung," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 115 (2003): 608–616; "Wege zu einer neuen Sicht der Tora," *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 11 (2005): 93–106.

⁵ Blum, *Vätergeschichte*.

⁶ John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1992); *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-*

trary to that view, Levin sees J as a redactor whose sources can be reconstructed by means of literary-critical methods.⁷ Van Seters and Levin concur in describing J as a highly liberal theologian who frowns on Deuteronomistic ideology; in contrast, M. Rose maintains that J further developed the Deuteronomistic message⁸. These contradictory characterizations result from the fact that very different texts have been subsumed into J. Viewing the non-priestly texts in Gen 12ff., we may indeed speak of liberal and universalistic tendencies where peaceful coexistence with other people is thought desirable. If, on the other hand, stress is placed on texts from the Exodus tradition, as for example Exod 23:23–33 or 34:10–13, one will arrive at the same militaristic conception of the occupation of the land as in Deuteronomy or the book of Joshua. If we follow Levin in his description of J as a theologian of the Diaspora who could only survive “if he neglected Deuteronomy,”⁹ we will easily find a message of this kind in the patriarchal narratives of the book of Genesis. In the book of Exodus, however, the perspective changes as the land and the expulsion of the people living in it appears as a condition of the fulfillment of the divine promises.

This observation brings us to an important point in contemporary Pentateuchal research, namely the re-discovery of a dividing line between Gen and Exod, and as regards both composition and theology. Already Ivan Engnell in his “Tradition-historical Introduction to the Old Testament” argued that within the Tetrateuch (he distinguished with M. Noth between Deuteronomy and the first four books of the Pentateuch) the traditions that are contained in Genesis are in content, character and origin clearly different from those of the other books.¹⁰ In his “The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch” Rendtorff stated concerning the narrative of Moses’ vocation in Exod 3: “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.”

Numbers (Louisville and Kampen: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

⁷ Christoph Levin, *Der Jahwist* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

⁸ Martin Rose, *Deuteronomist und Jahwist: Untersuchungen zu den Berührungspunkten beider Literaturwerke* (Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 67; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1981).

⁹ Levin, *Jahwist*, 430.

¹⁰ Ivan Engnell, *Gamla Testamentet: En traditionshistorisk inledning: första delen* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelsens Förlag, 1945).

The only reference to the patriarchal narrative appears by means of the formal and redactional mention of the “God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,” which leads Rendtorff to conclude “that this connection has been made only in a relatively late stage in the process.”¹¹

The discovery of the diversity (regarding the process of transmission and ideology) between the patriarchal and Exodus traditions was not an absolute novelty. The tradition-historical independence of the patriarchal and Exodus traditions had already been emphasized by Staerk, Galling and other scholars at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, yet the combination of these traditions was mostly situated already at the time of the early monarchy in Israel.¹² More recently, taking as his starting point an analysis of Hos 12, Albert de Pury has put forward in several publications the idea of two initially competing myths of origins, those of the Jacob cycle and the Exodus tradition.¹³

In de Pury’s view, Hos 12 provides a highly negative summary of several episodes of the Jacob cycle. Criticizing the reliance of the addressees on their forefather, the text sets the “impious” deceiver Jacob against the divine revelation starting in Egypt: “Jacob fled to the land of Aram, there Israel served (was a slave) for a wife, and for a wife he guarded sheep. By a prophet Yhwh brought Israel up from Egypt, and by a prophet he was guarded” (vv. 13–14). In the opposition of a prophet and a wife, de Pury sees a tension between a concept of origins based on vocation and another one based on genealogy. During the monarchical period (or even later, depending on how the text is dated), the Exodus tradition and the patriarchal tradition (at least the one concerning Jacob) existed separately without being literarily connected. In this way the question of the connection

¹¹ Rolf Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 89; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990; German original 1976), 85–87.

¹² Willy Staerk, *Studien zur Religions- und Sprachgeschichte des alten Testaments*, I. und II. Heft (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1899); Kurt Galling, *Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 48; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1928).

¹³ Albert de Pury, “Le cycle de Jacob comme légende autonome des origines d’Israël,” in John A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume Leuven 1989* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, 43; Leiden: Brill, 1991), 78–96; “Hosea 12 und die Auseinandersetzung um die Identität Israels und seines Gottes,” in Walter Dietrich and Martin A. Klopfenstein (eds.), *Ein Gott allein? JHWH-Verehrung und biblischer Monotheismus im Kontext der israelitischen und altorientalischen Religionsgeschichte* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 139; Freiburg (CH) and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 413–439; “Le choix de l’ancêtre,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 57 (2001): 105–114.

between the patriarchs and the Exodus was propounded anew. The topic was taken up by Konrad Schmid in his Habilitation¹⁴ published in 1999 where he endeavoured to produce supporting evidence for the occasionally surmised assumption (e. g. Winnet, Römer)¹⁵ that the literary connection between the patriarchs and the Exodus was for the first time provided by P. According to Schmid, the first literary connection of patriarchal and Exodus traditions appears in Gen 17 and Exod 6 where the two periods are unequivocally correlated, with the patriarchal era turning out as the first stage before the actual revelation of the divine name to Moses: “God spoke to Moses and said to him: I am Yhwh. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as El Shadday, but by my name Yhwh I did not make myself known to them.” This thesis has been advocated in numerous recent publications. So, for instance, Gertz postulated a literarily independent Exodus story linked to the patriarchal tradition only by P;¹⁶ in a similar way Otto ascribes the first connection of primeval, patriarchal and Mosaic histories to the priestly narrative.¹⁷ Most recently, E. Blum supported this position as well,¹⁸ affirming now that “on the *pre*-priestly level a literary connection between Gen and Exod (or between the patriarchal history and the Exodus story) cannot be demonstrated.”¹⁹ This means Blum has revised his former position and proposes a new delimitation of the D composition: “The scope of its action and vision squares Moses’ story between Exod 1 and Deut 34.”²⁰ However, since this view also provoked a

¹⁴ Konrad Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum AT & NT, 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999).

¹⁵ Frederick V. Winnet, “Re-examining the Foundations,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (1965): 1–19; Römer, *Väter*, 574.

¹⁶ Jan Ch. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 186; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999); “Abraham, Mose und der Exodus. Beobachtungen zur Redaktionsgeschichte von Genesis 15,” in Jan Ch. Gertz, Konrad Schmid and Markus Witte (eds.), *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 315; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2002), 63–81.

¹⁷ Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumsrahmens* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 30; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

¹⁸ Erhard Blum, “Die literarische Verbindung von Erzvätern und Exodus: Ein Gespräch mit neueren Forschungshypothesen,” in Gertz, Schmid and Witte (eds.), *Abschied vom Jahwisten*, 119–156.

¹⁹ Blum, “Die literarische Verbindung,” 152.

²⁰ Blum, “Die literarische Verbindung,” 155.

lot of criticism²¹, it can hardly be said that it has on the whole proven itself convincing. Still, a certain consensus seems perceptible in that even the critics of the thesis claiming that Gen and Exod were first put together by P start from the assumption that the connection of the history of the patriarchs and the Exodus story did not happen before the Babylonian exile.

R. G. Kratz, limiting the Yahwist in his *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* to the book of Genesis, ascribes the connection between Genesis and the following traditions to a “Yehowist” whom he situates between 587 and 515.²² C. Levin, advocate of the newer documentary hypothesis in contrast to many, considers J “not [as] a narrator, but [as] a redactor,”²³ who is responsible for the linking of the themes of the patriarchs and the Exodus; yet this Yahwist, too, is working in the exile. And the same holds true for John Van Seters’ Yahwist who is not a redactor but a historian. In view of these examples from contemporary Pentateuchal research, which could easily be increased, the theological specificity of the patriarchal narratives, together with their original independence in terms of both tradition-history and literary history, seems difficult to dispute.

Ivan Engnell rightly underlined that in the Tetrateuch the patriarchal stories are presented as an introduction to what follows. I would argue that the patriarchal tradition was originally conceived not as a prologue to the Exodus, but as an independent story of Israel’s origins, following in this Engnell’s and others’ insights. This does however not mean that the patriarchal tradition came into existence in complete ignorance of the Exodus tradition. It seems to me rather that some texts from Gen 12–50 allude to the Exodus tradition in a downright polemical way, while other texts from the patriarchal narratives are at pains to arrange a theological compromise between the patriarchs and the Exodus.

In what follows, I would like to demonstrate how several stories from the Abraham narrative react to the Exodus tradition. I beg your indulgence for not entering into the details of literary-critical and redaction-critical issues, which is impossible in the present contribution.

²¹ Christoph Levin, “The Yahwist and the Redactional Link Between Genesis and Exodus,” in Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (SBL Symposium Series, 34; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 131–141; John Van Seters, “The Patriarchs and the Exodus: Bridging the Gap Between Two Origin Traditions,” in Riemer Roukema (ed.), *The Interpretation of Exodus: Studies in Honour of Cornelis Houtman* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology, 44; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 1–15.

²² Reinhard G. Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2005; German original 2000).

²³ Levin, *Jahwist*, 34.

2. The “Exodus-Polemical Framing” of Genesis 12–50

After leaving Mesopotamia, passing through Haran and finally reaching the land of Canaan, Abraham receives the divine promise of the land but then immediately withdraws to Egypt. It is to be noted in passing that it certainly is not by accident that in the opening of Abraham’s history, the first patriarch symbolically passes through the Fertile Crescent and the three regions where Jews are present in the Persian period (Mesopotamia, Palestine, Egypt). This shows how Israel’s first ancestor was constructed in the Persian period as an ecumenical ancestor to take up an expression by Albert de Pury, not only in regard to the neighbours inside and outside the Persian province of Yehud, but also in regard to the different Jewish communities inside and outside the land.

2.1. *Gen 12:10–20: Abraham’s Anti-Exodus*

According to Gen 12:10, Abram’s withdrawal to Egypt is provoked by a famine, a motif reappearing later again in the Joseph narrative. Wishing to dwell in Egypt as a temporary resident (cf. לָגַר in 12:10), but afraid of being killed because of his beautiful wife he presents her as his sister accepting that she enters into the king’s harem. How to explain Abram’s behaviour? In both traditional and historical-critical exegesis, highly negative as well as positive (i. e. apologetic) evaluations of Abram’s conduct can be found. Oswald is of the opinion that the narrator “does not make himself at all clear regarding the way he evaluates Abram’s desertion from the land.”²⁴ Nevertheless, it can be observed that in contradistinction to the departure from Mesopotamia (12:1) the withdrawal from Canaan occurs without any divine word. Abram acts on his own initiative and is not ashamed to pass Sarai off as his sister whom Pharaoh then takes into his harem. He imagines the Egyptians as eager to commit murder (12:12 וַהֲרִיגוּ אֹתָיִךְ), thus adopting the same attitude as the narrator of the Exodus story (cf. Exod 2:15: Pharaoh seeks to kill Moses; in Exod 5:21, the Hebrews are afraid that Pharaoh will kill them; in both cases the verb הָרַג is used). Yet according to Gen 12:16, Pharaoh acts generously with Abraham, paying him a big bride price. Abram’s enrichment in Egypt in a way preludes the theme of the “plundering” of the Egyptians in the book of Exodus (Exod 12:35f., cf. 3:21f. and 11:1–3). But in Gen 12 Pharaoh acts

²⁴ Wolfgang Oswald, “Die Erzeltern als Schutzbürger: Überlegungen zum Thema von Gen 12,10–20 mit Ausblick auf Gen 20,21,22–34 und Gen 26,” *Biblische Notizen* 106 (2001): 79–89, 80.

of his own “free will,” enabling Abram’s sojourn, whereas in the Exodus story the belongings of the Egyptians are “obtained” on the occasion of Israel’s withdrawal. Another allusion to the Exodus story presents itself in the afflictions by which Yhwh strikes Egypt, a leitmotif of the plagues narrative (נָטַע Gen 12:17; cf. Exod 7–11, esp. 11:1). On the other hand, unlike the pharaoh of the Exodus story, the king of the Egyptians in Gen 12 reacts immediately to the divine intervention; while the pharaoh of the Exodus narrative is unremittingly reluctant to release Israel from his service (שָׁלַח, pi.), in Gen 12:20 the king of Egypt sends Abram, together with his wife and belongings, back into Palestine (שָׁלַח, pi.). Likewise, the discharge to Abram קָח וּלְךָ Gen 12:19 corresponds to that spoken to the people in the Exodus narrative: קָחוּ וּלְכוּ Exod 12:32.

Hence it seems very probable that the episode Gen 12:10–20 was composed in knowledge of the Exodus narrative (in which form, however? Oral or written?).²⁵ But the roles have been changed. Contrary to the Exodus narrative, Abram, representing Israel, plays a rather dubious part, while the pharaoh is endowed with positive features. The narrator does not tell us of what Yhwh’s plagues consist and the means through which the pharaoh learned Abram’s involvement, but he points out that the Egyptian ruler behaves according to the divine will. If we greatly extend the scope of the intertextuality, it could even be said that Pharaoh in some sense stands for Yhwh against Abram: the question מַה זֹּאת עֲשִׂיתָ (12:18) appears in the same form in Yhwh’s inquiries to Adam (Gen 3:13) and Cain (4:10, without זֹאת).²⁶

Gen 12:10–20 wishes to demonstrate that Abram should not live in Egypt, but in the land Yhwh gave to him.²⁷ Within this design, there may well be contained a polemic against the Egyptian Diaspora whose foundation according to Jer 41–42 is rooted in the people’s own initiative (and against God’s will; cf. Abram’s own initiative in 12:10). Though Egypt is not recommended as a place to sojourn, still, at the same time, there is a hidden yet intelligible polemic against the official Exodus ideology. Gen 12:10–20 could be summarized like this: “The pharaoh is better than his reputation.” A triumphant theology of the Exodus is precluded here. The date of the composition of Gen 12:10–20 is not easy to assess. The story fits however well in the first decades of the Persian period and may have

²⁵ See also Oswald, “Erzeltern,” 87; Blum, *Vätergeschichte*, 309.

²⁶ André Wénin, “Abram et Saraï en Egypte (Gn 12,10-20) ou la place de Saraï dans l’élection,” *Revue théologique de Louvain* 29 (1998): 433–456.

²⁷ Blum, *Vätergeschichte*, 311.

been composed in Yehud as a polemical answer to the Deuteronomistic Exodus-centered theology. Texts like Ezek 33:23ff. and Isa 50:1ff. provide evidence for the idea that the figure of Abraham was used in order to legitimate the non-deportees' claims to possess the land.

2.2 *Joseph as an Anti-Type of the "Exodical" Israel*

Both at the beginning and end of the patriarchal narrative, we find a positively depicted Pharaoh in conjunction with a subversive or polemical allusion to the Exodus theme. In contradistinction to Gen 12:10–20 however, the sojourn in the land of the Egyptians is depicted not only as possible, but also beneficial. In recent research, the original story of Joseph has been frequently considered of late origin, presupposing the existence of the Egyptian Diaspora.²⁸ In B. J. Diebner's view, the Joseph novella came into existence as a kind of midrash inserted into Genesis in an attempt to pay heed also to the Egyptian Diaspora alongside the Mesopotamian one.²⁹ But one could also argue that the Joseph story existed first as an independent Diaspora novella,³⁰ and was only lately interpolated in the book of Genesis as a connecting link between the narratives about the patriarchs and the Exodus epic, which means that in all likelihood a priestly connection of Gen* and Exod* existed without the Joseph story.³¹ Except for Ps 105, none of the post-exilic historical summaries, that endeavor to outline the Pentateuchal or Hexateuchal history (Josh 24; 1 Sam 12; Neh 9), contain any reference to Joseph. Even in the praise of the fathers of the book of Sirach Joseph is missing in the sequence from Jacob

²⁸ Thomas Römer, "Joseph approché: Source du cycle, corpus, unité," in Olivier Abel and Françoise Smyth (eds.), *Le livre de traverse: De l'exégèse biblique à l'anthropologie* (Patrimoines, 1992; Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1992), 73–85; Alessandro Catastini, "Ancora sulla datazione della 'Storia di Giuseppe'," *Henoch* 20 (1998): 208–224; J.-M. Husser, "L'histoire de Joseph," in Michel Quesnel and Philippe Gruson (eds.), *La Bible et sa culture: Ancien Testament* (Paris: Desclée Debrouwer, 2000), 112–122; Christoph Uehlinger, "Fratrerie, filiations et paternités dans l'histoire de Joseph (Genèse 37-50*)," in Jean-Daniel Macchi and Thomas Römer (eds.), *Jacob: Commentaire à plusieurs voix de Gen. 25-36. Mélanges offerts à Albert de Pury* (Le Monde de la Bible, 44; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2001), 303–328; Andreas Kunz, "Ägypten in der Perspektive Israels am Beispiel der Josefsgeschichte (Gen 37-50)," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 47 (2003): 206–229.

²⁹ Bernd Jörg Diebner, "Le roman de Joseph, ou Israël en Égypte. Un midrash post-exilique de la Tora," in Abel and Smyth (eds.), *Le livre de traverse*, 55–71.

³⁰ Arndt Meinhold, "Die Gattung der Josephsgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle I, II," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 87, 88 (1975–1976): 306–324, 72–93.

³¹ See e. g. Konrad Schmid, "Die Josephsgeschichte im Pentateuch," in Gertz, Schmid and Witte (eds.), *Abschied vom Jahwisten*, 83–118.

and Moses (44:22–23), appearing only at the end of the paragraph, which is suggestive of a secondary addition (49:15).

The first edition of Gen 37–50* wished to legitimate the Diaspora situation and the ideology advocated here sharply contradicts the theology of the Deuteronomistic school. This contrast expressed itself through ironical allusions to diverse Exodus motifs. In the final context of the Torah, Joseph even seems to be a forerunner of Moses, since like the latter he too is integrated into Pharaoh's family. Yet the relationship between Joseph and the king of Egypt is a very peaceful one, and as such serves as a model for interreligious dialogue. While the pharaoh of the Exodus story indicates again and again his ignorance of Israel's God, trusting exclusively in his magicians and experts (Exod 7–9), the Egyptian king in Gen 37ff. has no difficulty acknowledging Joseph's competence; and both Joseph and Pharaoh concur in calling God "Elohim." Let us remember here that the Joseph story, with the exception of a few verses in Gen 39, never uses the divine name Yhwh. These verses, Gen 39:2–4a, 5 and 21–23, are in all likelihood redactional additions;³² they stress Joseph's role as a mediator of blessings for the others, thus creating a link with Gen 12:3.

The universalistic mood of Gen 37–50 can also be detected in the fact that Deuteronomistic theological themes, like the election or the covenant, are completely absent. Joseph's rise in Egypt culminates with an event, which caused problems to some "pious" interpreters: according to 41:45, Joseph, who has been given an Egyptian name by the pharaoh, marries Asenath, thus becoming the son-in-law of an Egyptian priest. In this way Joseph practices a "mixed marriage," which according to texts of the book of Exodus (Exod 23:32–33; 34:15–16) and Deuteronomy (7:1–6) is an abomination, and which was harshly opposed by Ezra and Nehemiah. According to Gen 41, two of the future tribes of Israel – Ephraim and Manasseh – are products of such mixed marriage and therefore are *mamzerim*, half-breeds. The Chronistic genealogy does not contain any information of this kind (1 Chr 7:29), and on the whole, Ephraim and Manasseh are depicted in 1 Chr 7 exclusively as inhabitants of Canaan. In contradistinction to the exclusionist tendencies of the Deuteronomistic tradition (in a broad sense), the Joseph narrative supports coexistence and integration. It moreover ironically reverses the segregationist model, as for instance in 43:32 where the separation between Hebrews and Egyptians is ascribed to

³² So, for instance, Levin who ascribes these verses to the Yahwistic redactor, *Jahwist*, 274–277; cf. also Schmid, "Josephsgeschichte," 117.

the latter: “because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians” (תועבה, occurring frequently in the deuteronomic legislation).

The Joseph story juxtaposes Israel’s Exodus out of Egypt with Israel’s Exodus *to* Egypt: the father and the sons have to descend to Egypt, since the salvation comes from the periphery, and the center can benefit from it as well. The final interpretation of the story from Joseph’s mouth (Gen 50:20) makes clear that the sojourn in Egypt proved beneficial for the whole family. Thanks to the economical and social rise of the exiles, the entire people of “Israel” can become a numerous and prosperous people. Nevertheless, the ideology of the Diaspora expressed in Gen 37–50 does not wish to burn all the bridges to the Judean motherland: the remains of Jacob who died in Egypt have to be buried in Canaan. Hence the return of the patriarch’s remains prefigures the Exodus, but this Exodus is an ecumenical one, since the highest Egyptian dignitaries accompany Jacob’s family (50:7–14). Inspired by this conclusion, a later Hexateuchal redaction created a similar Exodus of Joseph’s bones, spanning from Gen 50:25 through Exod 13:19, all the way to Josh 24:32.³³ The integration of Joseph’s nonconformist story into Israel’s Torah can be explained as resulting from the desire to offer a possibility of identification to the Egyptian Diaspora as well. In this way, Gen 12:10–20 and Gen 37–50 frame the patriarchal narratives with allusions to Exodus and contain rather ironical or even polemical hints in respect to the Exodus that follows Genesis. While Gen 12:10ff. advocates a rather critical attitude to the Egyptian Diaspora, Gen 37ff legitimates it. Both texts however conform in developing a critical or, as the case may be, ironical reception of the Exodus tradition given in the “D-tradition.”

The same also holds true for another text from the Abraham-Sarah cycle which I will now treat.

3. *Gen 16: The Hagar-Ishmael Narrative as an Anti-Exodus*

In the NT Hagar is used typologically in Paul’s letter to the Galatians. By means of this typology, Paul seeks to describe the situation of the Jews living under the Law: “Hagar ... corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children” (Gal 4:25). Paul juxtaposes the off-

³³ For this, cf. Blum, *Vätergeschichte*, 44–45, 255–256; Thomas Römer, “Das doppelte Ende des Josuabuches: einige Anmerkungen zur aktuellen Diskussion um ‘deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk’ und ‘Hexateuch’,” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 118 (2006): 523–548.

spring of the slave woman to Isaac whom he typologically identifies with the Christians. As prompted by the negative evaluation of Hagar and Ishmael, this typological interpretation probably harks back to rabbinic exegesis. Yet, in my view, Hagar and Ishmael already have a typological function in the Torah itself, at any rate in Gen 16, though very different than in Paul's interpretation.

3.1. Structure and Origin of Gen 16

The structure of the text is easily apprehended. Clearly, Gen 16 is framed by vv. 1 and 15–16. The first information given in v. 1 concerns Sarai's inability to bear children (סרר ל' א), and vv. 15–16 take over this root three times, reporting on Hagar's childbirth. While the first word of the story is "Sarai," the last one is "Abram." On the textual level, Hagar and Ishmael are in a way wedged in between the couple of the forefather and the foremother.

The text divides easily into two parts, which can be discerned by changes of location and characters: vv. 2–6 and 7–14.

The first part takes place at Abram's dwelling place, perhaps in Hebron, if 16:1 is meant to be the original continuation of 13:18, which is very likely.³⁴ Yet the patriarch has little to say: Sarai gives the instructions and he obeys. As frequently observed, 16:2–6 is evocative of 12:10ff.: In Gen 12 the initiative comes from Abram who suggests to his wife to play the role of his sister, thus *de facto* forcing her to sexual intercourse with Pharaoh; in Gen 16, Sarai takes the initiative and suggests to Abram that he should sleep with her female slave.

The two suggestions in Gen 12:11 and 16:2 are identically introduced by אן סרר. In addition, the relationship of the two texts is further emphasized by the fact that Hagar is presented in Gen 16 as an Egyptian slave, thus part of the wealth of Abram acquired in 12:16.

In the second part, which is dedicated entirely to Hagar, she becomes the first person of the Torah to encounter the *mal'ak Yhwh*. She does not know with whom she deals, realizing only after the oracle about the birth of her child and the promise of numerous offspring that God had indeed revealed himself to her. As is well known, v. 13 contains a textual problem, the MT resisting translation in its present form.³⁵ Regardless of how

³⁴ So e. g. Levin, *Jahwist*, 56.

³⁵ Klaus Koenen, "Wer sieht wen? Zur Textgeschichte von Genesis XVI,13," *Vetus Testamentum* 38 (1988): 468–474.

one emends the text, Hagar in any event must have declared that she has seen God and remained alive, hence the subsequent name of the place.

Several hands can be distinguished in this text. For instance, the *mal'ak* invites Hagar to name her son Ishmael, while in v. 15 it is Abram who gives this name to his son. Moreover, the three successive discourses of the angel, introduced each time by וַיִּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאֲכִי (vv. 9,10,11), are indicative of enlarging additions as well. The chronological note in v. 3 interrupts the narrative continuity between v. 2 (בַּאֲרָץ) and v. 4 (בְּאֶרֶץ). Finally, while v. 7 situates the meeting of Hagar with the angel at a *spring* of water, v. 14 specifies a *well*. Verses 3, 15 and 16 belong to the priestly texts of the Pentateuch; the same probably holds true for the promise of the multiplication of descendants in v. 10 (cf. Gen 17:2, 20; “P”), unless this verse is attributable to post-priestly redaction (cf. the parallels with Gen 22:17 and 32:13). The instruction of v. 9 (Hagar’s return and submission) became necessary with the interpolation of the story of Gen 21, a midrash based on Gen 16.³⁶ The note about the well is perhaps an addition by a redactor “interested in aetiology.”

Can the first version of the Hagar-Ishmael story be dated? There are hints suggesting that the *terminus a quo* should be put in VIII/VII c. BCE, i. e., the neo-Assyrian period. Initially, a case for this date can be made on the base of parallels between Sarai’s behaviour and neo-Assyrian marital contracts.³⁷ Secondly, based on Knauf’s research on “Ishmael,” Gen 16 should be put in relation with the tribal confederation Shumu’il attested also in the VIII/VII c.³⁸

It further seems possible that the narrative originated in Hebron, the source of the Abraham tradition. Now, if it is true that the origins of the Deuteronomistic exclusionist ideology are to be situated near the end of the Judean monarchy (under Josiah?),³⁹ one could envisage the possibility

³⁶ To this and to what follows, cf. Ernst Axel Knauf, *Ismael: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nordarabiens im 1. Jahrtausend v.Chr.* (Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästinaverains; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1985); regarding the delimitation of the original narrative, see also Matthias Köckert, “Die Geschichte der Abrahamüberlieferung,” in André Lemaire (ed.), *Congress Volume Leiden 2004* (Vetus Testamentum Supplements, 109; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 103–128.

³⁷ Albert K. Grayson and John Van Seters, “The Childless Wife in Assyria and the Stories of Genesis,” *Orientalia* 44 (1975): 485–486.

³⁸ The (positive) comparison of (groups of) people with wild asses is well attested in Assyrian sources as well and already in Gilgamesh.

³⁹ Martin Rose, *Der Ausschließlichkeitsanspruch Jahwes: Deuteronomische Schultheologie und die Volksfrömmigkeit in der späten Königszeit* (Beiträge zur Wissenschaft

that the original narrative of Gen 16 was created as a counter-position against this Jerusalemite theology. But a somewhat later setting is also possible, the identification of El and Yahweh, which constitutes the point of the explanation of Ishmael's name, frequently occurs in Second Isaiah.

3.2. *Yhwh, the God of Hagar and Ishmael*

Several commentators have wondered why in v. 11 the angel addresses an oracle to Hagar that announces the birth of a child even though Hagar has already known for a long time that she is pregnant. The writer uses this form (which also inspired Luke in Luke 1) to emphasize the importance of the expected child. Without entering into the questions of dating, we can observe relations between Ishmael, Samson (Judg 13:5–7), Samuel (1 Sam 1:20–22) and the ideal king of Isaiah 7. The fact that Ishmael's birth is announced in the same way as the birth of the ideal king can be understood as a polemical statement against Deuteronomistic royalist expectations during the Babylonian and Persian periods.

An anti-exclusivist ideology can also be detected in the explanation of Ishmael's name: "You shall call his name Ishmael (שמעאל), because Yhwh has listened (שמע יהוה) to your affliction" (v. 11). The equation שמעאל = שמע יהוה indicates that the narrator wants to identify El with Yhwh (a similar phenomenon can be found in Isa 43:12: "you are my witnesses, declares Yhwh: I am El"). Accordingly, Yhwh is not only the God of Abraham and Isaac, but also the God of Hagar and Ishmael. The text advocates here a counter-position to a theology based on an exclusive relationship between Yhwh and Israel. Hagar's declaration after her vision of God fits the inclusive ideology of Gen 16 as well. Hagar "saw" God, before Moses did on the mountain of God. Actually, Hagar appears in Gen 16 as a kind of female Moses or a female anti-Moses.

3.3. *Hagar and Ishmael: A Reversed Exodus*⁴⁰

The *mal'ak Yhwh* meets Hagar *bammidbar*, in the wilderness. The narrator of Gen 16 apparently wishes to make a connection between Hagar's and Israel's sojourn in the wilderness. As already mentioned, Hagar is

vom Alten und Neuen Testament, 106; Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln and Mainz: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1975).

⁴⁰ To what follows, cf. also Thomas B. Dozeman, "The Wilderness and Salvation History in the Hagar Story," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 23–43; Thomas Römer, "Isaac et Ismaël, concurrents ou cohéritiers de la promesse? Une lecture de Genèse 16," *Études théologiques et religieuses* 74 (1999): 161–172.

introduced in Gen 16 as an Egyptian slave. In addition to serving as a back-reference to Gen 12, Hagar's Egyptian nationality works to reverse the Exodus tradition: Hagar, the Egyptian, is oppressed by her Hebrew mistress. The root עננ appearing in Gen 16:6 comes to be used in the following books of the Pentateuch to describe Israel's oppression in Egypt (Exod 1:11–12; Deut 26:6, cf. also Gen 15:13). Just as Israel flees (ברח, Exod 14:5) from Egypt, so does Hagar from her oppressor (ברח, Gen 16:6). The allusions to the Exodus tradition in Gen 16 are further strengthened through the addition of geographical data: Yhwh's angel meets Hagar on the way to Shur. According to Exod 15:22, Shur is the place of Israel's first stop after the withdrawal from Egypt.

V. 14, probably interpolated later, continues the allusions to the wilderness sojourn: “Kadesh” and “Bered” are evocative of “Kadesh” and “Zered,”⁴¹ which frame Israel's sojourn in the wilderness in Num and Deut (Num 20:1; 21:12; Deut 2:14: “the time from our leaving Kadesh-Barnea until we crossed the brook Zered was thirty-eight years...”).

All these allusions reverse the official scheme of Exodus: it is Hagar who prefigures Israel's fate, while Sarai plays a role comparable to that of the Egyptian oppressors. The resulting irony should preclude any triumphant and exclusionist use of the Exodus creed.

Once again, Hagar functions as a female Moses. Like him, she bears a double identity: she is an Egyptian slave who becomes the second wife of Abram, while Moses is a son of an Egyptian slave who gains admittance into Pharaoh's family. Like Moses, Hagar is given the privilege of divine revelation. The *mal'ak Yhwh* appears to both protagonists (Gen 16:7; Exod 3:2), mediating a message of liberation on both occasions: to Moses, the promise of liberation from Egyptian slavery; to Hagar the promise of Ishmael's living free. The substantive עני appears in both instances – Exod 3:7: “I have surely seen the affliction of my people”; Gen 16:11: “Yhwh has listened to your affliction.” In a way Hagar's experience exceeds that of Moses, at least according to Exod 33:20. Whereas Moses is explicitly denied a face to face encounter (“no man shall see me and live”), Hagar, according to Gen 16:13, sees God and yet remains alive.

Just as Moses becomes Israel's founder through his vocation, so Hagar in Gen 16 becomes the foremother of the Ishmaelites. She and her off-

⁴¹ Perhaps a confusion of כ and צ happened here.

spring experience an exodus and a liberation in the wilderness even before the descendants of Abraham and Sarah.

Therefore, the use of a number of Exodus and wilderness motifs in the depiction of Hagar's and Ishmael's destiny has a comparable function to that of the prophetic saying handed down in Amos 9:7: "Are you not like the Cushites to me, O people of Israel? declares Yhwh. Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?" Just like Amos 9:7, the author of Gen 16 criticizes a triumphant interpretation of the Exodus myth. Instead, it turns it on its head and ends up applying it to others.

The priestly version of the Hagar-Ishmael story insists less on the Exodus motifs, yet in a way it agrees with the ecumenical tendency of the original narrative, first and foremost by stressing the appurtenance of Ishmael to Abraham's house and the covenant in Gen 16:15–16 and Gen 17.⁴²

3.4. *The Priestly Construction of the Parallels Between Ishmael and Isaac*

According to P, Gen 16 ends in the house of Abram, who now, in contradistinction to v. 11, gives a name to Ishmael (vv. 15–16). Feminist biblical scholars may well consider this reinterpretation as typically patriarchal; still, it can also be observed that by means of the verses 15–16 Ishmael's belonging to Abraham's family is emphasized.

As often noted, the priestly texts draw a parallel between Isaac's birth (21:3–5) and Ishmael's birth;⁴³ Gen 16:15: "Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael"; Gen 21,3: "Abraham called the name of his son ..., whom Sarah bore him, Isaac." There is also a similar parallel concerning the note on the death of both Abraham's sons (25:17//35:29: "he was gathered to his people").

The promise given to Abraham in Gen 17:5 according to which he is to become father of numerous peoples no doubt includes Ishmael's offspring. The promise addressed to Hagar of the multiplication of her descendants in 16:10 (even if presently stemming from P or later redactors) is confirmed with Ishmael in 17:20. The fulfillment of the promise is recorded in Gen 25:12–16: Ishmael is a forefather of twelve tribes, thus

⁴² Albert de Pury, "Abraham: The Priestly Writer's 'Ecumenical' Ancestor," in Steven L. McKenzie and Thomas Römer (eds.), *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible: Essays in Honour of John Van Seters* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 294; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2000), 163–181.

⁴³ Blum, *Vätergeschichte*; Knauf, *Ismael*.

comparable to Jacob. Even in Gen 17, where a specific covenant with Abraham's offspring through Isaac is established, Ishmael, too, participates in the sign of this *berît*, since he is circumcised as well. The separation of Ishmael and Isaac (25:18, taking up Gen 16, records the territory of Ishmaelites' settlement from Hawila to Shur) does not entail any antagonism, for Isaac and Ishmael will later meet in order to bury their father together (24:62; 25:11).

To sum up, Gen 16 (the original narrative as well as the later additions with the exception of v. 9) expresses an anti-Deuteronomic theology. The narrative consciously operates with polemical and ironical allusions to the Exodus and the wilderness traditions. Consequently, it seems possible to presume that by the time of the composition of Gen 16*, the Exodus tradition and the patriarchal tradition were still in a certain tension.

However, there is in the Abraham narrative at least one text seeking to harmonize the patriarchal tradition with that of Exodus, wilderness and occupation of the land.

4. Gen 15: Abraham as Moses' Predecessor and "Founder" of the Torah

Being very complex, the debate on Gen 15 cannot be discussed here.⁴⁴ Suffice it to say that in the last ten years there is at least for this text a growing consensus that Gen 15 is a post-priestly text, one of the last of the patriarchal narratives,⁴⁵ which should be ascribed to a Pentateuchal or, as the case may be, Hexateuchal redaction (cf. Gen 15:18a and Josh 24:25). Still disputed is the question whether the prediction of the people's oppression in Egypt and their bringing out in verses 13–16, undoubtedly presupposing the priestly narrative, should be considered as an even later adjunction.⁴⁶ If Gen 15 is one of the latest texts of the Abraham cycle, the

⁴⁴ See the overview by Benjamin Ziemer, *Abram – Abraham: Kompositionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Genesis 14, 15 und 17* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 350; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2005).

⁴⁵ Thomas Römer, "Gen 15 und Gen 17: Beobachtungen und Anfragen zu einem Dogma der ‚neueren‘ und ‚neuesten‘ Pentateuchkritik," *Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament* 26 (1990): 32–47; Schmid, *Erzväter*, 172–187; Detlef Jericke, "Abraham in Mamre: Historische und exegetische Studien zur Region von Hebron und zu Genesis 11,27–19,38," *Culture and History of the Ancient Near East* 17 (2003): 280–283; Köckert, *Geschichte*, 127.

⁴⁶ So Christoph Levin, "Jahwe und Abraham im Dialog: Genesis 15," in Markus Witte (ed.), *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 345; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2004), 237–257, who ascribes the verses 13–16 to a later interpolator, yet as-

fact that these verses presuppose the P texts of Genesis cannot be considered as a diachronic argument. For the mixture of D and P themes and styles in late texts of the Pentateuch is a distinctive mark, as already argued by N. Lohfink.⁴⁷ One may argue that the long divine speech in 13–16 interrupts the narrative connection between v. 12 (sunset and deep sleep that falls on Abram) and 17 (the vision of a burning torch); the speech is inserted in this context by a resumption of v. 12a (אֲבְרָם לְבָרָא) in 17a (אֲבְרָם לְבָרָא) which may well indicate redactional activity. It has also been argued that there are tensions between the speech in 13–16, which announces oppression for Abraham's descendants and v. 18, which promises to Abraham's descendants the gift of an immense territory. But one may respond to this that the text may well try to establish a compromise between the concept of the promises to Abraham's offspring and the Pentateuchal concept that this offspring is not the direct one, but a much later generation. One should also mention, that Abraham's question "how shall I know" in v. 8 is only answered in v. 13 "you will know for sure."

Be that as it may, even if vv. 13–16 are an insertion, which I think is less plausible, they foster an idea which is already present in the other passages of the text, i. e., to combine the patriarchal traditions with the Exodus traditions.

In v. 7, God introduces himself as "Yhwh who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans." This opening of course is reminiscent of the beginning of the Decalogue: "I am Yhwh ..., who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Exod 20:2). Accordingly, Yhwh introduces himself already to Abraham as an "exodical" God (further allusions to the Decalogue can be found in the "fourth generation" and the "iniquity" [of the Amorite], v. 16). With the divine self-introduction אֲנִי יְהוָה, Abram comes to know, before Moses (and in contradistinction to the priestly text of Gen 17 where God is revealed as El Shadday), the true identity and definition of Israel's God. This presentation prepares Yhwh's covenant with Abram in v. 17, which precedes the covenant at Mount Sinai (Horeb).

sumes as well that already the original form of Gen 15 is post-priestly; see similarly Ludwig Schmidt, "Genesis xv," *Vetus Testamentum* 66 (2006): 251–267. See also Jean-Louis Ska, "Some Groundwork on Genesis 15," in Jean-Louis Ska (ed.), *The Exegesis of the Pentateuch* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 67–81, who however dates the original story before P.

⁴⁷ Norbert Lohfink, "Die Abänderung der Theologie des priesterlichen Geschichtswerks im Segen des Heiligkeitsgesetzes: Zu Lev 26,9.11-13," in Hartmut Gese and Hans Peter Rüger (eds), *Wort und Geschichte: Festschrift K. Elliger* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament, 126; Kevelaer and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 129–136.

The parallels between Abraham and Moses are reinforced in vv. 13–14. Just like Moses who is informed of God’s future actions during his vocation (Exod 3:17–22), Abram here obtains a summary of the Exodus story (cf. also the fourfold occurrence of the root **נצ**). Contrarily to Gen 12:10–20 and Gen 16, the evocation of the Exodus does not serve polemical purposes, it is presented to Abraham, who is here also depicted as a prophet, as information about the events to come before the promise of the land makes clear. The text takes up expressions from the Exodus tradition (slaves, oppression) in an “objective” manner (see Exod 1:11–14). The double chronological indication in v. 13 (enslavement for 400 years) and v. 16 (return at the fourth generation) has often puzzled the commentators, who consequently suspected several redactors. The fourth generation in v. 16 is certainly an interpretation of the Decalogue according to which Yhwh punishes the faults of the fathers until the fourth generation (Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9; see also Exod 34:7). The 400 years recall the priestly indication of 430 years in Exod 12:40. The reduction to 400 years in Gen 15 may be explained by midrashic strategy. According to Gen 21 (P) Abraham is 100 years old when Isaac, the next generation, is born, so that 400 may well denote 4 hundred-years generations⁴⁸.

The smoke and the fire of the theophany in v. 17 evoke God’s revelation on Sinai.

The conclusion of the covenant with Abram in Gen 15:18 anticipates the phraseology of the Sinai-covenant since the expression **כרת ברית** in all other cases refers to the Sinai covenant. This means that in Gen 15, contrary to Gen 17 where God concludes a specific *berît* with the Patriarch, Abram is depicted as a forerunner of Moses and the Exodus generation. That is to say, Gen 15 anticipates the Sinaitic covenant, and Abram becomes Moses’ predecessor as well as a representative of all “Israel.” Accordingly, in Gen 15 all the Pentateuchal (or Hexateuchal?) traditions are anchored in Abram; and in this way, as already noted by Galling, a conciliation between the tradition of the patriarchs and the Exodus tradition is achieved. From now on, the “Mosaic Abraham” allows one to read and to understand the patriarchal narratives as a prologue to the Exodus

⁴⁸ Another explanation would be the following. The 400 years refer to the length of the sojourn in Egypt. The four generations comprise the generation involved in the Exodus which starts with the birth of Moses. Since Moses is 120 years old when he dies, his life comprises according to Numbers 14 (a generation = 40 years) three generations, and the following one enters in the land.

epic, the book of Genesis becoming in a sense the “Old Testament” of the Torah.

Finally, the promise of a land, which reaches from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, may be understood as a way to make the whole Persian province of Transeuphratene the territory where Jews can live in: that means there is no difference between living in Yehud, Samaria or in the Diaspora. The whole Persian empire may be a homeland for Abraham’s offspring.

5. Some Concluding Remarks

The rediscovered difference between the patriarchal and the Exodus traditions is a major result of the historical critical research on the Pentateuch. This difference does not mean that the whole patriarchal tradition does ignore the Exodus tradition. The allusions to the Exodus in the Joseph novella and the “mosaization” of Abram in Gen 15 already presuppose a literary connection of Gen and Exod in the second half of the Persian period. Regarding Gen 12:10–20 and 16, the situation is more difficult. Both stories, probably stemming from the same author, take up the Exodus scheme in a critical way, possibly in order to react critically to the Deuteronomistic theology. Yet it is difficult to determine which form of the text the author possibly knew, or if he had a written text at his disposal at all. Moreover, with some of the intertextual relations indicated, the distinction between “rabbinic” and “historical-critical” exegesis is conspicuously blurred. Verbal roots as עָנָה or בָּרַח can, of course, represent allusions to the Exodus story, but on the other hand, these are also very common words. Therefore it is difficult to evaluate the intertextual relations, which we have observed in the context of a redaction-critical model. Nevertheless, Gen 12:10–20 as well as Gen 16 are constructed in such a way that both stories contain ironic hints to the Exodus tradition. Yet this also means that both of these narratives constitute critical encounters with “Israel’s” myths of origins. And, pertaining to the hermeneutical openness of the Torah, the different traditions of origins appear now in coexistence, which in no way precludes mutual critical questioning.