From the Call of Moses to the Parting of the Sea

Reflections on the Priestly Version of the Exodus Narrative[1]

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1 Research History As Reflected in Contemporary Debates about the Pentateuch

1.1 *The End of the Documentary Hypothesis?*

To non-specialists, contemporary discourse regarding research on the Pentateuch can only be explained and simplified up to a certain extent. The impression of chaos in scholarship—caused by differing premises, methods, and literary-historical reconstructions that constantly clash—arises promptly and any hopes to arrive at a scholarly consensus are quickly dashed.

With the classical documentary hypothesis being questioned from various sides in the mid-1970s, the late 1980s gave the impression that it would be possible to survive by adhering to a hypothesis based on two documents to explain the origin of the Pentateuch: a rejuvenated Yahwist or rather Deuteronomist (or a D-composition) and the Priestly source (or rather the P-composition).

However, the attitude in research changed radically in the following decades as doubts arose whether there actually was a contiguous pre-Priestly line of narration in the Torah that recounted events from the creation of the world to Moses' death or the conquest the of land. This discussion arose mainly due to questions about the literary transition from the patriarchal narrative to the exodus story, but also because of the thesis of an independent Primeval History, as well as the later insertion of the Sinai-pericope. When combined, these matters would lead scholars to a return to the fragmentary hypothesis (*Fragmentenhypothese*). Additionally, the extent of the so-called Priestly *Grundschrift* (P^g) was widely discussed (we will return to this discussion below). If neither P^g nor a pre-Priestly source or composition included the whole narrative arc of the Pentateuch, respectively the Hexateuch, the question of the origin of the Torah arises anew. Is the Torah the product of extensive post-Priestly redactions, or

some kind of mere coincidental writings that developed from a huge number of successive expansions (*Fortschreibungen*)?

If, however, one postulates "den vollständigen Abschied von der Urkundenhypothese, die sich als ein dem Denken des 19. Jh. verhaftetes Paradigma schlicht überlebt hat,"[2] this assertion is not statistically correct. The rejection of the traditional source theory can be found primarily in Pentateuchal research of German-speaking Protestants. In Anglo-Saxon—especially North American—exegesis, the documentary hypothesis is still being utilized and objections to it are raised by a minority of scholars (e.g. Thomas Dozeman or David Carr[3]). In the USA, students of Baruch Schwartz (Joel Baden, Jeffrey Stackert) started a strong dogmatic defense of the "New Documentary Hypothesis" as a reaction to objections against the model based on Wellhausen.[4] Going beyond Wellhausen, they assume that the three or four sources in all of the narrative texts of the Pentateuch (including the story of Joseph) can be reconstructed almost in their entirety. These were simply compiled mechanically without any redactor(s) adding any substantial amount of their own writing. This is probably not the mainstream (yet) in North American scholarship. However, most North American textbooks still present the traditional Documentary hypothesis as the best way to explain the formation of the Pentateuch.

Thus, scholarship on the Hebrew Bible is currently in the unfortunate situation that certain discussions and approaches are confined to specific "schools" that are sometimes restricted to a small group of researchers and their students. This situation makes the development of a new, widely accepted model quite difficult.

However, a few points can be enumerated in which a consensus may be possible:

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2   Christoph Berner, *Die Exoduserzählung: Das literarische Werden einer Ursprungslegende Israels* (FAT 73; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 49.

3   Thomas B. Dozeman, *Exodus* (ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4   See, e.g., Baruch J. Schwartz, "How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen; VTSup 152; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 263–278; Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (AYBRL; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); and Jeffrey Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses: Prophecy, Law, and Israelite Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

- in the middle of the Persian Period, around 400–350 BCE, the Pentateuch existed as a concept; this does not exclude later additions and revisions;
- in the Pentateuch, priestly and non-priestly texts can be differentiated; non-priestly does not necessarily mean pre-priestly.

1.2 *Discussion on the Priestly Texts*

Almost no one doubts the existence of Priestly texts in the Pentateuch. Georg Fischer, who opposes the existence of a P-source or redaction, is one of the few exceptions. He accepts that there are indeed linguistically specific P-texts; he argues, however, that these texts cannot be divorced from their context and should therefore be ascribed to one and the same "pentateuchal narrator" together with non-priestly, dtr, and other texts.[5] For Fischer "ist das Ansinnen, heute noch die historische Genese dieser Texte rekonstruieren zu können, überhaupt fragwürdig. Es setzt voraus, dass sie über einen längeren Zeitraum hinweg *schriftlich* weitergeformt wurden, wofür uns wirklich entsprechende Vergleichsbeispiele aus dem antiken Raum fehlen."[6] In this way, Fischer makes a virtue out of necessity and seeks to postulate a single narrator or compiler, who would have been responsible for the origin and development of the Pentateuch (as Whybray had similarly argued before[7]).

It is difficult, however, to explain the linguistic deviations, tensions, and contradictions found in the HB without postulating literary growth and a plurality of authors; to this end, the differentiation of P and non-P remains a valid starting point.

To a great extent there is agreement that P was not composed in its entirety at one time; rather, Wellhausen's differentiation of P[g] und P[s] is still appropriate. A consensus in terms of the end of the original Priestly source does not exist, however.

Recently, theories that assume a vastly shorter P[g] have been added to the traditional theory (i.e., that P actually included the complete narrative arc of the Hexateuch or the Pentateuch). The assumption of an original Hexateuch, which would also be the extent of P, is promoted by researchers who identify

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5 Georg Fischer, "Keine Priesterschrift in Ex 1–15?" *ZKT* 117 (1995): 203–211; reprinted in Fischer, *Die Anfänge der Bibel. Studien zu Genesis und Exodus* (SBABAT 49; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2011), 128–137.

6 Georg Fischer, "Zur Lage der Pentateuchforschung," *ZAW* 115 (2003): 608–616, 612.

7 Robert N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study* (JSOTSup 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987).

Josh 19:51 (Blenkinsopp, Lohfink[8]) or 18:1 (Knauf, Seebass[9]) as the conclusion of the Priestly source. The framing character of 18:1 is a commonly used as an argument in favor of the thesis. The words "Then the whole congregation of the Israelites assembled at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them" (Josh 18:1 NRSV) should be seen as an *inclusio* with the priestly command at creation in Gen 1:28 (according to which humankind should subject the world to its rule). However Gen 1:28 refers to the task of humankind as a whole and does not refer to the gift of a specific land to Israel. Apart from that, in Gen 9:1–7*, after the Flood, the order of Gen 1:28 is revised in the context of the priestly source, since the submission of the earth is no longer mentioned. Beyond that a continuous priestly line of narration cannot be identified in the book of Joshua.[10]

Probably the most popular opinion identifies the conclusion of P in Deut 34:7–9 at the end of the Pentateuch (it is postulated that the actual priestly account of Moses' death was displaced by the fusion of P and the older sources). This idea presumably goes back to Martin Noth, who saw the narrative outline of the Pentateuch in Pg, and was recently defended by Ludwig Schmidt and Christian Frevel.[11] Both (correctly) argue that the conquest of the land does not represent one of P's primary concerns. It is however questionable whether the note of Joshua being appointed as Moses' successor in Deut 34:7–9 represents an adequate ending. Deuteronomy 34:9 is only understandable with a continuation in Josh 1. Frevel recognized this problem and suggested that Deut 34:8 (when the Israelites stop grieving about Moses' death) should be understood as the conclusion of Pg. Nonetheless, this solution is not convincing either, because it also awakens expectations for a narrative continuation.

Lothar Perlitt tried to prove, based on linguistic reasons and in terms of contents, that the priestly verses in Deut 34 cannot be attributed to Pg: they

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8   Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Structure of P," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 275–292; Norbert Lohfink, "Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte," in *Congress Volume: Göttingen 1977* (ed. J.A. Emerton; VTSup 29; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 189–225 (repr. in Norbert Lohfink, *Studien zum Pentateuch* [SBAB 4; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988], 213–253).

9   Horst Seebass, "Josua," *BN* 28 (1985): 53–65; E.A. Knauf, "Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichten der Deuteronomisten," in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. Thomas Römer; BETL 147, Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 101–118. In his *Josua* (ZBKAT 6; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2008), 29, Knauf adds as a possibility verse 24,29b.

10   According to Knauf, *Josua*, 29, P comprises in Joshua only 4:19a; 5:10–12, 18:1, (24:29b).

11   Ludwig Schmidt, *Studien zur Priesterschrift* (BZAW 214; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993); Christian Frevel, *Mit dem Blick auf das Land die Schöpfung erinnern: Zum Ende der Priestergrundschrift* (HBS 23; Freiburg: Herder, 2000).

require secondary priestly texts like Num 27:12–23 and stand out due to a style that mixes priestly and Deuteronomc elements that is characteristic of late texts.[12] Consequently, the end of P can be found neither in Deut 34, nor in Num 27, as recently suggested (by Ska, García López).[13]

As no satisfying end for P^g can be found in the books of Num, Deut, or Josh, it is not very surprising that the conclusion of P has recently been increasingly sought in the Sinai pericope. Thomas Pola's thesis,[14] in which he claims that P^g finished his work in Exod 40 with the erection of the shrine in the desert, marks the beginning of this tendency. According to Pola, the priestly texts in Numbers clearly differ from P^g (in the "priestly texts" of Num, Israel is constructed as an "ecclesia militans," and the division into twelve tribes plays an important role in contrast to the books of Gen–Lev). The close interplay between P^g and Ezek 20 are another of Pola's arguments. According to Ezek 20:40, the goal of the intervention of YHWH for Israel is service on Mount Zion. From this Pola concludes that the shrine on Sinai was not originally designed to be transportable but was a kind of projection of Zion into the desert. Consequently, Pola categorizes all of the verses that presume the mobility of the shrine as secondary and reconstructs the end of P^g in the following texts: Exod 19:1; 24:15b, 16–17, 18a; 25:1, 8a, 9; 29:45–46; 40:16, 17a, 33b.

This reconstruction offers an readble text, however, the question remains whether such a short hand somewhat lapidary text (about two percent of Exod 19–40) really can be seen as a plausible conclusion of P^g; the problem is that Pola considers most of the verses that refer back to Gen 1 as secondary (cf. also Otto, who identifies the end of the original Priestly source in Exod 29:42b–46 since the descriptions of the construction do not match the commandments[15]). The parallelization of the creation of the world and the erection of the Tabernacle (which, we might add, can be found in parallels from the ancient Near East like the Enuma Elish and the Ugaritic Baal-mythos), something already observed by the Rabbis, constitutes an important argument in favor of the theory according to which the priestly narration finds its appropriate end with the construc-

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12   Lothar Perlitt, "Priesterschrift im Deuteronomium?" in *Deuteronomium-Studien* (FAT 8; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 123–143 (repr. of *ZAW* 100 [1988 Supplement]: 65–88).

13   Jean-Louis Ska, "Le récit sacerdotal: Une 'histoire sans fin'?" in *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers* (ed. Thomas Römer; BETL 215; Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 631–653; Félix García López, *El Pentateuco. Introducción a la lectura de los cinco primeros libros de la Biblia* (Introducción al estudio de la Biblia 3a; Estella: Verbo Divino, 2003), 332–333.

14   Thomas Pola, *Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift. Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von P^g* (WMANT 70; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1995), esp. 224–298.

15   Eckhart Otto, "Forschungen zur Priesterschrift," *TRu* 62 (1997): 1–50.

tion of the Tabernacle.[16] Is it possible that Pg only narrated the erection of the shrine and without recounting the installation of the Aaronide priesthood and the establishment of the sacrificial cult? Therefore, would not Lev 9 be a more plausible end to the priestly source (Zenger[17])? It recounts the consecration of Aaron and his sons (however with some deviations from Exod 29). A conclusion at Lev 9 also permits the assumption that Pg already included some basic ritual regulations in Lev 1–7*. This would preclude the presumption that has often been made that Pg consisted exclusively of narrative material. Another option would be to allow the original priestly source to continue until the so-called Holiness Code, at the *Yom Kippur* in Lev 16, which emphasizes God's forgiveness and the never-ending opportunity to purify the shrine and the community. This too seems to be a plausible climax and conclusion to the priestly source (Köckert, Nihan[18]). In contrast to that, one could agree with Kratz and others that Pg initially concluded with Exod 40 and that Lev 1–16 (on another scroll) presented "Nachträge im Rahmen der noch selbständigen Priesterschrift" with the result that Pg consisted of two scrolls: one "narrative" (Gen–Exod*), and one "ritual" (Lev 1–16*).[19] But such an abbreviated P raises the question of how to understand the promises regarding the land included in P texts.

The question of whether to understand P as an originally autonomous document or as a redaction of older, non-priestly-sources remains controversial. The idea of P as a redactor, promoted primarily by Frank Cross, Rolf Rendtorff, and John Van Seters, finds advocates in Rainer Albertz and Christoph Berner in more recent discussions.[20] This thesis is based on the observation that,

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16   Moshe Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1–2:3," in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (ed. André Caquot and Mathias Delcor; AOAT 212; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981), 501–512.

17   Erich Zenger, "Priesterschrift," *TRE* 27 (1997): 435–446.

18   Matthias Köckert, "Leben in Gottes Gegenwart. Zum Verständnis des Gesetzes in der priesterschriftlichen Literatur," *JBT* 4 (1989): 29–61. Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus* (FAT 2.25; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 150–198.

19   Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testamentsz* (UTB 2157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 116. The English translation is *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (trans. J. Bowden; London: T&T Clark, 2005).

20   Rainer Albertz, *Exodus, Band 1: Ex 1–18* (ZBKAT 2.1; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2012); Berner, *Exoduserzählung*. See also, with some hesitation, Jakob Wöhrle, "The Un-Empty Land: The Concept of Exile and Land in P," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 189–206.

despite many attempts, no one has succeeded in completely reconstructing the P source. The story of Jacob in particular demonstrates many lacunae; furthermore, Moses appears abruptly and without any introduction in the priestly Exodus narrative (should one read the P texts in Exod 2:23aß–25 and 6:2 ff. successively); and, the search for a contiguous priestly narrative fails completely in the book of Numbers. However, the assumption that the different source documents survived the process of compilation in their entirety is based on the spurious presupposition that the redactors actually sought to keep the sources as complete as possible. Examples from Mesopotamia, especially the Epic of Gilgamesh, attest to the loose handling of old documents, which in the course of a new edition can be shortened, left out, or rewritten (Tigay[21]). Erhard Blum tried to solve the problem of whether P was initially a source or was always a redaction by suggesting that we should understand the priestly composition neither as a source nor as a redaction.[22] According to him, some priestly texts were initially planned to exist on their own before being used as part of the editorial work that the same priestly circles undertook on older non-priestly traditions. This basically leads to the identification of one or more priestly documents and one or more priestly redactions.

In what follows, this discussion shall be addressed in the context of an analysis of the main texts of the priestly Exodus narrative.

2 The Priestly Depiction of Moses' "Calling" and the Revelation of the Name YHWH in Exod 6

2.1 *Structure and Diachrony*

God's speech in Exod 6:2–8 is always classified as priestly. It is clearly distinguished from the preceding speech of YHWH via a narrative reintroduction. The end is marked by a change of subjects in v. 9. The text is precisely structured by a series of refrains and frames:

v. 2	אני יהוה
v. 3	וארא אל ‏‎|‎ אברהם אל יצחק ואל יעקב
v. 4	הקמתי את בריתי אתם לתת להם את ארץ כנען
v. 5	נאקת בני ישראל אשר מצרים מעבדים אתם
	ואזכר את בריתי

21   Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

22   Erhard Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 229–286.

v. 6   אני יהוה

והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים

וגאלתי אתכם

v. 7   ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם

והייתי לכם לאלהים

אני יהוה

המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים

v. 8   והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ אשר נשאתי

את ידי לתת אתה לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב ונתתי אתה לכם מורשה

אני יהוה

The main motif of the speech is definitely the formula of self-introduction, which appears four times and makes clear that these parts have to do with the introduction, or rather the identity, of the God YHWH. The formula frames the entire speech in v. 2 and v. 8. Its further appearance in v. 6 opens the prophetic oration[23] that Moses should transmit to the Israelites and that is subdivided in v. 7 by the phrase אני יהוה. From v. 6 onward, the Israelites are directly addressed in the second person plural. Thereafter, the first part of the discourse directed to the Israelites contains the announcement of the exodus from Egypt and the promise that the Israelites will become YHWH's people. The promise of the land, which appears in vv. 3–4 and v. 8 in connection with the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, provides another frame for the whole speech. Here, the following displacement can be seen: v. 4 references giving the land to the patriarchs, which YHWH ratifies with his *berit*, whereby the land is referred to as "Canaan" and "land where they were foreigners." In v. 8, raising the hand (for an oath) equals the covenant. YHWH now wants to give the Israelites the land he promised the patriarchs as *morasha.*

YHWH's sophistically constructed speech appears brief and succinct. In contrast to the text of Gen 17, which this speech presupposes, neither YHWH's theophany and ascension nor Moses' reaction to the theophany he witnessed is reported.

The divine speech in Exod 6 hardly presents occasion for literary-critical operations. Verse 8 has occasionally been ascribed to a later redactor because it

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23   This introduction is often and mainly used in Ezekiel, when the prophet is commanded to deliver a speech: Ezek 11:16–17; 12:23, 28; 20:30; 33:25; 36:22.

is said to contradict the priestly conception of the land as a gift[24] as expressed in v. 4. The question of the priestly concept of land still has to be discussed.

In v. 6b the phrase "with an outstretched arm" stands before the phrase "mighty acts of judgment," which some scholars regard as a later retouching because it reflects Deuteronomic language and the non-priestly 6:1 mentions the "mighty hand."[25] This observation raises the question of whether priestly texts can have knowledge of and incorporate Deuteronomic phraseology.

There is a broad consensus regarding the fact that verses 9–12 belong to the same literary layer as 6:2–8. Moses fulfills the divine mandate of 6:6 immediately and without contradiction; however, he fails regarding the Israelites' not hearing. Therefore, another divine speech follows in which YHWH sends Moses to the pharaoh. Moses at this point anticipates the probability of a renewed failure. Due to the *Wiederaufnahme* in vv. 28–30, the following genealogy of Moses and Aaron can be identified as a later insertion. Consequently, the strand beginning in 6:2–12* continues in 7:1 ff. That Exod 2:23aß–25 prepares the reader for 6:2–12 is obvious as well, but it is questionable how one should judge this connection. To this end, the relationship between Exod 6:2–12 and the non-priestly account of Moses' call in Exod 3:1–4:18 must be analyzed first. In contrast to the traditional assumption, according to which Exod 3–4 consists of various layers and presents a generally older text around which a redactor draped the originally related P-text 2:23–25; 6:1 ff., different analyses have been increasing recently: for some Exod 3:1–4:18 is generally a post-priestly textual unity; for others the P-fragments in 2:23–25 and 6:2–12 must be understood as a priestly redaction of the older narration of Moses' calling.

2.2 *The Relationship between Exodus 3:1–4:18 and 6:1–12*

Eckart Otto[26] and Konrad Schmid[27] have both argued for the post-priestly dating of Exod 3–4; Schmid presents the most substantial explanations. Otto and

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24 Cf. Fujiko Kohata, *Jahwist und Priesterschrift in Exodus 3–14* (BZAW 166; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), 29–31; Bernard Gosse, "Le livre d'Ezéchiel et Ex 6,2–8 dans le cadre du Pentateuque," *BN* 104 (2000): 20–25.

25 Cf. Kohata, *Jahwist und Priesterschrift*, 28 f.; Jan Christian Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch* (FRLANT 186; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 243, and recently Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 158.

26 Eckart Otto, "Die nachpriesterliche Pentateuchredaktion im Buch Exodus," in *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction—Reception—Interpretation* (ed. Marc Vervenne; BETL 126; Leuven: Peeters, 1996), 61–111.

27 Konrad Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchung zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 81; Neu-

Schmid postulate that a "substantielle literarische Einheit" (Schmid) has to be assumed for Exod 3:1–4:18, which already presupposes Exod 6*. To support his thesis, Schmid refers to the "in der exegetischen Literatur dieses Jahrhundert meistens verschwiegen[en]" relationships between Exod 3:1–4:18 and the preceding priestly passages in Exod 2:23aß–25.[28] Indeed, both texts actually refer to the Israelites' crying out (צעקה in Exod 3:7–9; ויזעקו in Exod 2:23), as well as YHWH's seeing, hearing, and knowing (Exod 3:7; 2:23–25), and finally the patriarchal triad.

From this, contrary to Schmid, it does not follow that Exod 3–4 was composed a priori as a sequel to Exod 2:23aß–25.[29] It is also possible that the author of Exod 2:23aß–25 was familiar with Exod 3–4*. The Israelites' crying out in Exod 3:7 can be understood without reference to 2:23 (n.b. the different orthography) because it is rooted in the co-called "dtr Credo" (Deut 26:7). God's knowing (וַיֵּדַע אֱלֹהִים), used in Exod 2:25 (MT), is syntactically difficult because it has no object. If Exod 3:1 ff. had been conceptualized as a sequel of Exod 2:25, a better link could have been established. It is by far easier to understand the form of the verb in Exod 2:25 as originally being a Nifal as attested by LXX.[30] Consequently, the end of Exod 2:25 does not lead to 3:1 but to 6:2 ("God revealed himself and spoke to Moses …"). The criterion of the mutual attestation of the three patriarchs is not satisfactory, either. Even if one does not consider the

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kirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1999); cf. further Jürgen Kegler, "Die Berufung des Mose als Befreier Israels: Zur Einheitlichkeit des Berufungsberichts in Exodus 3–4," in *Freiheit und Recht: Festschrift für Frank Crüsemann zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Christof Hardmeier, Rainer Kessler, and Andreas Ruwe; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003), 162–188.

28 Schmid, *Erzväter*, 193. For the following arguments, see 193–209.

29 Cf. also the criticism of Schmid's thesis in Erhard Blum, "Die literarische Verbindung von Erzvätern und Exodus: Ein Gespräch mit neueren Endredaktionshypothesen," in *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (ed. Jan Christian Gertz, Konrad Schmid, and Markus Witte; BZAW 315; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 124–127.

30 Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 64–65, recently argued against this solution, which has been presented by Werner H. Schmidt, *Exodus 1,1–6,30* (BKAT 2.1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1974), 79; Alain Le Boulluec and Pierre Sandevoir, *La Bible d'Alexandrie. 2. L'Exode* (Paris: Cerf, 1989), 87 among many others. His argument of the *lectio difficilior* is, however, untenable since the consonantal text does not distinguish between Qal and Nifal. The Nifal form is more logical if Exod 2:23–25 had preceded Exod 6:2 ff., as 6:3 refers to the YHWH's revelation to the patriarchs. The Nifal form can be found more often in P-texts like in Exod 25:22; 29:42; 30:6, 36. The Masoretic vocalisation can explained by the fact that "durch die Trennung von 62 der Bezugspunkt verlorenging und eine Aussage über Gottes Offenbarung vor 31 zu früh kommt" (Schmidt, *Exodus*, 79). Therefore the Masoretes opted for a Qal and did not understand the end of 2:25 as a transition but as a conclusion.

fact—which Schmid does not discuss—that in Exod 3–4 the triad of the patri-
archs often appears in contexts which make literary criticism necessary, it is
hardly conceivable that an author familiar with Exod 2:23–25 would have omit-
ted a reference to the patriarchal *berît* mentioned in 2:24 when introducing the
land. In fact, the land is reintroduced in Exod 3 without any reference to God's
promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but rather with phrases known primar-
ily from Deuteronomy and not from Genesis.

The other noted observation cannot prove the post-priestly dating of Exod
3–4 in its entirety, either. Schmid indicates[31] that Exod 3–4 already alludes
to the priestly plague narratives and the later text of Num 12 (this narrative,
which is often mentioned as parallel to Moses' leprous hand, is however not the
most plausible textual referent; we can more likely identify in its background
a reflection of the tradition of Moses as the leader of a group of lepers, as
found in Manetho in the third century BCE[32]). These arguments refer to the
episode of Exod 4:1–17, which actually can readily be considered post-priestly
Fortschreibung, but not to Exod 3*.[33]

Is it therefore more reasonable to interpret Exod 2:23–25 and 6:2–12 as a
priestly redaction of the older narration of Moses' commissioning in Exod 3?
As evidence, one could note the inclusion of non-priestly expressions in those
texts. This is, however, only convincing if one presumes that an independent
priestly source had been written without any knowledge of the priestly Exodus
narrative. But the idea of various completely autonomous milieus for the pro-
duction of proto-biblical literature seems unlikely in terms of literary-sociology.

Furthermore, assuming that every part of P has a redactional function, it
remains generally inexplicable that the assertions that differ from, or advance
beyond, Exod 3 were not directly incorporated into the text.

Franck Michaeli, Käre Berge, Konrad Schmid, and others have observed that
Exod 6 and Exod 3 agree in their perceptions that the revelation of YHWH's
name to Moses is the reason for Israel's knowledge of God's name.[34] According
to biblical and non-biblical authors, the fact that the knowledge of YHWH's
name is connected with Moses or rather the Exodus is a solid date in terms
of tradition criticism and tradition history. Had the author of P been working

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31   Schmid, *Erzväter*, 203–206.

32   Thomas Römer, "Tracking Some 'Censored' Moses Traditions Inside and Outside the
      Hebrew Bible," *HeBAI* 1 (2012): 64–76

33   See also Gertz, *Tradition*, 305–326.

34   Franck Michaeli, *Le livre de l'Exode* (CAT 2; Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1974), 65;
      Käre Berge, *Reading Sources in a Text: Coherence and Literary Criticism in the Call of Moses*
      (ATAT 54; St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1997), 116; Schmid, *Erzväter*, 206.

as a redactor from the outset, he could have inserted his theory of the revelation into the scene of Moses' calling in Exod 3 without any difficulties. The idea in Exod 6:3 that the name YHWH was not known to the patriarchs is more difficult to explain as a redactional concept than it would be if the Genesis texts that are traditionally ascribed to Pᵍ were considered separately.

Furthermore, the transition from 6:1 to 6:2, which bears difficulties in terms of style and contents and which some textual witnesses have already tried to smooth, is difficult to explain assuming a redactor's work in 6:2 ff. If the author of 6,2 ff. had already seen and read 6:1 on a scroll, he could have spared himself the writing of an introduction to the speech or could have characterized this one as a continuation by using a עוד (as in, e.g., Exod 3:15).

Therefore, the comparison of Exod 3 and Exod 6 more likely leads to the conclusion that Exod 1:13 f.; 2:23aß–25; 6:2 ff. should be read in a continuous and coherent context.[35] The fact that Moses is not introduced separately can be explained by the supposition that the author of this context presumed the knowledge about Moses or a familiarity with some Moses narrative.

2.3   *Exodus 6 and the Patriarchs*

It is obvious that Exod 6:3–4 ("I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name YHWH I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they resided as aliens" [adapted from NRSV]) refers to the patriarchal narratives, especially to Gen 17. According to the title of Lohfink's famous essay, the author's intention in Exod 6 was a "priesterschriftliche Abwertung der Tradition von der Offenbarung des Jahwenamens an Mose" to the benefit of the patriarchs.[36] However, a depreciation cannot be seen here; it is about connecting the time of the patriarchs with the time of Moses theologically.

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35   Thus: [1:13] The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, [1:14] and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them. [2:23*] The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God. [2:24] God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [2:25] God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them. [6:2] God also spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the YHWH. [6:3] I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name YHWH I did not make myself known to them" (adapted from NRSV).

36   Norbert Lohfink, "Die priesterschriftliche Abwertung der Tradition von der Offenbarung des Jahwenamens an Mose," *Bib* 49 (1968): 1–8 (repr. in Norbert Lohfink, *Studien zum Pentateuch* [SBAB 4; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988], 71–78).

The covenant with the patriarchs,[37] mentioned in Exod 2:24 and 6:4, actually becomes the main reason for YHWH's intervention; the revelation of YHWH's name is, however, left to the time of Moses. The apparent three-stage theology of the revelation of P (God reveals himself to humankind as *Elohim* in Gen 1, to Abraham and his descendants as *El Shaddai* in Gen 17, and to the Israelites via Moses as *YHWH* in Exod 6[38]) works better if the P-texts in Genesis and Exodus are separated from the non-priestly texts. Besides the theological concern of P, which can be called "inclusive monotheism" and which according to Albert de Pury contains an ecumenical perspective, Exod 6 literarily emphasizes the connection between the patriarchs and the exodus.[39]

Recent research has increasingly interpreted the connection between Gen 17 and Exod 6 in the following way: the literary link of patriarchs and exodus was created by P. Consequently, P would be responsible for the theological and literarily associative joining of two originally autonomous traditions about Israel's origin. If this thesis were correct, it could also explain why an autonomous priestly source sometimes appears brief and apparently truncated. This would require its addressees being familiar with the pre-priestly patriarchal and Moses narratives. Among other things, this narrative connection would have had to have been dedicated to demonstrating that the patriarchal and the Exodus traditions belong together theologically and literarily. However, the thesis identifying P as the creator of the literary connection of Genesis and Exodus is vehemently doubted, too. For some, this connection is the work of an exilic (Van Seters, Levin[40]) or an older (Ludwig Schmidt[41])

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37   The P-texts of Genesis only explicitly recount a *berît* for Abraham. Genesis 17:19 ff. presumes that a covenant will be made with Isaac, but it is not mentioned. Is this a stylistic device or maybe a sign that some P-texts were not incorporated in the process of the compilation of the Pentateuch? For Jacob, one could think of Gen 35:10–13, where Gen 17 is played upon, although it does not attest the keyword "covenant."

38   Michaeli, *Exode*, 67.

39   Albert de Pury, "P^g as the Absolute Beginning," in *Les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, de l'Hexateuque et de l'Ennéateuque* (ed. Thomas Römer and Konrad Schmid; BETL 203; Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 99–128.

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

41   Ludwig Schmidt, "Die vorpriesterliche Verbindung von Erzväter und Exodus durch die Josefsgeschichte (Gen 37; 39–50*) und Exodus 1," *ZAW* 124 (2012): 19–37.

Yahwist, an Elohistic composition from the seventh century BCE (Schmitt[42]), or generally of a pre-priestly (exilic) link in Gen 50:21, Exod 1:6aα$_1$, 8–10* (Kratz, Carr, Berner[43]). This assumption clearly requires the existence of a pre-priestly Joseph narrative, a matter which, however, will not be discussed here.[44] Even if a literary connection between Genesis and Exodus had been created before P, it would remain extremely short and vague in literary terms. Only texts like Gen 17 and Exod 6 provide this connection with any theological depth.

2.4 The Meaning of the Land in Exodus 6:2–8 and in the Priestly-Source

Exodus 6:2–8 contains two explicit references to YHWH's promising the gift of the land.

| v. 4 | וְגַם הֲקִמֹתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתָּם לָתֵת לָהֶם אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֵת אֶרֶץ מְגֻרֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר־גָּרוּ בָהּ |
| v. 8 | וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂאתִי אֶת־יָדִי לָתֵת אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב וְנָתַתִּי אֹתָהּ לָכֶם מוֹרָשָׁה |

The relevance of the land for P has been interpreted differently within exegetical discourse. For one group, the theme of the land only plays a marginal role (Noth, Smend[45]); for others the land represents a primary concern of the priestly source (Elliger, Klein[46]). The promise of the land also touches on the aforementioned discussion about the end of P. David Carr, for example,

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42 Hans-Christoph Schmitt, "Erzvätergeschichte und Exodusgeschichte als konkurrierende Ursprungslegenden Israels—ein Irrweg der Pentateuchforschung," in *Die Erzväter in der biblischen Tradition: Festschrift für Matthias Köckert* (ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn and Henrik Pfeiffer; BZAW 400; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 241–266.

43 David M. Carr, "What Is Required to Identify Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections between Genesis and Exodus? Some General Reflections and Specific Cases," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 175; Kratz, *Komposition*, 304; Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 20–26.

44 See my discussion in "Deux repas 'en miroir' dans l'histoire de Joseph (Gn 37–50)," in *Fête, repas, identité. Hommage à Alfred Marx à l'occasion de son 70e anniversaire* (ed. Christian Grappe; RHPR 93; Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires 2013), 15–27, esp. 17–21.

45 Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1948), 16; Rudolf Smend, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments* (4th ed.; ThW 1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1989), 58.

46 Karl Elliger, "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung," *ZTK* 49 (1952): 121–143; Ralph W. Klein, "The Message of P," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Perlitt; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981), 57–66.

assumes that P is "specifically *hexateuchal* in scope."[47] Must P therefore have ended with a narrative describing the conquest of the land?

The first mention of the land in Exod 6:4 clearly refers to Gen 17:

Gen 17:7–8	Exod 6:4
וַהֲקִמֹתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֶת אֶרֶץ מְגֻרֶיךָ אֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן לַאֲחֻזַּת עוֹלָם	וְגַם הֲקִמֹתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתָּם לָתֵת לָהֶם אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן אֵת אֶרֶץ מְגֻרֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר־גָּרוּ בָהּ

P considered the promise of the land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as fulfilled, something Matthias Köckert correctly emphasized[48] and the וְנָתַתִּי in Gen 17 and לָתֵת לָהֶם in Exod 6:4 prove. According to this, the expression "the land in which they resided as aliens" does not mean that the land granted to the patriarchs was something temporary. Should one agree with Köckert, Bauks, and others that the term אחזה in Gen 17:8 can be understood as "privilege of use" (*Nutzungsrecht*),[49] the expression explains itself against the backdrop of Lev 25:23–24: "the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants" (NRSV). YHWH alone owns the land, but he allows his people to use it in perpetuity. In contrast to dtr theology, the priestly understanding of the land-grant does not contain the expulsion of other peoples and does not depend on obedience to the law.

When the land is mentioned for the second time in 6:8, אֲחֻזָּה is substituted by the expression מוֹרָשָׁה. Does this mean that Exod 6:8 represents a different perspective than 6:4 and that therefore this verse should be assigned to a

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47 David M. Carr, "The Moses Story: Literary-Historical Reflections," *HeBAI* 1 (2012): 7–36, 27.

48 Matthias Köckert, "'Land' als theologisches Thema im Alten Testament," in *Ex oriente Lux: Studien zur Theologie des Alten Testaments. Festschrift für Rüdiger Lux zum 65. Geburstag* (ed. Angelika Berlejung and Raik Heckl; ABG 39; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012), 154. Cf. also Jakob Wöhrle, "The Un-Empty Land: The Concept of Exile and Land in P," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 196 f., who points out that the P-texts Gen 28:4 and 35:12 presuppose that YHWH renews the land-grant for each individual patriarch.

49 Michaela Bauks, "Die Begriffe מוֹרָשָׁה und אֲחֻזָּה in Pᵍ. Überlegungen zur Landkonzeption in der Priestergrundschrift," *ZAW* 116 (2004): 171–188; Nihan, *Torah*, 66–68.

younger author as sometimes thought? First, it can be seen that v. 8 changes the message of v. 4 in two ways. Instead of the conclusion of a covenant, it is mentioned that YHWH raises his hand, which can probably be best understood as a gesture demonstrating the swearing of an oath. This gesture expresses YHWH's committing himself to support the patriarchs, just as the *berît* in v. 4 had. Accordingly, it should be considered whether מוֹרָשָׁה can be understood as a parallel expression of אֲחֻזָּה.

In contrast to what has been previously claimed, no tension exists between v. 4 and v. 8, because in v. 8 the land had been given to the patriarchs too. The phrasing as an oath can possibly be understood as priestly reception of the dtr promise of land to the ancestors. Passages like Deut 10:11; 11:9, 21 and 31:7 presume that the addressed generation should take possession of the land that YHWH had already sworn to give to their ancestors (אשר נשבע יהוה לאבתיכם).[50]

The closest literal matches with Exod 6:8 can however be found in Ezek 20:42, which also uses the expression "to raise one's hand."[51]

Ezek 20:42	Exod 6:8
וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה	וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם
בַּהֲבִיאִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל־אַדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל	אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂאתִי אֶת־יָדִי לָתֵת אֹתָהּ
אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂאתִי אֶת־יָדִי לָתֵת אוֹתָהּ	לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב
לַאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם	וְנָתַתִּי אֹתָהּ לָכֶם מוֹרָשָׁה
	אֲנִי יְהוָה

In this way, P would have transferred the promise of land to the ancestors in Egypt, as recorded in Deut and Ezek, to the patriarchs. This transfer from the ancestors in Egypt to the patriarchs would have presumably been undertaken in order to emphasize the connection of the two traditions of Israel's origin (as it is also done in Deut 1:8; 30:20 and other verses assigned to the Pentateuch redaction).

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50 Deuteronomy 11:19 adds "their seed"; cf. the tables in Thomas Römer, *Israels Väter: Untersuchungen zur Väterthematik im Deuteronomium und in der deuteronomistischen Tradition* (OBO 99; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 13.

51 נשא יד to describe a gesture of swearing can be seen mostly in Ezek; cf. Römer, *Väter*, 504–506, and Johan Lust, *Traditie, redactie en kerygma bij Ezechiël: Een analyse van Ez., xx, 1–26* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België Klasse der Letteren 65; Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, 1969), 218–222.

The lexeme מֹורָשָׁה in Exod 6:8, which is not often attested in the HB and mostly in the book of Ezekiel,[52] refers to Ezek 33:24, in which Abraham, having previously possessed the land, is correlated with the claim to the land of the population of Judah that was not deported:

אֶחָד הָיָה אַבְרָהָם וַיִּירַשׁ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַאֲנַחְנוּ רַבִּים לָנוּ נִתְּנָה הָאָרֶץ לְמֹורָשָׁה

If the statement found in Ezek 33:24 represents a kind of proverbial demand of the people who remained in the land, it is possible that this demand must also be seen behind Exod 6:8.[53] In the context of an early Persian priestly-source, the promise to lead Israel into the land seems to be an update of the gift of the land to the patriarchs. Now, did P report the fulfilling of this promise? For Pola, Exod 19:1 presents the fulfillment of Exod 6:8: "*Die Ankunft des Volkes* vom Exodus her am Berge Sinai, der aber in Ex 19:1 als Zion verstanden ist, *bedeutet in diesem kurzen Vers die gesamte Darstellung der 'Landnahme'.*"[54] Whether this allegory was obvious for the addressees of Exod 19:1 is unclear. Pola's reference to Exod 29:45–46 is interesting, however. According to Exod 6:7 the prevailing aim of exodus is the acceptance of Israel as YHWH's people and Israel's realization that YHWH is their God. YHWH's speech in Exod 29:45–46, which summarizes the meaning of the sacrificial cult, corresponds to this: "I will dwell among the Israelites, and I will be their God. And they shall know that I am YHWH their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am YHWH their God" (adapted from NRSV). This would mean that in contrast to the Deuteronomic perception, the land has neither geopolitical or geotheological meaning for P, but it rather provides the frame in which the true cult of God can be realized. The transposition of the tabernacle in the desert provides no reason to date Pᵍ before the consecration of the second temple in Jerusalem. P's intention is rather to embed all of the important elements of the worship of YHWH (Sabbath, circumcision, Pesach, cult) into the prehistory of the world and into the origin of the people of Israel. Whoever likes to speculate can raise the question of whether the transposition of the tabernacle into the desert, so to speak in a "no man's land," does not indeed represent a certain neutral attitude regarding the localization of the shrine: is this a discrete acceptance of the fact that a sacrificial cult to YHWH existed not

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52   Exodus 6:8; Deut 33:4; Ezek 11:5; 25:4, 10; 33:24; 36:2, 5; see also מורש in Isa 14:23; Obad 17; Job 17:11.

53   Gosse understands Exod 6:8 to be an answer to Ezek 33:24; see Bernard Gosse, "Exode 6,8 comme réponse à Ezéchiel 33,24," *RHPR* 74 (1994): 241–247.

54   Pola, *Priesterschrift*, 348.

only in Jerusalem but also on Mount Garizim? Accordingly, it is possible that the original priestly source ended in the Sinai pericope and did not recount the conquest of the land, as—we might add—was also presumed in traditional delineations (Gen 1–Deut 34*). However, this does not mean that P ignored any knowledge of such a tradition; rather, P presumed its addressees familiarity with such a tradition. Thus, the question of "priestly" texts in the book of Joshua should be reopened in this context. Do these belong to a consistent Hexateuch redaction that sought to emphasize that the book of Joshua belongs to the Torah, or are they—as Rainer Albertz[55] has suggested—an attempt to adapt the book of Joshua into the canon?

2.5   *Exodus 6:1–12 and Ezekiel*

The similarity of Exod 6:8 and Ezek was mentioned above and it has often been observed that Exod 6:1–12 generally contains many links to Ezek. These will not be discussed in detail here.[56]

It is certain that P and Ezek 20 share the opinion that YHWH's self-revelation to his people took place in Egypt for the first time (cf. ידע Nif. in Exod 2:25 [LXX]; 6:3 and Ezek 20:5; as well as the almost identical opening of the speech: אני יהוה in Exod 6:2 and אני יהוה אלהיכם in Exod 20:5; furthermore the continuation of the YHWH speech with the promise of the exodus from Egypt [יצא, Hif.] in Exod 6:6–7 and Ezek 20:5). The Israelites' not hearing also appears in both texts: לא שמע in Exod 6:9 and לא אבו לשמע in Ezek 20:8. However, the historical retrospect in Ezek 20 has its own profile. The link between the patriarchs and the exodus claimed in P appears neither in Ezek 20 nor in any other texts of the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel 20:5 references the "seed of the house of Jacob" that was in Egypt, which apparently presupposes the tradition of Jacob's immigration to Egypt; the three patriarchs, however, never appear together in Ezek. Abraham is mentioned in Ezek 33:24; Jacob appears as YHWH's servant and the recipient of the land in Ezek 28:25 and 37:25, as well as in 39:25.[57] Apparently the redactors of Ezek did not possess the same interests in the patriarchs as did P.

These observed parallels and differences between Ezek and Exod 6 (and other P texts) raise the question of the socio-literary classification of the tra-

55   Rainer Albertz, "The Canonical Alignment of the Book of Joshua," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 287–303.

56   Peter Weimar, *Untersuchungen zur priesterschriftlichen Exodusgeschichte* (FB 9; Würzburg: Echter, 1973); Schmidt, *Exodus*, 280–285; Gertz, *Tradition*, 245–248, and especially Lust, *Traditie*.

57   For this, cf. Römer, *Väter*, 506–517.

dents of P and Ezek. Is it possible to stand by Gertz's assumption "P selbst habe neben Formulierungen der 'Ezechielüberlieferung' auch auf solche der nichtpriesterschriftlichen Darstellung zurückgreifen können,"[58] or should P be considered as written and edited by writers who were in contact with some group of people who were commissioned to edit the Ezekiel scroll? This question has to remain unanswered here. It compels us to undertake a more intense analysis of the material and the specific situations behind the formation of the proto-biblical scrolls.

3   The Priestly Competition with the Magicians in Exodus 7–9

Following the priestly introduction of the quarrel between the pharaoh, Moses, and Aaron in Exod 7:1–7, which presumes and advances the narrative in 6:1–12 (cf. the "mighty acts of judgment" in 6:6 and 7:4), a broad consensus exists regarding the extent of the priestly narration preserved in Exod 7–9. Priestly material can be identified in 7:8–13, 19–20a, 21b, 22; 8:1–3, 11aγb, 12–15; 9:8–12, which most likely comes to an end in 11:10. This verse sums up once more the wonders of Moses and Aaron, as well as the obstinacy of the pharaoh, which also fulfills the prediction in 7:4.

According to Kratz, these narratives do not belong to the original priestly exodus narrative because of the breadth of their presentation and their "concurrency" with the narration of the parting of the sea.[59] A certain randomness adheres to this argumentation; it is not obvious to me that the narrative material about the confrontation with the king of Egypt contradicts the narrative of the parting of the sea in Exod 14*. Rather, they can best be understood as transition to this story.

The five scenes, of which the first four can more readily be characterized as "evidentiary miracles" (*Erweiswunder*) than as plagues, are constructed in a parallel way and contain a clearly recognizable line of narration:[60] the Egyptian

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58   Gertz, *Tradition*, 249

59   Kratz, *Komposition*, 244–247.

60   John Van Seters, "A Contest of Magicians? The Plague Stories in P," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (eds. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 569–580; Thomas Römer, "Competing Magicians in Exodus 7–9: Interpreting Magic in Priestly Theology," in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon* (ed. Todd E. Klutz; JSNTSup 245; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 12–22.

magicians, who can generally keep up with Moses and Aaron,[61] finally have to admit that the god whom they do not know is stronger than their arts and powers. The elimination of the Egyptian magical-priests from the core of the narrative, as has been occasionally suggested,[62] would render this story superfluous because, as Gertz has correctly commented, "die priesterliche Plagendarstellung allein von dem Wettstreit mit den Magiern lebt."[63]

The five scenes are constructed in a parallel way and can be read as a single narrative without any problems:

	Snakes	Blood	Frogs	Gnats	Boils
YHWH said:					
"Speak to Aaron"	7:9	7:19	8:1	8:12	
"Take your staff"	7:9	7:19	8:1[64]	8:12	
"Stretch out your hand"		7:19	8:1		
Miracle to be executed	7:9	7:19	8:1	8:12	9:8–9
Execution and consequences	7:10	7:20	8:2	8:13	9:10
		7:21b	8:2	8:13	9:10
The undertakings of the Egyptian	7:11	7:22	8:3	8:14	
magicians and consequences	7:12a		8:3	8:14f.	9:11
Hardening of Pharaoh's heart	7:13	7:22		8:15	9:12
and his not listening	7:13	7:22	8:11b[65]	8:15	9:12

7:1 The YHWH said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. 2 You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the

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61   Thus, one should consider (with Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 184) whether the statement in 7:12b that emphasizes the superiority of Aaron's staff should be understood as a gloss.

62   E.g. Christoph Levin, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 336.

63   Gertz, *Tradition*, 82 n. 24.

64   "Stretch out you hand with your staff."

65   The note about the hardening of pharaoh's heart is missing, probably due to the connection with the non-priestly v. 11a*.

Israelites go out of his land. 3 But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and I will multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 When Pharaoh does not listen to you, I will lay my hand upon Egypt and bring my people the Israelites, company by company, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. 5 The Egyptians shall know that I am YHWH, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out from among them." 6 Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as YHWH commanded them. 7 Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh.

(a) 8 YHWH said to Moses and Aaron, 9 "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a wonder,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, and it will become a snake.'" 10 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did as YHWH had commanded; Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. 11 Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same by their secret arts. 12 Each one threw down his staff, and they became snakes; [but Aaron's staff swallowed up theirs]. 13 Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as YHWH had said.

(b) 19 YHWH said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—over its rivers, its canals, and its ponds, and all its pools of water—so that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout the whole land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'" 20* Moses and Aaron did just as YHWH commanded. 21* And there was blood throughout the whole land of Egypt. 22 But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts; so Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them; as YHWH had said.

(c) 8:1 And YHWH said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, the canals, and the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.'" 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7 But the magicians did the same by their secret arts, and brought frogs up on the land of Egypt. 11* Pharaoh did not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

(d) 12 Then YHWH said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats throughout the whole land of Egypt.'" 13 And they did so; Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and gnats came on humans and animals alike; all the dust of the earth turned into gnats throughout

the whole land of Egypt. 14 The magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, but they could not. There were gnats on both humans and animals. 15 And the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of a god!" But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, just as YHWH had said.

(e) 9:8 Then YHWH said to Moses and Aaron, "Take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw it in the air in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 It shall become fine dust all over the land of Egypt, and shall cause festering boils on humans and animals throughout the whole land of Egypt." 10 So they took soot from the kiln, and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses threw it in the air, and it caused festering boils on humans and animals. 11 The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils afflicted the magicians as well as all the Egyptians. 12 But YHWH hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he would not listen to them, just as YHWH had spoken to Moses.

11:10 Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh; but YHWH hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

Christoph Berner also notes this methodical and elaborate structure. He concludes, however, that this does not permit the exegete to identify an author's compositional will, "sondern der Fall beweist vielmehr, daß selbst noch so kleinschrittige Redaktionsprozesse alles andere als willkürlich verlaufen."[66] Here, the methodological question arises as to whether it is more plausible to attribute a narrative to five or more selectively acting redactors, who were able to arrive at a surprisingly cogent narrative, rather than to ascribe a coherent and tension-free story to a single author.

The aforementioned episodes about the quarrel with the Egyptian magical-priests can be understood as a single narration without any problem.[67] In my opinion, its intention and objective become more obvious if you read these scenes in succession, which would contradict the supposition that these passages can be ascribed to one (Van Seters[68]) or several (Berner) priestly redac-

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66   Berner, *Exoduserzählung*, 168, n. 2.

67   In 8:11 the P-note about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is missing, which can be explained by the connection to the non-priestly narration (cf., Gertz, *Tradition*, 87). One might also consider whether the authors submitted themselves to some rigid system of conformity.

68   John Van Seters, "A Contest of Magicians?" 569–580; as well as the criticism of Gertz, *Tradition*, 85–89.

tions. It is indeed quite astounding that redactors editing an older text would do this in such a way that their insertions into the text produce an independently sensible context. When considering the dtr redactions in the Former Prophets, we can see that this is not correct. The narrations about the dispute suitably match the priestly context in terms of contents and theology.

In Exod 7:1 YHWH appoints Moses as "elohim," in contradistinction to the "divine" pharaoh, and Aaron as his prophet, who therefore equals the Egyptian magical-priests. This matches the constellation of the narrative about the dispute. After the Egyptian magicians fail to keep up in the fourth round, Aaron also takes a step back in the final scene;[69] now it is Moses who uses soot from a kiln to produce abscesses that affect all of the Egyptians, even the magicians, as explicitly stated. If it were true that the plague of the killing of the first-born (Exod 12) was not recounted in P[g],[70] one might identify the end of the original priestly cycle of plagues in 9:8–12. Then the mighty acts of judgment announced in 7:4 would refer to this scene. This question shall however remain unanswered at this point. The explicit declaration in 9:12 that YHWH can harden pharaoh's heart can be understood as the fulfillment of Exod 7:3 and transition to 11:10 and 14:4, 8.

In the fourth scene the magician-priests admit their inefficacy with the statement: "this is the finger of (a) God" (8:15). This widely-discussed expression[71] probably refers primarily to Aaron's staff; it might, however, also be explained in the priestly context as an allusion to Moses' elohim-role in Exod 7:1. The exclamation of the Egyptian magicians should also be understood in the context of the priestly revelation-theology, according to which YHWH is only available as elohim to the all peoples who cannot claim Abraham as their ancestor.

The priestly narrative in Exod 7–9* therefore fits the context of Ex 6–7* and 14*, but also has a certain characteristic profile. Consequently, one might ask whether P possessed a written *Vorlage* or knew oral tradition, a question that is not broadly discussed in contemporary research. Such a *Vorlage* is sometimes believed to have existed for the priestly account of creation in

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69   Cf. also Michaela Bauks, "Das Dämonische im Menschen: Einige Anmerkungen zur priesterschriftlichen Theologie (Ex 7–14)," in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt* (*Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context of their Environment*) (ed. Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K.F. Diethard Römheld; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 244–245.

70   Cf. Jean-Louis Ska, "La sortie d'Egypte (Ex 7–14) dans le récit sacerdotal et la tradition prophétique," *Bib* 60 (1979): 191–215.

71   Bernard Couroyer, "Le 'doigt de Dieu' (Exode, VIII, 15)," *RB* 63 (1956): 481–495.

Gen 1;[72] for Exod 7–9, Blum recalled Reindl's thesis that, in this case, we find a narrative from the Egyptian diaspora that sought to depict YHWH's and his servants' superiority vis-à-vis the Egyptian magicians.[73] The parallels with Egyptian magical fairy-tales and also the expression חַרְטֻמִּים, which appears in the fifth scene (7:22; 8:3, 14–15; 9:22) and apparently is an Egyptian loanword which only appears in the HB in contexts of the diaspora (Gen 41:8, 24 and Dan 1:20; 2:2), could speak in favor of such a hypothesis. It remains questionable, however, to what extent such a *Vorlage* could be literarily reconstructed if Exod 7–9* P requires the context of Exod 1–15. Nevertheless, the question of possible sources or *Vorlagen* for P should not be neglected.

4   The Priestly Depiction of the Parting of the Sea in Exodus 14

The priestly version of the parting of the sea in Exod 14 confirms the examination of Exod 7–9*. The analysis of this text, which has traditionally been regarded as an exemplary text for source criticism, has achieved a broad consensus regarding the determination of the priestly elements, just as in Exod 7–9*. The question as to what extent traces of *Fortschreibungen* can be identified within the P portions[74] will not be discussed here. It is, however, notable that the parts that had been identified as P (here, I am relying roughly on Levin's reconstruction) fit into a coherent narrative:

> 14:1 Then YHWH said to Moses: 2* Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon. 3 Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, "They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has closed in on them." 4 I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, so that I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army; and the Egyptians shall know that I am YHWH. And they did so. 8 YHWH hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the Israelites, who went out with hands

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72   See on this question also Jürg Hutzli, "Tradition and Interpretation in Gen 1:1–2:4a," *JHS* 10/12 (2010): 1–22.

73   Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, 252; Joseph Reindl, "Der Finger Gottes und die Macht der Götter. Ein Problem des ägyptischen Diasporajudentums und sein literarischer Niederschlag," in *Dienst der Vermittlung: Festschrift Priesterseminar Erfurt* (ed. Wilhelm Ernst, Konrad Feiereis, and Fritz Hoffmann; Erfurter Theologische Studien 37; Leipzig: St. Benno Verlag, 1977), 49–60.

74   Cf., e.g., Levin, *Jahwist*, 345.

raised. 9 The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, his chariot drivers and his army; they overtook them camped by the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. 10a As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them.

15* Then YHWH said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites to go forward. 16* But you stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. 17 Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. 18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers." 21a* Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. 21b And the waters were divided. 22 The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. 23 The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers.

26 Then YHWH said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." 27a So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. 28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. 29 But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

The repetitions within the priestly narrative that have sometimes been criticized do not necessarily have to be categorized into various layers; a similar redundancy can also be found in Gen 17. Furthermore, Thomas Krüger commented correctly that three scenes can be differentiated in the priestly narration of Exod 14: "Mit der wiederholten Ankündigung und Ausführung in 14,*1–10.*15–23 und *26–29 demonstriert sie [= P] die souveräne Lenkung des Geschehens durch Jahwe."[75] In contrast to the pre-priestly version (J or D), the priestly depiction of the parting of the sea is deliberately constructed as a myth. Ernst Axel Knauf correctly states that "für P ist der Durchzug durch das Meer kein geschichtlicher, sondern ein ur-geschichtlicher, ein mythischer Sachverhalt. In ihm kommt die Schöpfung Israels … zum Abschluss."[76] At this point a

75   Thomas Krüger, "Erwägungen zur Redaktion der Meerwundererzählung (Exodus 13,17–14,31)," *ZAW* 108 (1996): 519–533, 521.

76   Ernst Axel Knauf, "Der Exodus zwischen Mythos und Geschichte: Zur priesterschriftlichen

literary observation also becomes relevant. In the same way that Exod 6 delib-
erately refers back to Gen 17, Exod 14 P obviously casts a line back to Gen 1 (and
also to Gen 7–8 P), and thereby draws a parallel between the creation of the
world and the creation of Israel:[77] in this way הַיַּבָּשָׁה appears in Exod 14:16, 22,
and 29 and in Gen 1:9–10, where the dry land builds the necessary basis for the
life-forms about to be created. Also the expression בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם in Exod 14:16, 22–23,
27,[78] and 29 reminds the reader of בתוך הַמָּיִם in Gen 1:6 where the firmament
appears in the middle of the water. The parting of the sea (בקע) in Exod 14:21
reminds the reader of the parting of the deep in Gen 1:6 (there however with
בדל); the root appears in Gen 7:11 where the wells of the deep open up. As in Gen
1, in which God's word is the primary agent of creation, YHWH's word in Exod
14 P is the reason for Israel's being able to march through the parted sea. In this
way, with the help of Exod 14, P accomplishes a theological and literary *inclusio*
with Gen 1. The textual hinges of Gen 1:17; Exod 6; and 14 underscore the con-
nection of the proto-history, the patriarchs, and the exodus. The creation of the
world fulfills a double objective for P: the "birth" of Israel as YHWH's people in
Exod 14, and the erection of the tabernacle in the desert as a place of encounter
between YHWH and Israel in Exod 25–31* and 35–40* (in these chapters the
allusions to Gen 1:1–2:3 are obvious as well).

5   Conclusion

This analysis of Exod 6:7–9 and 14 demonstrated that these texts belonged to
what was originally an autonomous priestly-source. By clearly referring back
to Gen 1 and Gen 17, they create a strong connection to the traditions of The
book of Genesis and thereby design a proto-history consisting of three parts.
Exodus 6 can be more readily understood as an independent version of Moses'
calling in Exod 3 than as its redaction. Exod 7–9 and 14 P can be read and
understood more easily when connected to each other than in their current
literary context; this datum also favors the assumption of an originally inde-
pendent document. Proponents of redaction-historical hypotheses, however,

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Rezeption der Schilfmeer-Geschichte in Ex 14," in *Schriftauslegung in der Schrift: Festschrift für Odil Hannes Steck zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Reinhard G. Kratz, Thomas Krüger, and Konrad Schmid; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 77.

77   This is clearly shown by Jean-Louis Ska, *Le passage de la mer. Etude sur la construction du style et de la symbolique d'Ex 14,1–31* (AnBib 109; Rome: Pontifical Institute 1986).

78   This part of this verse does not belong to P. The expression is used here to describe YHWH's destruction of the Egyptians in the sea.

are right when they say that P's narrative strand cannot be reconstructed in its entirety. This means that in all likelihood not all texts were kept when the priestly source was edited. The idea that literary criticism can reconstruct every source and older tradition word for word is based on the anachronistic assumption that these texts possessed a kind of canonical status from the time of their initial composition. The fact that the authors of P were familiar with the non-P traditions and even sometimes inserted something or reinterpreted does not necessarily prove redaction-critically oriented models; as Knauf informally, but correctly, noted: "Im kleinen Kreis der Jerusalemer Elite, der beide Versionen entstammen, kannte man sich, war verwandt und verschwägert."[79] Ehud Ben Zvi goes even further with his postulation of a group of literati in the temple of Jerusalem in the Persian period that undertook the maintenance and editing of most of the proto-biblical writing and that was capable of imitating and mixing various styles and ideas.[80] This assumption does not do justice to the complex structure of the texts, though it can be understood as a warning not to multiply the redactors and tradents ad infinitum. It is, for example, probable that the tradents of P were also involved in the process of editing the Ezekiel scroll and were familiar with other non-priestly scrolls. The compilation and promulgation of the Pentateuch is possibly the best example for the close collaboration of the presumably small, intellectual groups that consisted of priests and other members of the Judean (and Samaritan) elite.

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79 Knauf, "Exodus," 83.

80 Ehud Ben Zvi, "Observations on Prophetic Characters, Prophetic Texts, Priests of Old, Persian Period Priests and Literati," in *The Priests in the Prophets: The Portrayal of Priests, Prophets and Other Religious Specialists in the Latter Prophets* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Alice Ogden Bellis; JSOTSup 408; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 19–30.

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