

Preface

This book is an English translation of my *Habilitationsschrift, Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999).¹ The notes and the bibliography have been updated. Some passages have been expanded or modified to clarify the meaning or to engage with recent scholarly contributions. Nevertheless, I have to admit that the English version of this book remains a work whose origin in the German-speaking academic tradition can be clearly recognized. Although the bibliography provided at the end of this work is extensive, it probably still lacks some contributions, especially from American and Israeli scholars. I apologize for these shortcomings. However, I hope that this book can provide a glimpse of recent European discussions about the composition of the Pentateuch, regardless of whether or not the reader agrees with the literary-historical proposals formulated here. For the convenience of the reader, quotations from German books have been translated into English.

In this book, I argue that the Priestly thread is the first to link together the main themes of the primeval story, the patriarchal story, and the exodus story. Originally, Genesis on the one hand and the Moses story on the other provided two competing traditions of Israel's origins that were not combined before the time of the Priestly Code—that is, the early Persian period. Thus, I depart from some of the main tenets of the Documentary Hypothesis such as the existence in the Tetrateuch both of a J source and of an E source that bridged the literary and theological gap between Genesis and Exodus before the Priestly Code. Of course, one can distinguish Priestly and non-Priestly texts in Genesis and in Exodus. But it is in no way clear that all non-Priestly texts are *a priori* pre-Priestly texts, as the

1. See the reviews by David M. Carr, *Bib* 81 (2000): 579–83; Ludwig Schmidt, *TLZ* 125 (2000): 1012–14; John Van Seters, *JBL* 119 (2000): 341–43; Henrik Pfeiffer, *ZAW* 113 (2001): 320–21; Eckart Otto, “Forschungen zum nachpriesterschriftlichen Pentateuch,” *TRu* 67 (2002): 125–55, 150–52. More extensive treatments are provided by David M. Carr, “Genesis in Relation to the Moses Story: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives,” in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History* (ed. A. Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 273–95; Erhard Blum, “Die literarische Verbindung von Erzvätern und Exodus: Ein Gespräch mit neueren Endredaktionshypothesen,” in *Abschied vom Jahwisten* (ed. J. C. Gertz et al.; BZAW 315; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) 119–56; John Van Seters, “The Patriarchs and the Exodus: Bridging the Gap between the Two Origin Traditions,” in *The Interpretation of Exodus: Studies in Honour of Cornelis Houtman* (ed. R. Roukema; CBET 44; Leuven: Peeters, 2006) 1–15; and Hans-Christoph Schmitt, “Erzvätergeschichte und Exodusgeschichte als konkurrierende Ursprungslegenden Israels: Ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik,” in *Die Erzväter in biblischer Tradition: Festschrift für Matthias Köckert* (ed. A. C. Hagedorn et al.; BZAW 400; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009) 241–66.

Documentary Hypothesis tends to suggest. Furthermore, it is not obvious that some or even all of the pre-Priestly elements in Genesis and in the Moses story were literarily linked together from their literary-historical beginnings, as the J and E hypotheses assume. To my mind, the textual evidence in Genesis and Exodus points in another direction: the pre-Priestly material in both text blocks is literarily and theologically so divergent that their present linkage is more appropriately interpreted as the result of a secondary redaction than as thematic variation in an early, literarily unified document such as J, whose diversity may be explained by positing different origins of the material in the oral prehistory of that work.

What this book is proposing, may sound “bold,”² but it is not new and does not stand alone in the current scholarly discussion of the Pentateuch. Following observations from Kurt Galling and Martin Noth, Albert de Pury and Thomas Römer already suggested in 1989 and 1990 that there are no pre-Priestly links between Genesis and Exodus. Independent of my work in *Erzväter und Exodus*, Jan Christian Gertz came to the same conclusion in his book *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch* (FRLANT 186; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000, especially pp. 381–88). Eckart Otto’s recent publications (“Mose und das Gesetz: Die Mose-Figur als Gegenentwurf politischer Theologie zur neuassyrischen Königsideologie im 7. Jh. v.Chr.,” in *Mose, Ägypten und das Alte Testament* [SBS 189; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2000] 43–83; idem, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und im Hexateuch: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumrahmens* [FAT 30; Tübingen: Mohr, 2000]; idem, *Die Tora des Mose: Die Geschichte der literarischen Vermittlung von Recht, Religion und Politik durch die Mosegestalt* [Hamburg, 2001]; idem, *Mose: Geschichte und Legende* [Munich: Beck, 2006]) and, to a certain extent, but with some hesitations,³ Reinhard Kratz’s *Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (trans. J. Bowden; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005) share the same opinion as well. Meanwhile, the discussion on this topic is documented in two volumes, *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); and, more controversially, *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).

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2. Van Seters, *JBL* 119 (2000): 343.

3. See, e.g., pp. 279, 281, 307.

this book from his essay “Genesis in Relation to the Moses Story.”⁴ Finally, my thanks go to Jim Eisenbraun, Beverly McCoy, and John Cook of Eisenbrauns for their diligent work on this book and its publication.

KONRAD SCHMID
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4. Carr, “Genesis in Relation to the Moses Story” (see n. 1 above).

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