

JAEYOUNG JEON

From the Reed Sea to Kadesh

*Forschungen
zum Alten Testament
159*

Mohr Siebeck

Forschungen zum Alten Testament

Edited by

Konrad Schmid (Zürich) · Mark S. Smith (Princeton)
Andrew Teeter (Harvard)

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Jaeyoung Jeon

From the Reed Sea to Kadesh

A Redactional and Socio-Historical Study of
the Pentateuchal Wilderness Narrative

Mohr Siebeck

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ISBN 978-3-16-161216-9 / eISBN 978-3-16-161217-6
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-161217-6

ISSN 0940-4155 / eISSN 2568-8359 (Forschungen zum Alten Testament)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

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The book was typeset by Martin Fischer in Tübingen using Times typeface, printed on non-aging paper by Gulde Druck in Tübingen, and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

For my mother
and
in memory of my father

Preface

The basic frame of this book was formulated through my postdoctoral project “Composition and Redaction of the Wilderness Narratives (Exod 15:22–18:27; Num 10:11–20:29) in their Pentateuchal and Hexateuchal Contexts.” The project was initiated by Prof. Thomas Römer, who invited me to join him in Lausanne, and was generously supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). Although the project period ended already in 2017, I have continued working on expanding the scope from a literary-historical analysis to encompass both studies of the socio-historical context of Persian Yehud and the literary pre-history of the wilderness narrative. The broadened scope required more time to complete the monograph but brought a few further important perspectives about the formation history and meanings of the wilderness tradition. Thus, it was worth the extended time that I invested in this subject, while working in parallel with another SNSF project on Chronicles and the Priestly literature.

As ancient scribal works on major traditions were enabled by the collective efforts of a community, so are our academic works also produced collectively through scholarly interactions and support in our academic community. Accordingly, I am very much indebted to many colleagues for the publication of this monograph. First of all, I am deeply grateful for Prof. Thomas Römer, who invited me to work on this subject. Throughout my time working in Lausanne, he has been an inspiring mentor, good friend, and even like family. His consistent practical, mental, and emotional support and encouragement have enabled me to move forward in my academic career. I also appreciate the members of *L’Institut romand des science biblique* (IRSB) and *Faculté de théologie et de sciences religions* (FTSR) at the University of Lausanne for their support and academic exchanges.

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Konrad Schmid, who has always been supportive, even since my Ph.D. Regarding this publication in particular, he accepted the manuscript to the prestigious series *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* and accelerated the process in kind consideration of my situation. I appreciate also Prof. Eckart Otto and Dr. Peter Altmann for reading the manuscript and kindly commenting on it. My special thanks go to John Will Rice, my English editor. From the early stage of drafting the manuscript to the post-typeset corrections, he helped me so effectively, consistently, and willingly. When writing in a language other than one’s mother tongue, the quality of the publication’s

language is often highly dependent on the language editor. John Will has been accompanying me in recent years as a reliable editor. I would also appreciate the efficient work of Bettina Gade, Markus Kirchner and their colleagues at Mohr Siebeck who handled my manuscript.

My family has always been my main source of strength. I am grateful for Eunshim, who has always been so supportive, and for Hajin and Yeju, who keep me alive.

Lausanne, July 7, 2022

Jaeyoung Jeon

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Abbreviations

ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
ActAnt	Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
ADPV	Abhandlungen des deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJBI	Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute
ALHR	American Lectures on the History of Religions
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs/Monografías sobre el Antiquo Cercano Oriente
<i>ANES</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
ANESSup	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement Series
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
<i>ARAM</i>	<i>ARAM Periodicals</i> (Society for Syro-Mesopotamian studies, the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford)
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATM	Altes Testament und Moderne
ATT	Ancient Texts and Translations
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeological Review</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHTh	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BiBJS	Biblical and Judaic Studies
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BIW	Bible and Its World
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
<i>BM</i>	<i>Beit Mikra</i>

<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BRev	Bible Review
BRS	<i>Biblical Resource Series</i>
BSJGW	Berichte aus den Sitzungen der Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften
BTAVO	Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients: Geisteswissenschaften
<i>BThZ</i>	<i>Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZABR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CaE</i>	<i>Cahiers Évangile</i>
<i>Cath</i>	<i>Cathedra</i>
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
<i>CE</i>	<i>Cahiers Évangile</i>
<i>CHJ</i>	<i>Cambridge History of Judaism</i> . Edited by William D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein. 4 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984–2006.
<i>ClQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
CRB	Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSBL	Dove Studies in Bible, Language, and History
EBib	Echter Bibel
EBR	Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EDSS	<i>Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> . Edited by Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000
EETH	Einführung in die evangelische Theologie
EHS.T	Europäische Hochschulschriften. Theologie
EM	Encyclopedia Miqra'it (Hebrew)
<i>ErIsr</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
<i>EstEcl</i>	<i>Estudios Eclesiásticos</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament

GBS	Gorgias Biblical Studies
GCT	Gender, Culture, Theory
GS�.AT	Geistliche Schriftlesung. Erläuterungen zum Alten Testament für die Geistliche Lesung
GTA	Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten
GTW	Grundriss der theologischen Wissenschaften
HACL	History, Archaeology, and Culture of the Levant
HANE/M	History of the Ancient Near East/ Monographs
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HeBAI	Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
Hermeneia	Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
<i>Historia</i>	<i>Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte</i>
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Interp</i>	<i>Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology</i>
IPIAO	Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern
<i>Iraq</i>	<i>The Journal of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq</i>
ITL	International Theological Library
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
<i>JAEl</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections</i>
<i>JAJ</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
<i>JANES</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBTh</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scripture</i>
<i>JHeS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JPSTC	JPS Torah Commentary
JSAS	Journal of the Serbian Archaeological Society
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series

<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Judaica</i>	<i>Judaica: Beiträge zum Verständnis des jüdischen Schicksals in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (Zurich: Zwingli)</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KD	Kerygma und <i>Dogma</i>
KeH	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
<i>KJCS</i>	<i>Korean Journal of Christian Studies</i>
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio Divina
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LiBi	Lire la Bible
LISOR	Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions
LSAWS	Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic
LSTS	The Library of Second Temple Studies
LTP	Laval Théologique et Philosophique
MdB	Le Monde de la Bible
MMA	Monographs in Mediterranean <i>Archaeology</i> / Metropolitan Museum of Art
MThSt	Marburger Theologische Studien
MWG	Max Weber-Gesamtausgabe
NBS	Numen Book Series
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology (formerly Biblical Archaeologist)
<i>NEAEHL</i>	<i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land.</i> Edited by Ephraim Stern. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NN</i>	<i>Nations and Nationalism</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBO.SA	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Series Archaeologica
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLB	Orte und Landschaften der Bibel
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia (NS)</i>
ORA	Orientalische Religionen in der Antike
OSEE	Oxford Studies in Early Empires
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Old Testament Studies
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>PJ</i>	<i>Preussische Jahrbücher</i>
PPFBR	Publications of the Perry Foundation for Biblical Research in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem
<i>Qad</i>	<i>Qadmoniot</i>
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
QMHS	Quantitative Methods in the Humanities and Social Sciences
QUIA	Quellen und Interpretationen – Altägypten

<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RechBib	Recherches Bibliques
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
<i>RHJE</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire Juive en Egypte</i>
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
<i>SAK</i>	<i>Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur</i>
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
SBA	Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
SBAB	Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsatzbände
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and Its Literature
SBLBE	Society of Biblical Literature Biblical Encyclopedia Series
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
SHVL	Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund
Siph	Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures (Eisenbrauns)
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SOFS	Symbolae Osloenses Fasciculi suppletorii
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
STAT	Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemia Toimituksia Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
STh	Studienbücher Theologie (Kohlhammer)
STT	Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemia Toimituksia
Stw	Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft
SUNVAO	Skrifter utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo
SymS	Symposium Series
<i>TA</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
<i>ThFr</i>	<i>Theologie und Frieden</i>
THLI	Textwissenschaft, Theologie, Hermeneutik, Linguistik, Literaturanalyse, Informatik
<i>ThT</i>	<i>Theologische Tjidschrift</i>
ThW	Theologische Wissenschaft
<i>Transeu</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
TranseuSup	Transeuphratène Supplément
<i>TRE</i>	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Edited by Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–
<i>TRu</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
TVZ	Theologischer Verlag Zürich

<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VWGTh</i>	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WMANT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>YES</i>	Yale Egyptological Studies
<i>ZABR</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZBK</i>	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

I. Introduction

Despite its quantitative significance in the Pentateuch, the wilderness narrative has not been amply discussed in terms of its own literary and historical value nor of the literary history of the Pentateuch. The narrative connects three literary units with the major Pentateuchal themes: the exodus (Exod 1–15); the revelation at Sinai (Exod 19–Num 10); Deuteronomy and the conquest. Unlike these units, the wilderness narrative consists of diverse episodes that are not always closely related to each other logically or thematically and are attached to a thread of itineraries that is often incoherent. This “episodic” nature without a coherent structure or apparent thematic development has made the wilderness narrative less attractive for scholarly attention. Throughout the last century, the formational models of the Pentateuch and Hexateuch, both classical and newer, have been developed and examined mainly through the stories of the patriarchs and exodus; the models were simply applied to or imposed on the wilderness narrative. The models from other Pentateuchal units nevertheless hardly do justice to the wilderness narrative. Already Martin Noth admitted that the JEDP scheme of classical source criticism cannot be applied to wilderness narrative, in particular in the book of Numbers.¹ Recent Pentateuchal studies also necessitate developing a formational model for each “larger unit.” This situation has been derived from the critical re-examinations of the classical notions of the Yahwist and the Priestly Source. First, the notion of a Yahwist was significantly modified with suggestions of exilic/postexilic datings or even denied completely beginning in the final quarter of the twentieth century.² The Yahwist hypothesis was then dealt another serious blow by the denial of a pre-Priestly literary connection between the patriarchal and exodus stories, which is becoming a consensus especially in Europe.³ The separation between the two larger units has consequently resulted in positing overarching compositions/redactions that connected different Pentateuchal units to the Priestly or post-Priestly layers.

A further separation between the units has been accelerated by the new definition of the extent of P^(G), which limits P from Creation to the Sinai pericope.

¹ See Noth, *Numeri*, 8 (ET: 5).

² See, e.g., Rendtorff, *Pentateuch*; H. Schmid, *Sogenannte Jahwist*; Van Seters, *Prologue to History*.

³ See the discussions in the following volumes: Gertz et al., *Abschied vom Jahwisten*; Schmid et al., *Farewell to the Yahwist?* More recently, see Gertz et al., *Formation of the Pentateuch*.

With minor variations, scholars are increasingly accepting the notion of this “short P.”⁴ Theorizing a literary unit by P from Genesis to the Sinai pericope has inevitably caused a conceptual “vacuum” in the scholarly reconstructions of the formational process between this unit and Deuteronomy. At the same time, it has provided a theoretical basis for assigning post-Priestly datings to major parts of the narrative after Sinai. The growing skepticism of any pre-P composition or redaction of the “post-Sinai” wilderness narrative has also been expanded to the “pre-Sinai” wilderness narrative (Exod 16–18). The wilderness narrative thus requires its own model explaining its literary history, distinguished from those of the preceding and following literary units.

Since the wilderness narrative in its present form is regarded as the youngest in the formation process of the Pentateuch, its composition and redaction would explain how and when the lengthy formative process of the Pentateuch was completed. This means that the thus-far neglected wilderness narrative (or the main parts of Numbers) should stand at the core of the study of Pentateuchal formation.

Additionally, the relatively late formation of the narrative, mainly during the Persian period, would provide methodological justification and new interpretive possibilities to read the narrative against the religious, social, economic, and political contexts of the period. Despite our still-limited knowledge of the Persian period, recent developments in historical studies and new archaeological findings, not only of Yehud but also of the Persian Empire and its different satrapies and provinces, provide fertile soil for fresh and rich interpretations of the narrative.

The aim of the present study is thus two-fold: Firstly, it delves into the literary history of the wilderness narrative and suggests a formational model that explains its peculiar literary features, including its diverse subject matter, repetitive or conflicting episodes, dynamic intertextual connections, and disagreeing voices on important social and political issues. The dominant models in present Pentateuchal scholarship of a “linear development” through successive phases of expansion and reworking neither satisfactorily explain those features nor suitably reflect the social diversity of Persian Yehud and the diaspora communities. Instead of a strictly linear model, the present study suggests a model of *scribal debate* between different scribal circles representing voices and interests of diverse social groups in Yehud, Samaria, and diaspora communities.

This study also endeavors to interpret different episodes of the wilderness narrative by reconstructing the socio-historical context of the Persian period. To be sure, earlier traditions stemming from the early monarchic or even pre-monarchic periods may be traced from some of the episodes. Early traditions are nevertheless reformulated by later scribes with new meanings for contemporary

⁴ For further, see below, III.7.2.

audiences. It is therefore of vital importance to understand the episodes within the socio-historical contexts in which they were (re)formulated and performed.

The basic frame, model, and methodology of this study to achieve this aim are further elaborated in what follows. Beforehand, however, a history of scholarship on the formation of the wilderness narrative as well as the currently suggested models and their limitations are discussed.

1. Pentateuchal Formation Models and the Wilderness Narrative

1.1. *The Views based on the Classical Documentary Model*

According to the classical “Wellhausenian” Documentary Hypothesis, the sources J, E, and P were also found in the wilderness narrative. Most major commentaries on Numbers have been written based on this classical scheme.⁵ For example, from Gray’s commentary (1912)⁶ to relatively recent ones by Baruch Levine⁷ (1993, 2000) and Horst Seebass (1993–2002),⁸ the Documentary Hypothesis with some modifications served as the basic framework for understanding the composition and date of Numbers. Some commentaries presuppose significantly modified documentary models. Jacob Milgrom, for instance, developed Yehezkel Kaufmann’s view and argued for an early dating of P in Numbers in the early or even pre-monarchic period.⁹ Philip J. Budd’s Numbers commentary involves a modified concept of the “Yahwist” as an editor/author in the time of Josiah.¹⁰ The classical JEDP framework is still accepted by some circles for reconstruction of the composition of the Pentateuch.¹¹

Nevertheless, a validity of the classical Documentary model in Numbers has already been denied by Martin Noth. He argued, as seen above, that the classical source division does not work well for the wilderness narrative, and in Numbers in particular.¹² Noth also underestimated the narrative’s tradition-historical significance. He claimed that the theme of “Guidance in the Wilderness” is “not a

⁵ The Pentateuchal wilderness narrative is found in Exodus and Numbers, and commentaries can therefore hardly cover the whole narrative.

⁶ Gray, *Numbers*.

⁷ Levine, *Numbers 1–20*; idem, *Numbers 21–36*.

⁸ Seebass, *Numeri* (3 vols.). Seebass, however, significantly modifies the classical scheme by suggesting a thorough “Numbers redaction” in the Book of Numbers.

⁹ See Milgrom, *Numbers*; see also Licht, *Numbers*, XI–XXI; Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*.

¹⁰ Budd, *Numbers*, xxii–xxiv.

¹¹ Notably, the recent “Neo-Documentarians” are reviving the classical source criticism in a more rigid form than that of Wellhausen. See, e.g., Baden, *Composition*; idem, *Redaction of the Pentateuch*.

¹² Noth, *Numeri*, 8 (ET: 5).

very important or really independent theme,” and that it “presupposes an already much advanced stage in the expansion of the Pentateuchal narrative.”¹³ For him, therefore, the theme merely bridges the two major themes of “guidance out of Egypt” and “guidance into the arable land”¹⁴ and “arose simply from the narrative desire to tell something concrete about the further fortunes of the Israelite tribes after the ‘guidance out of Egypt.’”¹⁵ Noth also maintained that the narrative was written by southern Judean authors familiar with the caravan routes and their few water sites, and that this circle of authors was also responsible for the introducing the “promise to the patriarchs” theme.¹⁶

For Noth, the wilderness narrative has two major themes: The primary theme is concerned with existential questions from wilderness life, such as thirst, hunger, and danger from enemies. The stories of Marah (Exod 15:22–25) and Meribah (Exod 17:1–7), as well as the brief note on Elim (Exod 15:27), concern thirst and water provision; the stories of manna (Exod 16) and quail (Num 11) are about food; the threat of desert raids and natural danger are found in the narratives of the battle with Amalek (Exod 17:8–16) and the bronze serpent (Num 21:4b–9).¹⁷ The second theme is the people’s murmurings, a tradition-historically late development compared to the guidance in the wilderness. For example, the etiology of the name “Kiberoth Hataabah” traces back to a secondary elaboration of an older quail story; the story of Dathan and Abiram is a projection of historical rivalries among the Jerusalem cultic staffs in a relatively late period and can hardly be original; the addition of the elders motif in Num 11 and Num 12 is also late.¹⁸

Besides the commentaries, a few studies have focused on the Pentateuchal wilderness narrative as a whole. In general agreement with Noth’s tradition-historical approach, Volkmar Fritz focused on the earlier stages of the wilderness narrative’s formation.¹⁹ Fritz argued that a pre-Yahwistic collection of wilderness stories was formulated and orally transmitted in southern Palestine, together with the story of conquest. According to Fritz, Moses is not originally rooted in this tradition; the wilderness episodes were collected in Beersheba, a central sanctuary in southern Palestine, and formulated literarily as a “proto-Yahwist” text.²⁰ The Yahwist then took over this written form and revised it with his own material as a story of Moses and of disobedience in the wilderness.²¹

¹³ Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* [ÜP], 62, 127 (quotation, ET: 58, 115).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 127 (ET: 115).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63 (quotation, ET: 59).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 127–34 (ET: 115–22).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 139–43 (ET: 125–30).

¹⁹ See Fritz, *Israel in der Wüste*.

²⁰ The “proto-Yahwist” includes the Meribah episode (Exod 17:1–7*), the manna story (Exod 16* and Num 11:4–35*), the Hobab tradition (Num 10:29–32), and the story of Dathan and Abiram (Num 16*). For details, see Fritz, *Israel in der Wüste*, 108.

²¹ According to Fritz, passages added by the Yahwist include Exod 15:22–25a; Num 1:33a; 11:1–3; 21:4b–9.

Still based on Noth's tradition-historical framework, George Coats endeavored to prove that the negative wilderness traditions were later development upon an earlier positive tradition about Yhwh's aid in the wilderness.²² Coats drew this conclusion analyzing the parallel wilderness narratives, such as the spring and food narratives. For instance, he assigned the spring narratives of Marah (Exod 15:22–27) and Massah and Meribah (Exod 17:1–7) to J, and the spring narrative of Kadesh Meribah (Num 20:1–13) to P. In the J narratives, Coats detected three successive levels of pre-literary development: (1) the earliest local etiology based on wordplay, (2) an intermediate level introducing a tradition about Yhwh's miraculous aid in the wilderness, and (3) the late addition of the murmuring motif.²³ In the Kadesh Meribah narrative (P), Coats found two levels: the earlier murmuring story and a later addition explaining why Moses and Aaron could not enter the promised land. The Meribah and Massah traditions were, for Coats, also accepted and combined by the Deuteronomist (Deut 33:8) and interpreted as exemplary cases demonstrating Israel's lack of faith in Yhwh.²⁴ Coats similarly found that the manna and quail in both Exod 16 and Num 11:4–34 were once independent traditions originally describing Yhwh's gracious aid and were only later adopted for the murmurings.²⁵ He further supported his claim by demonstrating that the short murmuring stories such as Taberah (Num 11:1–3) and the bronze serpent (Num 21:4–9) represent later stages of the rebellion's development, and that the murmuring motifs in these narratives were used only secondarily for introducing the danger expressed in the etiology.²⁶ Coats often regarded murmuring passages as late additions. He argued, for instance, that the murmurings in the sea narrative (Exod 14:11–12) were a later addition;²⁷ the murmuring motif was also added later to the scout narrative (Num 13–14), despite already being negative in tone due to the failed attempt to enter the land.²⁸

David Frankel, in his study of the Priestly murmuring stories of Exod 16; Num 13–14; 16–17; 20, has endeavored to prove the originality and pre-exilic date of the Priestly texts in these chapters in line with the early dating of P by the Jerusalem School.²⁹ Frankel reconstructs the literary development of the texts through detailed redaction-critical analysis, concluding that the early

²² Coats published heavily on various aspects of the wilderness narrative, but here I focus on his thesis in *Rebellion in the Wilderness*. For his other studies, see, e.g., “Wilderness Itinerary”; “Legendary Motifs”; “Conquest Traditions”; “Exposition”; “Traditio-Historical Character”; *Moses*.

²³ Coats, *Rebellion*, 70–71.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 70–71. Coats simply regarded the text as “Deuteronomistic” without a further distinction within Dtr texts.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 83–114.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁹ Frankel, *Murmuring Stories*.

layers include both God's benevolent provision in the wilderness and the motif of sin and punishment, but the stereotypical murmuring speeches (e.g., Exod 16:3; Num 14:2–3; 16:3) belong to a secondary Priestly layer. Frankel maintains that the early Priestly material is unaware of the Sinai complex (e.g., Exod 16), including the theophany and the lawgiving, and that those early murmuring stories therefore do not address observance of the commandments. For Frankel, the Priestly murmuring stories are thus earlier than Deut 8:2 and Ezek 20, which envision the wilderness period as a test of obedience to the commandments and as a period of unlawful idolatry, respectively.

1.2. *The Newer Models*

The gradual decline of the classical source-critical framework after the 1970s necessitated new models of formation for the Pentateuch. Various models have developed for the entire Pentateuch or parts thereof, and basically in two opposite directions: simpler, two-layer models and more complex models with multiple layers. Since it is neither possible nor necessary in this subsection to discuss the newer models comprehensively, I focus only on those relevant to the formation of the wilderness narrative.

1.2.1. *Two-Layer Models*

The two-layer models maintain the fundamental division between the Priestly and the non-Priestly layers and identify diverse texts based on this division. These models, however, deviate from each other according to their definitions of the non-P texts. John Van Seters, for instance, posits a late, post-Dtr Yahwist (J) as an author and historian from the exilic period equivalent to Greek historians/writers such as Homer. This late Yahwist wrote most of the non-P texts from Genesis to Numbers as an early history of the people; P is a later redactional work attached to this late J. This holds true for the wilderness narrative, for Van Seters, wherein he distinguishes between mainly two layers, (late) J and P.

The non-P texts are defined by Erhard Blum as a Deuteronom(ist)ic composition.³⁰ He suggests a two-layer model consisting of this Deuteronom(ist)ic composition (KD; *deuteronomische Komposition*) and a Priestly composition (KP; *priesterliche Komposition*). Blum first applied KD to the whole Tetrateuch, but later modified it against its presence in Genesis arguing that KD starts only in Exodus.³¹ Similar to Van Seters, Blum reconstructs mostly KD and KP in the wilderness narrative. However, he also assumes more written traditions

³⁰ Blum, *Vätergeschichte*; idem, *Pentateuch*.

³¹ Blum, "Literarische Verbindung."

incorporated by KD, though not always specifying them, while Van Seters's late J authored most of the non-P texts himself.

1.2.2. Complex Models

The complex models are based on two methodological presuppositions: the denial of a continuous source or overarching redaction at the pre-Priestly stage in Gen–Num, and the notion of a “short-P” that ends at the Sinai pericope. These two presuppositions are gradually becoming the new consensus in especially European scholarship.

Eckart Otto differentiates between two groups of texts, Gen–Exod and Deuteronomy(–Josh), which is the point of departure for his model.³² For Otto, the primeval history, patriarchal story, and Moses-exodus story were developed separately until the exilic period, when they were combined by P (P^G). Otto argues that P^G ends at Exod 29*, while P^S extends to Lev 9. Through P^G and P^S, therefore, the Priestly “Tritoteuch” was completed and formed approximately the current form of Gen 1–Lev 9. At the other end of the Hexateuch, an early form of Deuteronomy was combined with an early form of Joshua, which he designates as the “Moabite Redaction.” Otto's separation between the two literary units, the Priestly redactional work (Gen–Lev) and Moabite redaction (Deut–Josh), leaves the wilderness period as a literary gap. This literary gap, according to Otto, was filled by two post-Priestly redactional works in the postexilic period. The two clusters were first connected by the “Hexateuchal Redaction” (“HexRed”) that produced an early form of the Hexateuch. The following “Pentateuchal Redaction” (“PentRed”) separated the Pentateuch from the Hexateuch, adding several redactional passages into the Pentateuch. Most of the wilderness narrative is assigned to these two layers in Otto's model, though he detects some old traditions in Numbers.³³

For Otto, both HexRed and PentRed are post-Dtr and post-Priestly and, consequently, presuppose the two literary works. In his reconstruction of HexRed and PentRed, therefore, the classical criteria distinguishing between Priestly, non-Priestly, and Deuteronomistic texts are not strictly applied. In his two redactional layers (HexRed and PentRed), texts generally regarded as incompatible with each other due to differences in language and concept are often mixed together. HexRed and PentRed are the formative redactional phases, to which he assigns a significant number of Hexateuchal passages. This differs from, for example, the models of Thomas Römer and Reiner Albertz, which will be discussed shortly.

³² Otto, *Tora*; idem, “Deuteronomium 1–3 als Schlüssel”; idem, *Deuteronomium 1–11*; idem, *Das Deuteronomium*.

³³ See, e.g., Otto, *Das Deuteronomium*; idem, “Deuteronomium 1–3 als Schlüssel.”

Based on and modifying Otto's model, Reinhard Achenbach produced an extensive study on Numbers.³⁴ His monograph *Die Vollendung der Tora* is the first extensive effort to fill the gap between the early stages of the Sinai pericope and Deuteronomy. For the formation of the wilderness narratives in Numbers, Achenbach assumes an old pre-Deuteronomistic strand about the wilderness wanderings as a preliminary stage. He assigns to this strand the texts of Hobab (Num 10:29–32*), the provision of quail (only some verses in Num 11), the scout story (parts of the non-P strand in Num 13), the detour around Edom (Num 20:14–21*); the victory at Horma (Num 21:1–3), the bronze serpent (Num 21:6–9*), the defeat of Sihon (Num 21:21–30*), the settlement in Transjordan (Num 32*), and an early version of the Balaam tradition (Num 22–24*). This old, pre-exilic and exilic strand was edited and enriched by HexRed at a post-P stage, which, according to him and Otto, literarily connected Gen–Exod and Deut–Josh (ca. 450 BCE). Achenbach assigns most of the non-Priestly texts in Num 10–14; 16; 20–25; 32 to HexRed. Achenbach agrees with Otto in assuming that the next redactional phase was PentRed (ca. 400 BCE). He assigns most of the texts with Priestly flavor in the narratives in Num 10; 13; 20 to this redaction. Furthermore, he attributes to PentRed the texts containing the non-Priestly Tent of Meeting in Num 11–12 as well as some additions to the Balaam story (Num 22–24*). In post-PentRed stages, he identifies three phases of theocratic revision (*Theokratische Bearbeitung*; “ThB”) by a later priestly group in Jerusalem (fourth century BCE). He assigns to ThB the remaining Priestly texts, such as Num 1–10, late editorial passages in the narratives of Num 13–14; 16–17; 25; 32, the legal material in Num 5–6; 15; 18; 19, and the chapters for land distribution in Num 26–36.

Erich Zenger (of the so-called “Münster model”) also agrees with the notion of a short-P, finding its end in Lev 9:24. However, he regards most of the Hexateuchal and even Enneateuchal narratives as having been formulated already in pre-Priestly stages.³⁵ For instance, according to Zenger, the “Jerusalemite Historical Work” (*Jerusalemmer Geschichtswerk*; JG) formed after 700 BCE included the stories of the patriarchs, exodus, and conquest (Gen 2*–Josh 24*). During the exilic period, the Primeval History and Dtn were added to this literary work, which was again combined with the Dtr history to form the Enneateuch (Gen 2:4b–2 Kgs 25* as the *Exilische Geschichtswerk*; EG). For Zenger, P^G and P^S were composed separately between 520 and 450 BCE and were combined with the pre-P texts by the Pentateuch redaction that separated the Pentateuch from Enneateuch (around 400 BCE). Zenger excludes the non-P wilderness narratives from JG and dates them relatively late, but still seems to date them as pre-Priestly. Therefore, although Zenger assigns many Priestly texts in Exod–Num

³⁴ See esp. Achenbach, *Tora*; idem, “Erzählung von der gescheiterten Landnahme.”

³⁵ See, e.g., Zenger, *Einleitung*, 66–176.

to P^s, his short-P model does not make any significant changes to the chronological ordering of the Pentateuchal texts.

Thomas Römer has endeavored to fill the literary gap between the Priestly edition of Gen–Lev and Deuteronomy quite differently from Otto and Achenbach. Through a series of publications,³⁶ he has suggested that the former was already complete at both P and non-P levels, which consequently requires a new definition of the non-Priestly texts in Numbers. Unlike Otto and Achenbach, who assume two continuous and formative redactional layers from Genesis to Joshua (HexRed) and from Genesis to Deuteronomy (PentRed), Römer maintains that the main strands in Exodus do not continue into Numbers or further into Deut–Josh. For him, “the narratives in Numbers, both non-P and so-called P, have been formulated in order to make a literary bridge (*Brücke*) between Gen–Lev and the deuteronomistic Deuteronomy.”³⁷ Although he accepts that there were redactional phases carried out across the Pentateuchal and Hexateuchal horizons, these phases were neither thorough nor formative. Römer therefore applies two different formational models to Exodus and Numbers, respectively.

Römer reconstructs the formation process of Exodus mainly in two stages. He finds traces of an old Moses-exodus strand in passages such as Moses’s birth narrative (Exod 2:1–10) and his return to Egypt (Exod 2:23aα; 4:19). These old strands were reformulated and developed by a Dtr version of the Moses-exodus story beginning with the earlier layer of Exod 3. Relevant to the present study, he also assigns to this layer the three wilderness story units: Massah and Meribah (Exod 17:1–2*, 5–7*), the battle with Amalek (Exod 17:8–15), and Jethro’s visit (18:1–12*). For Römer, therefore, the main strand in Exodus was formulated by Dtr at a pre-Priestly stage. Afterwards, P^(G) was added to the Dtr version, which was again redactionally expanded by the Holiness School (e.g., Exod 12:14–20, 43–50; 31:12–17; 35:1–3; 19:3–8; 24:1, 9–11; 29:19–21, etc.). Further additions were then made by the Hexateuchal and Pentateuchal redactions, yet these phases made only minor contributions to the formation of the Hexa-/Pentateuch.³⁸

³⁶ Römer’s model has been presented in various articles, such as Römer and Brettler, “Deuteronomy 34”; Römer, “Egypt Nostalgia”; idem, “Sojourn”; Römer et al., *Introduction*, 279 ff.; Römer, “Buch Numeri”; idem, “Nombres”; idem, “Mose in Äthiopien”; idem, “Books of Leviticus and Numbers”; idem, “Exodus 3–4.” His model has been most comprehensively summarized in Römer, “Sojourn” and “Der Pentateuch,” esp. 111–49.

³⁷ Römer, “Der Pentateuch,” 142.

³⁸ Römer assigns to the Hexateuchal Redaction a small number of texts presupposing the conquest, such as Exod 13:17; 16:35 [cf. Josh 5:10–12]; 18:1–12 [cf. Josh 2], as well as the late additions of 4:24–26; 15:1–18. Likewise, he attributes to the Pentateuchal Redaction only minor texts, such as the patriarchal motifs in Exodus (Exod 3*: 4:1–17; 32:13); the Egypt nostalgia texts (Exod 14:11–12; 16:3; 17:3–4, etc.); the “belief” motif (Exod 14:31b; 19:9); the prolepsis of lawgiving (Exod 15:22–27); the establishment of the legal system (Exod 18:13 ff.). See Römer, “Der Pentateuch,” 144–46.

The formative layers of Exodus (Dtr, P, HS), for Römer, do not continue into Numbers. He argues instead that the wilderness narratives in Num 11–25 were formulated based on the earlier positive wilderness stories in Exodus 15–18, updating them with a negative tone: manna and quail (Num 11; Exod 16), a war motif (Num 13–14; Exod 17), and Moses’s wife (Num 12, Cushite; Exod 18, Midianite) and father-in-law (Num 10:29 ff., Hobab; Exod 18, Jethro). Indeed, those parallels in Exodus and Numbers as well as the negative shift in tone in the post-Sinai wilderness stories have been widely recognized. In previous generations of scholarship, these aspects were often explained in theological perspectives at a synchronic level, within the layers of JE and P.³⁹ Römer’s view is distinguished from previous views by his “bridge model” explaining them through a diachronic differentiation between the two narrative groups. This diachronic perspective is rooted in the idea that earlier prophetic traditions remember the wilderness period positively (e.g., Jer 2:1–3; Hos 9; also Deut 8) and, therefore, the negative perspective of the period should be seen as a late development.⁴⁰ Additionally, Römer finds Num 11–20 a forerunner of midrashic literature formulated as exegesis or commentary of pre-existing texts and traditions as if a “rolling corpus.”⁴¹ He then suggests examples of such midrashic reformulation of Num 11 and 20 (vv. 1–13), which form a concentric structure around the Kadesh tradition (Num 13–14).⁴²

Römer admits that there are old traditions preserved in Numbers, such as the Balaam tradition (Num 22–24*), the story of Baal Peor (Num 25*), parts of the conquest of Transjordan (Num 20–22*), and the priestly blessing (Num 6:24–26). However, these were separate traditions that did not constitute whole narrative strands. Römer is skeptical of the existence of an old wilderness narrative strand as assumed by Achenbach.⁴³ He argues therefore that Numbers was formulated very late, between 450 and 350 BCE.

Rainer Albertz previously accepted Blum’s *KD-KP* model in his socio-historical reconstruction of Israel’s history of religion.⁴⁴ Recently, however, he has developed his own, more complex model.⁴⁵ Especially for Numbers, he accepts Römer’s “bridge model” that emphasizes the diachronic gap between Exodus and Numbers in both Priestly and non-Priestly texts and suggests two

³⁹ See, e.g., Childs, *Exodus*, 260 ff.

⁴⁰ See Römer, “Der Pentateuch,” 146.

⁴¹ The “rolling corpus” model was suggested by William McKane for explaining the formation of the Book of Jeremiah. See McKane, *Jeremiah* (ICC), 1:1–lxxxiii; Römer, “Sojourn,” 427 ff.

⁴² Römer, “Sojourn,” 433 ff.

⁴³ See Römer, “Der Pentateuch,” 147.

⁴⁴ Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte Israels*, 2 vols (ET: *Israelite Religion*).

⁴⁵ Albertz, *Exodus 1–18*; idem, “Late Exilic Book”; idem, “Noncontinuous Literary Sources”; idem, “Pentateuchal Redaction”; idem, “Ex 33,7–11”; idem, “Buch Numeri (I)”; idem, “Buch Numeri (II).”

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