

JÜRIG HUTZLI

The Origins of P

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Jürg Hutzli

The Origins of P

Literary Profiles and Strata of the Priestly Texts
in Genesis 1 – Exodus 40

Mohr Siebeck

Jürg Hutzli, born 1963; 2005 PhD University of Bern; since 2012 Lecturer for Hebrew and Aramaic language and literature at the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne; 2019 habilitation, University of Zurich; 2020-2022 working on the project “Primus: Textuality in the Second Temple Judaism: Composition, Function, and Transmission of Texts”, Charles University Prague.

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Preface

This book is the revised version of my habilitation, submitted in 2019 to the University of Zurich. It is the result of a long-term study that began with analyses of Priestly texts in the book of Genesis. In its final form, the work includes analyses of all Priestly texts in Genesis–Exodus. Crucial questions concerning P, namely inner stratification, literary profile, historical setting, and relationship to the non-P “environment,” are analyzed separately for each Priestly unit or section. Each analysis begins with a discussion of the unit’s most important textual problems. This is followed by the larger analysis of the unit. At the end, a synthesis summarizes the results of the comprehensive analytical part with regard to the ensemble of the Priestly texts, the Priestly composition (P^c), and its later supplements.

The delimitation of the Priestly texts that form the basis of analysis for this study, i.e. the P texts in Genesis 1–Exodus 40, is the result of preliminary observations concerning the differences in profile between Priestly texts in Genesis on the one hand and those in Exodus on the other. These differences can only be demonstrated by a thorough analysis of all the relevant texts in both books. Since the study must address the important question of the relationship between the tabernacle account in Exod 25–29*, 39–40* and the Sinaitic sacrificial legislation, a preliminary survey of Lev 1–16 is included as well. Priestly(-like) texts in Leviticus, Numbers, and beyond would have stretched the scope of the work too far, and so the difficult question concerning the extent of the Priestly composition is addressed only briefly and provisionally.

An important result of this study is the conclusion that the Priestly texts form a stratum that is more composite and less homogeneous than was previously thought. Existing studies of P emphasize the presence of corresponding elements at the end of the opening text (Gen 2:1–3) and the end of the tabernacle account (Exod 39–40). The choice of shared vocabulary creates a parallel between the achievement of creation and that of the tabernacle’s construction. However, thematic imbalances and theological tensions between different sections and units often go unobserved in studies on P. In addition to the construction and inauguration of the tabernacle, P^c has a second focus: the covenants with Noah and with Abraham. Single units like Gen 1, the Priestly flood story, and the Priestly Abraham narrative have their own distinct theologies that do not fit that of the comprehensive Priestly composition in every respect. Furthermore, as recent studies by E. Blum, J. C. Gertz, and J. Wöhrle point out, the literary profile of P is not the same in every section. Some units have characteristics of autonomous composition, whereas others depend conceptually or even syntactically on non-P narratives and should therefore be considered redactional. This observation suggests a rejection of the controversial and overly simplistic binary of “source

or redaction.” Yet, in contrast to the three aforementioned scholars, who attribute both the source texts and the redactional texts within the P stratum to the same literary layer (Priestly *Grundschrift* [P^G] / Priestly Composition [P^C]), the present study assigns the two dissimilar literary profiles to distinct literary strata: the source texts, which are present in the primeval history and the Abraham narrative, predate the redactional texts, which are predominantly found in the other sections. While the former should be assigned to a proto-Priestly level, the latter bear typical characteristics of the comprehensive Priestly composition.

Since the study provides a detailed survey of the multifaceted textual and literary problems of the Priestly texts in Genesis–Exodus, it can be read as a comprehensive critical commentary on P in this larger section. In this capacity, the study should be useful for many readers who are interested in the Priestly texts and their discussion in traditional and recent research.

I am grateful to many people who assisted me in various ways during my study. I thank in particular Prof. Thomas Römer and Prof. Konrad Schmid for their support; they have been committed discussion partners during various phases of this work. I benefitted from the constructive and encouraging habilitation reports by Prof. Konrad Schmid and Prof. Thomas Krüger. I would like to thank Dr. Jan Rückl, Axel Bühler, Dr. Jordan Davis, and Prof. Nathan MacDonald (in chronological order) for reading parts of the manuscript and for subsequent fruitful discussions. I have also presented certain sections of the study at symposia and project meetings and received valuable comments; particularly worthy of note is the Sinergia project “The History of the Pentateuch. Combining Literary and Archaeological Approaches” (hosted by the Universities of Lausanne, Tel Aviv, and Zurich). The discussions in this framework widened my focus to include additional observations from archaeology, historical geography, and material culture in the investigation. I also benefited from participating in the stimulating project “Primus: Textuality in Second Temple Judaism: Composition, Function and Transmission of Texts,” Charles University, Prague. Exchanges on the book’s topics and texts with my colleagues at the Institute of Biblical Studies at the University of Lausanne, in particular Dr. Jaeyoung Jeon, Prof. Jean-Daniel Macchi, and Alain Bühlmann, have also been helpful and pleasant.

I also thank Dr. Sarah Sheckman for her insightful editing of the manuscript and for her valuable comments, Dr. Samuel Arnet for his attentive help in preparing the final print file and Nina Jaillet and my wife Carmelia Pinheiro Hutzli for their efficient support in verifying the biblical references and creating the indexes.

I. Introduction

1. State of Research and Preliminary Considerations concerning Profiles and Strata of the Priestly Literature

1.1 The Theory of P: Evidence and Open Questions

The Priestly literature is easily identifiable through its style (repetition, concentric structure), certain particular linguistic features (distinct vocabulary, designation for God), and coherent theological convictions (theonym theology, monotheism). It is striking that most scholars, for several decades, have agreed in ascribing the same texts of the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers to P (P^G/P^C, P^S, H).¹ When it comes to the general attribution of texts to P or to non-P, only a few verses are disputed.²

There are nonetheless several important open questions concerning this theory: (1) the demarcation of the document, that is, the identification of its “endpoint” (Exod 40; Lev 9; 16; Deut 34:7–9; Josh 18:1; 19:51); (2) the literary profile (is P composed as a source or as a redaction layer?); (3) the inner stratification of the Priestly writings (for some texts, which traditionally are, as an ensemble, assigned to P^G/P^C, a diachronic differentiation between two or more layers seems necessary; i.e., a differentiation between proto-P and the Priestly composition [P^C], or between P^C and P^S, or between P^C and H); and (4) the historical locations of the identified Priestly layers.

(1) The difficulty of demarcating P lies in the identification of its endpoint: strong arguments for each position have been put forward, yet no theory is completely convincing or without problems.

The classical theory that the report of Moses’s death (Deut 34) is P^G’s end encounters difficulty in the lack of a coherent and self-contained P thread in the book of Numbers.³ Notably, the language of Deut 34:7–9, traditionally ascribed to P, is not typ-

¹For an explanation of the sigla, see below I.2.7.

²See the compilations in K. ELLIGER, “Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung,” *ZTK* 49 (1952): 121–22, and N. LOHFINK, “Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte,” in *Congress Volume: Göttingen, 1977*, ed. J. A. Emerton, *VTSup* 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 198, n. 29, which are basically in agreement with Nöldeke’s detailed reconstruction from 1869 (T. NÖLDEKE, *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments* [Kiel: Schweser, 1869]). According to the isolated view of G. Fischer, however, the Priestly texts cannot be divorced from their context; see G. FISCHER, “Keine Priesterschrift in Ex 1–15?,” *ZTK* 117 (1995): 203–11.

³Scholars who have put forward this theory include M. NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuchs*, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960), 181–208; ELLIGER, “Sinn”; C. FREVEL, *Mit Blick auf das Land die Schöpfung erinnern: Zum Ende der Priestergrundschrift*, HBS 23 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000); J. BADEN, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

ical of P.⁴ Similar problems apply to the idea that P would end with the achievement of control over the land by Joshua (Josh 18:1 or Josh 19:51).⁵ With regard to these problems and to linguistic differences between the Priestly texts in Genesis–Exodus on the one hand and those in Numbers on the other, T. Pola has postulated Exod 40 as the endpoint of P.⁶ Pola was followed by E. Otto,⁷ who argues that P ends in Exod 29. But this proposal raises the question whether the account of the construction of the sanctuary (or perhaps only the construction order) makes sense without the description of the sacrificial cult. In this vein, E. Zenger and C. Nihan regard the cult regulations in Lev 1–9 or Lev 1–16, respectively, as part of P^G.⁸ More generally, one might also ask whether the idea of a report beginning in a universal manner with the world’s creation but ending abruptly in the desert is plausible.⁹

(2) One of the most contentious points in the actual debate on P is the question whether P was written as an independent or autonomous document, that is, as a source, or whether it was, from its very beginning, composed as a redaction layer.

P’s distinct ideological tendency, which deviates strikingly from the non-P texts, is used as an argument to support the source theory.¹⁰ Aspects of P’s ideological out-

⁴ Cf. L. PERLITT, “Priesterschrift im Deuteronomium?,” in *Lebendige Forschung im Alten Testament*, ed. O. Kaiser, BZAW 100 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 65–87.

⁵ LOHFINK, “Die Priesterschrift,” 198, n. 29; E. A. KNAUF, “Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichten der Deuteronomisten,” in *The Future of Deuteronomistic History*, ed. T. Römer, BETL 147 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 101–18; IDEM, *Josua*, ZBK 6 (Zurich: TVZ, 2008), 19–20; P. GUILLAUME, *Land and Calendar: The Priestly Document from Genesis 1 to Joshua 18* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009).

⁶ T. POLA, *Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift: Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von P^G*, WMANT 70 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995) (P ends in Exod 40:33b). Pola was followed by M. BAUKS, “Genesis 1 als Programmschrift der Priesterschrift (P^G),” in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History*, ed. A. Wénin, BETL 155 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 333–45, who sees the end of P in Exod 40:34b (345), and R. G. KRATZ, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*, trans. J. Bowden (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 243, who puts the end of P in Exod 40:34.

⁷ E. OTTO, “Forschungen zur Priesterschrift,” *TRu* 62 (1997): 35.

⁸ E. ZENGER, “Priesterschrift,” *TRE* 27:435–46; C. NIHAN, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus*, FAT II/25 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

⁹ Cf. E. BLUM, “Issues and Problems in the Contemporary Debate Regarding the Priestly Writings,” in *The Strata of the Priestly Writings: Contemporary Debate and Future Directions*, ed. S. Shectman and J. Baden, ATANT 95 (Zurich: TVZ, 2009), 41.

¹⁰ Scholars who consider P a source include (among others) LOHFINK, “Die Priesterschrift,” 183–225 = IDEM, *Studien zum Pentateuch*, SBAB 4 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988), 213–53; K. KOCH, “P – kein Redaktor! Erinnerung an zwei Eckdaten der Quellenscheidung,” *VT* 37 (1987): 446–67; P. WEIMAR, “Gen 17 und die priesterliche Abrahamsgeschichte,” *ZAW* 100 (1988): 52–60; D. CARR, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 43–140; A. DE PURY, “Abraham: The Priestly Writer’s ‘Ecumenical’ Ancestor,” in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible; Essays in Honor of John Van Seters*, ed. S. L. McKenzie, T. Römer, and H. H. Schmid, BZAW 294 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 163–81 = IDEM, *Die Patriarchen und die Priesterschrift / Les Patriarches et le document sacerdotal: Gesammelte Studien zu seinem 70. Geburtstag / Recueil*

line pointed out or asserted by scholars are strict monotheism, “theonym theology” (YHWH reveals his name only at Sinai), and strict cult centralization (cult and sacrifice begin only in the Sinai, after the consecration of the tabernacle). Because of P’s marked (albeit not always consistent) theological tendency, many scholars reject the idea that P was written as a redaction layer built on already existing non-P compositions that do not share its ideological maxims. Another argument put forward in favor of the source theory is the fact that in certain sections P and non-P share the same content, creating doublets. This particular textual-profile element is explained as resulting from the combination of the P source with the non-P source by a redactor. Yet, other scholars reply that in such cases one of the two textual strands is interpreting and correcting the other.

Scholars advocating the redaction model point to certain sections of P that show significant dependence on non-P texts. Major gaps are visible in the Priestly narrative thread, rendering P incomprehensible without the neighboring non-P texts.¹¹ In response, scholars defending the source model claim that P is a separate, autonomous document that was written “in constant relation to non-P material.”¹² What remains, however, is the problem of the gaps in the narrative of P. Some argue that passages were lost during the process of joining together the non-P and P texts, but this explanation does not take into account that there are entire sections in P where no gaps are visible, as for instance in the Priestly texts of the primeval history and in the Terah-Abraham narrative. Most of these latter texts do not seem to be dependent on or related to non-P texts, for example, Gen 1* (base layer), the Priestly flood story, the Priestly version of the Table of Nations, and the bulk of P’s Abraham narrative. The question of dependence is of course also disputed for these texts and must be examined for each unit, but this disparity, if confirmed by further investigation, favors E. Blum’s idea that some P texts were composed as autonomous narratives, whereas others were written as revisions of non-Priestly texts.¹³

d’articles, à l’occasion de son 70e anniversaire, ed. J.-D. Macchi, T. Römer, and K. Schmid, ATANT 99 (Zurich: TVZ, 2010), 73–89 (74); T. RÖMER, “The Exodus Narrative according to the Priestly Document,” in *The Strata of the Priestly Writings: Contemporary Debate and Future Directions*, ed. S. Shectman and J. Baden, ATANT 95 (Zurich: TVZ, 2009), 158–59.

¹¹ Cf. F. M. CROSS, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of Religion in Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 301–22; J. VAN SETERS, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 279–85; R. RENDTORFF, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch*, trans. J. J. Scullion, JSOTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 136–70; C. BERNER, *Die Exoduserzählung: Das literarische Werden einer Ursprungslegende Israels*, FAT 73 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); R. ALBERTZ, *Exodus 1–18*, ZBK 2.1 (Zurich: TVZ, 2012); IDEM, *Exodus 19–40*, ZBK 2.2 (Zurich: TVZ, 2015); H. UTSCHNEIDER and W. OSWALD, *Exodus 1–15*, IEKAT (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2013).

¹² Cf. CARR, *Reading*, 47.

¹³ E. BLUM, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, BZAW 189 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 229–85; IDEM, “Noch einmal: Das literargeschichtliche Profil der P-Überlieferung,” in *Abschied von der Priesterschrift? Zum Stand der Pentateuchdebatte*, ed. F. Hartenstein and K. Schmid, VWGT 40 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 32–64. See also R. H. PFEIFFER, “A

(3) The question of the inner differentiation of P is necessarily linked with that of its extent. If P^G/P^C is limited to texts found in Genesis–Exodus (or Gen–Lev 9/16), then the P texts of Numbers must be attributed to P^S (that is, they must be secondary P texts). Most scholars ascribe Lev 17–26 to a separate document, the so-called Holiness Code (H), and recently several scholars have assigned additional P texts to authors close to H.¹⁴ With the exception of these latter, studies and commentaries on P often give the impression that in terms of their style and theology P^G/P^C and H are both coherent and uniform entities. Redaction-critical differentiations within P (in its entirety or in large part) – see, for instance, the studies of von Rad or P. Weimar – have not had a great impact in the interpretation of the Priestly writings.¹⁵ Nevertheless, we should address the question whether we can, from a literary and conceptual perspective, interpret P^C, P^S, and H as monolithic blocks and whether the attribution of all P texts to one of these three strata is evident in every case.¹⁶ Several observations contradict this assumption. First, there are indications favoring the idea that several P texts are based on sources with distinct stylistic and ideological features. This is especially the case with the creation narrative of Gen 1, certain genealogical lists (Genesis),

Non-Israelite Source of the Book of Genesis,” *ZAW* 48 (1930): 67; J. C. GERTZ, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch*, FRLANT 186 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 391; IDEM, “Genesis 5: Priesterliche Redaktion, Komposition oder Quellschrift?,” in *Abschied von der Priesterschrift? Zum Stand der Pentateuchdebatte*, ed. F. Hartenstein and K. Schmid, VWGT 40 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 91; J. WÖHRLE, *Fremdlinge im eigenen Land: Zur Entstehung und Intention der priesterlichen Passagen der Vätergeschichte*, FRLANT 246 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 147–60.

¹⁴I. KNOHL, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995); J. MILGROM, *Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1344; IDEM, “H_R in Leviticus and Elsewhere in the Torah,” in *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception*, ed. R. Rendtorff, R. A. Kugler, with the Assistance of Sarah Smith Bartlet, VTSup 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 24–40; J. WÖHRLE, “The Integrative Function of the Law of Circumcision,” in *The Foreigner and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. R. Achenbach, R. Albertz, and J. Wöhrle, BZABR 16 (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 2011), 71–87.

¹⁵G. VON RAD, *Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch literarisch untersucht und theologisch gewertet*, BWANT 65 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1934). Cf. the influential refutation of von Rad’s thesis by P. HUMBERT, “Die literarische Zweifelt des Priester-Codex in der Genesis (Kritische Untersuchung der These von von Rad),” *ZAW* 58 (1940–41): 30–57. For Weimar’s redaction-critical studies, see P. WEIMAR, “Chaos und Kosmos: Gen 1,2 als Schlüssel einer älteren Fassung der priesterschriftlichen Schöpfungserzählung,” in *Mythos im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt: Festschrift für Hans-Peter Müller zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger, and D. Römheld, BZAW 278 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 196–211; IDEM, “Die Toledot-Formel in der priesterschriftlichen Geschichtsdarstellung,” *BZ* 18 (1974): 84–87; IDEM, “Gen 17,” 22–60; IDEM, *Die Meerwundererzählung: Eine redaktionskritische Analyse von Ex 13,17–14,31*, ÄAT 9 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1985), 175–99.

¹⁶This question is one of the starting points of the collected essays in F. HARTENSTEIN and K. SCHMID, eds., *Abschied von der Priesterschrift? Zum Stand der Pentateuchdebatte*, VWGT 40 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015).

and also the specific stipulations for sacrifice (Leviticus). Many scholars assume that an originally independent and ancient “book of *tôlēḏōt*” existed. Second, certain texts like those belonging to the *tôlēḏōt* framework and to the network of statements concerning the ancestors’ ages (which are traditionally attributed to P) depend on non-P texts, which raises the question whether these texts really are part of the Priestly composition (as commonly supposed) or belong to later redaction layers. In general, the observation (see 2, above) that P constitutes an uninterrupted thread in some sections and in others consists of only a few short, punctual statements and passages bears directly on the question of inner differentiation. This variation in P’s literary profile might indicate different literary strata: Where P constitutes an independent, continuous, and self-contained strand, it *may* constitute an autonomous *proto*-Priestly composition. Where P builds on the non-P strand and reinterprets it, one should consider it a redaction layer that aims to combine a (proto-)P and a non-P section in order to create a more comprehensive composition.

(4) Most European and North American scholars agree in dating the Priestly composition in the late Neo-Babylonian (second third of the sixth century BCE) or the early Persian period (last third of the sixth and beginning of the fifth century BCE).¹⁷ They follow the arguments of nineteenth-century scholars such as E. Reuss, A. Kuenen, and J. Wellhausen in part. The “revolutionary” historical location of P (youngest source, from the exilic/postexilic period) by those scholars was and is still a cornerstone of biblical research. The point of departure for this theory was the observation by Reuss, taken up by K. H. Graf and Kuenen, that the Priestly cultic laws are not known either in the historical books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings or in the writings of the preexilic prophets and therefore postdate them.¹⁸ In Wellhausen’s theory, the main argument for the postexilic date of P was that Deuteronomistic cult centralization was presupposed or even taken for granted by this source.¹⁹ Nowadays, not all of these arguments carry the same weight. Several scholars consider the possibility that some of the stipulations in Lev 1–5 stem from preexilic times,²⁰ and the

¹⁷ Cf. T. RÖMER, “Der Pentateuch,” in *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments: Neuauflage*, ed. W. Dietrich et al., Theologische Wissenschaft 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014), 93.

¹⁸ J. CONRAD, *Karl Heinrich Grafs Arbeit am Alten Testament: Studien zu einer wissenschaftlichen Biographie*, ed. U. Becker, BZAW 425 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 73–178; A. KUENEN, *Historisch-critisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des Ouden Verbonds I* (Leiden: Engels, 1861) = IDEM, *A Historical-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch*, trans. H. P. Wicksteed (London: Macmillan, 1886), 140.

¹⁹ J. WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin: Reimer, 1895), 412 = IDEM, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 404–5; repr. of *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. J. Sutherland Black and A. Menzies, with preface by W. Robertson Smith (Edinburgh: Black, 1885). Wellhausen is followed by BLUM, “Issues and Problems,” 32.

²⁰ For different views on the origins of these texts, cf. M. NOTH, *Das dritte Buch Mose: Leviticus*, ATD 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 11–12; R. RENDTORFF, *Leviticus*, BK 3.1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 5–7, 20–21; NIHAN, *From Priestly Torah*, 198–231.

extent of the Josianic reform is also debated. Furthermore, Wellhausen's claim that cult centralization is presupposed by P has been questioned by Y. Kaufmann and continues to be challenged by scholars.²¹ T. Römer, for example, argues that the localization of the sanctuary in the wilderness (Sinai) might express the authors' neutrality toward competition or conflict between different ΥHWH sanctuaries in the Persian era.²²

Other scholars, following Kaufmann, argue for a preexilic date on the grounds of linguistic dating of P. A. Hurvitz inferred from amassed biblical lexicographical data that P was written in "Classical Biblical Hebrew" and therefore would date from the preexilic period. He is guided by two criteria: the listed vocabulary consists (1) of Priestly terms that are absent from Ezekiel and that establish the chronological priority of P vis-a-vis Ezekiel (e.g., זָבַח , "sacrifice") and (2) of Priestly terms that are replaced by a synonym in Late Biblical Hebrew (e.g., שֵׁשׁ , "linen," replaced by בִּגְדֵי , "linen").²³ More nuanced is the study by R. Polzin who differentiates between P^G and P^S and assigns the two strata to a transitional stage.²⁴ Scholars defending a setting in exilic or postexilic eras question the conclusion drawn from linguistic data assuming that later authors would have been able to adapt to the conventions of Classical Biblical Hebrew.²⁵ They furthermore point out terms and themes in P that are typical of postexilic writings.²⁶

In current scholarship additional arguments favoring a setting at the end of the Babylonian or the beginning of the Persian era have been put forward and are gaining influence. Scholars point to the proximity of P to texts in Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, with which it shares vocabulary and ideological motifs.²⁷

²¹ Y. KAUFMANN, *The Religion of Israel from Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. M. Greenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960). Kaufmann maintained that the P prescriptions were meant to regulate cultic practice at local sanctuaries. See also J. MILGROM, "Priestly ('P') Source," *ABD* 5:460.

²² Cf. RÖMER, "Der Pentateuch," 92. See also ALBERTZ, *Exodus 19–40*, 193–94, and KNAUF, *Josua*, 19.

²³ A. HURWITZ, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem*, Cahiers de la Revue biblique 20 (Paris: Gabalda, 1982). See also IDEM, "Dating the Priestly Source in Light of the Historical Study of Biblical Hebrew a Century after Wellhausen," *ZAW* 100 (1988): 88–100. G. RENDSBURG, "Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of 'P,'" *JANESQU* 12 (1980): 65–80 and J. MILGROM, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 3–5, basically agree with Hurvitz.

²⁴ Polzin establishes the chronological sequence "JE – Court History – Dtr – P^G – P^S – Chronicles"; see R. POLZIN, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose*, HSM 12 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 85–122.

²⁵ See the detailed discussion below I.2.6.2 (lit.).

²⁶ See B. LEVINE, "Late Language in the Priestly Source: Some Literary and Historical Observations," *WJCS* 8 (1983), 69–82.

²⁷ Cf. T. POLA, "Back to the Future: The Twofold Priestly Concept of History," in *Torah and the Book of Numbers*, ed. C. Frevel, T. Pola, and A. Scharf, FAT II/62 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 39–65; J. JEON, "A Source of P? The Priestly Exodus Account and the Book of Ezekiel," *Semitica* 58 (2016): 77–92.

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