

# The Historical Location of P

Edited by  
JÜRGEN HUTZLI  
and JORDAN DAVIS

*Archaeology and Bible*  
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**Mohr Siebeck**

# Archaeology and Bible

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# The Historical Location of P

Reconsidering the Priestly Texts  
in Light of Material Culture  
and Geographical Indications

Edited by

Jürg Hutzli and Jordan Davis

Mohr Siebeck

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## Preface

This collected volume resulted from a broader project entitled “The History of the Pentateuch: Combining Literary and Archaeological Approaches,” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (Sinergia project CRSII160785). The project – a joint venture of the universities of Zurich, Lausanne and Tel Aviv – was directed by Konrad Schmid (Zurich), Christophe Nihan and Thomas Römer (Lausanne), and Israel Finkelstein and Oded Lipschits (Tel Aviv).

The “History of the Pentateuch” Project was subdivided into three key fields of investigation:

1. The Cultural and Historical World behind Genesis 25–50
2. The Historical Geography of the Priestly Document and of the Priestly Literature in the Book of Numbers
3. Sanctuaries, Cult, and Ritual in Ancient Israel and Ancient Judah

The present volume is the result of the conference for sub-project 2, which was held in Lausanne in 2019 (“The Historical Location of “P” – Language, Geography and Material Culture”). The guiding thematic idea of the conference was to determine the historical setting and date of the Priestly literature via analysis of linguistic singularities, toponyms, and the material culture reflected in the texts. Our volume comprises eleven essays in total. Of the three criteria dealt with at the Lausanne conference, unfortunately only ‘geography’ and ‘material culture’ have made it to print. Nevertheless, we believe that they are dealt with accurately and make up a substantial volume on the “historical location of P”. The volume contains also a detailed introduction to the history of research on our topic.

As arguably *the* dominant voice in the Pentateuch (de Pury’s “Absolute Beginning”), a clearer understanding of the historical background and social milieu of the Priestly Writings is essential.<sup>1</sup> Greater precision in dating various texts – favored by reflection on the choice of relevant criteria – allows for the potential of better interpretation, not only of the “Priestly” writings but also of the stratification to be found within the Pentateuch. This volume is not, and

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<sup>1</sup> Albert de Pury, “Pg as the Absolute Beginning,” pages 99–128 in *Les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, de l’Hexateuque et de l’Ennéateuque*, BETL 203, ed. Thomas C. Römer and Konrad Schmid (Paris: Leuven University Press, 2007).

cannot, be exhaustive, but seeks to offer various perspectives on this issue, which we hope will inspire further research in a similar direction.

The preparation of our volume has undergone some serious and unforeseen delays, partly related to the pandemic, which we regret. In particular, we are saddened that one of the contributors, Eliezer Oren, Professor Emeritus at Ben-Gurion University, Israel, passed away before the publication of our volume. May his memory be a blessing.

We would like to thank our contributors for their patience, their contribution, and their attendance at the conference in Lausanne. We would also like to thank Sarah Shectman and John Will Rice for their careful diligence in providing English correction and copy-editing expertise.

September 2025

Jordan Davis and Jürg Hutzli

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# The Historical Location of the Priestly Writings

## An Introduction

*Jürg Hutzli and Jordan Davis*

### 1. History of Research

The most striking event in the history of P research is certainly the relatively sudden change in 19<sup>th</sup> century scholarship from the view of P as the oldest source to the conviction that P is the youngest layer. How exactly did this happen? Scholars highly valued the importance and influence of the Priestly writings from very early on and therefore supposed that they must form the “Grundschrift” (“base-layer”) of the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch), a coherent, originally independent document. Another label for this literary stratum was “Elohist” (or “Elohim document”; in correspondence to the designation of God of this stratum in the book of Genesis). In two of the three competing models of Pentateuch formation at that time, the documentary theory on the one hand, and the complementary hypothesis on the other, the Priestly layer played this eminent role. In 1853, Hermann Hupfeld presented the Documentary Hypothesis in a form that was to have great influence in the following years and decades.<sup>1</sup> In his study on the book of Genesis, he identified three sources, all of which would continue in the following books and cover the Pentateuch: Elohist 1 (= “Urschrift”; P), Elohist 2 (=Elohist; E), Jhvist (=Jahvist, J). Shortly later, Theodor Nöldeke showed in a thorough study on the entire Hexateuch that the “Grundschrift” could be relatively easily separated from the other sources used by the later Yahwist due to its distinctive content and style (1869).<sup>2</sup> Nöldeke’s demarcation of the Priestly stratum in Genesis und Exodus 1–14 has changed relatively minimally to the present day.<sup>3</sup> The Priestly writings were conceived

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<sup>1</sup> Hupfeld, *Quellen*.

<sup>2</sup> Nöldeke, *Untersuchungen*.

<sup>3</sup> See the compilations in Elliger, “Sinn,” 121–22; Lohfink, “Die Priesterschrift,” 198, n. 29; Guillaume, *Land*, 193–195. Nevertheless, not a few units within the identified Priestly strand are denied belonging to the basic stratum of P (or to P at all) by scholars (see below, n. 30).

to be the product of the early Judean monarchy, written by priests or Levites who wanted to enhance the legitimization of the Solomonic Temple.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, a few scholars, while adhering to the documentary model or at least to the historical-critical approach, questioned the early date of the legal texts of the “Grundschrift.” As early as 1833, Édouard (Eduard) Reuss, taught in Strasbourg that the Priestly cultic laws were not known in the books of Judges and Samuel nor in the prophetic literature of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE and should therefore be dated later than the code of Deuteronomy, which is alluded to in Jeremiah. However, Reuss refrained from publishing his theses because “they were in part diametrically opposed to what the *communis opinio* permitted.”<sup>5</sup> But his insight was later taken up by his student Karl Heinrich (Charles Henri) Graf. In *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (1866), Graf affirmed that the Priestly laws were neither presupposed in Deuteronomy, nor in the historical books (Judges, Samuel, Kings) nor in the writings of the pre-exilic prophets.<sup>6</sup> A consensus had developed on the dating of Deuteronomy since de Wette’s identification with the book found under Josiah; the setting of the Priestly Cultic Laws had to be later. Nevertheless, Graf maintained that the “Elohist” (i.e., the Priestly stratum) in Genesis was the earliest stratum in that book.<sup>7</sup> Some time before (1862), Julius Popper, a Jewish German scholar, wrote a monograph on the two strongly deviating versions of the Tabernacle account in MT on the one hand and LXX on the other, also addressing the question of the dating of the Tabernacle account(s). He came to the conclusion that the second section, the fulfillment account in Exodus 35–40, was composed in two stages, namely in the first half of the 3rd century BCE and afterwards (during and after the [first] translation of the Septuagint of Exodus was

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<sup>4</sup> See Nöldeke, *Untersuchungen*, 127–128; 138–139. De Wette, *Introduction*, 24–26, situated some parts of the “Elohim”-document already in the times of Samuel.

<sup>5</sup> (Les thèses) “étaient en partie diamétralement opposées à ce qu’admettait l’opinion générale, si bien que j’hésitais à les produire devant le public provisoirement encore trop engagé dans l’ancienne ornière”, see Reuss, *L’histoire sainte et la loi*, 23, n. 1. For a sketch of his position (written 1878 in retrospect) see *ibidem* (p. 23–24). Brief allusions to his intuitive insight can already be found in his encyclopaedical article on Judaism from 1850: Reuss, “Judenthum,” 334; 337.

<sup>6</sup> Graf, “Bücher”, 8–55; 69–71.

<sup>7</sup> Shortly later (1869), however, after a private correspondence with Kuenen (cf. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 11, n. 1), he dated the narrative parts of P after the “Jehovist” (=J) and assigned them to the same author as the Priestly cultic legislation (cf. Graf, “Die s.g. Grundschrift”). Two reasons prompted Graf to correct his model (see *ibidem*, 467–470). Firstly, the observation of a shared vocabulary between the Priestly cultic laws and the circumcision law in Gen 17 (which for Graf was “inseparable” from the Priestly “Grundschrift” of Genesis), and secondly the recognition of the “Jehowistic” texts (=J) in Genesis as a source rather than redactional additions; concerning this second argument, he was influenced by Hupfeld’s analysis.

completed.).<sup>8</sup> Popper was more hesitant about the date of composition of the earlier instruction section (before or after Ezekiel?).<sup>9</sup> Graf was influenced by Popper's study when dating the Priestly cultic law. He reckoned with a long period of redaction of the Priestly cultic law texts from the Neo-Babylonian period until their compilation by Ezra and even afterwards.<sup>10</sup> Subsequently, the Dutch scholar Abraham Kuenen accepted Graf's theory, although he modified it at an important point. He considered the narrative parts of the Elohist source ("P") as "post-Jehovist" (post-J) and stemming from the author of the Priestly cultic legislation; with this, he returned to viewing P as an unified stratum, but as the latest among the presumed Hexateuch sources (*De Godsdienst van Israël*, 1869/1870).<sup>11</sup>

The debates regarding the dating of various texts of the Pentateuch continued. The arguments put forward by Reuss, Graf, Popper and Kuenen to radically push the Priestly writings (or parts of them) to a later date had found little support in scholarship. It was Wellhausen who brought about the breakthrough of the "New Documentary Hypothesis." While relying on the ideas of his predecessors, Wellhausen endeavored to examine and substantiate the theory more systematically in relation to the history of composition of the historical books on the one hand and the history of Israel's cult and traditions on the other (1876–78).<sup>12</sup> In his *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, he demonstrated in detail, how the Priestly cultic legislation with its descriptions of the magnificent desert tent, furniture and sacrifices *materialiter* did not fit into the pre-

<sup>8</sup> Popper, *Bericht*, 179–183.

<sup>9</sup> Popper, *Bericht*, 208: "Auffallen muss indess (...), wie Ezechiel hier Vorschriften für den Priesterdienst und die Zadokiden anführt, ohne auch nur mit einer Sylbe der im Pentateuch längst vorhandenen, theils sehr abweichenden, uralten mosaischen Bestimmungen zu erwähnen (...) – so dass in der That die Frage entsteht (...): sind die gesetzlichen Bestimmungen in unserem Pentateuch älter, oder ist der Standpunkt in jener Gesetzesentwicklung, wie wir sie beim Ezechiel finden, das Frühere?" ("It must, however, be noted [...] how Ezekiel here cites regulations for the priestly service and the Zadokites without any hint at the ancient Mosaic regulations [...] that have long been present in the Pentateuch, some of which are very different [...] so that in fact the question arises [...]: are the legal regulations in our Pentateuch older, or is the stage of the development of law, as we find it in Ezekiel, the earlier one?").

<sup>10</sup> Graf, "Bücher," 71–75; 86–87. For Graf ("Bücher," 75), the Priestly texts are only reflected and presupposed among the late biblical books in Chronicles (dated to the beginning of the Hellenistic period), an argument that had been put forward by Popper (*Bericht*, 179–180) as well.

<sup>11</sup> Engl. Translation, *The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State* (1875), vol. 2, 192–194.

<sup>12</sup> See Wellhausen, *Composition*; idem, *Geschichte Israels* (later labelled: *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*).

exilic period.<sup>13</sup> Regarding the crucial question of the literary-historical relationship with Deuteronomy, a key argument related to cult centralization is put forward by Wellhausen. He noted that it was often erroneously assumed that P had little interest in cult centralization. On the contrary he highlighted:

The assumption that worship is restricted to one single centre runs everywhere throughout the entire document... The tabernacle is not narrative merely, but, like all the narratives in that book, law as well; it expresses the legal unity of the worship as an historical fact, which, from the very beginning, ever since the exodus, has held good in Israel.<sup>14</sup>

Having this strong concern, P depended on and presupposed the Deuteronomist's claim of cult centralization. Another important point of reference for P's historical location was the composition of Ezekiel 40–48.<sup>15</sup> The latter, like Deuteronomy and the Priestly Code originating from the Jerusalem priesthood, takes an intermediate chronological position between the two other works. When coming to the concrete dating of the Priestly materials, Wellhausen argued first approximately for both terminus post and ante quem. Regarding the former he wrote, "How absolutely unknown the Priestly Code continued to be even down to the middle of the exile can be seen from the Books of Kings, which cannot have received their present shape earlier than the death of Nebuchadnezzar."<sup>16</sup> As for the latter, Wellhausen advanced an argument that had been previously put forward by Popper and Graf:<sup>17</sup> "And how comes it to pass that in the Book of Chronicles, dating from the third century, the Priestly Code suddenly ceases to be, to all outward seeming, dead, but asserts its influence everywhere over the narrative in only too active and unmistakable way?"<sup>18</sup> In the course of the argument, Wellhausen narrowed down the date a little. Since, according to him, Ezra promulgated the Pentateuch in 444 BCE, the codification of the Priestly document as result of labor of many years must have taken place sometime earlier in the Persian period.<sup>19</sup> Thanks to this refinement of the Reuss-Graf-Kuenen hypothesis, it was Wellhausen who was able to convince European researchers in particular of the reverse order of the sources: JEDP. This four-source model, with P as the latest source, remained incredibly powerful for almost the entirety of the twentieth century. As Carr states:

This basic four source theory for the formation of the Pentateuch (...) could be presupposed as given by most scholars writing on Pentateuchal topics for over a hundred years. It held

<sup>13</sup> Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 17–81.

<sup>14</sup> Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 34.

<sup>15</sup> Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 59–60, 404.

<sup>16</sup> Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 48.

<sup>17</sup> See above, footnote 10.

<sup>18</sup> Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 49.

<sup>19</sup> Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 408–409.

sway over virtually all academic biblical scholarship, particularly in Euro-American contexts more or less linked to Protestant Christianity, from the rise of the Wellhausenian synthesis in the late nineteenth hundreds to the later decades of the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, some scholars, though accepting the documentary hypothesis, remained reticent concerning the late dating of the Priestly writings, in particular Jewish researchers. In Yehezkel Kaufmann's view (1933, 1937), contrary to that of Wellhausen, P reflects a situation with several local sanctuaries. He observed "it is not only that P fails formally to prohibit the cult at the high places; none of the concepts that are peculiar to Deuteronomy are present in P."<sup>21</sup> Several Israeli scholars followed (and still follow) Kaufmann in dating P to the preexilic era but with partly different arguments: Avi Hurvitz argued for a preexilic date on the basis of linguistic dating of P. He inferred from amassed biblical lexicographical data that P was written in "Classical Biblical Hebrew" and therefore would date from the preexilic period.<sup>22</sup> Similar arguments on both linguistic and ideological grounds, are advanced by Jacob Milgrom in his magisterial Leviticus commentary.<sup>23</sup> Some of these arguments also inspired European research (without, however, the latter abandoning the late dating of the comprehensive Priestly composition). Wellhausen's claim that cult centralization is a central concern of P continues to be challenged, also by European scholars. Thomas 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 YHWH sanctuaries in the Persian era.<sup>24</sup>

The trend within European scholarship in particular, was and still is to see Pg/Pc as the product of the late Babylonian or Persian period. For several scholars the peaceful world view of P reflects the Persian *oikumene*.<sup>25</sup> They often argue with special regard to the genealogy of Gen 10 as reflecting the Persian imperial policy. This interpretation, however, has recently been challenged with regard to certain geographical data in the Priestly Table of Nations

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<sup>20</sup> Carr, "Changes," 434.

<sup>21</sup> Kaufmann, *Religion*, 176.

<sup>22</sup> Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*

<sup>23</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 5–12.

<sup>24</sup> Römer, "Der Pentateuch," 92. See also Albertz, *Exodus 19–40*, 193–194. James Watts ("The Torah as the Rhetoric") sees the requirement for centralization of the cult expressed in P, but understands the principle differently: the Priestly author was less concerned with spatial centralization than with the monopoly of the Aaronide priesthood over the cultic service. According to Watts, the logic of centralization would allow the uniform cult to be held at multiple shrines.

<sup>25</sup> Vink, "date;" Köckert, "Land," 150, n. 16; de Pury, "Pg as the Absolute Beginning," 115–116; Nihan, "L'écrit sacerdotal," 185–86; Schmid, "Ecumenicity," 4–9.

(notably the absence of Persia) which are interpreted as pointing to a pre-Persian era as historical background.<sup>26</sup> Scholars also point to the proximity of certain Priestly texts to passages in Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, with which they share vocabulary and ideological motifs.<sup>27</sup> Other specific arguments put forward in favor of the Persian period include aspects of material culture reflected in the tabernacle account, such as details of the high priest's garment in Exod 28.<sup>28</sup>

Yet, the circumstances surrounding our question have changed in recent decades. In the turmoil of the collapse of the documentary hypothesis at the end of the last century in Europe, P was the only putative source that survived – but only halfway. To be sure, observations on overarching compositional structures and punctual (but not consistent) terminological correspondences in various parts of P remain valid. Nevertheless, three obstacles stand in the way of the unobjectionable recognition of P as a source. Firstly, since Perlitt's breakthrough study on the putative end of P in Deut 34 the supposed source remains without end.<sup>29</sup> None of the "replacement proposals" (for the lost end) made since then have been able to really satisfy, let alone prevail.<sup>30</sup> Secondly, in certain sections P is so lacunary (and dependent on non-P) that a large minority of researchers consider P to be a redactional layer rather than a source or both of them.<sup>31</sup> Thirdly, there are also differences in the literary and theological profile of individual sections. The composition of the Priestly writings appears to have evolved over time. This characteristic of P (the Priestly *writings*) must also be taken into account for the question of historical and geographical localization. One should address the latter not only for the supposed comprehensive Priestly composition (the moment of whose coming into being

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<sup>26</sup> See Hutzli, *Origins*, 143–146. Similarly, according to Hutzli, *Origins*, 179–185; 201–203, geographical indications in the Priestly Abraham narrative point to a Neo-Babylonian setting of the latter.

<sup>27</sup> Pola, "Back to the Future"; Jeon, "A Source of P?".

<sup>28</sup> Nihan, "Le pectoral d'Aaron"; Nihan and Rhyder, "Aaron's Vestments".

<sup>29</sup> Perlitt, "Priesterschrift".

<sup>30</sup> Proposed endpoints are: Exod 29 (Otto, "Forschungen," 35); Exod 40 (Pola, "Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift"); Lev 9 (Zenger, Art. "Priesterschrift"); Lev 16 (Nihan, *From Priestly Torah*, 20–68); Lev 27 (Ska, "Le récit sacerdotal"); Josh 18 (Knauf, *Josua*, 19–21).

<sup>31</sup> Large gaps and dependency on non-P characterize in particular the sections of the Jacob- and the Joseph narratives, as demonstrated by Blum, "Noch einmal," 35–40 and Wöhrle, *Fremdlinge*, 64–146 (among others).

seeming fluid and difficult to seize), but also for single units having their own linguistic and theological profile.<sup>32</sup>

The increasing abandonment of the Documentary Hypothesis in its classical form in European research has had only a minor impact in the USA. On the contrary, the four-source theory was revived there, albeit in a different form. A significant shift is the disregard of questions on history and realia in the analytic approach of the “Neo-Documentary Hypothesis.” Exponents of the latter consider the composition of the Pentateuch a purely literary problem that should be separated from the reconstruction of the history of religion and cult.<sup>33</sup> Wellhausen himself took a diametrically opposite stance. As shown above, the linking of the texts to their historical context played a decisive role in his source analysis, and he was skeptical against the “mechanical separation between sources” purely based on literary observations.<sup>34</sup> The *historical-critical* approach, which has proven its worth is shared by most modern scholars. Redactional criticism cannot do without the (tentative) reconstruction of the historical context.

With the dwindling influence of the Documentary Hypothesis the scholarly discussion in Europe has moved towards seeing the Priestly *Grundschrift* (considered a source) / the Priestly Composition (considered a redaction layer) as

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<sup>32</sup> Both earlier *Vorlagen* or sources, i.e., previously independent units, and later additions within the Priestly stratum are identified by various scholars. (1) Since Eerdmanns (*Alttestamentliche Studien*, 4–5) and von Rad (*Die Priesterschrift*, 35); scholars often argue that the opening phrase in Gen 5:1a presupposes a “book” or “record” of *tôlêdôt*, the ostensible source of Gen 5 and other Priestly genealogical texts as well. Scholars also reconstruct an originally independent source behind Gen 1 (see for instance Levin, “Tatbericht”, Hutzli, “Tradition and Interpretation”). Recently Hutzli, *Origins*, identified other “proto-Priestly units” in the primeval history of Genesis and in the Abraham narrative as well. Moreover, several scholars agree that P has made use of an earlier collection or texts as base of the ritual laws in Lev 1–3 (see Noth, *Das dritte Buch Mose*, 11–12; Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, 6–7; Nihan, *From Priestly Torah*, 198–231). (2) Israel Knohl (*Sanctuary of Silence*) and other scholars assign several texts that are traditionally ascribed to the Priestly base layer to the later “Holiness school” (Gen 2:2–3; 17:9–14, 23–27; 23; Exod 6:6–8; 12:14–20; Exod 12:43–50). Moreover, later origins are considered for several other units some of which having an important place in the Priestly composition such as: the Priestly passages in the Joseph narrative (Schmid, “So-Called Yahwist,” 46–47; Römer, “Joseph Story,” 198), the Priestly plagues narrative (Kratz, *Composition*, 242–243; Berner, “Der literarische Charakter,” 103–104), the entire Passover pericope (Kratz, *Composition*, 242–43; J.-L. Ska, “Les plaies d’Égypte”), and (almost) the entire Tabernacle account (Pola, *Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift*).

<sup>33</sup> See Stackert, *A Prophet like Moses*, 19–20; Baden, *Composition*, 32; and the critique in Schmid, “The Neo-Documentarian Manifesto,” 468–470.

<sup>34</sup> Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte*, 8, n. 2; 299 = idem., *Prolegomena to the History*, 8, n. 2 (quotation is from here); 295.



the beginning of a trajectory that resulted in the formation of the Hexateuch and Pentateuch. Scholars now indeed distinguish between Priestly texts (of different strata: Pg/Pc; Ps; H) on the one hand and post-Priestly (albeit often Priestly-like) additions on the other. The latter may stand in relation to overarching Pentateuch and Hexateuch redactions or may have other specific ideological concerns. These supplements are found above all in Numbers and Joshua but also in other books.<sup>35</sup> The present volume continues on this trajectory, exploring not only the historical location of Pg/Pc, but also that of significant post-Priestly materials. As a consequence, the different contributions bring into focus not only the social and political climate of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian period but also that of the Hellenistic era.

## 2. This Volume

The above outline of the history of research revealed Wellhausen's interest in the different cultic realities in the various periods of the history of ancient Israel and their significance for the dating of the Priestly Document. His detailed demonstration that the Priestly cultic legislation concerning the desert sanctuary, its equipment and its sacrifices is not at home in the preexilic period had a major impact on scholarship. In the discussions that followed, especially from the 1960s onwards, the linguistic argument became more important, pushed above all by scholars who disputed the late dating, but also by those who sought to support the latter. The recourse to material aspects reflected in the texts faded somewhat into the background.

The guiding principle of the Lausanne conference (from which this book arose) was to pay attention to the choice of criteria in exploring the historical location of P and to recall those that have been neglected in the (recent) past, such as geographical indications and references to material culture in the Priestly texts.

The order of the contributions follows the canonical order of the biblical texts predominantly dealt with in them.

In *Literary Extensions in the P Genealogies of the Primeval History and Their Indications for a Relative Dating of P*, Michaela Bauks begins with the classical attribution of Genesis 5 and 11 to Pg and demonstrates that there are several internal inconsistencies with the lists, not least a reliance on non-P traditions in Genesis. She therefore argues that these texts must belong to a post-

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<sup>35</sup> For post-Priestly redactional models see esp. Achenbach, *Vollendung*; Albertz, *Pentateuchstudien*. See also discussion in Davis, *End*, 7–41. For Priestly-like texts in the books of Samuel and Kings, see Hutzli, “Priestly(-Like) Texts.”

Priestly strata that sought to harmonize preexisting Priestly and non-Priestly genealogical materials.

In *From Ur to Harran: History of Origins or Late Rewriting?* Lionel Marti investigates the possible historical origins of Abraham's journey back to Canaan via Ur and Harran. He notes that while these two locations each have a long history of occupation, there are other details in the narrative that point to a postexilic setting. He concludes that the extant Abraham story is "well anchored in the historical reality of the editor," which leads him to the idea that the Abraham narrative was designed to be a story of origins for a postexilic audience.

In *The Inscriptions of Mount Gerizim and P*, Jürg Hutzli discusses how the inscriptions from Mount Gerizim share commonalities with the Priestly writings. He demonstrates that certain Biblical texts dealing with the figures (or respective regions) of Ephraim, Manasseh and Phinehas are intrinsically linked to the Samaritan community and suggests that these late-Priestly additions were likely of Samaritan origin.

In "...*Albeit My Name is YHWH!*" *Exodus 6:2–8 and the System of Divine Designations in P*, Anna Elise Zerneck discusses the three names of God corresponding to P's three-tiered world-view. She demonstrates that each of God's names can be associated with different theological concepts. P's innovation of hierarchically differentiating the designations of God is shown to have powerfully influenced not only the Bible itself but even scholarship to this day.

In *Israel's Exodus from Egypt According to P: The Significance of Baal Zephon in Exodus 14*, Konrad Schmid investigates P's version of Israel's crossing the sea, particularly its reference to Baal Zephon, in order to determine if there are any historical indicators behind this location. He demonstrates that this location is a "theological invention," placing the event at a prominent pagan sanctuary between Egypt and Canaan. The sanctuary itself does not seem to have been in operation prior to the Persian period based upon the archaeological record, suggesting that P's story cannot be dated prior to this period.

In *Mount Kasios (Baal Zephon?): The Archaeological Perspective*, Eliezer D. Oren investigates the archaeological evidence of modern Ras Qasrun (el-Qels), which has been proposed as the location of Baal Zephon. He demonstrates that – so far – no cult objects have been found that might indicate a sanctuary or open place of worship. However, the sandbar features a wide distribution of Persian period sites, which suggests that if this was indeed the location of Baal Zephon, then it most plausibly relates to a Persian period reality.

In *The Demotic Literature and the Priestly Exodus: The Legend of Sesostris, the Inaros Cycle, and the Battles of Magicians Compared to the Priestly Exodus*, Axel Bühler begins with the recent scholarly understanding that many of the traditions found in demotic literature date to the Persian period and are strongly linked to Aramaic literature produced in Egypt. He suggests that these changes have not yet been taken into account by Hebrew Bible scholars, who

usually compare the traditions of the exodus with the Egyptian culture of the second millennium BCE. In line with this understanding, he argues that the magicians' competition (Exod 7–9), the construction of the tabernacle (Exod 25–40), and the organization around the tabernacle (Num 1–4) all demonstrate similarities to this literature, which suggests that Persian-period Egypt was the compositional context of the Priestly Writing.

In *The Priestly Sanctuary in Exodus 25–31 and 35–40: Material Culture and Historical Contextualization*, Christophe Nihan investigates the key cultic items described in the construction of the sanctuary – namely, the *mēnorāh*, the ark and the cherubs, the inscribed stones on the breastpiece of the high priest, the daily offering, and the altar of incense – and concludes that these items have their origins in the early Second Temple period.

In *The Collective Practice of the Sabbath as Priestly Innovation*, Wolfgang Oswald reconstructs the development of the Sabbath from an individually counted day of rest to an institutionalized, collectively counted day of rest. He argues that it was the Priestly authors of the Holiness Code that promoted this collective practice. They had the necessary infrastructure for that practice: the temple as a central place where specialists calculated the days for the Sabbath. The sanctuary hosted a department for public announcement, including trumpet-playing priests. As for the historical localization of the texts in question, it is significant that Oswald demonstrates that the use of trumpets is frequently mentioned in texts from the late Persian and Hellenistic periods, but not in earlier writings.

In *The Israelite Wilderness Camp and the Persian Movable Court of the Great Kings*, Jaeyoung Jeon compares the description of the wilderness camp in Numbers with the Persian imperial camp and shows the numerous parallels between the two. He concludes that the systematically organized wilderness camp has been inspired by the Achaemenid royal military camp, albeit with YHWH ruling in the place of the Persian king.

In *A Priestly Source in Numbers?: Transjordan and the Priestly Ideology in Numbers 32*, Jordan Davis argues that the Priestly text of Numbers 32 is best conceived as an alternative version of the non-Priestly story rather than as a supplement to it. This story, however, does not align with Pg's ecumenical and peaceful worldview, suggesting that the standalone Priestly source was expanded prior to its incorporation into a combined (Priestly + non-Priestly) Pentateuch.

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