

BRUNA VELČIĆ

The Priestly Narrative in Numbers 13–14

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Bruna Velčić

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A Contribution to the Debate on the Extent of Pg

Mohr Siebeck

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*In loving memory of my parents
Anton and Marija,
with gratitude*

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Bruna Velčić

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Abbreviations

ABG	Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
AncB	Anchor Bible
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ASBF	Analecta: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch. Neues Göttinger Bibelwerk
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testament
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BC	before Christ
BETHL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	Elliger, K. – Rudolph, W. et al. (ed.), <i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> (Stuttgart, 1967–1977; ⁵ 1997).
BHTh	Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie
<i>Bib.</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BiInS	Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>BiLe</i>	<i>Bibel und Leben</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CMSBF	Collectio Minor. Studium Biblicum Franciscanum
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament Series
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
EHS.T	Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe 23, Theologie
<i>EstB</i>	<i>Estudios Biblicos</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FAT II	Forschungen zum Alten Testament – 2. Reihe
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FS	<i>Festschrift</i>
Ger.	German
GK	Gesenius, W. – Kautzsch, E. (ed.), <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> (tr. A. E. Cowley) (Oxford ² 1910).
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSS	Harvard Semitic Series

ICC	The International Critical Commentary of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
J	Yahwist
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBTh	<i>Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie</i>
JE	Jehovist
JM	Joüon, P. – Muraoka, T., <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> (SubBi 14; Roma 1993, 2000) I–II.
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament – Supplement Series
KEH	Kurzgefaßtes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
KStTh	Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie
KuD	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>
LHB.OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible. Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MoBi	Monde de la Bible
MT	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible
MThSt	Marburger Theologische Studien
NCBC	The New Century Bible Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NRTh	<i>Nouvelle Revue Théologique</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studiën
P	Priesterschrift
Pg	priesterliche Grundschrift / Priestergrundschrift
PHSC	Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures (and its Contexts)
PSV	Parola Spirito e Vita
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RivBib	<i>Rivista biblica</i>
RHPPhR	<i>Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses</i>
SamP	Samaritan Pentateuch
SBAB	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
SBFLA	Studii Biblici Franciscani liber annuus
SBi	Sources Bibliques
SBL.SymS	Society of Biblical Literature. Symposium Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
Sem.	<i>Semitica</i>
SKG.G	Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft. Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse
SRivBib	Supplementi alla Rivista Biblica
StBi	Studi Biblici
StP	Studia Pohl

StSo	Storia e Società
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
<i>TEuph</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
<i>THAT</i>	Jenni, E. – Westermann, C. (ed.), <i>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> (München – Zürich 1971, 1976) I–II.
Theos	Theos. Studienreihe Theologische Forschungsergebnisse
THLI	Textwissenschaft, Theologie, Hermeneutik, Linguistik, Literaturanalyse, Informatik
<i>ThPh</i>	<i>Theologie und Philosophie</i>
<i>ThR</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
<i>ThWAT</i>	Botterweck, G. J. – Ringgren, H. et al. (ed.), <i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> (Stuttgart 1970–2016) I–X.
<i>ThZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>TTZ</i>	<i>Trier Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UTB	Uni – Taschenbücher
UTB.W	Uni – Taschenbücher für Wissenschaft
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
Vg	Vulgate
VWGTh	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WBC	World Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WO'C</i>	Waltke, B. K. – O'Connor, M., <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> (Winona Lake 1990).
<i>ZABR</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZThK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Introduction

In its specific nature, the Priestly narrative (Pg)¹ was never tackled by the debate which engaged Pentateuchal studies in the nineteen seventies. In recent decades, however, it has become the object of lively discussion, especially with regard to its actual conclusion.

In fact, during the twentieth century, a majority of scholars agreed in identifying the conclusion of Pg with the account of the death of Moses in Deut 34,1aa.7–9,² or else in the statements about the subjection and division of the land in Josh 18,1; 19,51.³ However, in 1988, Lothar Perlitt challenged the presence of Pg passages in Deuteronomy and indicated the announcement of Moses' death in Num 27,12–14 as the conclusive text of the Priestly narrative, a passage which Martin Noth claimed to be the final fragment of Pg that can be traced in the book of Numbers.⁴

Perlitt's article represented a starting point for reflection and a stimulus for the elaboration of further proposals about the conclusion of the Priestly narrative. Various exegetes have suggested that it could be placed in the Sinai pericope. According to some, in the book of Exodus: in 29,42b–46, for example, according to Eckart Otto, with God's announcement of the institution of the

¹ The siglum "Pg" denotes the basic narrative (Ger. *priesterliche Grundschrift* or *Priestergrundschrift*) of the (written) Priestly work (P). For the sigla, cf. E. ZENGER – C. FREVEL, "Das priester(schrift)liche Werk (P)", *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (E. ZENGER – et al.) (ed. C. FREVEL) (KStTh 1,1; Stuttgart 1995, ⁹2016) 187–188. Tucker's proposal to abandon the sigla "Pg" in favour of "H composition" (Gen 1 – Lev 16) will not be adopted; cf. P. TUCKER, *The Holiness Composition in the Book of Exodus* (FAT II.98; Tübingen 2017) 189.

² Cf. J. WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin – New York 1878, ⁶1905) 356, 408; K. ELLIGER, "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung", *ZThK* 49 (1952) 121–122; M. NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I. Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (SKG.G 18,2; Halle 1943) 206.

³ Cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, "The Structure of P", *CBQ* 38 (1976) 290–291; N. LOHFINK, "Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte", *Congress Volume. Göttingen 1977* (ed. W. ZIMMERLI) (VTSup 29; Leiden 1978) 198.

⁴ Cf. L. PERLITT, "Priesterschrift im Deuteronomium?", *ZAW* 100 Suppl. (1988) 65–88; M. NOTH, *Das vierte Buch Mose. Numeri* (ATD 7; Göttingen 1966) 185.

Aaronite priesthood;⁵ for others, in Ex 40, at the end of the construction of the sanctuary at Sinai, particularly, for Thomas Pola, in 40,16,17a.33b,⁶ for Michaela Bauks and Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, in 40,33b.34b,⁷ and, for Reinhard G. Kratz, in 40,33b.34.⁸ Others still have suggested that Pg concludes in Leviticus: for Erich Zenger in 9,23–24, where, after the offering of the first sacrifices, the Glory of YHWH appears and the people respond with prostration and liturgical rejoicing;⁹ for Christophe Nihan in Lev 16, with the rite of purification carried out by Aaron in the inner-sanctum.¹⁰

With regard to these proposals, it should be reiterated that already Martin Noth maintained that, although Pg terminated *de facto* with the death of Moses (Deut 34*), it effectively reached its own particular goal with the delivering of the ordinances established at Sinai.¹¹ From such theological observations, the

⁵ Cf. E. OTTO, “Forschungen zur Priesterschrift”, *ThR* 62 (1997) 29–36. His opinion is shared by J. WÖHRLE, “The Priestly Writing(s): Scope and Nature”, *The Oxford Handbook of the Pentateuch* (ed. J. S. BADEN – J. STACKERT) (Oxford 2021) 262.

⁶ Cf. T. POLA, *Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift. Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von P** (WMANT 70; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995) 343–349.

⁷ Cf. M. BAUKS, “La signification de l’espace et du temps dans ‘l’historiographie sacerdotale’”, *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. RÖMER) (BETHL 147; Leuven 2000) 30–37; S. RUDNIG-ZELT, *Glaube im Alten Testament. Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Jes 7,1–17; Dtn 1–3; Num 13–14 und Gen 22,1–19* (BZAW 452; Berlin – Boston, MA 2017) 234–235. So also A. DE PURY, “Pg as the Absolute Beginning”, *Les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, de l’Hexateuque et de l’Ennéateuque* (ed. T. RÖMER – K. SCHMID) (BETHL 203; Leuven 2007) 109–111.

⁸ Cf. R. G. KRATZ, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments. Grundwissen der Bibelkritik* (UTB.W 2157; Göttingen 2000) 116–117. This opinion is shared by J. C. GERTZ, *Grundinformation Altes Testament. Eine Einführung in Literatur, Religion und Geschichte des Alten Testaments* (ed. J. C. GERTZ) (UTB 2745; Göttingen 2006, 2019) 237–23; W. BÜHRER, *Schriftgelehrtes Murren. Schriftgelehrte Fortschreibungs- und Auslegungsprozesse in den Murrerzählungen in Exodus und Numeri* (FAT 152; Tübingen 2021) 85, n. 4.

⁹ Cf. ZENGER – FREVEL, “(P)”, 187–204. Thus also K. SCHMID, *Erzväter und Exodus. Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999) 263, n. 532. According to Achenbach, P can be reconstructed from Gen 1 to Ex 29 (Lev 8–9*); cf. R. ACHENBACH, “Das Heiligkeitgesetz und die sakralen Ordnungen des Numeribuches im Horizont des Pentateuchredaktion”, *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers* (ed. T. RÖMER) (BETHL 215; Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA 2008) 145, n. 1.

¹⁰ Cf. C. NIHAN, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch. A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus* (FAT II.25; Tübingen 2007) 379–382. So also T. RÖMER, “How Many Books (teuchs): Pentateuch, Hexateuch, Deuteronomistic History, or Enneateuch?”, *Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch? Identifying Literary Works in Genesis through Kings* (ed. T. B. DOZEMAN – T. RÖMER – K. SCHMID) (Ancient Israel and its Literature 8; Atlanta, GA 2011) 38; J. JEON, *From the Reed Sea to Kadesh. A redactional and socio-historical study of the pentateuchal wilderness narrative* (FAT 159; Tübingen 2022) 255.

¹¹ Cf. NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart 1948) 7–8.

above-mentioned exegetes have drawn literary consequences and have established that the *goal* and the *end* of Pg coincide: they consider that the Sinai pericope is a “suitable” ending for a story that begins with the creation of the world (Gen 1,1–2,4a) in that it relates the moment when the Creator God enters his dwelling in order to be worshipped, a pattern similar to the other creation accounts of the Ancient Near East (for example, *Enuma Elish*).¹²

Furthermore, there have also been arguments mounted in support of the post-Pg character of the passages traditionally attributed to the Priestly narrative in the book of Numbers.¹³ In further support of this position, studies have appeared which argue that the book of Numbers was produced for the most part by late and post-Priestly redactions, and, as such, is probably the youngest of the books of the Pentateuch, functioning as a bridge between the Triteuch (Gen-Lev) and the book of Deuteronomy.¹⁴

By contrast, some scholars continue to reiterate that Pg must continue after the Sinai pericope and tackle the question of the gift of the land and the entrance into Canaan in accordance with the promise made to the patriarchs and their descendants (Gen 17,8; 28,4; 35,12; 48,4; Ex 6,4.8). Moreover, the construction of a portable sanctuary, that is, the tent of meeting (Ex 40,33b.34), would indicate that, for Pg, the Israelites’ journey after their escape from Egypt did not end at Sinai. Finally, they argue, there are enough narrational, lexical, contentual and stylistic arguments for attributing to Pg at least four accounts in the book of Numbers, namely, a thread of Num 13–14* and 20,1–13.22–29; 27,12–23, passages which take up the theme of the land and explain why the exodus generation and its leaders did not enter Canaan but died in the desert. Among the scholars who support the continuation of Pg after the Sinai pericope

¹² Cf. C. NIHAN – T. RÖMER, “Le débat actuel sur la formation du Pentateuque”, *Introduction à l’Ancien Testament* (ed. T. RÖMER – J.-D. MACCHI – C. NIHAN) (MoBi 49; Genève 2004) 95–97.

¹³ Cf. POLA, *Priesterschrift*, 89–90, 304–305; E. OTTO, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch. Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumrahmens* (FAT 30; Tübingen 2000) 26–62; IDEM, “Priesterschrift”, 9–20; NIHAN, *Torah*, 24–30.

¹⁴ The most important studies are: R. ACHENBACH, *Die Vollendung der Tora. Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Numeribuches im Kontext von Hexateuch und Pentateuch* (BZAR 3; Wiesbaden 2003) 629–638; IDEM, “Die Erzählung von der gescheiterten Landnahme von Kadesch Barnea (Numeri 13–14) als Schlüsseltext der Redaktionsgeschichte des Pentateuchs”, *ZABR* 9 (2003) 56–123. For a general picture of the recent developments in the study of Numbers, cf. T. RÖMER, “De la périphérie au centre: les livres du Lévitique et des Nombres dans le débat actuel sur le Pentateuque”, *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers* (ed. T. RÖMER) (BETHL 215; Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA 2008) 3–34; C. FREVEL, “The Book of Numbers – Formation, Composition, and Interpretation of a Late Part of the Torah. Some Introductory Remarks”, *Torah and the Book of Numbers* (ed. C. FREVEL – T. POLA – A. SCHART) (FAT II.62; Tübingen, 2013) 1–37; IDEM, *Desert Transformations. Studies in the Book of Numbers* (FAT 137; Tübingen 2020) 83–120.

are Jean Louis Ska and Suzanne Boorer, according to whom Pg extends as far as Num 27,12–14;¹⁵ then, Christian Frevel, Hans-Christoph Schmitt, Peter Weimar, Ludwig Schmidt, Enzo Cortese, Aaron Schart and others, who place the conclusion of Pg in Deut 34*;¹⁶ and, finally, Joseph Blenkinsopp, Norbert Lohfink, Ernst A. Knauf, Philippe Guillaume and David M. Carr, who maintain that Pg extends into the book of Joshua, at least as far as Josh 18,1(–10); 19,51.¹⁷

The present study represents a contribution to this current debate – over the conclusion of Pg and the presence of Priestly texts in the book of Numbers. The aim is to verify whether we can ascribe to Pg one of the four passages mentioned above, that is, a thread of Num 13–14*. The starting point of our enquiry will be the “narrative programme” marked out by the three promises given by God to Abraham during the establishment of the covenant in Gen 17, which will enable us to confirm that there is a narrative necessity for the

¹⁵ Cf. J. L. SKA, “Le récit sacerdotal: une ‘histoire sans fin’?”, *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers* (ed. T. RÖMER) (BETHL 215; Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA 2008) 631–653; IDEM, “Old and New in the Book of Numbers”, *Bib.* 95 (2014) 110–114; S. BOORER, *The Vision of the Priestly narrative. Its Genre and Hermeneutics of Time* (Ancient Israel and its Literature 27; Atlanta, GA 2016) 84–89.

¹⁶ Cf. C. FREVEL, *Mit Blick auf das Land die Schöpfung erinnern: Zum Ende der Priesterschrift* (HBS 23; Freiburg im Breisgau – Basel – Wien – Barcelona – Rom – New York 2000) 234–388; H.-C. SCHMITT, “Spätdeuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk und Priesterschrift in Deuteronomium 34”, *Textarbeit: Studien zu Texten und ihrer Rezeption aus dem Alten Testament und der Umwelt Israels*. FS P. Weimar (ed. K. KIESOW – T. MEURER) (AOAT 294; Münster 2003) 418–424; P. WEIMAR, *Studien zur Priesterschrift* (FAT 56; Tübingen 2008) 319–345; L. SCHMIDT, “P in Deuteronomium 34”, *VT* 59 (2009) 475–494; E. CORTESE, “Per un ritorno sicuro alla teoria documentaria in Num 10–36 (e Gios 13–22)”, *SBFLA* 59 (2009) 39; A. SCHAT, “The Spy Story and the Final Redaction of the Hexateuch”, *Torah and the Book of Numbers* (ed. C. FREVEL – T. POLA – A. SCHAT) (FAT 62; Tübingen 2013) 181, n. 181; E. NOORT, “Num 27,12–23 und das Ende der Priesterschrift”, *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers* (ed. T. RÖMER) (BETHL 215; Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA 2008) 118–119; H. SEEBASS, “Das Buch Numeri in der heutigen Pentateuchdiskussion”, *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers* (ed. T. RÖMER) (BETHL 215; Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA 2008) 251; E. BLUM, “Issues and Problems in the Contemporary Debate Regarding the Priestly Writings”, *The Strata of the Priestly Writings. Contemporary Debate and Future Directions* (ed. S. SHECTMAN – J. S. BADEN) (AThANT 95; Zürich 2009) 41.

¹⁷ Cf. J. BLENKINSOPP, *The Pentateuch. An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (ABRL; New York 1992) 237–238; N. LOHFINK, “Die Landübergabe in Numeri und das Ende der Priesterschrift. Zu einem rätselhaften Befund im Buch Numeri”, *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur V* (SBAB 38; Stuttgart 2005) 292; E. A. KNAUF, “Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichten der Deuteronomisten”, *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. RÖMER) (BETHL 147; Leuven 2000) 113–115; P. GUILLAUME, *Land and Calendar. The Priestly Document from Genesis 1 to Joshua 18* (LHB.OTS 391; New York – London 2009) 157–162; D. M. CARR, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford – New York 2011) 296–297.

continuation of Pg beyond the Sinai pericope (chap. I). This will be followed by the diachronic analysis of Num 13–14*, in order to identify the account traditionally attributed to Pg which tells of the exploration of the land of Canaan (= “Canaan” account; chap. II). Next, we shall examine and assess the arguments adopted against the “Canaan” account’s belonging to Pg (chap. III), and, at the end, we shall present the reasons in favour of this attribution through a detailed analysis of the narrative connections and the lexical, structural, contextual and stylistic correspondences between the “Canaan” account and the Pg texts in Genesis and Exodus (chap. IV).

The starting point of our analysis will be the reconstruction of Pg by S. Boorer (signalling possible divergences):

Gen 1,1–2,4a; 5,1–28.30–32; 6,9–22, 7,6.11.13–16a.18–21.24; 8,1.2a.3b–5.7.13a.14–19; 9,1–17.28–29; 10,1–7.20.22–23.31–32; 11,10–27.31–32; 12,4b.5; 13,6.11b.12abα; 16,1a.3.15.16; 17,1–27; 19,29; 21,1b–5; 23,1–20; 25,7–11a.12–17.19–20 ... 26b; 26,34–35; 27,46–28,9 ... ; 31,18aβb; 33,18a; 35,6.9–13a.15.22b–29; 36,1–14; 37,1.2aab ... ; 41,46a ... ; 46,6.7; 47,27b.28; 48,3–6; 49,1a.29–33; 50,12.13; Ex 1,1–5.7.13–14; 2,23aβb–25; 6,2–12; 7,1–13.19.20αα.21b.22; 8,1–3 ... 11b–15; 9,8–12; 11,9–10; 12,1.3–13.28.40–41; 14,1–4.8.9aβb.15aab.16–18.21aab.22–23.26.27αα.28–29; 15,22*.27; 16,1.2–3.6–7.9–15.21.35*; 17,1abα; 19,1.2a; 24,15b–18a; 25,1–2αα.8–9.10–40; 26,1–37; 27,1–19; 28,1–2.6–41; 29,1–20.22–26.31–32.35.43–46; 39,32.43; 40,17.33b.34; Num 10,11a.12a.13*.¹⁸

With regard to the nature of the Priestly narrative, we shall line up alongside those who see it as a relatively independent writing. On the one hand, indeed, Pg is incomplete, it contains lacunae, and is aware of and rereads more ancient materials and traditions but, on the other hand, it sets out a new version of the history of the world and of Israel, a version which has its own autonomy and literary and theological coherence.¹⁹

¹⁸ Boorer, who included some modifications to the classical reconstruction of M. Noth, concludes the above list with Num 13,1–3a.17aβ.21.25.26.32.33aab; 14,1a.2–3.5–7.9aab.10.26–28.29*.31(?).35–38; 20,1a.2.3b.4.6.7.8αα*β.10.11b.12.22b.23αα.25–29; 22,1; 27,12–14 (cf. BOORER, *Vision*, 89). For Noth’s reconstruction, cf. A. F. CAMPBELL – M. A. O’BRIEN, *Sources of the Pentateuch. Texts, Introductions, Annotations* (Minneapolis, MN 1993) 2–90.

¹⁹ The theory of the relative independence of Pg has been advanced by J. L. SKA, “De la relative indépendance de l’écrit sacerdotal”, *Bib.* 76 (1995) 404–405. For similar positions, cf. C. NIHAN, “L’écrit sacerdotal comme réplique au récit deutéronomiste des origines. Quelques remarques sur la «bibliothèque» de P”, *La Bible en récits. L’exégèse biblique à l’heure du lecteur. Colloque international d’analyse narrative des textes de la Bible, Lausanne (mars 2002)* (ed. D. MARGUERAT) (MoBi 48; Genève 2003, ²2005) 201–206; KRATZ, *Komposition*, 247; CARR, *Formation*, 292–296. Hutzli has recently proposed a ‘source and redaction’ model for P, based on a differentiation between proto-P and P^C (Priestly composition); cf. J. HUTZLI, *The Origins of P. Literary Profiles and Strata of the Priestly Texts in Genesis 1 – Exodus 40* (FAT 164; Tübingen 2023) 339–393, esp. 384–387. Within European exegesis, P is mostly considered a “source”; cf. K. SCHMID, “Has European Scholarship Abandoned the Documentary Hypothesis? Some Reminders on Its History and

As for our exegetical method, our analysis of Num 13–14* will employ the historical-critical method, but also, during the diachronic analysis as well as elsewhere in the study, we shall have recourse to criteria of narrative and stylistic analysis. Since each method has its own aims and limits, the employment of several criteria will enable us to note arguments in favour of a definite conclusion, as also to mitigate the subjectivity inevitably present in the analysis of literary works.

Remarks on Its Current Status”, *The Pentateuch. International Perspectives on Current Research* (ed. T. B. DOZEMAN – K. SCHMID – B. J. SCHWARTZ) (FAT 78; Tübingen 2011) 18–20. For the debate over the nature of P, cf. E. BLUM, “Noch einmal: Das literargeschichtliche Profil der P-Überlieferung”, *Abschied von der Priesterschrift? Zum Stand der Pentateuchdebatte* (ed. F. HARTENSTEIN – K. SCHMID) (VWGTh 40; Leipzig 2015) 32–64, and other contributions in the same volume.

CHAPTER I

The Divine Promises to Abraham (Gen 17) and the Extent of Pg

In his time, Julius Wellhausen identified four divine covenants in the Priestly narrative – with Adam, Noah, Abraham and Israel.¹ Today, however, it is commonly recognised that the Priestly writer tells of only two covenants – the one with Noah, all the living beings and the whole earth (Gen 9,1–17), and the one with Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17) – both “everlasting” covenants (cf. בְּרִית עוֹלָם in Gen 9,16; 17,7).²

In the covenant with Noah, God promises to protect the repopulation of the earth after the flood (9,11.15) and the realisation of this plan, set out in Gen 10–11*, culminates with the birth of Abram in 11,26. The covenant with Noah brings the primordial history to a close, creating, at the same time, a bridge towards the history of the patriarchs and Israel, which begins with God’s covenant with Abraham in Gen 17, since the three promises which God gives to him and to his descendants represent a “narrative programme” for the story that follows. The first promise guarantees to Abram/Abraham the birth of numerous descendants (vv. 2.4–6), while the other two outline the divine plan to become the God of Abraham and his descendants (vv. 7.8b) and to give them the land of Canaan (v. 8a). In subsequent texts, the promises are conferred on Abraham’s descendants and their realisation is dealt with. In the Priestly narrative, as S. Boorer states, “the story of the nation and its ancestors is the unfolding of the Abrahamic covenant promises.”³

¹ Cf. J. WELLHAUSEN, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Berlin 1866, ⁴1963) 1. In fact, he called it *Liber quattuor foederum* (abbrev. Q).

² Cf. W. ZIMMERLI, “Sinaibund und Abrahambund. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Priesterschrift”, *ThZ* 16 (1960) 268; J. L. SKA, *Introduzione alla lettura del Pentateuco. Chiavi per l’interpretazione dei primi cinque libri della Bibbia* (Collana Biblica; Bologna 2004) 173.

³ BOORER, *Vision*, 145; cf. IDEM, “The Kerygmatic Intention of the Priestly Document”, *ABR* 25 (1977) 14–18; P. WEIMAR, “Zwischen Verheißung und Verpflichtung. Der Abrahambund im Rahmen des priesterschriftlichen Werkes”, *Für immer verbündet. Studien zur Bundestheologie der Bibel* (ed. C. DOHMEN – C. FREVEL) (SBS 211; Stuttgart 2007) 261–269. According to WEIMAR, *Studien*, 188–191, 203–212; I. KNOHL, *The Sanctuary of Silence. The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis, MN 1995) 102, n. 145; S. M. OLYAN, “An Eternal Covenant with Circumcision as Its Sign: How Useful a Criterion

The divine promises reappear in Gen 28,1–9; 35,9–15*, where Isaac invokes on Jacob divine blessing, fertility and possession of the land of Canaan (28,3–4), and God renews with Jacob the promises he previously made to Abraham (35,11–12). With regard to the transfer of the promises to Isaac, even if there is no passage which makes this explicit, it is announced in Gen 17,19.21 and implied in Gen 35,12 and Ex 6,4. The promises reappear, later, in Gen 48,3–6, where Jacob recalls them at the moment of the adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh (48,3–4),⁴ and, finally, in Ex 6,2–8, where God assigns them to the Israelites while announcing their liberation from slavery in Egypt (6,4.7–8).

On account of this last passage, some exegetes reckon vv. 4–5.6–8 (or only v. 8) as additions: vv. 4–5 because they interrupt the theme of the revelation of the divine name in vv. 3.6,⁵ vv. 6–8 because of the presence of atypical, deuteronomistic vocabulary.⁶ However, the passage appears to be unitary and is to be attributed to Pg. This is confirmed, first, by the coherent structure, since vv. 2–5 appear as a preparation for vv. 6–8. The juxtaposition of the two *qatal* forms in 6,4a.5a, introduced by emphatic constructions (וְגַם אֲנִי שְׁמַעְתִּי and וְגַם הִקְמַלְתִּי), highlights the contrast between the covenant established with the patriarchs and the present

for Dating and Source Analysis?”, *The Pentateuch. International Perspectives on Current Research* (ed. T. B. DOZEMAN – K. SCHMID – B. J. SCHWARTZ) (FAT 78; Tübingen 2011) 354–357, the expressions עוֹלָם לְבְרִית and עוֹלָם לְאֱלֹהִים, להִיזִית לָךְ לְאֱלֹהִים, לְאֱמֻנָת עוֹלָם, and לְאֱמֻנָת כְּנָעַן) are additions in 17,1–8, but, as reiterated by NIHAN, *Torah*, 34–35, n. 72; BOORER, *Vision*, 47–48, there are no reasons for making these cuts. Some exegetes consider vv. 9–14.23–27 secondary, but – as the recent study of Krause also demonstrates – the law of circumcision is an integral part of the text and there is no justification for the entire elimination of these verses; cf. J. J. KRAUSE, “Circumcision and Covenant in Genesis 17”, *Bib.* 99 (2018) 157–160.

⁴ Some exegetes do not agree that Gen 48,3–6.(7) belong to Pg because, in their view, Pg is not aware of a “history of Joseph”. For a survey of opinions, cf. K. SCHMID, “The So-Called Yahwist and the Literary Gap between Genesis and Exodus”, *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. T. B. DOZEMAN – K. SCHMID) (SBL.SymS 34; Atlanta, GA 2006) 44–47. Given the correspondences between 48,3–4 and Gen 17,1.2.4–6.8; 28,3–4; 35,9.11–12, we shall include these verses among the Pg texts that are important for our study. They do not add any new elements to the divine promises in Pg but take up contents that are clearly present in the above-mentioned Priestly texts. For the Priestly matrix of 48,3–4, cf. F. GIUNTOLI, “Ephraim, Manasseh, and Post-Exilic Israel. A Study of the Redactional Expansions in Gen 48 Regarding Joseph’s Sons”, *The Post-Priestly Pentateuch. New Perspectives on its Redactional Development and Theological Profiles* (ed. F. GIUNTOLI – K. SCHMID) (FAT 101; Tübingen 2015) 215–216.

⁵ Cf. RUDNIG-ZELT, *Glaube*, 241, n. 511.

⁶ Cf. A. KUENEN, *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in die Bücher des Alten Testaments: hinsichtlich ihrer Entstehung und Sammlung* (Leipzig 1887) I, 315–316; B. BAENTSCH, *Exodus – Leviticus – Numeri* (HKAT 2; Göttingen 1903) 47; F. KOHATA, *Jahwist und Priesterschrift in Exodus 3 – 14* (BZAW 166; Berlin – New York 1986) 28–34; OTTO, “Priesterschrift”, 9–10; ACHENBACH, “Erzählung”, 101. The attribution of the passage to HS, advanced by KNOHL, *Sanctuary*, 17, n. 24, is not convincing given that the passage is well anchored in Pg, cf. BOORER, *Vision*, 47–48; BLUM, “Issues”, 34.

situation of the slavery of their descendants. This contrast is resolved with the *wayyiqtol* in 6,5b, which states that God had remembered the covenant (וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱת־בְּרִיתִי), to decide then to bring the promises made to the patriarchs to fulfilment (6,6–8). The vocabulary relating to the promises (6,7–8) is very close to that of Gen 17,7–8; 28,4; 35,12; 48,4, and various particular expressions found in 6,6–8 are found again in Ezekiel, who is ideologically close to P (וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱת־בְּרִיתִי; וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱת־בְּרִיתִי; וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱת־בְּרִיתִי; וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱת־בְּרִיתִי).⁷

The sequence of the texts which record the transfer of the promises determines that these are destined principally for a particular line descending from Abraham: Isaac (Gen 17,19.21; 28,1; 35,12; Ex 6,3–4.8), Jacob (Gen 28,1; 35,9; 48,3; Ex 6,3–4.8) and the descendants of Jacob, namely, the “sons of Israel” (Ex 6,6; cf. Gen 35,12; 48,4).⁸ This is confirmed further by texts which describe the fulfilment of the promises: Ex 1,7, telling of the proliferation of the Israelites in Egypt, represents the fulfilment of the promise of numerous descendants, and Ex 40,34–35, where God’s taking possession of the sanctuary indicates the fulfilment of the divine promise to become the God of Abraham and his descendants.⁹ The gift of the land of Canaan is also destined for the Israelites (Gen 35,12; 48,4; Ex 6,6.8), but opinions on the fulfilment of this

⁷ The only expression which is actually problematic is בְּרִיתִי, which recurs in Deut 4,34; 5,15; 26,8. In fact, Gertz considers it an addition; cf. J. C. GERTZ, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung. Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch* (FRLANT 186; Göttingen 2000) 245–248. About the closeness of the Priestly narrative to Ezekiel and the attribution of Ex 6,6–8 to Pg, cf. J. L. SKA, “La place d’Ex 6,2–8 dans la narration de l’exode”, *ZAW* 94 (1982) 538–540; J. LUST, “Exodus 6,2–8 and Ezekiel”, *Studies in the Book of Exodus. Redaction – Reception – Interpretation* (ed. M. VERVENNE) (BETHL 126; Leuven – Louvain 1996) 209–224; W. H. SCHMIDT, *Exodus 1,1–6,30* (BKAT 2/1, Neukirchen–Vluyn 1988) 274–275; L. SCHMIDT, “Die Priesterschrift – kein Ende am Sinai!”, *ZAW* 120 (2008) 482–483; NIHAN, *Torah*, 34–35, n. 72 and 65, n. 237; JEON, *From the Reed Sea*, 157–159.

⁸ Therefore, we are not convinced by the opinions on the “ecumenical” openings of Pg in relation to the divine promises, as sustained, for example, by A. DE PURY, “Abraham: The Priestly Writer’s ‘Ecumenical’ Ancestor”, *Rethinking the Foundations. Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible. FS J. Van Seters* (ed. S. L. MCKENZIE – T. RÖMER – H. H. SCHMID) (BZAW 294; Berlin – New York 2000) 163–181; K. SCHMID, “Judean Identity and Ecumenicity: The Political Theology of the Priestly Document”, *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid period. Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (ed. O. LIPSCHITZ – G. N. KNOPPERS – M. OEMING) (Winona Lake, IN 2011) 3–26. For the criticism of these positions, cf. M. KÖCKERT, “Gottes ‘Bund’ mit Abraham und die ‘Erwählung’ Israels in Genesis 17”, *Covenant and Election in Exilic and Post-Exilic Judaism* (ed. N. MACDONALD) (FAT II.79; Tübingen 2015) 1–27. Hutzli resolves the issue diachronically: while in the (proto-)Priestly Abraham narrative the land is destined for Abraham and all of his descendants, “in the Priestly texts of the Jacob-Esau, Joseph and exodus section, the group of beneficiaries is limited to the line Isaac-Jacob (Israel) alone”; HUTZLI, *The Origins of P*, 197.

⁹ Cf. SKA, *Introduzione*, 176–177.

promise vary. Some scholars hold that it is fulfilled already in Genesis and Exodus, others that its realisation has to be sought after the Sinai pericope.

Given that the promises of Gen 17 have a programmatic function within the Priestly narrative, the question of the fulfilment of the promise of the land has a fundamental role in the debate over the conclusion of Pg: if the promise reaches its fulfilment in Genesis and Exodus, Pg can be concluded at Sinai; otherwise, an argument has been gained in favour of the thesis that Pg continues after the Sinai pericope.

For this reason, this chapter will examine the proposals about the fulfilment of the promise of the land in Genesis and Exodus. The enquiry will begin with the analysis of the content of the first two covenantal promises and of the way they are fulfilled (§ 1 and 2). It will continue with the analysis of the content of the promise of the land; the presentation of the proposals about its fulfilment in Genesis and Exodus; and a discussion of these proposals, which will enable us to demonstrate their failure and to confirm the narrative necessity for the continuation of Pg beyond the Sinai pericope (§ 3). The final section will be reserved for a summary (§ 4).

1. Numerous Descendants

1.1. Promise (Gen 17,2b.4–6; 28,3; 35,11; 48,4a)

The promise of numerous descendants is unique to the patriarchs and occurs only in the book of Genesis. It is formulated with the pair פָּרָה – רָבָה (“be fruitful” – “be numerous”; Gen 17,2.6; 28,3; 35,11; 48,4), which is also found in the accounts of creation and of the flood (1,22.28; 8,17; 9,1.7). In various Pg texts, the pair is introduced by the verb בָּרַךְ (*piel*; “bless”), which indicates that what we have is a formula of blessing typical of the Priestly narrative (cf. Gen 1,22.28; 9,1; 17,20; 28,3; 48,3). In the formulation of the promise, the two verbs occur, for the most part, in the *hiphil*, with God as the subject (17,2.6; 28,3; 48,4; *qal* in 35,11), indicating that the fertility of the patriarchs will be the fruit of the divine action.

The verbal pair is also accompanied by a series of expressions which serve to underline the great number of the patriarchs’ descendants. God promises to make Abram/Abraham “very, very” (בְּמֵאד מְאֹד; 17,2.6) numerous and fruitful, “father of a multitude of nations” (אֲבִי־הַמֶּוֹן גוֹיִם; 17,5) and ancestor of kings (וְיִמְלִכִם מִמֶּךָ יִצְחָק; 17,6). Such expressions highlight the exceptional nature of the blessing bestowed on Abram/Abraham, who is destined to be the ancestor of many nations (cf. Gen 16,15–16; 25,1b–5). God announces that Sarah too, Isaac’s mother, “will become nations, and kings of peoples will come from her” (וְהָיְתָה לְגוֹיִם מְלָכִי עַמִּים מִמֶּנָּה יִהְיוּ; 17,16), and that he will make Ishmael fruitful and numerous as well (17,20).

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