

JORDAN DAVIS

The End of the Book of Numbers

Archaeology and Bible

6

Mohr Siebeck

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On Pentateuchal Models and
Compositional Issues

Mohr Siebeck

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For Joanna and Finn.

Preface

The following monograph grew out of 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). When I heard that I had been selected to take part in this prestigious project on the formation of the Pentateuch I was elated. However, I must confess that I found the idea of investigating “historical geography” rather daunting. Not only did I have very little exposure to archaeological matters from my previous studies, but I found the concept of looking at place names rather insipid. However, my ignorance proved to be greatly misguided, as it turned out historical geography not only opened the doors to new insights into the biblical text itself but also towards questions of those texts’ place within the formation of the Pentateuch. Furthermore, the geographical findings are arguably the most interesting part of the argument ... *Mea culpa*.

The resulting monograph features only a single name on the cover, however there were, of course, many supporting figures who undeniably helped it reach its final form.

Konrad Schmid, who not only made the decision to accept me as a doctoral student but who also suggested that I apply for the Sinergia project on the formation of the Pentateuch. Konrad not only helped me in his supervisory role but has continued to support me long after this official requirement ended. I feel lucky to have such a role model during this formative stage in my career.

Christian Frevel, for whom I worked as a research assistant during the writing of my dissertation. Christian’s own work on the book of Numbers and the history of ancient Israel provided an enormous influence on my own thinking and I consider myself fortunate to have been in a position to engage with his work so closely. Christian also inspired me with his tireless work ethic and I am especially grateful for the detailed feedback he provided on the final draft of my dissertation.

Many other friends and colleagues contributed to my journey as well: Julia Rhyder, my fellow Aussie in Europe, with whom I had countless fruitful discussions and who continues to be an unending source of encouragement and in-

spiration. Jürg Hutzli, with whom I worked alongside as a co-editor as part of the Sinergia project and who provided welcome feedback on my dealings with the Priestly texts in Genesis. Katharina Pyschny, who shared her expertise on the book of Numbers and provided helpful critiques of my early ideas. Christophe Nihan, who invited me to present a workshop wherein I could discuss my ideas with the research team in Lausanne.

I would also like to thank the editors of ArchB – Israel Finkelstein, Deirdre Fulton, Oded Lipschits, Christophe Nihan, Thomas Römer, and Konrad Schmid – for accepting this monograph into the series and Mohr Siebeck for the publication – especially Elena Müller for her advice and help during the preparation and Markus Kirchner for his detailed feedback.

Finally, I wish to thank my family: My parents – Peter, Anne and Graeme – for their encouragement and support. My son Finn, who was born during the PhD and who provided countless hours of distraction and joy. And my wife, Jo, who left the good life in Melbourne to move to a country whose language we did not speak in pursuit of this crazy academic dream of mine.

Lastly, I would like to mention one study that I only became aware of too late in my own research: Dylan R. Johnson, *Sovereign Authority and the Elaboration of Law in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*. FAT II 122 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020). Dylan, a fellow researcher at UZH, also has extensive chapters on Num 27 (pp. 217–265) and Num 36 (pp. 266–295).

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Chapter 1

Introduction

After the fire had extinguished atop the mountain and the embers had dulled, after the smoke had cleared to be remembered only by its lingering taint upon the clothes of all who had borne witness, after the ringing in the ears from the trumpet blast had faded, after the smell of blood from those slain by the Levites had been blown away, Israel departed the mountain.

It is in the aftermath of this most glorious and terrible scene that the book of Numbers begins. Yet even here, after all that had just transpired, the ineffability of the divine and the chosen nature of Moses still struggled to take root. Before leaving the shadow of the mountain Moses does not turn to ΥHWH for guidance but to his Midianite brother-in-law, Hobab. We are told that they conversed and learn that Moses wants Hobab to join Israel on its journey; although there was likely some degree of familial duty involved, the real reason for the invitation is that Moses does not even know where to camp (Num 10:31). Israel's wilderness journey, then, appears to have been confusing not only for modern readers but for Moses also. As MacDonald observes, "For Israel and for the reader, the book of Numbers is an unwelcome detour on the way to destinations more interesting."¹

Much of Numbers' unpopularity in earlier scholarship was due to three main reasons. First, it was devoid of most of the major themes of the Pentateuch (the history of origins, the patriarchal tradition, Israel's journey to the mountain of God) and so – perhaps justifiably – received less attention than the other Pentateuchal books. Second, of the five books in the Pentateuch, Numbers was the book in which the Documentary Hypothesis was the least effective.² Martin Noth, in particular, brought this observation into the limelight when he observed that had it been analysed in isolation, one would not conclude that Numbers was comprised of the three primary sources. However, the dominance of the Documentary Hypothesis and the lack of any viable alternatives at the time was also aptly demonstrated as Noth went on to conclude that because the source model was so effective at explaining the rest of the Pentateuch, one should also use it

¹ MACDONALD, "Numbers," 113. RÖMER, "périphérie," 3, notes, "peu d'attention est accordée au livre des Nombres cependant" (*Little attention is given to the book of Numbers, however*).

² More accurately, the "New" Documentary Hypothesis, as developed particularly by GRAF, *Bücher*; KUENEN, *Inquiry*; WELLHAUSEN, *Composition*; WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena*. For further discussion see, BADEN, *Redaction*; ROGERSON, "Protestant," 211; RÖMER, "Higher"; SMEND, "Work." For a detailed exploration of nineteenth century scholarship on the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, see SÆBØ, *HBOT* 3.1.

to analyse the book of Numbers.³ Lastly, the book's mixture of narratives, lists and legal materials was also deemed problematic, producing a work that was, at least to some degree, confusing. Binns, for example, observed in his 1927 commentary:

As a piece of literature [the book of Numbers] falls short of the highest class owing to its lack of unity and proportion. At the same time it cannot be denied that it contains narratives of the greatest merit, strung like pearls on a string, but the underlying idea has been obscured by too great a profusion of detail, and the various authors and editors – even down to the unknown scribe who gave the book its final form – were not at one in their aims.⁴

Since the turn of the millennium things have begun to change for the book of Numbers, and it is now experiencing something of a renaissance in Pentateuchal scholarship.⁵ This renaissance has resulted in new models being produced, which among other things seek to better explain the fourth book of the Pentateuch. These new models have only really been possible in light of the weakening of the Documentary Hypothesis, which no longer maintains its monopolistic position. The peculiar nature of Numbers and its contrarian relationship to the Documentary Hypothesis are the precise reasons that make it arguably the best testing ground for new hypotheses. The book of Numbers thus functions as the litmus test for the validity of new theories on the development of the Pentateuch.⁶

Despite being “freed” from the constraints of the Documentary Hypothesis, no new model has attained anywhere near the success of the source model. Indeed, the opposite rather seems to be the case, now more than ever is the field filled with dissenting voices. One major effort in the attempt to bring the wider field into closer alignment resulted in the volume entitled, *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures of Europe, Israel, and North America*. In the volume's introduction the editors write:

³ NOTH, *Numbers*, 4–5, writes, “If we were to take the book of Numbers on its own, then we would think not so much of ‘continuous sources’ as of an unsystematic collection of innumerable pieces of tradition of varied content, age and character (‘Fragment Hypothesis’). But it would be contrary to the facts of the matter, as will already be clear from the contents of the book, to treat Numbers in isolation. From the first, the book has belonged, in the Old Testament canon, to the larger whole of the Pentateuch, and scholarly work on the book has consistently maintained that it must be seen in this wider context. It is therefore, justifiable to approach the book of Numbers with the results of Pentateuchal analysis achieved elsewhere and to expect the continuing Pentateuchal ‘sources’ here, too, even if, as we have said, the situation in Numbers, of itself, does not exactly lead us to these results.”

⁴ BINNS, *Numbers*, xiv.

⁵ The title of RÖMER, “périphérie,” rightly captures the idea that the study of Numbers has now moved from “de la périphérie au centre” (*from the periphery to the centre*). FREVEL, “Stücke,” 271, likewise argues that the book of Numbers is now integral to discussions of literary history, the history of religion and theology. See the collected works by RÖMER, “Books;” FREVEL et al., *Torah*.

⁶ This fact led ALBERTZ, “Numeri I,” to begin his analysis with Numbers 20–21, two chapters of renowned redactional complexity.

Recent decades have witnessed not simply a proliferation of intellectual models but, in many ways much more seriously, the fragmentation of discourse altogether as scholarly communities in the three main research centers of Israel, Europe and North America increasingly talk past one another ... scholars tend to operate from such different premises, employ such divergent methods, and reach such inconsistent results that meaningful progress has become impossible. The models continue to proliferate but the communication seems only to diminish.⁷

Although it must be admitted that it is not possible to analyse the Pentateuch without any model or without any presuppositions, it is possible to seek analytical methods that are less tightly correlated with a particular model. The present work, then, suggests some tools that can be used with any model in the hopes of engaging (at least as far as possible) in a text-to-model analysis rather than a model-to-text one. These tools are (1) the increased attention paid to “empirical” evidence for processes of literary production from both biblical and non-biblical literature, (2) non-biblical historical evidence, not least geographical references, and (3) the renewed attention paid to the “Northern Kingdom” (in both preexilic and postexilic periods) in the formation of the Pentateuch.⁸ Why are these tools useful and why are they important?

Recent advances in the history of the ancient Levant have not only increased the reliability of data, but also significantly increased the amount of available data. This increase in data has caused dramatic shifts throughout the broader study of the ancient Near East, not least in Hebrew Bible studies. To provide one key example, the increased number of excavations performed in and around Jerusalem have helped bring the idea of a “Solomonic Golden Age” into serious doubt.⁹ This in turn has given rise to the need for new explanations, not only for

⁷ GERTZ et al., “Convergence,” 2–3.

⁸ Of course, the Northern Kingdom proper ended with the Assyrians, however a blanket term for Yahwists north of Judah/Judea/Yehud is lacking.

⁹ SCHMID, *History*, 50, for example, argues, “viewed historically, we must now distance ourselves both from the political notion of a Davidic-Solomonic empire, projected by the Old Testament literature as a ‘Golden Age,’ and from the idea of a literary industry flowering in that period.” FREVEL, *Geschichte*, 175, summarises: “Nimmt man die archäologischen und historischen Hinweise zusammen, ist die blühende vereinte Monarchie unter Salomo mehr Legende als Wirklichkeit. Die Evidenz reicht nicht aus, um verantwortet an der biblischen Darstellung festzuhalten. Die Legenden weisen zu weiten Teilen auf Zustände des 8. Jh.s v. Chr. Salomos Pracht war nicht Nichts, aber sie war sicher auch nicht groß. Für eine ‘salomonische Aufklärung’ (G. von Rad) jedenfalls fehlen ebenso die Voraussetzungen wie für umfassende Literaturproduktionen und Geschichtswerke. Vor dem Hintergrund der Entstehung der zwei Staaten Israel und Juda und der Erkenntnis, dass von einer vereinten Monarchie Abschied zu nehmen ist, muss die Frage gestellt werden, ob Salomo überhaupt eine historische Person gewesen ist. Die Frage lässt sich anders als bei David bisher nicht durch außerbiblische Zeugnisse positiv beantworten. Vieles lässt sich besser erklären, wenn die literarische Überlieferung zu Salomo in mehreren Schüben zusammen mit der Überzeichnung des Königs David, wie die Darstellung der Reichsteilung und die Darstellung der Frühphase der Königtümer Israel und Juda, als Brücke zwischen der älteren Davidüberlieferung und den Annalen der Omriden ge-

the history of Israel and Judah in general, but also for the formation of the biblical traditions. Although scholars have always tried to link the biblical materials to history, it is not surprising that when one's view of history changes, one's understanding of the biblical traditions is also likely to change. One of the major goals of the present work, then, is to take a closer look at the topographical information contained in the biblical material and to see if new solutions can be found regarding the composition of those biblical texts in light of more up to date archaeological and historical results.

A further key insight used in the ensuing exegesis is the idea that one of the major drivers behind textual modification is ideological divergence. The present work takes this key insight gained from recent empirical investigations on textual conflation and editorial activity, which concludes that when ideological changes are minor, then the editing of the text is correspondingly minor, when a larger ideological shift is introduced, this introduces a much more overt change to the text.

With these tools in hand the question is: Which text(s) to analyse? Even among the newest Pentateuchal models the final chapters of Numbers remain somewhat mysterious. Thomas Römer, in a modified way, follows Noth's proposal that the final section of the book represents something of a "rolling corpus," in which disparate material was simply appended in the order in which it appeared. Reinhard Achenbach argues (with a few exceptions) that the entirety of Numbers 26–36 is the work of the three-part, post-Pentateuchal theocratic redactor (ThB I–III). Rainer Albertz goes even further and suggests that Num 25:19–36:13 is the work of a single redactor, PB5, whose major goal was to compensate for the loss of Joshua when the Hexateuch (Genesis – Joshua) was reduced to the Pentateuch (Genesis – Deuteronomy).¹⁰ Thus, despite the hundreds of pages that have been

schaffen worden ist." (*If the archaeological and historical references are taken together, the flourishing United Monarchy under Solomon is more legend than reality. The evidence is not sufficient to maintain the biblical presentation in a responsible manner. The legend points to conditions of the 8th century BCE. Solomon's splendor was not nothing, but it certainly was not great either. For a 'Solomonic Enlightenment' [G. von Rad], at any rate, the prerequisites are lacking, as are comprehensive literary productions and historical works. Against the background of the emergence of the two states, Israel and Judah, and the realization that it is time to say goodbye to a United Monarchy, the question must be asked whether Solomon was a historical person at all. In contrast to David, this question cannot yet be answered positively by non-biblical testimonies. Much can be better explained if the literary tradition of Solomon was created in several phases together with the exaggeration of King David, such as the depiction of the division of the kingdom and the depiction of the early phase of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, as a bridge between the older tradition of David and the annals of the Omrides.*) With regards to the biblical depiction of a Solomonic "Golden Age," KNAUF/GUILLAUME, *History*, 76, argue that the story of Solomon projects, "the glory of the Assyrian Empire onto a fabulous past to show how such an empire can only lead to ruin."

¹⁰ This led ALBERTZ, "Redaction," 230, to propose that Numbers 25:19–36:13 was designed as a replacement of the book of Joshua by the editor responsible for shortening the Hexateuch into a Pentateuch. Speaking of the Transjordan conquest in Numbers 32 he writes, "This topic

written on Numbers since its “return to glory,” the issues pertaining to the final section of the book have remained largely unresolved.

The present work analyses two key traditions – one narrative, one legislative – that have a high chance of yielding positive results with regard to compositional questions. Although containing clearly disparate material, the final section of the book of Numbers can be summarised by the themes of conquest and settlement, both in its preparation and its enactment. The dense accumulation of topographic detail in the final section of the book of Numbers allow for recent archaeological advances to play a major role. Furthermore, the final section of Numbers features a curious emphasis on the tribe of Manasseh (cf. table 1), which at least *prima facie* provides a promising avenue for investigating the involvement of Northern scribes and traditions.

The narrative of Numbers 32 and the narrative-legislation of Numbers 27 and 36, then, represent a fortuitous intersection of redaction-critical difficulties, geographical details, and the tribe of Manasseh. Numbers 32 details the settlement of the Transjordan tribes, which includes the sudden and unexpected appearance of the half-tribe of Manasseh in the final verses. Numbers 27:1–11 and 36:1–12 are paired pericopes, united by the inheritance issues relating to the Manassite Zelophehad’s daughters. Thus, these chapters represent fertile ground to make use of the three investigative tools identified above.

Via a detailed exegesis of these key chapters, it will be demonstrated that the compositional growth of the final section of the book of Numbers is neither the result of a disordered series of appendages, nor is it the product of a particularly limited number of late redactors.

Tribes	Population Change between Numbers 1 and Numbers 26	Tribes	Population Change between Numbers 1 and Numbers 26
Reuben	-2770	<i>Manasseh</i>	+20500
Simeon	-37100	Ephraim	-8000
Gad	-5150	Benjamin	+10200
Judah	+1900	Dan	+1700
Issachar	+9900	Asher	+11900
Zebulun	+3100	Naphtali	-8000

Table 1: Population changes between the first and second census

would well fit a redactor who was obliged to exclude the book of Joshua from Israel’s founding document, on the one hand, but did not want to lose its important message within the Pentateuch, on the other hand.”

Chapter 2

Setting the Stage: Background for Understanding the Book of Numbers

It is not possible to understand the current research on Numbers without a sufficient grounding in the underlying discussions on the formation of the Pentateuch. This chapter seeks to provide a general orientation regarding theories on the formation of the Pentateuch. This in turn will lead to a fuller discussion of the three key extra-biblical tools noted in the introduction. With these tools and the foregoing discussion on models, a broad proposal will be made regarding the origins of the Pentateuch. Finally, an overview of the structure of Numbers will be presented, with particular attention given to the final chapters of the book. All in all, this chapter functions as the foundation upon which the following exegetical chapters are built.

2.1 Pentateuchal Models and the Book of Numbers

It should come as no surprise that the resurgence in Numbers' popularity has a high degree of correlation with the recent shifts in Pentateuchal theory, or more precisely, with the models regarding the formation of the Pentateuch. Simply put, it was only after the Documentary Hypothesis lost its monopoly on Pentateuchal scholarship that the book of Numbers became a topic of interest. There are several factors relating to this that will be elaborated below.

2.1.1 *The Documentary Hypothesis*

2.1.1.1 *A Brief History of the Source Model*

As Otto remarks, it is rather ironic that source criticism first arose in order to defend the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.¹ Astruc's² original conviction that Moses must have consulted various sources in order to write Genesis and the beginning of Exodus was continuously expanded by scholars such as de Wette³

¹ OTTO, "Meaning," 29.

² Astruc only analysed Exodus up to chapter 2 because he believed the rest of the book to be genuinely Mosaic. See discussion in, e.g., HARVEY JR./HALPERN, "Dissertatio," 51-52.

³ DE WETTE, "Dissertatio." See discussion in OTTO, "Truth."

and Hupfeld⁴ to arrive at the idea that the entire Pentateuch was composed from various sources.

This trend in Pentateuchal criticism climaxed at the end of the nineteenth century with the so-called “New” Documentary Hypothesis, which is most famously connected with the names Graf,⁵ Kuenen⁶ and Wellhausen.^{7,8} It was Wellhausen’s *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* that largely settled the debates about the Documentary Hypothesis by concluding that the sources should be chronologically ordered with respect to the development of Israelite society and particularly in relation to cult centralisation – the Covenant Code, as the representative JE text, presented a decentralised cult (see esp. Exod 20:24), Deuteronomy (D) centralised the cult to one place (see esp. Deut 12:13–14), and P presupposed a centralised cult with its single sanctuary administered by a select priestly family – thus arriving at the well-known abbreviated sequence JEDP.⁹ Such was the power of the Documentary Hypothesis as an explanatory framework that it held a virtual monopoly for almost a century, and even now, in the 21st century, it continues to play a significant role.¹⁰

2.1.1.2 *The Problem of Deuteronomy*

Having rearranged the chronological order of the four sources to JEDP, the New Documentary Hypothesis had difficulty explaining the book of Deuteronomy. The first difficulty was that Deuteronomy was the only source that functioned in a more or less standalone way. A more significant issue was that the Priestly source, although being the youngest, was largely absent in the book of Deuteronomy.¹¹ In contrast, de Wette’s earlier model proposed that Deuteronomy was different to the other sources because it constituted the final layer of the Hexateuch/Pentateuch and thus the absence of P in Deuteronomy was not an issue.¹²

In 1943, Martin Noth proposed an answer to this problem that became the mainstay of Old Testament scholarship for the next half century.¹³ Noting the

⁴ See discussion in, e. g., VAN SETERS, *Edited*; BADEN, *Redaction*; RÖMER, “Higher.”

⁵ See discussion in ROGERSON, “Protestant,” 211.

⁶ KUENEN, *Inquiry*. See also SMEND, “Work.”

⁷ WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena*.

⁸ See esp. overview in RÖMER, “Higher.”

⁹ WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena*, 27–169.

¹⁰ As CARR, “Changes,” 434, observes, “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 sway over virtually all 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.”

¹¹ See esp. OTTO, “*Nachpriesterschriftlichen*”; OTTO, “Integration.” This, of course, does not take into account recent discussions regarding the end of P. See below.

¹² See, e. g., OTTO, “Truth,” 21.

¹³ NOTH, *Studien*. See also RÖMER, “History.”

many linguistic and stylistic links between the Former Prophets (Joshua – Kings) and Deuteronomy, Noth argued that these at one point constituted a self-contained epic of Israel's history. Noth proposed that in light of the fall of the kingdom of Judah, a scribe set out to interpret this catastrophe.¹⁴ This explained why the Former Prophets (and Deuteronomy itself) could be seen to share a unified theology.¹⁵ Noth called this composition the "Deuteronomistic History."¹⁶

The Deuteronomistic History introduced many benefits in understanding the structure and ideology of the Former Prophets and provided a simple explanation for the distinctive character of the book of Deuteronomy in the Pentateuch. However, it also meant that an explanation had to be provided for the Tetratauch (Genesis – Numbers), which, devoid of the conquest and the death of Moses, was difficult to conceive as a complete standalone work.¹⁷ Noth's solution to this problem was to suggest that the original ending of the Tetratauch was lost or removed once the Pentateuch incorporated the book of Deuteronomy.¹⁸

The secondary literature on the Deuteronomistic History is immense, now spanning approximately 70 years of scholarship, and is still debated today.¹⁹ Even for those in favour of a Deuteronomistic History, the model as originally proposed by Noth is rarely asserted.²⁰ Indeed, as Knauf succinctly observes, "In any case, Noth's Dtr has been abandoned by everyone."²¹

Efforts to retain the core idea of the Deuteronomistic History are achieved by modifying Noth's hypothesis with various expansions and alterations. Thus, Campbell likens the Deuteronomistic History to a house; its foundation and structure were built by Noth, but has become subject to numerous renovations, developments, and redecorations over time.²²

¹⁴ DE PURY/RÖMER, "Historiography," 51.

¹⁵ RÖMER, "History," 648–649.

¹⁶ For a detailed overview of the history of research, see DE PURY/RÖMER, "Historiography."

¹⁷ ROSE, "Ideology," 426–427, for example, notes, "Noth's thesis actually destroys the unity of the Pentateuch (and the Torah) by excising Deuteronomy, which he makes the programmatic introduction of a great historiography." That said, it remains true that Deuteronomy is somehow separate. RÖMER, "Many," 39, for example, notes that of all the books in the Enneateuch (Genesis – 2 Kings) only Genesis, Deuteronomy, and 1 Samuel have "absolute beginnings," i. e., the remaining books open with joining introductions (e. g., "After the death of Moses ..." in Joshua 1:1). On the one hand this does speak to Deuteronomy being separate from the Tetratauch, but the fact that 1 Samuel also contains an "absolute beginning" actually argues against the idea that Deuteronomy – 2 Kings were an originally stand-alone work.

¹⁸ RÖMER, "Many," 27. Cf. OTTO, "Schlußstein."

¹⁹ To name a few examples: MCKENZIE/GRAHAM, *History*; DE PURY et al., *Israel*; RÖMER, "Future;" GERTZ et al., *Geschichtswerke*.

²⁰ SCHMID, "Wellhausen," 20.

²¹ KNAUF, "Historiography," 390.

²² CAMPBELL, "History," 37. One of the most prominent "renovations" came from the Göttingen model, which asserted that there were three distinct layers of the Deuteronomistic History: a historical redaction (DtrH), a prophetic (DtrP), and a legislative (DtrN). For an overview of the Göttingen model, see, e. g., RÖMER, "History," 649–650.

Although much more could be said, it is sufficient to note that regarding the formation of the Pentateuch the concept of the Deuteronomistic History, in the most basic sense of a standalone work stretching from Deuteronomy – 2 Kings, is increasingly being understood to introduce more problems than it solves.²³ In light of this, it is becoming more common to speak of Deuteronomistic Histories in the plural, which represent editorial harmonisations in light of Deuteronomistic ideology rather than one single historical work.²⁴

2.1.1.3 *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Book of Numbers*

It would be a mistake to suggest that all scholars follow the same concept of how the Documentary Hypothesis works. As Baden, for example, states, “from Wellhausen to Richard Elliott Friedman, virtually all adherents of the Documentary Hypothesis have posited three distinct redactions: J and E into ‘JE,’ by a redactor ‘R^{JE}’; ‘JE’ and D into ‘JED’ by a redactor ‘R^{JED}’; and JED and P into the canonical Pentateuch by the final reactor, ‘R.’”²⁵ Yet Baden goes on to argue that this multiple compilation is not supported by the literary evidence and concludes, “There is, in short, no literary reason to assume more than one compiler for the canonical Pentateuch.”²⁶

However, for the purposes of the present discussion attention need not be given to these distinctions. Rather, the focus will rest upon the fundamental idea that, in all its variations, the Documentary Hypothesis assumes the Pentateuch is primarily composed from four originally standalone sources. Three of these sources – J, E and P – comprised narratives that spanned the whole pre-history of Israel, from creation until (at least) the death of Moses. The key point being

²³ To give only a sample of the criticisms now brought against the Deuteronomistic History. See, e.g., ALBERTZ, “Search;” FREVEL, “Geschichtswerk;” FREVEL, “Wiederkehr;” KNOPPERS, “Future;” KRATZ, “Ort;” SCHMID, “Emergence;” SCHMID, “Wellhausen;” VAN SETERS, *History*; VAN SETERS, “Redaction.”

²⁴ As SCHMID, “Deuteronomy,” 28, writes, “Regarding the thesis of a ‘Deuteronomistic History,’ it is clear in view of these considerations that this expression is only correct in the plural. There were various ‘Deuteronomistic Histories’ in the Enneateuch. One can discern an initial ‘Deuteronomistic History’ in Samuel – 2 Kings that was shaped not by Deut 12 but by the cult centralization in Jerusalem. Another ‘Deuteronomistic History’ is perceptible in Exodus – Joshua + Samuel – 2 Kings and is shaped by the first commandment, deriving its theological thrust through the literary arches of Exod 32 and 1 Kgs 12 as well as through the twofold theme of ‘exodus from Egypt’ and ‘return to Egypt’ in 2 Kgs 25:26 (‘From Egypt to Egypt’). Finally, a third and, to my mind, post-Priestly ‘Deuteronomistic History’ is recognizable in Genesis – 2 Kings, which is already dominated by the notion of the ‘Torah of Moses’ that it applies to the story. Genesis – 2 Kings also coins the great literary inclusion stretching from Joseph in Egypt to King Jehoiachin at the table of the Babylonian king Amel-Marduk, thereby representing a diaspora theology for Israel.” See also KNOPPERS, “Future;” FREVEL, “Geschichtswerk;” RÖMER, “History.”

²⁵ BADEN, *Composition*, 218.

²⁶ BADEN, *Composition*, 221.

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