

THE INTERPRETER'S BIBLE

at Kadesh (Num. 20:1) in the first month, presumably of the third year, since no dates are mentioned between chs. 10 and 20. Aaron's death is recorded in 20:23-28, and 33:38 places this in the fifth month of the fortieth year after the Exodus. Thus a period of something more than thirty-seven years is "covered" by 20:1-22 (with this cf. Dent. 2:14, Num. 21:12-13).

It is the presence in the text of difficulties and inconsistencies such as these which makes it impossible to accept the traditional theory that the Pentateuch is the work of one man. The crises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were thus led to attempt the formulation of a theory of sources. They did not, however, discover the clue which ultimately was to make possible the isolation of these sources, and so the determination of their origin and character.

IV. The Rise of Scientific Criticism

In 1755, Jean Astruc,⁸ a physician of Montpellier, published a monograph on the sources of Genesis.⁹ He noted the alternating use of God and Yahweh to designate the deity as an indication of diversity of authorship, and using this as his criterion, resolved Genesis into two main documents, postulating at the same time a number of minor sources.

Some twenty-five years later Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, who had independently reached the same general conclusions as Astruc, published his introduction to the Old Testament. He advanced a step beyond Astruc, however, in that he attempted to establish the existence of additional characteristics, both of style and content, marking each source. Nevertheless, he failed to recognize that the sources of which Genesis was composed were to be found underlying the remaining books of the Hexateuch.

In the century that ensued, investigation of the Hexateuch followed three main lines. One of them attempted to reconstruct the documents from which the books had been composed; the second rejected the theory of continuous source documents and instead developed, in one form or another, a "fragment-hypothesis," which maintained that the present narrative was a compilation of numerous brief, independent, and often contradictory units of tradition. The third theory, lying midway between the document-hypothesis and the fragment-hypothesis,

⁸ Astruc's conclusions had been anticipated by Vittinga (1683) and by H. R. Witter (1211), but their work seems to have remained practically unknown until attention was called to it by Adolphe Lods; see his *Israel from Its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century*, tr. J. H. Strachan (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1882), p. 10, and his *Jean Astruc et sa critique biblique* (Paris: Librairie de la Sorbonne, 1924).

⁹ *Conjectures sur les sources originales dont il faut que Moïse se soit servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse* (Paris: chez Lesclapart, 1755).

was that of supplementation. According to this theory, underlying the present narrative there was but one continuous source document, which had, however, been supplemented from time to time by the insertion of fragments of diverse origin.

The work of the century found a summing up in the "new document-hypothesis" of Hermann Hupfeld, who, in 1835, exactly one hundred years after the appearance of Astruc's *Conjectures*, published the results of his investigations into the sources of Genesis,¹⁰ following this a few years later with a similar analysis of the remaining books of the Pentateuch. In its developed form this new document-hypothesis maintained that the groundwork of the Pentateuch was a document which in Genesis is referred to God as Elohim. This Hupfeld designated E¹ (today it would be symbolized by P). He believed (erroneously, as it will be seen) that this was the earliest of the component documents. Next in origin was the second E document, designated E²—roughly equivalent to the modern E. Still later a third document was written which used the name Yahweh, and which Hupfeld designated J. These three documents were combined by a redactor to form a composite work which would today be symbolized by PEJ (or Hupfeld, EEJ²). The latest document of the four was Deuteronomy, which was added to this composite work in order to form the present Pentateuch.

It may be noted here that the solution of the problem of the growth of the Hexateuch involves two things: the books must be analyzed into their component sources, and the chronological relationship of the sources must be determined. In the century ending with Hupfeld the first of these tasks had been substantially accomplished—though subsequent investigation was to modify the results in certain details, and was to reveal a process of literary development within the sources themselves; little of value had been achieved as regards the second task. This was due to the fact that Hupfeld, like his predecessors, had approached the problem through Genesis. This book, being practically pure narrative, furnished of itself little or no indication as to the chronological order of the documents of which it was composed. It was therefore easy enough to assume that the document which furnished the opening chapter of the book, and also served as the framework into which the material from the other documents

¹⁰ *Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammenstellung* (Berlin: Weigand & Griepen, 1835).

¹¹ German scholars used J to represent the Hebrew letter *yod*, the first letter of the divine name (YHWH) now designated Yahweh; hence the document using this name in Genesis is called J, not Y.

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had been fitted, was chronologically the first of the series.

V. The Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis

In 1865-66 Karl H. Graf published the results of his critical work on the historical books of the Old Testament.¹¹ He approached the problem of the Hexateuch not by way of Genesis, but through a comparative study of the laws. He maintained that the Book of the Law "found" in the temple in the reign of Josiah (II Kings 22:8) was the Deuteronomic Code, D; that the laws in Exod. 13-23 and 34 were earlier than D, as was the "prophetic" narrative, JE, in which they were embedded; that the laws of the P Code—Hupfeld's E¹—were of post-exilic origin, but that the narrative of P was the oldest part of the Hexateuch. With it the Deuteronomist had combined JE and his own work. To this Ezra had added the P legal code, together with some supplementary narrative material.

The great Dutch scholar Abraham Kuenen immediately discerned both the strength and the weakness of Graf's hypothesis, and pointed out to him in a private letter that the narrative and the laws of P were so obviously interdependent that it was impossible to suppose that they had originated some centuries apart. Graf accepted this criticism and modified his theory accordingly, which at once received the public support of Kuenen,¹² and a few years later, of Julius Wellhausen.¹³ The theory, which has come to be known as the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, may in its broad outlines be stated as follows:

The Hexateuch is composed of four originally separate documents, of which the earliest is that known as J, so called because of its use of the name Yahweh in the narratives of Genesis. The second is E, so called because of its use of Elohim prior to the specific revelation of the name Yahweh to Moses, recorded in Exod. 3:14-15. These two documents were combined, with the necessary harmonization, to form a single narrative, JE, by a redactor, R¹. The third document in point of time is Deuteronomy, D, which is identical in whole or in part with the lawbook found in the temple in the reign of Josiah. The combination of JE with D to form JED was effected by a redactor, R², who in the process added a considerable amount

¹² *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1866).

¹³ In *The Religion of Israel*, tr. Alired H. May (London: Williams & Norgate, 1874-75). The original entitled *Geschichte von Israel*, appeared in 1868-70.

¹⁴ In a series of articles in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Theologie*, XXI and XXII (1876-77), published in book form as *Die Composition des Hexateuchs* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1885).

of material of the older narratives. With, in addition to the account of the patriarchs and Mosaic periods, are severely limited to a few, and are for the most part of a theological character, those in the narrative of the Conquest are of such a nature as to alter radically the representations of JE. For this and other reasons it is probable that the Deuteronomic redaction was carried through by different hands, possibly at different times. The fourth document is P, so symbolized because of the great amount of priestly legislation it contains. It is post-exilic in origin, and was combined with JED by a redactor, R³, to form JEDP. This allowing for the insertion of some supplementary legislative material, an occasional narrative, and possibly for some minor Deuteronomic additions, was substantially the present Hexateuch.

The evidence upon which this hypothesis rests can be only briefly summarized here. Some of the actual phenomena which led to its formulation have already been indicated, but it is in Exod. 6:2-5 that the key to the composition of the Hexateuch is found. There it is stated that God had appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but had not been known to them by his name Yahweh (Gen. 17:1 and 35:11, recording God's revelation of himself as El Shaddai to Abraham and Jacob respectively—the analogous revelation to Isaac is missing, presumably dropped in the process of collating the documents because of redactional exigencies—obviously belong to the same source as Exod. 6:2-5; and those stories in Genesis in which the name Yahweh is known to the actors must come from another source.

Gen. 17:1; 35:11, and Exod. 6:2-5 thus provide a point of departure. Gen. 17:1, with which the rest of that chapter is continuous, states explicitly that Abraham was at the time ninety-nine years old. Now we have already seen how the recorded ages of the patriarchs give rise to serious chronological difficulties in the narrative of Genesis, a fact which suggests that the passages in which their ages are given come from another hand than the stories thus rendered incredible. This points to the conclusion that the age verses, and the material inseparable from them, are from the same source as Gen. 17:1. This material is sufficiently extensive to make it possible to discern something of the style of its author, to note many of his characteristic expressions, and to detect certain of his preconceptions, theological and other. Working with these criteria we are able to isolate from Genesis a body of material informed by a peculiar theory of revelation. In this material it is

¹⁵ Gen. 12:4-7; 16:3-16; 21: 25; 27:10, 17; 19:29; 26:24-35; 35:28-29; 37:26; 41:45; 47:1-11; 48: 49-29; 50:12-18; 22:1, Exod. 7:7, etc.