

Winnett, F. V., The Mosaic Tradition (Toronto), 1949

authorship. Certainly they justify us in approaching the study of the Central Cores of the plague stories with the a priori assumption that each is a literary whole, not a jig-saw puzzle of pieces drawn from three different sources." (p.9)

"If it had not been for the three-document theory the unity of the narrative would never have been called in question." (p.10)

//

p. 12 This examination of the accepted documentary analysis of the Plague Narrative indicates that it rests on false assumptions and that the literary phenomena presented by the narrative can be explained better by a theory of stylistic arrangement than by a theory of documentary admixture, by a theory of single rather than composite authorship. The threefold pattern adopted by the biblical author, although sensed only imperfectly by the analysts, gives some support to their triple-document theory. But, as shown above, the documentary lines drawn by the analysts correspond very imperfectly to the stylistic divisions which seem to have been intended by the author.²

Footnote 2 That there is something wrong with the usual documentary approach is evident from the absurd results obtained by C. A. Simpson in his analysis of the Plague Story in The Early Traditions of Israel (Oxford, 1948), pp. 170-81, 433, 542-5, 617-19.

p. 13 Such a complicated literary process leading to such a highly artistic result makes too great a demand upon our credulity. Did such a process ever lead to the creation of a great work of literature, which the Story of the Plagues undoubtedly is? Great literature simply does not arise in that way. It is the creation of a single imaginative mind, not the mechanical fitting together of pieces drawn from various sources, two verses from J, a half-verse from E, a touch of P.

p. 14 . . . the written story which we possess passed through a long period of oral transmission. Whatever the original nucleus of the Plague Story may have been, it doubtless grew with the passing of time. There would be added to it other plagues to which Egypt is subject, and attempts would be made to impress the whole with an artistic character. But once the story was written down I believe the process of growth came to an end. The assumption of modern biblical scholars that extensive liberties were taken with the