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happened was a deviation from Moses. Rather, it holds, a fictional account was composed in the postexilic period, which read back into the times of Moses the origin and justification of those things which had developed in the postexilic period. The pre-exilic period had known no high priests; that institution had not developed until after the exile. Then it was romantically, and falsely, traced back to Moses' brother Aaron.

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To repeat, the pre-exilic prophets are in agreement with Graf-Wellhausen. Amos 5.25 denies that there had been the kind of animal sacrifices in the Wilderness period which reflect P's interest in the early chapters of Leviticus; Jeremiah 7.21-4 reads: ". . . I did not speak with your fathers and did not command them, on the day I brought them out of Egypt, concerning holocaust and sacrifice." Jeremiah is saying, in effect, that requirements such as Leviticus and Deuteronomy attribute to the Wilderness were never made. Any inclination to accept the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis as a point of departure stems from a theological reluctance. The evidence supports it.

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Reasons for considering Graf-Wellhausen a point of departure

There are two reasons why the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis should be considered as a point of departure rather than as a final explanation.

1. . . ., in the ninety odd years since Graf, Pentateuch scholarship, far from standing still, has moved on (though not always forward!). Archaeology has yielded new knowledge, not only of history and religion, but also of the Hebrew language.

2. . . . there have always been three major deficiencies in the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis.

a. . . . a result of the thoroughness with which the Wellhausenites went through the Pentateuch and assigned its contents to the various sources. Their analysis was too acute . . . Hence, analysis had to separate and redistribute these component parts. . . . The end result carried analysis beyond logic into absurdity, for a Hebrew sentence with four words could appear in a scientific edition in four kinds of type. Source analysis became excessively subjective and even fantastic.

b. . . . an assumption of rectilinear (straightline) development. Anthropology was called upon to support the view that religion always moves from the free and spontaneous into the organized and the systematized. Accordingly, systematic religion, as represented by Priestly religion, was seen as a development from, and therefore later than, spontaneous prophetic religion. In rectilinear development, there is little or no room for diverse impulses to exist side by side, and surely no room for steps backward. The Wellhausen view was too often excessively mechanical.

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c. . . . what purported to be objective description was unconsciously subjective evaluation. The nineteenth century German scholarship . . . was largely conducted by exponents of individualism in religion. Hence there was little or no sympathy for institutional religion in general . . . little for the biblical priestly system. . . . As a result, many Wellhausians described the P code as if they were describing the Catholic Church, to which they felt superior and condescending.