

Erosion of Wellhasenism

Development

*Gwynford Henton Davies, Principal Report
Park College, Oxford University*

"Tabernacle" by G. Henton Davies in IDB, Vol. III, pp.498-506

p. 503 As a corollary of the Graf-Wellhausen position and with the acceptance of P as a postexilic author devoted to priestly aims and ideals, P's tabernacle has been seen and explained as an ideal fiction based on Solomon's temple. Wellhausen claimed that the tabernacle was a copy of Solomon's temple and not its prototype . . . The Graf-Wellhausen reconstruction has thus given a sequence in which E's tent is the shadowy original; then Solomon's temple, and then Ezekiel's ideal reconstruction, and lastly P's own tabernacle follow. . . The followers of the Graf-Wellhausen school then came to regard P's tabernacle as nonhistorical - largely an ideal fiction of the postexilic priestly writers.

It is, however, well known that the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis is undergoing considerable modification. Its religious and evolutionary aspects are being rejected by an increasing number of scholars, and its literary aspects are being modified in a more conservative tendency. Its documents, J, E, D, and P, are no longer points on a date line, but represent streams of tradition, and in the flow of the stream is material both ancient and new. There is thus a new respect for the tradition of the P documents, as there is also a growing respect for some of the special standpoints of the Chronicler. It follows, therefore, that P's account of his tabernacle must be reassessed in the light of the new approach to and new understanding of Pentateuchal criticism. This may be achieved without abandoning the distinctive entities corresponding to the JE, D, H, P, symbols.

p. 504 Again in regard to the tabernacle itself, there is the prior, simpler tradition of the tent of E. But it is almost universally supposed that P's tabernacle is based on Solomon's temple. But why should P ^{project} project his ideal into the past behind Solomon's temple? In view of the fact that there was a tent in the tradition, it is equally feasible that P's tabernacle is an elaboration of E's tent, with, of course, much difference and even contradiction, which itself was the model from which Solomon in part drew the design for his own temple. . .