

Critics of the post-exilic dating are able to marshal arguments on the basis of inner-biblical and/or external, archaeologically observed data in favor of the early dating of specific items in P: genealogies,¹⁷ lists of sacrifices,¹⁸ the basic design of the tabernacle,¹⁹ and some archaic technical terms.²⁰ *These items, however, do not establish a pre-exilic date for the source as a whole, but only for some of its specific elements and features.*²¹ Early attestation elsewhere supplies only a *terminus a quo* for an item which could have been borrowed by Israel *anytime after* that date.²²

J. J. Finkelstein, 209–211; J. H. Tigay, »Was There an Integrated Gilgamesh Epic in the Old Babylonian Period?«, *Ancient Near Eastern Studies ...* J. J. Finkelstein, 215–218. For an excellent source critical study of a more recent text, cf. the old, yet very relevant article by G. F. Moore, »Tatian's Diatessaron and the Analysis of the Pentateuch,« *JBL* 9 (1890) 201–15. Prof. D. Weiss-Halivini of the Jewish Theological Seminary is collecting data from Talmudic literature demonstrating the same processes (oral communication, Nov., 1980).

¹⁷ R. R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World*, New Haven, 1977. Wilson does not deal with the date of P *per se*; he does, however, demonstrate that the genealogies in P sometimes fill a literary rather than a purely genealogical function (e.g. 160). Usually, they conform to the types attested elsewhere in other biblical sources and in other ancient near eastern cultures (cf. ch. 3, »The Form and Function of Genealogies in the Hebrew Bible,« 137–98).

¹⁸ The insightful observations of B. A. Levine (»Ugaritic Descriptive Rituals,« *JCS* 17 [1963] 105–111; and with W. W. Hallo, »Offerings to the Temple Gates at Ur,« *HUCA* 38 [1967] 17–20, 45–50) were applied to the Biblical lists by A. F. Rainey, »The Order of Sacrifices in Old Testament Ritual Texts,« *Biblica* 51 (1970) 485–98.

¹⁹ S. E. Loewenstamm, *Review of W. Beyerlin, Herkunft und Geschichte der älteren Sinaitraditionen*, 1961 in *IEJ* 12 (1962) 162–63; R. J. Clifford, »The Tent of El and the Israelite Tent of Meeting,« *CBQ* 33 (1971) 221–27. The remark of B. S. Childs is appropriate: »Although there is a growing consensus that ancient material underlies the Priestly tabernacle account, a wide difference of opinion still exists regarding both the nature of early traditions and the process by which the priestly account took shape (The Book of Exodus, Philadelphia, 1974, 352).

²⁰ E. A. Speiser, »Leviticus and the Critics,« in M. Haran ed., *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume*, Jerusalem, 1960, 29–45; B. A. Levine, »Comments on Some Technical Terms of the Biblical Cult,« *Lešonenu* 30 (1965) 3–11; Y. M. Grintz, »Archaic Terms in the Priestly Code,« *Lešonenu* 39 (1974–75) 5–20, 163–81; 40 (1975) 5–32; M. Weinfeld, »Pentateuch,« in: *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 13, cols. 241–42.

²¹ Cf. Speiser, »Leviticus,« 45. This point is recognized by M. Haran who writes in the »Preface« of »Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School,« Oxford 1978, that in the book an attempt will be made »to demonstrate the antiquity of all the material in the Pentateuchal source (P)« (p. v). The book, however, presupposes this demonstration but indicates instead how many unanswered questions in the history of Israelite religion may be answered if P is considered early pre-exilic. Cf. pp. 3–5.

²² »Borrowing« is perhaps too precise a term though it may be an accurate description in some cases. The process of cultural diffusion and influence is far too subtle to be described by any single term. For an example of the many forces involved in the transformation and

The possibility or even the likelihood that ancient elements are present in P has been accepted by most scholars maintaining the post-exilic dating.

It is therefore necessary to distinguish between the chronological origin of the components of P and the time of their final articulation. The question which this paper seeks to answer is the following: Can P be dated by reference to a *terminus ad quem*? In this study, independent yet converging lines of evidence will be adduced which indicate that the correct response to this question is in the affirmative. The data to be presented and analyzed are historical, linguistic, and literary.

In order to be successful, the *terminus ad quem* argument must demonstrate that after a certain date *x* has been replaced or subsumed by *y* or that *y* is consciously aware of the priority of *x*. In this formula, *x* may represent an institution, a law, a linguistic feature, or a story; *y* represents a development of *x*, a replacement for it, or its discontinuity. The argument must account for both *x* and *y* which are mutually exclusive and cannot be coeval. Arguments from silence are unacceptable because they lack an empirical base and because of their rhetorical nature.

The following discussion presupposes the dating of J, E, and JE to before the seventh century B.C.E., and the dating of D to the last quarter of the seventh century.

I

The large numbers of priests and Levites involved in the life of ancient Israel may be indicated by the mention of a priest's office in the lists of David and Solomon's high officials (2 Sam 8 17; 20 25; 1 Kings 4 4). They are clearly implied by the list of 48 cities assigned to Levites and priests preserved in two versions in Jos 21 and 1 Chr 6. In the list, thirteen cities are occupied by descendants of Aaron, and thirty-five by the other Levites (Jos 21 19; 1 Chr 6 45). Although the supposedly late distinction made between priests and Levites in this list reflects the stance and concern reflected elsewhere in priestly legislation, W. F. Albright and B. Mazar have shown that the geographical situation presupposed by the list is to be dated relatively early in Israelite history. The constellation of cities listed was under Israelite control only in the early years of Solomon's reign.²³ Z. Kallai distinguishes between the date of this particular constellation of cities and the date of the list in its extant form. He points out that since the groupings of cities are congruent with the administrative districts from the latter part of Solomon's career, the preserved list must date from *ca.*

transmutation of a rite cf. Z. Zevit, »The 'Eglâ Ritual of Deuteronomy 21 1–9,« *JBL* 95 (1976) 389–90.

²³ W. F. Albright, »The List of Levitic Cities,« *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume* (English Section), New York, 1945, 49–50, 56–58; B. Mazar, »The Cities of the Priests and the Levites,« *VT* 7 (1959) 195–96. Contrast Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 161.