

point de référence ultime de toute expérience prophétique, dont la formule de messenger est une des principales caractéristiques.

Enfin, s'il y a lieu de parler d'une certaine dévaluation⁵⁶ de la révélation du nom divin à Moïse par rapport à Gn 17 surtout, cela pourrait aussi s'interpréter en raison de la place unique qu'occupe Ex 6 dans la trame du récit global. Ex 6 ne veut pas être une théophanie comme Ex 3. Mais il inaugure une nouvelle étape, non plus celle où Dieu »apparaissait« comme *ʾl šddj*, mais celle où dorénavant il »se fait connaître« comme *yhwh* (6:3).

Ces quelques remarques avaient pour seul but de montrer qu'il reste encore bien des questions à résoudre sur la nature de P⁸ et surtout sur la dernière rédaction du Pentateuque.

Ex 6:2-8 est-il une simple répétition d'Ex 3-4, dans le style sacerdotal? Quelle est sa fonction dans le récit final? Pour répondre à la première question, il faut étudier le genre littéraire du passage. Ce n'est ni un récit de vocation, ni une simple annonce de salut, ni un oracle de jugement, ni un oracle-preuve. Le texte est unique en son genre. Dieu répond à son peuple en détresse et confirme sa promesse de salut en vertu du pacte conclu avec les patriarches. C'est le moment-clé de l'histoire d'Israël. A la seconde question, on peut répondre que le texte est bien placé dans la narration pour relancer l'action après l'échec de la première mission de Moïse. Cela pose des questions sur les rapports de P⁸ avec les anciennes sources et la dernière rédaction du Pentateuque.

Is Ex 6:2-8 a mere repetition of Ex 3-4, in the style of the priestly writer? What is its function in the final text of Exodus? To answer the first question, it is necessary to study the literary genre of the passage. It is not a »call narrative«, nor a mere announcement of salvation, nor an oracle of judgment, nor an oracle of demonstration (*Erweiswort*). The text is unique. God answers his people in distress and confirms his promise of salvation in virtue of his covenant with the patriarchs. It is the central moment of Israel's history. To the second question, one must answer that this text is properly placed in the narrative because it is this very action that gives a new beginning to God's salvific activity after the failure of Moses' first mission. All this asks questions about the relations between P⁸ and the older sources, and about the last redaction of the Pentateuch.

⁵⁶ Id., Die priesterschriftliche Abwertung (cf. n. 9).

⁵⁷ Cet article a bénéficié de nombreuses améliorations grâce à D. J. McCarthy, de Rome, que je tiens à remercier pour son aide.

Process Analysis Applied to the Early Traditions of Israel: a Preliminary Essay

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1. Introduction

It is not the object of this essay to survey the methods of Old Testament criticism which have been used during the past two centuries. Such information is readily available in the text books. However, a brief comment on methods of criticism in the context of the present enquiry may be useful.

Since the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis was formulated in the 19th century, approaches to the Pentateuch have often been dominated by the notion that it contains four main blocks of material. It is true that the form critical approach and the traditio-historical approach, among others, have given new insights into Pentateuchal research. Nevertheless, the very terminology of the four document hypothesis persists and this creates a barrier, to some extent, to further progress. At the same time, many convincing attempts have been made to show that J, E and P, at least, are composite.

One of the main buttresses of the four document hypothesis is the supposed exclusive use of certain divine names, especially in the Genesis material, by three of the authors. However, this is a very insubstantial claim and, to illustrate its inadequacy, it is only necessary to analyse, for example, Ps 18 or Jesaia 40-55 on similar principles. Such an analysis could be used to argue that both the psalm and the Isaianic material have several contributory authors who use characteristic divine names. The other criteria usually used to argue for the four document hypothesis could equally well be applied to a multi-source hypothesis. The point of this comment on the traditional four document hypothesis is merely to indicate that the present writer does not intend to be constrained by its limitations.

The actual concept of a Pentateuch constitutes another barrier to imaginative research into the early traditions of Israel. This concept has, of course, been challenged, in that some commentators prefer to speak of a Tetratauch or a Hexatauch. In one sense, however, the concept of a Pentateuch is indestructible. It is, after all, the Torah of the Jews and the sacred book of the Samaritans. Nevertheless, when it comes to explaining the sources of Israel's early traditions, the concept of a Pentateuch may prove to be a false god. The point of this statement is that the present writer finds it profitable to consider Israel's early traditions across a much