

Another widely acknowledged source for the biblical literature is the Priestly source, or P (Guillaume 2009; Schectman and Baden 2009; Baden 2012, 169–213). This source is characterized by a transcendent view of deity and by concern for genealogy, authority, purity, and ritual law.¹⁶ Understood to begin with the creation account of Gen 1:1–2:4a, the earliest version of P is also thought to include a genealogy of Adam and of Shem, a flood account, the table of nations, portions of the books of Genesis and Exodus, Leviticus (including another source comprising Lev 17–26 known as the Holiness Code, or H), and portions of the book of Numbers (and perhaps Joshua). An original P corpus likely circulated independently,¹⁷ perhaps during the sixth or early fifth century BCE,¹⁸ but at some point, it was brought together with D and other narrative strands to produce the macronarrative of the Pentateuch.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the development of biblical literature I will address is the question of the Yahwist (J) and Elohist (E) sources. According to the classical formulation of the Documentary Hypothesis (DH), J and E were two of the earliest documentary sources for the Pentateuch, and many theoretical models attribute the initial combination of the patriarchal and exodus narratives to J (Römer 2006, 24–25). They have been unstable sources in some ways, however, and questions regarding their relationship to each other and to the broader Pentateuchal macronarrative have occupied the attention of source critics for some time.¹⁹ Many—particularly German—scholars have recently forwarded the theory that the two corpora operated as independent traditions of Israelite origins until initially joined by P (Gertz, Schmid, and Witte 2002; Dozeman and Schmid 2006; Schmid 2010, 2012a). This would confine J to the early patriarchal narratives and render it less of a discrete documentary source and more of a collection of Yahwistic fragments. I think the arguments in favor of this view are strong, and so in this book I adopt the convention of referring to D, P, and either pre- or post-P sources.

I understand the rest of the biblical literature to have been composed between the Neo-Babylonian and Greco-Roman periods, with Daniel being the last, written around 164 BCE.²⁰ Some of these texts preserve traditions from earlier time

¹⁶ The concern for the temple cult is understood by many to have been introduced in a later phase of P. In this view, P “provided the chronological and narrative thread of the compilation of the Torah” (Knauf and Guillaume 2016, 183).

¹⁷ For an English translation of one proposed original P document, see Guillaume 2009, 13–30. A somewhat related attempt to delineate P is Propp 1996, 458–78.

¹⁸ For a preexilic context for P, see Milgrom 1999; Faust 2019; cf. Meyer 2010, 1–6.

¹⁹ Recent concerns about J are usually traced to Rendtorff 1976, 1977; cf. Römer 2006.

²⁰ Although the traditions still circulated separately, continued to be edited, and were characterized by a great deal of textual fluidity, as demonstrated, for instance, by the variability between MT, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Septuagint (Tov 2012, 174–90).