Methodological Reflections on a Theology of the Pentateuch

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1 The Pentateuch as Theology

The Pentateuch not only contains theology or theologies but is itself theology. According to a simple medieval definition, theology can be understood as speech about God that, firstly, teaches about God (*de deo docet*); secondly, is taught by God himself (*a deo docetur*); and thirdly, leads to God (*ad deum ducit*).[1] Hence, theology is speech about God in the mode of reflection, revelation, and inspiration, as well as doxology and paraenesis. In other words, theology is systematic, argumentative, interpretative, and worshipful religious speech.[2] The speech about God in the Pentateuch meets these criteria in its different literary layers, especially in its most recent compositional and redactional layer.

The frame of the flood narrative in Gen 6:5–7; 8:21–22 and Abraham's dialogue with God in Gen 18:17–33 are examples of reflection. The numerous self-descriptions and speeches of God are examples of inspiration or revelation. The great prayers in Exod 15:1–21 and Deut 32:1–44 are examples of doxology. The whole of Deuteronomy, as an instruction to Israel by Moses, is an example of paraenesis. All of these aspects are present in a compressed form in the scene of revelation in Exod 34:5–8.

2 The Account of the Theology of the Pentateuch

An account of the theology of the Pentateuch is descriptive, prescriptive, and constructive. On the one hand, an adequate account of the theology of the Pentateuch includes a description of the various theologies it contains and

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[1] Albertus MAGNUS, *Commentarii in sententiarum*, dist. I, art. ii, in vol. 25 of *Opera omnia* (ed. A. Borgnet; Paris: Vivès, 1893), 15–17; IDEM, *Summae theologiae*, tract. I, quaest. II, in vol. 31 of *Opera omnia* (ed. A. Borgnet; Paris: Vivès, 1895), 11–12.

[2] See R. SMEND, *Die Mitte des Alten Testaments: Gesammelte Studien 1* (BEvT 99; Munich: Kaiser, 1986), 104–117, here 111–117.

their manifold interactions. On the other hand, even a simple description of the theology of the Pentateuch always has a normative aspect. For the God who is recounted in the Pentateuch, and in whose name laws are promulgated, is claimed to be creator of the whole world and lord of all history. Furthermore, an account of the theology of the Pentateuch developed within the context of a faith community and a community of interpretation that takes the Bible as the foundation of its speech about God should articulate a constructive and critical contribution to God-talk in the past and in the present. Where the community of faith and the wider society are no longer congruent with each other, the potential for a theology of the Pentateuch to interpret life and to orient communal life is called into question.

3 The Inquiry into the Theology of the Pentateuch

An inquiry into the theology of the Pentateuch is not identical with a history of literature, a history of law, or a history of the religion of ancient Israel and early Judaism. Rather, it requires all three of these. The Pentateuch emerged alongside cultural, literary, and historical-religious developments. Therefore a theology of the Pentateuch must integrate the results of research into the history of the literature, law, and religion of ancient Israel and early Judaism.

The *history of literature* contributes to the profiling of the literary layers in the Pentateuch. On a broad scale, a theology of the Pentateuch can have the character of a theological literary history.

The *history of law* shows the forms and history of binding the law to YHWH as its founder, preserver, and supreme authority. Thus a theology of the Pentateuch can also appear as a theological history of law.

The *history of religion* of ancient Israel and early Judaism, which occurs in the milieu of the religions of the ancient Near East, Egypt, the Levant, and ancient Greece, serves to determine the nature and development of YHWH as the central subject, basis, and aim of speech about God in the Pentateuch. Therefore a theology of the Pentateuch can exhibit the contours of a theological history of religion.

Together, literary, legal, and religious history illuminate the character of the Pentateuch as a many-voiced discourse about God developed from the constant change of scribal production and interpretation, of tradition and redaction, of integration and adaption. However, as a dialogue produced by redaction, the theology of the Pentateuch is always more than the sum of the theologies of the different literary layers and their contextualization in a particular legal and religious history. Yet the theology of the Pentateuch is not simply identical with the theology of the so-called final redaction and its classification within the history of religions. On the one hand, the final redaction is understood as the conscious

compromise between different *Trägerkreise* (schools) and their theologies. On the other hand, the final redaction represents a contemporary group and its theology that prevailed under certain religious and historical conditions.[3] For an account of the theology of the Pentateuch is always influenced by the theology of the one giving the account. The presenter of the account (re)constructs the literary, legal, and religious history of ancient Israel and early Judaism under certain contemporary historical conditions and selects and interprets under certain hermeneutic presuppositions. In this respect, a theology of the Pentateuch certainly adopts a point of view "from the outside."[4] As with the production of the Pentateuch and its interpretation within itself, a theology of the Pentateuch is subject to the processes of historical development, reception, and adaption. It both conserves and creates and is in principle always open-ended.

4 Four Coordinates of a Theology of the Pentateuch

A historical-critical understanding of the Pentateuch is inevitable, as there has been a point of no return since at least the exegesis of Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780–1849).[5] Under these conditions, four fundamental coordinates of a theology of the Pentateuch must be taken into consideration: firstly, the names and epithets of God as the main character of the Pentateuch (the personage); secondly, the compositional and narrative profile of the Pentateuch (the dramaturgy); thirdly, the forms and traditions of the Pentateuch (the encyclopedia); and, fourthly, the appropriation of the theology of the Pentateuch by readers (the participation and reception).

4.1 The Personage

A theology can be understood as an argumentative unfolding of the meanings contained in *the name of a god*, the horizon of meaning opened by this name, its historical background, and the name's narrative and functional contexts. The

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[3] For extensive details, see E. BLUM, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989); T. RÖMER, "Hauptprobleme der gegenwärtigen Pentateuchforschung," *TZ* 60 (2004), 289–307.

[4] R.G. KRATZ, "Noch einmal: Theologie im Alten Testament," in *Vergegenwärtigung des Alten Testaments: Beiträge zur biblischen Hermeneutik; Festschrift Rudolf Smend* (ed. C. Bultmann et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 310–326, here 325.

[5] "Glücklich waren unsere Alten, die, noch unkundig der kritischen Künste, treu und ehrlich alles das selbst glaubten, was sie lehrten! Die Geschichte verlor, aber die Religion gewann! – Ich habe die Kritik nicht angefangen; da sie einmal ihr gefährliches Spiel begonnen hatte, so mußte es durchgeführt werden, denn nur das Vollendete in seiner Art ist gut"; see W.M.L. DE WETTE, *Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament: Zweiter Band* (Halle: Schimmelpfennig, 1807), 408.

beginnings of theology thus understood can be found in the combination of the divine designation אלהים with the tetragrammaton in Gen 2:4–3:24, the interpretation of the tetragrammaton by means of the root היה in Exod 3:14–15, the linking of the divine designations יהוה and שדי אל in accordance with the Priestly imagination of a graded revelation of YHWH in Exod 6:2–3 (cf. Gen 17:1), or in a complex manner in the formula of grace in Exod 34:6–7. Exodus 34:5–8 is an exemplary model of an innerbiblical theology that conforms to the criteria mentioned above and lends itself particularly well to developing coordinates for the theology of the Pentateuch described in this paper.[6]

Hence an account of the theology of the Pentateuch must contain a religious history of the names of God in the Pentateuch. The consideration of *the epithets and titles* attributed to God contributes to a further religious-historical development of the composition of speech about God. The phenomenon of the "Kompetenzausweitung JHWHs"[7] (the expansions of YHWH's domain of competence), which characterizes the whole history of YHWH worship, can be illustrated by the attribution of certain epithets, such as the designation of YHWH as judge in Gen 18:25 or as king in Num 23:21.

4.2 The Dramaturgy

The narrative and rhetorical profile of the Pentateuch is framed by the speeches of God in Gen 1:3 and Deut 34:4 and presents itself in long passages of great divine speech. According to this profile, we find different fundamental *roles of God*: as *creator* in the primeval history, as *companion* in the patriarchal history, as *liberator* in the exodus narrative, as *the Holy One* in the establishment of the cult, and, last but not least, as unequalled *legislator and teacher* in the testimony of Moses in Deuteronomy.[8] These roles indicate fundamental theological concepts and entire theologies. We can assign different *themes* to the various roles that run through the whole Pentateuch and its theology, such as the human person, the land, the people, or the covenant. Finally, the *narrative dialectic* of life and death, blessing and curse, revelation and hiddenness, and punishment and forgiveness forms essential points of reference for an account of the theol-

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[6] See also R. SCORALICK, *Gottes Güte und Gottes Zorn: Die Gottesprädikationen in Ex 34,6f. und ihre intertextuellen Beziehungen zum Zwölfprophetenbuch* (HBS 33; Freiburg: Herder, 2002); M. FRANZ, *Der barmherzige und gnädige Gott: Die Gnadenrede vom Sinai (Exodus 34,6–7) und ihre Parallelen im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt* (BWANT 160; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003).

[7] On this term, see B. JANOWSKI, "Der Gott Israels und die Toten: Eine religions- und theologiegeschichtliche Skizze," in *JHWH und die Götter der Völker: Symposion zum 80. Geburtstag von Klaus Koch* (ed. F. Hartenstein and M. Rösel, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 99–138, here 104–105.

[8] See also G. FISCHER, *Theologien des Alten Testaments* (NSKAT 31; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2012).

ogy of the Pentateuch. At the *center* of its content is the vitality and omnipotence of YHWH, which is both presupposed and proclaimed.

4.3 The Encyclopedia

Individual theologies in the Pentateuch can be characterized as priestly, prophetic, sapiential, or legal on the basis of their *forms (genres) and traditions*. Even if sociological differentiation between the various schools of the Pentateuch tradition has proven difficult to demonstrate (so too for the wider Old Testament tradition), the classification of priestly, prophetic, and legal authors and transmitters introduced in the nineteenth century has fundamentally proven its worth by its ability to distinguish between the various theologies in the Pentateuch.[9] In contrast, the binary opposition between the (priestly-)theocratic and the (prophetic-)eschatological[10] is less suitable, as particular eschatological conceptions can also be theocratic. In light of the functional overlap of priests and prophets in ancient Israel, one might rather speak of cultic or cult and ritualistically oriented theology instead of priestly theology and eschatologically oriented theology instead of prophetic theology. Previous Pentateuch scholarship, especially Protestant research of the nineteenth century, favored the prophetic narrator over the priestly narrator. Retention of the old terminology need not imply such an evaluation.

4.4 The Participation and Reception

The framing element of *participation and reception* arises from a threefold background: Firstly, the Pentateuch, or certain passages within it, are already quoted and interpreted in scriptures that only later became canonical.[11] Secondly, the Pentateuch itself addresses its readers directly, particularly by means of the great prayers of Exod 15 and Deut 32, the blessings in Gen 49 and Num 23–24*, or the address to the current Israel in Deuteronomy. Thirdly, receptions of the Pentateuch, whether in early Jewish literature or medieval painting,

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[9] On the history of research, see M. WITTE, *Die biblische Urgeschichte: Redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1–11,26* (BZAW 265; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 7–16.

[10] See, e.g., H.-C. SCHMITT, *Theologie in Prophetie und Pentateuch: Gesammelte Schriften* (ed. U. Schorn and M. Büttner; BZAW 310; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 203–219, subsequent to the classical work of O. PLÖGER, *Theokratie und Eschatologie* (WMANT 2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1959).

[11] Here one is also reminded of the formula of grace from Exod 34:6–7, which appears in all sections of the Hebrew Bible and in the Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament, or of the phenomenon of the (critical) reception of the Torah in late prophetic and wisdom texts (cf. Prov 2; Job 31); see B. SCHIPPER and D.A. TEETER (eds.), *Wisdom and Torah: The Reception of 'Torah' in the Wisdom Literature of the Second Temple Period* (JSJSup 163; Leiden: Brill, 2013).

have themselves influenced later receptions and articulations of the theology of the Pentateuch. Here we can see the close systematic connection between an author-based and a reception-based hermeneutics. If the history of reception is deliberately integrated into accounts of the theological discourse conducted within the Pentateuch itself, we can, following Benjamin D. Sommer, speak of a "dialogical theology of the Pentateuch."[12]

5 Models for the Presentation of the Theology of the Pentateuch

The theology of the Pentateuch can be presented either as narrative or systematically or historically. These approaches can already be found within the Pentateuch and early Jewish literature. Given the multiplicity of theologies in the Pentateuch, it is also necessary to inquire into the unity of the theology of the Pentateuch.

5.1 A Narrative Presentation

Nehemiah 9 offers an innerbiblical model for a primarily narrative presentation. Beginning with a doxology and the profession of YHWH's uniqueness, the poet proceeds in poetic-theological miniatures of the primeval history, the patriarchs, the exodus, Sinai, and the settlement of Israel. He then continues with the history of Israel in the land up until his own time. These prayers, composed in historical perspective, shape both the key words of the Pentateuch tradition[13] and the hymnic predications of YHWH.[14] Thus the narrative baseline of this presentation becomes enriched by systematic and doxological elements. From the choice of these key words and the individual hymnic predictions, a theology of the Pentateuch can be recognized in the garb of the theology of the author of Neh 9. This means that Neh 9 *mediates* a theology of the Pentateuch that is poetically renarrated, systematically composed, and doxologically structured with a focus on the uniqueness, justice, and mercy of God (cf. Exod 34:6–7). Given the constant address of God as "you,"[15] the designation of YHWH as "our

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[12] B. D. SOMMER, "Ein neues Modell für Biblische Theologie," in *Theologie und Exegese des Alten Testaments/der Hebräischen Bibel: Zwischenbilanz und Zukunftsperspektiven* (ed. B. Janowski; SBS 200; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 187–211, here 196–211.

[13] Cf. בחר (Neh 9:7; cf. Deut 4:37; 10:5), יצא (Neh 9:7; cf. Gen 15:7), אמן (Neh 9:8; cf. Gen 15:6), ברית (Neh 9:8; cf. Gen 15:18; 17:2), אות (Neh 9:10; cf. Exod 4:8–9, 28; 7:3; Deut 6:22), מופת (Neh 9:10; cf. Exod 4:21; 7:3; Deut 6:22), נפלאות (Neh 9:17; cf. Exod 3:20; 34:10), תורה (Neh 9:13, 26; cf. Exod 24:12; Deut 4:8), צוה (Neh 9:14; cf. Deut 4:5, 14, 40; 6:1, respectively), זכר (Neh 9:17; cf. Ex 13:3; 7:18; 8:2).

[14] Cf. Neh 9:6 (יהוה לבדך); 9:7 (אתה הוא יהוה האלהים); 9:8 (צדיק אתה); 9:10 (שם); 9:17 (// Exod 34:6–7); 9:19 (רחם; cf. 9:27, 31); 9:20 (רוחך הטובה); 9:32 (האל הגדול).

[15] Cf. Neh 9:6, 7, 8, 17, 19, 20.

God," and the conclusion in vv. 32–37 written in the first-person plural, this theology is directed toward those who read and pray the text of Neh 9. It thus aims to be applied and integrated into their life and faith.

Within the scope of modern accounts of theology in the Pentateuch, Gerhard von Rad's *Theology of the Old Testament* offers the classical articulation of a narrative approach, as prefigured by Neh 9 (and other so-called historical Psalms),[16] in the form of "renarration" (*Nacherzählung*).[17] The strength of a narrative approach lies, firstly, in its close alignment with the literary composition of the Pentateuch and the literary forms used in it; secondly, in its ability to take all texts of the Pentateuch into equal consideration; and, thirdly, in its accessibility to readers. For in this approach the "narrative thread" (*Erzählfaden*) of the Pentateuch constitutes the internal theological coherence. A weakness of the narrative approach arises with respect to its historical dimension, namely its systematic synchrony and taxonomy. To avoid excluding literary and religious-historical findings, the literary and religious-historical level on which the renarrator is located must be specified. Diachronic and longitudinal perspectives need to be incorporated alongside synchronic and systematic overviews.

5.2 A Systematic Presentation

An innerbiblical precursor for a more systematically focused theology of the Pentateuch can be found in the description of the activity of divine wisdom (σοφία) in Wisdom of Solomon 10:1–11:1. Wisdom of Solomon 10 exhibits a narrative profile insofar as its author adheres to the chronology of the Pentateuch by selecting the righteous from Adam to Moses. However, the hypostasis-like σοφία constitutes a fundamental and systematic means of interpretation that is external to the text. It represents and interprets the activity of God as it is described from Genesis to Exodus. The narrative-systematic theology of the Pentateuch from Wis 10 is comparable to Ben Sira's praise of the fathers (Sir 44:1–49:16). Even this poetic summary of history basically follows the outline of the Pentateuch but focuses on chosen heroes from Enoch to Joshua (and, beyond him, up to Nehemiah).[18] The overall theological concept internal to the text – that is to say, taken from the Pentateuch itself – is in this context the terms

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[16] Cf. Pss 78; 105; 106; 135; 136, and J. GÄRTNER, *Die Geschichtspsalmen: Eine Studie zu den Psalmen 78, 105, 106, 135 und 136 als hermeneutische Schlüsseltexte im Psalter* (FAT 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); S. RAMOND, *Les leçons et les énigmes du passé: Une exégèse intra-biblique des psaumes historiques* (BZAW 459; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014); and M. WITTE, *Von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit: Weisheit und Geschichte in den Psalmen* (Biblisch-Theologische Studien 146; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2014).

[17] G. VON RAD, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (2 vols.; Munich: Kaiser, 1957–1960).

[18] In contrast to the Wisdom of Solomon, which consciously abstains from denominating the heroes, Ben Sira introduces the figures by name in his *laus patrum*.

ברית[19] and διαθήκη[20]. A similar concept is found in the historical summary of the Damascus Document (*CD* III)[21] or in the letter to the Hebrews (ch. 11), when they treat the theological view of time from the creation up to the prophets under the umbrella term πίστις.

Wisdom of Solomon and Ben Sira anticipate a theological overview focused on the work of wisdom, the foundation of a covenant, or the notion of faith in modern Christian and Jewish presentations of the theology of the Pentateuch.[22] The classic example of this is Walter Eichrodt's *Theology of the Old Testament*.[23] Even accounts that, following the old dogmatic *loci* method, center less on a particular theological concept and more on an overview of themes such as God, human, creation, sin, election, salvation, or justification belong to the category of systematic theologies of the Pentateuch. There are many examples of this approach in recent research.[24] Insofar as they attempt to locate the inner unity of the theology of the Pentateuch, they describe it in relation to terms such as *justice* or *faith* or by means of correlations such as electing and obligating or promising and fulfilling.[25] The strength of such an approach lies in its ability to relate clearly individual texts of the Pentateuch to fundamental and overarching issues for theology as a whole and for other humanities and cultural studies. A theology that strives to be applicable usually also orients itself more readily around a systematic than a narrative presentation. The weakness of a systematic approach becomes evident in the application of nontextual categories for the classification and selection of the texts from the Pentateuch. The selection of

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[19] Sir (H) 44:12, 17, 20, 22; 45:15, 24, 25.

[20] Sir (G) 44:11, 18, 20, 22; 45:5, 7, 17, 24, 25; 47:11.

[21] In doing so, *CD* III not only uses the term ברית as a leitmotif in the historical overview from Noah to the present but also assigns the theologically programmatic titles "creator" (עשה) and "teacher" (יורה), by which the whole Pentateuch is framed, to God (*CD* III.8).

[22] On the reception of the term *faith* as the title for a history of religion and a theology of the Hebrew Bible, see, e.g., M. BUBER, *Der Glaube der Propheten* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1950); S. GESUNDHEIT, "Gibt es eine jüdische Theologie der hebräischen Bibel?," in *Theologie und Exegese des Alten Testaments/der Hebräischen Bibel: Zwischenbilanz und Zukunftsperspektiven* (ed. B. Janowski; SBS 200; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 73–86, here 86; and SCHMITT, *Theologie* (see n. 10), 220–237.

[23] W. EICHRODT, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (3 vols.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1933, 1935, 1939).

[24] See, e.g., R. E. CLEMENTS, *Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1978); J. SCHREINER, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (NEB 1; Würzburg: Echter, 1995); W. BRUEGGEMANN, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997); R. RENDTORFF, *Theologie des Alten Testaments: Ein kanonischer Entwurf, Bd. 2; Thematische Entfaltung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2001).

[25] See, e.g., C. WESTERMANN, *Theologie des Alten Testaments in Grundzügen* (GAT 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), and H. D. PREUSS, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991–1992).

texts and the focus on individual systematic themes, which are at least implicit, often depend on dogmatic premises. Though the religious-historical dimension still can be raised in the treatment of the individual topoi, the systematic approach risks flattening out the literary-historical development and context.

5.3 A Historical Presentation

The innerbiblical prototypes of a historical approach to the theology of the Pentateuch include the three-tiered concept of revelation in the Priestly writer, the confrontation between YHWH as the old and known God of Israel and the new and foreign gods in Deut 32 (cf. Josh 24), and the conversion narrative of Abraham in *Jub.* 12. These texts offer historical approaches to speech about God, though in the sense not of a genetic derivation but rather of a history of religious insight enabled by means of revelation. Modern examples of attempts to transfer this history of revelation in the Pentateuch to a history of religion of Israel include the theses concerning the God of the fathers[26] and the origins of the worship of YHWH at Sinai.[27]

Where a theology of the Pentateuch is arranged primarily along historical lines, it must free itself from the equation of biblical Israel with historical Israel on the one hand and the narrative revelation of YHWH with the history of the religion of YHWH on the other.[28] A theology of the Pentateuch that is primarily oriented according to history is – just as a theology of the Hebrew Bible or a theology of the Old Testament – neither identical with nor an alternative to a religious history of Israel and early Judaism. The essential characteristic of a historically oriented theology is the explication of the gradual development that characterizes the speech about God in the Pentateuch. Thus a historically oriented theology of the Pentateuch presents the development of speech about God at the level of critically reconstructed as well as literary and theological profiles. Thereby, the history of redaction becomes the history of theology on the basis of the literary-historical conditions in the Pentateuch; in particular, it becomes a history of theology of early Judaism.[29] The works of Christoph Levin and John Van Seters are examples of this, even though they do not yet fully extend to the entire Pentateuch.[30]

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[26] Cf. A. ALT, *Der Gott der Väter: Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der israelitischen Religion* (BWANT 48; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1929). For refutation of this thesis, see M. KÖCKERT, *Vätergott und Väterverheißungen: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Albrecht Alt und seinen Erben* (FRLANT 142; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988).

[27] See the issue entitled "Anfänge und Ursprünge der Jahwe-Verehrung," *BTZ* 30/1 (2013).

[28] See R.G. KRATZ, *Historisches und biblisches Israel: Drei Überblicke zum Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 141–143.

[29] See KRATZ, "Noch einmal" (see n. 4), 322.

[30] J. VAN SETERS, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1992); IDEM, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus–*

The strengths of a historical approach lie in the fact that the reader is included in the history of God-talk in the Pentateuch and that the theological emphasis of individual redactions can be brought into conversation with analogs in the parabiblical and postbiblical early Jewish history of theology.[31] The history itself appears here as an inner unity of theology. A difficulty arises in this approach when determining individual layers of its literary scope and dating their origins. By way of example, this is evident when we consider the question whether J, E, D, or P is the oldest literary and theological layer identified in the Pentateuch (which is being revisited in current research) and in which redaction-historical, and thereby theological-historical, relation the supposed layers stand relative to each other.[32] I recall in particular the epoch-making statement that the Priestly writer presumes the Deuteronomic demand for unity of the cult[33] or that the concept of God in the so-called J source is latently monotheistic and post-Deuteronomic or post-Deuteronomistic.[34] The possibility of transferring the history of theology into a theology that meets the aforementioned criteria remains open in a purely historical approach. However, a decidedly nontheological approach to history or an approach that consciously avoids the concept of theology is never without (at least an implicit) theology.[35]

Numbers (CBET 10; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994); C. LEVIN, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); IDEM, *Re-Reading the Scriptures: Essays on the Literary History of the Old Testament* (FAT 87; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 1–23; for such a program, see also KRATZ, "Noch einmal" (see n. 4), 320–325.

[31] See SOMMER, "Ein neues Modell" (see n. 12), 203–208, for the theory, and WITTE, *Die biblische Urgeschichte* (see n. 9), for an example.

[32] For the state of discussion, see C. HOUTMAN, *Der Pentateuch: Die Geschichte seiner Erforschung neben einer Auswertung* (CBET 9; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994); J.C. GERTZ et al. (eds.), *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (BZAW 315; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002); T.B. DOZEMAN and K. SCHMID (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 34; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006); T.B. DOZEMAN et al. (eds.), *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (FAT 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); J.C. GERTZ et al., *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Literature, Religion and History of the Old Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 252–263.

[33] J. WELLHAUSEN, *Geschichte Israels in zwei Bänden* (2 vols.; Berlin: Reimer, 1878), 1:106–107; after the second edition, titled *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin: Reimer, 1883).

[34] See H.H. SCHMID, *Der sogenannte Jahwist: Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Pentateuch-forschung* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976), 154–183. On the difference between Dtn and Dtr and their relationship to each other, see VAN SETERS, *Prologue* (see n. 30), 128–129; 255–257, 262–265, 332, and LEVIN, *Der Jahwist* (see n. 30), 430–436.

[35] Cf. the short historical review on the juxtaposition of Julius Wellhausen and Bernhard Duhm by SMEND, *Die Mitte* (see n. 2), 105–110.

5.4 A Synthetic Presentation

An *ideal* theology of the Pentateuch would combine the narrative, systematic, and historical approaches. In view of the four coordinates mentioned above, this means that a theology of the Pentateuch first of all describes the names and epithets of God in the prolegomena. It would then develop each role of God – God as creator, companion, liberator, holy one, and unequalled teacher and legislator – in a separate paragraph according to narrative development. By doing so, the theology would describe the theologies of the corresponding layers and redactions in accordance with literary-historical insights. Finally, it would systematically evaluate the motifs and themes that shape the so-called final form and the reception history of the text in terms of the underlying conceptions of the divine and the human and their potential to interpret present-day life. Thus a theology of the Pentateuch would amount to an interpretation of the meaning of life from the perspective of how the dramaturgy and encyclopedic elements (the forms and traditions) of the Pentateuch play out. This theology would be prescriptive not in the sense of a norm but in the sense of an interpretation and application. Consequently, each chapter of such a theology would contain three sections: a renarration, a historical layering, and a systematic synthesis. Narrative, historical, and systematic relationships among the blocks of tradition in the Pentateuch must be made explicit by appropriate cross-references within and among traditions.[36]

5.5 The Pentateuch as a Part of the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament

The Pentateuch/Torah is but a part of the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament and framed by a larger canon. Therefore, a theology of the Pentateuch/Torah does not stand on its own but interacts with the theology in and the theology of both the Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible. Within the canon of the Hebrew Bible, the theologies of the Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim complement each other, interpret each other, and ultimately constitute a multivoiced critical Jewish theology. The Hebrew Bible finds its direct continuation, interpretation, and transformation in early Jewish literature, in the Talmud, and in the midrash. As part of the Christian Old Testament, the theology of the Pentateuch is an essential component for understanding both the theology of the New Testament and Christian theology.[37] As an alternative to early church and medieval hermeneutics, as well as modern attempts at christocentric or christotelic interpretations,[38] one could employ a

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[36] Cf. O. KAISER, *Der eine Gott Israels und die Mächte der Welt: Der Weg Gottes im Alten Testament vom Herrn seines Volkes zum Herrn der ganzen Welt* (FRLANT 249; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

[37] See RENDTORFF, *Theologie* (see n. 24), 311.

[38] See P. ENNS, *Ecclesiastes* (Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 27–29.

hermeneutics in which the theology/theologies of the Pentateuch are outlined according to the potential permeability of New Testament understandings of God, the world, and humanity. Structural correspondences and parallels in concepts and motifs as well as tradition-historical connections could also be presented. Such a "christotransparent approach"[39] aims to illuminate the various theologies of the Pentateuch that shape the New Testament understanding of Jesus as Christ, lord, and God. From the point of view of the New Testament, the theologies of creation, history, law, cult, and wisdom gathered in the Pentateuch reach their goal ($\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda o\varsigma$) when they concretely enter space and time and become personal through God's activity in Jesus Christ. In this case, the theology of the Pentateuch contributes to Christology.

6 Conclusion

A survey of the theology of the Pentateuch belongs to the fundamental and enduring tasks of Pentateuch research. In the process of developing such a theology, the theological significance of the Pentateuch must be explicated, firstly, in its different canonical forms (with the Hebrew Bible *and* the Septuagint being the most important historical receptions and dialogue partners for the Torah); secondly, referring to its sources and redactions; and thirdly, referring to its role as Torah in the context of Judaism and as part of the Christian Bible consisting of Old and New Testaments. The strength of each theory of the development and meaning of the Pentateuch is also made evident by the elucidation of the theological currents that are reflected in the composition of the Pentateuch and by elucidation of the theological character of the Pentateuch.

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[39] See M. WITTE, *Jesus Christus im Alten Testament. Eine biblisch-theologische Skizze* (Salzburger Exegetische Theologische Vorträge 4; Berlin: LIT, 2013).