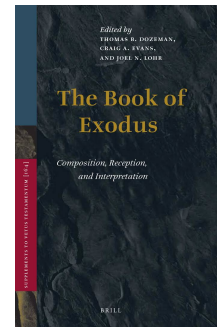
The Book of Exodus: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation, edited by Thomas B. Dozeman, Craig A. Evans, and Joel N. Lohr



The Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature 7 | Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 164 | Leiden: Brill, 2014 | xviii + 670 pages | ISBN: 978-90-04-28266-7 (hardcover) $289.00

This collection of articles on Exodus is designed to cover core issues from different angles as well as to touch upon most key subjects in Exodus itself. The book is divided into four parts.

Part 1 contains three articles that function as overviews of large topics. The first, by William Johnstone, reconstructs an older version of the Tetrateuchal Horeb/Sinai account by looking closely at Deuteronomy's retelling. Johnstone assumes that the Torah began as a Deuteronomistic document that went through a later Priestly revision, and thus, the earlier telling, if reconstructed correctly, should match Deuteronomy's retelling.

The second article, by Konrad Schmid, pushes against the Documentary Hypothesis as a useful model for understanding Exodus. Schmid argues that we should not interpret the strands in the Moses story in light of the Patriarchal narratives. As references to the exodus in other biblical texts seem earlier and more primary than references to the Patriarchs, we should relate to the Moses story as primary. In Schmid's view, it is the Priestly layer that ties the accounts of the patriarchs together with the Moses account.

The third and final article in this section, by Lester Grabbe, offers a historical reconstruction for the origin of the exodus tradition. Grabbe argues that the earliest references to an exodus tradition come from eighth-century Northern prophetic sources. That the tradition does not derive from a historical core in the fifteenth to thirteenth centuries is supported by the lack of any reasonable corollary in New Kingdom Egyptian reality, or in Kadesh-barnea (Ein el-Qudeirot), which shows no evidence of serious settlement in the fifteenth/thirteenth century. The toponyms and routes used in the biblical description of the exodus and wilderness wandering do often fit a later (Saite or even post-Saite) context, however. Finally, Grabbe observes, the story as told, with such lack of specifics as no named king, is written more as a story and less as a historical chronicle, making attempts to correlate it with some historical event unlikely.

Part 2 of the book has an article on each of the "major" pericopae in Exodus (as defined by the editors), which mostly take a historical-critical perspective. Deciding what is major or not is, of course, somewhat subjective, but the editors have done a reasonable job here, though perhaps a bit more focus on the first 13 chapters would have been appropriate.

The first article, by Jan Gerz, focuses on the salvation at the sea narrative, and challenges both the neo-documentarian approach, which he claims makes little effort to understand the text as we have it, as well as the purely supplementary approach, which, he claims, does not satisfactorily explain the composition of the biblical text here. Although the essay is ostensibly an analysis of Exod 13–14, it is really a response to Christoph Berner's supplementary approach to this text. Gerz argues that the passage is composed of two independent texts, one Priestly and one non-Priestly, that were combined and then supplemented to smooth out the contradictions and situate it properly in its enneateuchal context.

Thomas Römer's article, the second in this section, deals with the entire exodus narrative (chs. 1–15). He notes that, despite the difficulty in arriving at consensus points, due to the reality of small schools of thought conversing only among themselves, one consensus point is that by the late Persian period, a "Torah" existed, within which P can be distinguished from non-P. P itself grew in stages, and Römer focuses much of his article on determining the scope of the earliest layer, Pg, which he sees as an originally independent P narrative (i.e., not a redactional layer on non-P). He notes that P adapted the language of land-promises in Ezekiel, which, like D, referred to the ancestors in general, and applied it to the Patriarchs, thus linking the two complexes. He further notes the contours of a P story in a handful of verses in Exod 1–2, the introduction of Moses in ch. 6, the plague story, which features the failure of Pharaoh's magicians, the splitting of the Sea narrative, with birth of Israel language mimicking Gen 1 creation language, and finally the Tabernacle account with its obvious use of creation language.

The third article, by Rainer Albertz, deals with the wilderness material in chs. 15–18, which connects the two main parts of the book—Egypt and Sinai. Albertz notes that delimiting the unit is complicated: the edges are interwoven with the main blocks on each end, and the material is varied in content and lacks a clear structure. Nevertheless, beginning where the wilderness is first introduced, before the story of the sea, and ending before the story of Jethro at the mountain, yields a structure that begins and ends with a military success, and frames stories about food and water. Albertz

sees the manna story as a Priestly creation written to come between Elim and Rephidim. (He also sees a Dtr redaction on top of that.) The core R^{EX} narrative invented the wilderness cycle by pulling together water stories about water spots the author knew, as well as a local Amalek tradition. In this early text, the people complain peevishly at the sea and God saves them, in Marah they are calmer, then Elim is ideal, and finally at Massah/Rephidim, the people lose patience.

Wolfgang Oswald's article on the Sinai pericope, the fourth in this section, discusses where ch. 18 fits in. He notes that it occurs at the mountain of God, and has a strong emphasis on laws, covenants, and judging, which ties it to the revelation story and the legislation that is part and parcel of it. In trying to understand the Sinai pericope as a whole, Oswald finds the DH division problematic, as proponents barely agree on what verses to assign to what source and their methods yield serious lacunae and the sources often end up with contradictory elements. Instead, he notes that the narrative has a strong Dtr flavor. Oswald suggests three layers: a "mountain of God" layer, which is exilic and with the Covenant Code as its core; a Dtr redaction of this layer, pushing for the Decalogue taking the place of the CC; then a Priestly redaction, which works to create distance between God and the people. Then two "Toraitic" redactions on top of these: the first emphasizing the importance of Moses, the second, the elders.

In the fifth article, Christoph Dohmen discusses the Decalogue. He notes that its significance is in its context as opposed to its content, since its provisions appear in other places in the Bible. How the ten are supposed to be counted is unclear, and appears to differ in Exodus and Deuteronomy. Dohmen argues that each Decalogue tradition needs to be understood in its narrative context, and not seen as just two slightly variant versions of the same tradition that "happen" to be included in two places. At the same time, Dohmen offers a synchronic reading of the two pericopae, and sees the two versions as complementary, with Deuteronomy being Moses's narration and Exodus being the narrator's expression to the reader.

The sixth article, David Wright's analysis of the Covenant Code, pushes against the idea that the CC grew over time, as a result of internal development through addition of text blocks or redaction, which is a popular explanation for the CC's two types of laws (casuistic and apodictic). Instead, Wright sees the CC as a conscious modification of the Laws of Hammurabi. The casuistic laws are revisions of LH's laws and the apodictic laws revisions of the exhortatory sections of LH's prologue and epilogue. He further ar-

gues the likelihood that CC was written as part of a source including Moses's biography, built on that of Sargon and Hammurabi. If so, a date during the Neo-Assyrian Sargonid period would be most attractive. (The difference between this dating and that of Oswald's in the earlier article is quite stark.)

Suzanne Boorer's article on the Golden Calf, the seventh in this section, suggests that the story developed in stages. In the core narrative, Moses did not know about the calf until he saw it, and he only intercedes with God at the end. Exodus 32:7–14 was added later to correct some theological problems, such as the possible inference that YHWH does not know about the calf until Moses tells him later in the account. Exod 33:1–3 was also added in tandem or after 32:7–14, as it builds on the same land-promise theme that permeates this pericope. Boorer further argues that Deut 9–10 is later and dependent upon the Exodus narrative *in its entirety*, i.e., including the redactions, implying the redactions are not very late as is often argued.

In the eighth and final article in this section, Helmut Utzschneider offers a long summary and collation of the tabernacle material, noting the use of inner and outer space, the differences between the materials used in both, and also the direction of the narration. Although he touches on the difference between what look like supplemental speeches and the core text, Utzschneider's approach is synchronic since, he argues, the multiple diachronic models (which he outlines at the end) are difficult to decide between.

Part 3 of the book deals with textual transmission and reception history. Unlike the previous sections, these are specialty topics, with each article offering a focused treatment of a select topic. The articles vary in detail, style, and argumentation, and are most useful to non-specialists in how they summarize and lay out the data in their respective subfields.

Sidnie White Crawford's piece on Qumran surveys all the Dead Sea Scrolls which include Exodus, rewrite Exodus, or even make use of phrases or stories from Exodus as part of independent works. She thus shows the importance of Exodus and its imagery to the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Leonard Greenspoon's article on the Greek translation of Exodus discusses the method of the LXX translator, and focuses specifically on the translation of the Decalogue in Exodus 20, and its relationship to other text forms of the Decalogue, including that of the LXX translation of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy.

The piece on the Syriac translation by Jerome Lund is a very technical piece showing the nitty-gritty of how the Peshitta translates. He argues that later versions of the Peshitta added pluses and corrections influenced by LXX but that the oldest manuscripts show greater affinity to MT. Of particular

importance to Lund is arguing for the superiority of MS 5b1 over the one chosen by BHS, 7a1.

David Everson's piece on the Old Latin (OL) and Vulgate translations strengthens accepted wisdom that OL follows the LXX both in text type as well as in awkward Hebraising translation. In contrast, Jerome follows the MT in his Vulgate translation. Over time, as he became more confident in his Hebrew, he became freer in his translation, making use of good Latin idiom.

Bruce Chilton's piece on the Aramaic targums concentrates on Targum Neophyti. Chilton explicates how Neophyti's theology and midrashic analysis of text work by analyzing in depth the "Poem of the four nights," namely the targumic midrash to Exodus 12:42.

Philo's reading of Exodus, the second most discussed book in the Pentateuch in Philo's writings (after Genesis), is discussed in Gregory E. Sterling's article. Sterling describes the tension felt in Philo's writings on Exodus between his particularistic Jewish perspective and his universalist outlook.

Craig A. Evans shows how different verses, scenes, concepts, and phrases from Exodus are used generatively in the New Testament. He quotes a number of specific examples from Jesus's discourse in the gospels, from Paul's epistles, and from the opening of the Gospel of John.

Paul Spilsbury gives an overview of Josephus's retelling of Exodus, as well as his treatment of Moses. Spilsbury highlights Josephus's willingness to expand the narratives with accounts not in the book, to remove problematic accounts such as the golden calf or Moses killing the Egyptian, and his tendency to recast Moses as a Hellenistic philosopher and statesman.

Lutz Doering's article shows how Jubilees not only rewrites the first half of Exodus, but how a large portion of the later sections of Exodus are the basis for how Jubilees is framed. Even specific passages in the latter half of Exodus are interpreted in Jubilees, and contradictions within Exodus and between Exodus passages and other biblical passages are solved in its exegesis.

The Church Fathers' exegesis of Exodus is discussed by Joel Elowsky, who gives a rich survey of the various interpretations offered by the Church Fathers about the core texts of Exodus. He points out that these Church Fathers were pastors speaking to congregants, and not systematic exegetes. They saw themselves as continuing the work of Paul and even Jesus in their exegetical style, as opposed to that of Philo or the Rabbis.

The final article in this section, by Burton L. Visotzky, showcases the various types of Rabbinic interpretations, both aggadic and halakhic, found

in Rabbinic literature. The piece has three sections. The section on Exodus 1 presents all types of sources, whereas the section on Exodus 12–19, and the halakha section on the latter half of Exodus, focuses heavily on tannaitic midrash, specifically the Mekhiltas.

Section 4 deals with biblical theology, and has only two articles. Walter Brueggemann's article, although aware of source and redaction-critical issues, offers a theological reading of Exodus based on the theme of the Sabbath. He argues that God's command to rest is set against Pharaoh's greed and acquisitiveness, and is meant to teach the lesson that proper living is not about accumulation, especially at the expense of others. Brueggemann's reading ends with reflections on what Exodus can say about contemporary society.

Terence Fretheim's article shows how God works through agents, whether they be human (Moses, Aaron, etc.) or natural (wind to split the sea, wood to sweeten the water, etc.). Fretheim goes so far as to say that God never works alone, though as he defines "agent" so expansively (even God's own body is an agent), his reading is virtually "unfalsifiable."

The Book of Exodus: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation offers a more-or-less balanced portrayal of the state of the field in Exodus studies. Admittedly, the book leans a bit to the European side in its historical-critical stances in the first two sections, specifically in the textual layers the articles discuss and their (late) dating. That said, as it is an essay collection, some amount of random leaning in one direction or another should be expected. Perhaps an editor's introduction, laying out the state of the field and the current debates about these matters, would have been helpful, though I think the book was sufficiently balanced and transparent even without it.

On the specialty matters in the third section, the articles vary in specificity and persuasiveness. One could always second guess the choices of topics, but overall the presentation of surveys on key exegetical texts from ancient times is a useful and sound approach for such a volume. In short, the book has something for everybody in the field of biblical studies, and for those of us who deal with Exodus and the Pentateuch, it has quite a lot.

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