

2. Statements as to precise parts of P, giving correct material from a far earlier period.

Cross, F. M., "The Priestly Tabernacle", The Biblical Archaeologist Reader ed by G. Ernest Wright and David Noel Freedman (Chicago: Quadrangle Books) 1961

p.216 The most recent trend in the literary criticism of the Priestly writings is represented by the work of G. von Rad (Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch, 1934) and M. Noth in his monumental Ueberlieferungs-geschichtliche Studien (1943). Von Rad splits P into two separate sources, one older, less priestly, and more historical; the other comparatively late, priestly, and artificial. He is followed by Galling and in part by Noth, but has not gained general acceptance. Noth's work seeks to eliminate P from Joshua, cutting away all accretions to leave a source, largely narrative, which concludes with the death of Aaron and Moses. Noth's treatment, however, overlooks P's character as commentary formed from sundry old records in his insistence that P be a logical unity, later split up to form the framework of the Tetrateuch. Noth is probably correct in regarding JEP and the Deuteronomic books as separate entities. And yet, even if this is true, the Joshua lists, for example (cf. § 7), must derive from the same circle of documents, extant in the pre-Exilic period, as many of those in the Priestly portions of the Tetrateuch.

These recent attempts to seek out the "nuclear" Priestly stratum reflect a new respect for the historical core of P. The confections, doublets, and additions which allow separation of Priestly materials into two or more parts also testify to the age of its sources, but at the same time to the heterogeneous character of its origin. We cannot use the Priestly materials uncritically. Priestly tradition in its present form is dogmatic and late; nevertheless, it is a valuable historical witness, often more reliable in detail than the older oral sources. In the last analysis, it can in no way represent pious fraud, but rather the best efforts of priestly scholars who tried to piece together the golden past from materials available to them.

p. 220, 221 There is no reason to assume with most scholars (most recently Galling) that the tabernacle is the fiction of later writers who wished to make the tabernacle conform more closely in structure to the temple.