

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE VIII.

IS THE DOCUMENTARY THEORY TENABLE?¹

BY THE REVEREND JOHANNES DAHSE,
FREIRACHDORF, GERMANY.

II.

JULIUS WELLHAUSEN'S SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

BEFORE plunging *in medias res*, let me speak of a new victory which the textual critics have won. In the tenth number of the new weekly *Die Geisteswissenschaften* (Leipzig, Veit and Co.), 1913-14, Professor D. Max Löhr publishes an article, entitled "The Present Status of Old Testament Knowledge" (pp. 264-267), in which he compares the present time with that of thirty-five years ago. Just as, at that time, after the appearance of the first volume of Julius Wellhausen's "Die Geschichte Israels" (later called *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*), a vigorous activity in the realm of Old Testament knowledge set in, so again in our own time, where many positions that were previously considered certain are being shaken (p. 265), there is much zealous work being done in the realm of Hexateuchal inquiry. We note especially that, in the course of his article, Dr. Löhr speaks of the use of the divine names (p. 266), and that he recognizes that, even after the establishment of the great Hexateuchal writing, systematic changes in the names of the Deity have occurred. Then he continues: "In view of this fact, the acceptance of a Jahwistic or Elohist source writing would, at first glance,

¹Translated by Florence Chaney Geiser, Oberlin, Ohio.

seem to be out of the question. But, alas, it only seems so. The distinguishing of both these source writings, which we shall designate for a while longer as Jahwist and Elohist, depends, in its last analysis, not upon this outward difference, but upon all sorts of real theological and linguistic differences, whose concurrence makes evident the presence of two transmitting strata concerning Israel from its earliest history down to the settling in Canaan." "What has to be set aside in the future is something purely external; viz., the name used for both sources up to this time, not the sources themselves." We are exceedingly grateful to Dr. Löhr for publicly casting aside the divine names as source distinctions and for expressing the same opinion which Dr. Gressmann does; viz., that the different strata of Genesis which must eventually be distinguished are unjustly designated, according to the use of the divine names, "Jahwist" and "Elohist." Whether the other criteria mentioned by Dr. Löhr are in reality so cogent that, using them as a basis, we shall be compelled to conceive of the different strata of the Pentateuch as being source writing; whether they are really different strata of transmission rather than different conceptions of the same account (with occasional amplifications), our following articles will attempt to decide. For the present let us concern ourselves with several so-called real differences between the alleged source writings of Genesis.

Julius Wellhausen says (*Composition des Hexateuchs*, 1885, p. 50): "I do not hesitate to express the alternatives: either all the literary criticism of the Biblical books of history is foundationless and void, or else Genesis xxvi. 34 f.; xxviii. 8 f. originate from a different source than Genesis xxxvi. 1-5, 9-19." Concerning these passages, we read in the Massoretic text xxvi. 34 f.: "Now when Esau was forty years old he

married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. They were a grief to Isaac and to Rebekah." In Genesis xxviii. 8 f., we read: "Now when Esau saw that the Canaanites were objectionable to his father, Esau went to Ishmael, and in addition to his other wives, took to wife Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth." According to chapters xxvi. and xxviii., Esau's three wives are Judith, Basemath, and Mahalath. But we find the Massoretic text different in Genesis xxxvi. There, in verse 2, we read: "Esau took the following Canaanites to wife: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; finally Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth." Esau's wives are therefore Adah, Oholibamah, and Basemath.

At first glance these two accounts seem to be irreconcilable. However, a closer study of the history of the text discloses the fact that we have here a classic example of the changes to which names, especially, have been subjected in the course of transmission. Of the name of the first wife (xxvi. 34) we find the following main variations in the LXX manuscripts:—

1. Judith daughter of the Hittite Baier (Beer, Beerel) m n h l x
2. Judith " " Balel (Beel) [a] c o c₂
3. Judin " " Baier (Beer) A M e g j d p t s v q u
4. Judin " " Balel (Beel) E r
5. Adan " " Allon fia
6. Judln " " Hivite Elon bw

As second wife the following are mentioned:—

7. Masemath (Basemath) daughter of the Hivite Allon (Elon)
8. Masemath, daughter of the Hittite Balor (Beor) bw
9. Ελιβεμα, θυγατερα Ανα θυγατερα Σεβεγων του εναιου fia

Now if we compare the names of the first and second wives (Gen. xxvi.) with one another, it becomes evident that the

witnesses bw have changed the names of the fathers; neither of these manuscripts here represents an independent transmission; they belong rather to the main stream of the LXX manuscripts (cf. the manner of the reading of the text *sub* 3). By so doing we reach the conclusion that the father of the first wife is always designated as Hittite, the father of the second wife as Hivite. Furthermore, we observe (*sub* 2 and 4) that the name of the father contains an "l." According to the testimony of the manuscripts [a] c o c₂, a Hebrew בַּאֵל seems to have lain before Origen. If we combine this with the designation *sub* 5, it is clear that it is a short בַּת־אֵיל ("ב"אֵיל"). Accordingly, with regard to the father of the first wife, the manuscripts a c o c₂ and E r belong to the same stream of transmission as the recension fi^a. Now so far as the different forms for the name of the wife herself are concerned (Judith, Judin, Adan), it is evident that all three stand in relation to one another, and that Judith is the latest form of the name. For a wife of Esau would not have borne the name Judith, which was not used till later, but much rather the name of Lamech's wife, Adah=Adan.

We come now to the name of the third wife of Esau (Gen. xxviii. 9). Concerning the descent of this wife, all manuscripts of the LXX agree, except that the Ethiopic Version has, for *αδελφην Ναβαιωθ*, the expression "fratris Nachor." The wife herself is called *Μαελεθ* by the majority of the Greek manuscripts, which is in accordance with the Massoretic text. But here again the group fi^a (this time in company with dp) deviates, in the manner of the reading of the text *Μασεμαθ*, from this main stream of transmission. It is remarkable, that Josephus agrees with this passage with his *Βασεμαθην*. Dr. Eb. Nestle, in his "Septuaginta-Studien" (vol. v. p. 20), felt compelled to attribute this agreement of Josephus with the

above-mentioned LXX manuscripts to the fact that these manuscripts were influenced by the text of Josephus and that naturally they would be worthless as a means upon which to base textual criticism. But then the text of Josephus must also have influenced the Syriac translation in this passage, for Peshitta has likewise Basemath. Since such an influence upon the Syriac by Josephus is probably out of the question, Basemath is to be regarded here as a Hebrew variation, and the manuscripts fi^{d} p have preserved for us, in reality, xxviii. 9, the text used by Josephus. Now if we compare the manner of reading of the text of the manuscript group fi^{a} with regard to the three wives of Esau, we have:—

Adan=Adah, daughter of the Hittite Allon

Olibama=Ohollamah, daughter of Anah, daughter of Zibeon, the Hittite

Basemath, daughter of Ishmael

But these are exactly the very names which Esau's wives bear in Genesis xxxvi. 2 ff.

The question now arises, Whence has fi^{a} gotten the name of the second wife of Esau? First of all, there is the possibility that the Greek author of fi^{a} placed the names mentioned in Genesis xxxvi. 2 in place of Basemath in chapter xxvi. 34 for the purpose of harmonizing both lists. If that were the case, then we ought again to find the Greek text of xxxvi. 2 in chapter xxvi. 34 of fi^{a} . But there exists, however, a characteristic difference between LXX xxxvi. 2 and the manner of reading of the text of fi^{a} (xxvi. 34). The Septuagint has, viz., as do also Sam. and Syr. (xxxvi. 2), *Ολιβεμα θυγατερα Ανα του υιου Σεβεγων*; likewise xxxvi. 14. But fi^{a} writes in xxvi. 34 *Ελιβεμα θυγατερα Ανα θυγατερα Σεβεγων*. That does not go back to the *Greek* text of xxxvi. 2, but rather coincides with the present *Hebrew* text of xxxvi. 2. It is

not likely that the author of *fi^a* when he worked at chapter xxvi. would have examined the Hebrew text of chapter xxxvi. but rather he would have translated word for word the Hebrew text of chapter xxvi. 34, which lay before him. In consequence in the Hebrew text which lay before *fi^a*, the name of the second wife (xxvi. 34) was given as Olibama=Oholibama.

Now one might doubt whether so material a variation could have been found in the Hebrew text of xxvi. 34. But Sam. (chap. xxxvi.) proves that, as a matter of fact, changes in the names of Esau's wives, as well as in many other names (e.g. Gen. iv.), were undertaken at a very late date. The Samaritan substitutes, for example, in chapter xxxvi., in every instance, the name Mahalath for Basemath, in order to be in harmony with chapter xxviii. 9. Consequently the LXX manuscripts *qu* in chapter xxxvi. 2 have, in regard to the manner of reading of the Sam. text, after *Βασεμμαθ*, the addition *και την Μαελεθ*. But, pray, how could the name Mahalath appear instead of Basemath? It is to be noted that Mahalath occurs as the name of a daughter-in-law of Solomon (2 Chron. xi. 18) and Basemath as the name of a daughter (1 Kings iv. 15). But a scribe might easily confound the names of a daughter and a daughter-in-law of the same king. The textual controversy in regard to Esau's wives seems finally to have resolved itself into the following:—

Adan, daughter of the Hittite Elon, has been given as the name of the first wife. In the course of time, after her name was changed to Judin and then to Judith, the name of the father of the exilic Judith (Merari) affected the name of the father of Esau's wife, he being then called B'eri, while, as has already been correctly stated by Ball, the b'er in the preceding line (Gen. xxvi. 33) was probably a factor in changing

the form of the name. Now since "daughter of the Hittite Elon" was the traditional designation for a wife of Esau, it was given to the second wife. Something similar to this occurs quite frequently. For example, in Jeremiah xxxix. 3 (LXX xlvi. 3) the same man, the chief cup-bearer of King Nebuchadnezzar, is twice mentioned in the same verse, first as Nergal-sharezer, Samgar, and then as Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag. But how it happens that Oholibama in chapters xxvi. 34; xxviii. 9 has vanished from the main stream of transmission is not clear without a word further; perhaps it is because Oholibama was mentioned in xxxvi. 25 as a *son* of Ana; in this passage in the Peshitta, viz., "daughter of Ana" is missing, and xxxvi. 18 concludes the original LXX with the word *Ελιβεμας*, and the Hexapla is the first to add *sub* an asterisk *θυγατρος Ανα γυναικος Ησαυ*. But after the name Oholibama had vanished and Basemath had taken its place in xxvi. 34, it is readily explained how the name of Mahalath, the daughter-in-law of the other Basemath, was substituted by a scribe for the name of the third wife. It is especially true that such changes may be explained, if the thesis in my book "Textkritische Materialien" is correct; viz., that in chapters xxvi. 34, 35, and xxvii. 46-xxviii. 9 we have "liturgical accompaniments" before us, which stood originally in the margin and were therefore easily subjected to change. After the name Mahalath had once been incorporated into the text, it is readily conceivable why Sam., for purposes of coherence, substituted in every instance in Gen. xxxvi. the name Mahalath for Basemath.

Thus we see: the deviations between Gen. xxvi. and xxviii. and Gen. xxxvi. are not to be attributed to different source writings, but are to be explained by accidental changes which the text suffered, together with an unfortunate attempt at

improvement. But if we do not have to do here with different source writings, then Julius Wellhausen, in his words cited above, has pronounced judgment upon himself! Textual criticism has triumphed over literary criticism. It is worthy of note, that right here Dr. Skinner himself, to be sure with certain reservations, is inclined to admit corruptions of the text, when he says on page 429 of his *Commentary*: "The confusion is too great to be accounted for naturally by textual corruption, though that may have played a part." In the first part of this sentence, Dr. Skinner overestimates the difficulties. For, with the aid of the minuscule manuscripts *fi*, we have found a way through them.

From the list of the names above, it is evident that the Masoretic text deviates from the other recensions, also, in regard to the descent of the fathers. The deviations of *bw* xxvi. 34 have already been mentioned above (*sub* 6 and 8). For the sake of completeness it ought to be added that the second *חתי* in xxvi. 34 is given again word for word by the manuscripts E and x through *του χερταίου*. On the other hand, the Syriac agrees in this passage with the other LXX witnesses, that have *חתי*. A difficulty in regard to the original tribe name arises in xxxvi. 2. There *Σεβειων* is designated as *Ευαιος*, which corresponds to the Hebrew *חתי*; as we have already observed, *fi* has this designation in xxvi. 34. But now Zibeon (xxxvi. 20) is reckoned among the Horites. Therefore the majority of the expounders substitute in xxxvi. 2 *חתי* for *חתי*. It must remain undecided to what extent that is correct. For, remarkably enough, *חתי* is not only cited in xxxvi. 20 as a national name, but also in xxxvi. 22 as a subdivision of itself. If the name in xxxvi. 22 is correct, then another more comprehensive designation would be expected in xxxvi. 20. We have such a one in this passage in the case of the manuscripts

dnp and the Bohairic translation, namely, *του χερταίου*, but also these witnesses have in xxxvi. *21 χορραίου*, thence this likewise is an unsatisfactory solution. Not until now has all the material furnished by manuscripts been used in straightening out the confusion which has arisen in the Old Testament in general in regard to the tribal designations חתח, חתח, and חתח. I shall cite only one passage — chapter xxxiv. 2. In the Massoretic text we have חתח, in the main stream of the LXX transmission חתח, and in the LXX manuscripts $\delta \lambda \eta \rho$ חתח. The Ethiopic manuscript C, Aquila and Symmachus and the LXX editions Sixtina and Complutensis agree with the Massoretic text. Septuagintal manuscripts are not cited by Brooke McLean for this reading. But the reader will perceive, as a result of this digression, what a history the text of the Bible has behind it, and how necessary a criticism of the text is before any conclusions can be drawn or any hypotheses built up.

This investigation concerning Esau's wives is, however, not important for us merely because of Wellhausen's statement; it ought to contribute toward gaining for the LXX witnesses פ^{a} (r) the place belonging to them. It is just this high estimation of mine for this group of manuscripts which Dr. Skinner has attacked. He writes concerning it (Expositor, June, 1913, p. 497) as follows: Dahse "is blind to the possibility that it [viz. פ^{a}] may be something different from both [viz. Hesychius or Lucian] and much less important than either." He attacks me especially because of my supposition that a Hebrew text lay before the author of this recension. Now we have already observed in this article how important the manner of the reading of the text of this group is and that it does not bear the characteristics of inner Greek corruptions, but rather has a Hebrew foundation. For both

of these assertions let me cite several examples; first of all, one which was cited in my "Textkritische Materialien" in regard to Genesis xxxv. 22 ff.

Concerning this list of Jacob's sons in the so-called P document, Dr. Skinner writes (p. 427): "In two points the list deviates from the tradition of JE (chaps. xxix.-xxx.): the children are arranged to their mothers; and the birth of Benjamin is placed in Mesopotamia." This is, however, not the case in all the LXX witnesses. The manuscripts fir, the Armenian Version of the Bible, and two Ethiopic manuscripts omit the sons of Rachel in xxxv. 24 and add them in verse 26 after the sons of Zilpah; the order of sequence is therefore sons of Leah, sons of Bilhah, sons of Zilpah, and sons of Rachel. That, however, is the order of sequence in the so-called JE document. There is, therefore, no contradiction which would lead one to conclude that there were different sources; fir has preserved for us a purer text in the case of Jacob's sons, just as in the case of Esau's wives. This purer text is probably not a product of the critical knowledge of the author of fir, but it depends, as I have shown on page 153 of my "Textkritische Materialien," upon a Hebrew foundation. We have, moreover, the same order of sequence in the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs." Higher criticism can no longer make the appeal that the order of sequence of the sons of Jacob (chap. xxxv.) is evidence of a different transmission from that of chapters xxix.-xxx. And the assertion that P has Benjamin born in Mesopotamia is just as incorrect. For in one member of our group, in the Armenian Version verse 26b is lacking *ουτοι οι υιοι Ιακωβ οι εγενοντο αυτω εν Μεσοποταμια της Συριας*. This part of the verse is to be regarded as a glossary interjected from chapter xlvii., exactly as is the case in the Book of Jubilees,

where there has been a more extended annotation, in that Dinah has been added.

The manuscripts f^a (together with Chrys.), also xxxv. 16, offer a purer text, inasmuch as the strange $\chi\alpha\beta\rho\alpha\theta\alpha$ is omitted (cf. with this passage the Ethiopic and Armenian witnesses). Moreover, we have a more important omission in our group xlv. 21, since f^{ar} , together with o and the Bohairic Version, omit Ophimin among the grandsons of Benjamin.

The importance of the readings of f^r is not only indicated by the passages where this group has a shorter text, but also where it has a longer text. For example, our witnesses in xxvi. 25 add $\epsilon\nu\ \tau\omega\ \phi\rho\epsilon\alpha\tau\iota\ \gamma\epsilon\rho\alpha\rho\omega\nu$ (cf., also, the reading of bw and $E\ dpt\ egj$); in chapter xxix. 6 they have, along with $A\ E\ l$, $\epsilon\tau\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \lambda\alpha\lambda\omicron\upsilon\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$ before $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \iota\delta\omicron\upsilon\ \rho\alpha\chi\eta\lambda$. In chapter xxx. 13 they add, after the name Asher, $o\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \pi\lambda\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$; likewise k and the Old Latin translation (cf., also, $E\ d\ p\ x$ and the Armenian and Egyptian versions). This reading is already known to Jerome. In chapter xxxi. 25 our group gives, after $o\rho\epsilon\iota$, $\alpha\ \gamma\kappa\lambda$; likewise in h . In chapter xxxiii. 1, i^{ar} , after $\epsilon\rho\chi\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$, add $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \sigma\upsilon\nu\alpha\nu\tau\eta\sigma\iota\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$. In chapter xxxvii. 10 f^{ar} have (cf., also, the Bohairic translation) apparently had in their Hebrew model א'ב back of the question. In chapter xxxvii. 25 f^b , together with $dnpt$, after $\text{I}\sigma\mu\alpha\eta\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\alpha\iota$, adds $\epsilon\mu\pi\omicron\rho\omicron\iota$; in chapter xxxviii. 11 f^{ar} and D , after $\tau\eta\ \nu\upsilon\mu\phi\eta\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$, add $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\ \tau\omicron\ \alpha\pi\omicron\theta\alpha\nu\epsilon\iota\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \delta\upsilon\omicron\ \upsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$; in chapter xli. 24 f^{ar} and the Bohairic translation after $\epsilon\zeta\eta\gamma\eta\tau\alpha\iota\varsigma$, add Αιγυπτου . In chapter xlv. 9 a Hebrew קח (equal $\tau\omicron\ \tau\alpha\chi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$) is given again by f^r , along with $k\ s\ M^m$ and the Ethiopic Version, after $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\beta\eta\theta\iota\ \omicron\upsilon\nu$; (cf. Deut. vii. 4). In chapter xlv. 31 f^{ar} has along with the Old Latin

Version, before *οι αδελφοι*, the words *ο πατηρ μου και*. And, finally, they translate (in chap. 1. 5), after *λεγων*, the addition *πρω του τελευτησαι αυτου* which the Sam. text has. This last agreement with the Sam. points most distinctly to a Hebrew origin of the characteristic readings of fir, and several of the other variations mentioned above exhibit likewise a Hebrew origin, most distinctly of all the *το ταχος* in chapter xlv. 9.

It is to be hoped that the reader will have gained from these statements the impression that Dr. Skinner is unjustly seeking to depreciate the readings of fir. They are of the utmost importance in determining the history of the Biblical text, and have, therefore, been abundantly considered by Dr. Procksch in the latest commentary on Genesis.