Book-Seams in the Hexateuch I

The Literary Transitions between the Books of Genesis/Exodus and Joshua/Judges

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The Lack of Transition between Genesis 50 and Exodus 1

Joel S. Baden

To begin with my thesis, or with a restatement of the title of this essay: there is no transition between Gen 50 and Exod 1. That is: the transition between Gen 50 and Exod 1 is no more distinctive from a compositional standpoint than the transition between any two chapters of the Pentateuch. That is: the transition between the narrative recounted in Gen 50 and the narrative recounted in Exod 1 is no more distinctive than the transition between any two narratives in the Pentateuch. That is: the passage of time and change in Israelite fortunes that seems to occur somewhere in the beginning of what we now call Exod 1 is entirely unremarkable from a narrative and compositional perspective.

Now to expound further on this basic stance. The books of Genesis and Exodus did not, and for all practical purposes do not even today, exist. These are, and always have been, at most, two volumes of a larger work, and it is a mistake to think of them as anything else. If it is accepted, as it almost always is, that there was a comprehensive priestly work, part of which exists in what we now call Genesis and in what we now call Exodus – whether one thinks that work to have been a redactional layer or an independent document – if that basic claim is accepted, then there are no such things as the books of Genesis and Exodus. What can be discussed is whether some of the material about the patriarchs – the non-priestly, pre-priestly material – existed in an identifiable, distinctive, self-contained, written form at some point, and whether some of the material about the Israelite existence in and departure from Egypt – the non-priestly, pre-priestly material – also existed in an identifiable, distinctive, self-contained, written form at some point, and whether those two or more written texts were combined with each other before the composition of the priestly work. But at no point in any of that reasonable and important conversation should the words Genesis and Exodus be spoken.

1 For P as a redactional layer, see the seminal essay of CROSS, Canaanite Myth, 293–325; as an independent document, see recently SCHMID, Genesis and the Moses Story, 47–49; for an attempt to mediate the two positions, see BLUM, Studien, 229–285: “Weder »Quelle« noch »Redaktion«”.

2 For a fairly detailed example of just such a discussion, see the essays, in conversation with each other, of BADEN, ‘Continuity’ and SCHMID, ‘Genesis and Exodus’.
When we inquire about the transition between Genesis and Exodus, we are necessarily asking questions about the final form of the text. That is, after all, what “Genesis” and “Exodus” are: the names given to these volumes only once they had reached their (mostly) final forms.\(^3\) For the sake of keeping our work even remotely tethered to the text that we are supposed to be investigating, we are required to begin from the text as we have it: which is to say, from a text that is continuous from the end of Genesis through the beginning of Exodus. We should remember that there is no identifiable stage in the history of transmission or reception at which that was not the case.\(^4\) The traditional claim of Mosaic authorship held from the early postbiblical period through (and including) Astruc, and was replaced in critical scholarship with theories that entailed overarching pentateuchal source documents or layers.\(^5\) Though there may be some exceptions of which I am unaware, for the most part it is safe to say that the only people to treat Genesis and Exodus as if

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\(^3\) We can recognize, of course, that the term “final form” is vaguely misleading for the ancient period; it is used here without any suggestion that there were no further additions, editions, corrections, insertions, alterations, updatings, orthographic changes, etc., over the course of many subsequent generations, even within the textual tradition of the Septuagint, from which the names “Genesis” and “Exodus” are drawn. What is intended here is the stage at which any Pentateuch-encompassing changes were made: the compilation of independent sources, or the additions of the last thorough-going layers.

\(^4\) The presence or absence of the \(\vee\) at the beginning of Exod 1:1, as noted in the essay on material evidence in part I, section 1 of this volume, does not affect the status of continuity. In any case, it seems far more likely that the texts without the copula are reacting to the materially-based scroll division, rather than a \(\vee\) being added to (unnecessarily) effect a sense of continuity. (On the material necessity for the division of the compiled Pentateuch into separate scrolls, see STACKERT, ‘Before and After Scripture’, 170, with the bibliography, especially that of HARAN, in n. 7 there). There are no biblical, non-pentateuchal texts that refer, by name or otherwise, to independent Genesis and Exodus scrolls or stories (writ large; on the question of tradition, see below). The earliest postbiblical treatments of this material also treat the narrative as continuous, naturally enough, as they are receiving the canonical text (or something close enough to it). This is evident especially in texts like Jubilees, which, though primarily focused on Genesis, extends into the Exodus story, and even in retelling Genesis interpolates material from elsewhere in the Pentateuch, such as the Sabbath and festival laws (see STACKERT, ‘Before and After Scripture’, 170–171). And the early commentaries on individual books – the Mekilta, e.g., – respond to the traditional book division without making any claim about literary continuity, as they are produced by, for and within circles in which unity of authorship was a point of dogma.

\(^5\) The rare alternative theories, such as Spinoza’s proposal that Ezra was the true author, simply replicate the concept of authorial unity and transfer it to a different author. ASTRUC, Conjectures, may have been the strange medial hinge: in the attempt to explain how Moses could have written about events that took place before his birth (i.e., Genesis), Astruc relied on a theory of Moses as editor of source documents for the first book and as legitimate author for the rest of the Pentateuch. This may be the closest that early critical scholarship came to making any claim for independent patriarchal and Exodus traditions, but it lasted only for a brief moment in the history of scholarship.
they were authentically separate compositional works, rather than as sequential and consecutive volumes of a single overarching literary work, are living right now.

Thus, when we inquire about the transition between these two chapters, we have to recognize that, from the perspective of the Pentateuch as a whole, we might as well be asking about the transition between any two chapters. The placement of these two chapters at the seams of the division into volumes is, literally, unimportant. And, of course, the notion of chapters altogether is literally unimportant – we should really be talking about the end of the Joseph story and the beginning of the Israel-in-Egypt narrative.

So as long as we recognize that in asking about the transition or continuity between these two chapters, in these two “books,” we are engaging a question that could just as well be asked of any two narrative blocks in the Pentateuch, regardless of verse, chapter or book division, then it is a perfectly legitimate enterprise.

What, then, can we say about the transition between these two narrative blocks? Beginning from the canonical text, as we always must, there can be no question that the two are intrinsically linked. In Gen 50:14, Joseph and his family return to Egypt, and there they remain, as 50:22 reminds us – ישה יפק – and as is reaffirmed in the final words of the chapter: מישראל היה והיה אשר – ויהי ישה אשר עתים והכנופ את יהושע באורים חמשים). Unless one were to posit a patriarchal story that ends with the family in Egypt, rather than in possession of the land that the preceding narrative has spent so much effort to demonstrate the Israelite claim to, Gen 50 requires a departure from Egypt. This is especially the case when we read verses 24–25, where that very departure is anticipated explicitly:

ויהי ישה אשר יפק יפק אתכם והעלה אתכם מן נתבע לאברהם לאיצחק לאיעכבה הארץ ולהמת תרכת ולתקב. I am reading canonically here, and intentionally so.

When we turn to Exod 1, it is equally the case that it is dependent on what has come before. Verses 1–5 and 7 are, as is universally recognized, not new narration but rather the recollection of events that already took place, back in Gen 46 and 47, and nearly verbatim. Verses 6, which refers to Joseph and all

6 Our modern chapter divisions in the Bible are derived from the medieval Latin Bible produced by Archbishop Stephen Langton in the thirteenth century (MOORE, ‘Vulgate Chapters’, 73).

7 See the essay on material evidence above. The various minor differences between Gen 46–47 and Exod 1:1–5, 7 are hardly meaningful, as truly verbatim repetition is rarely found in the Pentateuch, even in the more rigid style of the priestly material. Although much is made of it in the material evidence essay above, the questions of Joseph’s enumeration with his brothers or the difference between 70 and 75 members of the family also have no bearing on the literary relationship between the account of the descent of Jacob and his descendants to Egypt and the pluperfect review of that descent. For the latter, it is crucial to note that the tradition of 70 in the MT of Exod 1:5 matches the count of 70 in the
his brothers, requires that we know who Joseph and his brothers are, and that we should care; so too v. 8, which requires that we know not only Joseph but also that he had a relationship with the previous Pharaoh.

Many scholars would claim that these verses do not prove anything. Exodus 1:1–5 and 7, after all, are well known to be P, which, as already mentioned, is agreed to have been continuous from the patriarchs to Egypt. And the other two verses, 1:6 and 8, are, very often, swiftly declared to be post-priestly additions, inserted for the precise purpose of linking these two originally separate literary compositions.

The issue of secondarily inserted linking verses requires comment. Although our field is almost never free of circular reasoning, in this case the reasoning is even more circular than usual. Here we have the claim that two narrative units are separate, a claim that is proven – indeed, that can only be proven – by removing as secondary the very verses that connect the two units. At that point it is said that the original independence of the units is demonstrated, because we have separated them, and moreover we can even see how they were secondarily linked: by putting those same verses – the ones that we have just removed – right back where they originally were. As a technique of literary analysis, this move seems to be very central to much contemporary pentateuchal scholarship; yet its commonality does not ameliorate its logical problems.

To put it another way: there is nothing in the text as we now have it that demands that the patriarchal and Egypt narratives were once separate. That argument does not emerge at all from the text – nor could it, seeing that the two narratives are plainly not separated in the final form – but emerges, rather, from the a priori claim, driven by tradition-historical conclusions (not literary-historical ones), regarding the original distinction between the patriarchal and Egypt traditions. I will return to that question below, but for now, I want to emphasize again that the motivating factor for the separation of Gen 50 and Exod 1 into two distinct literary compositions is not a literary factor. It is a product of a scholarly problem – the supposition of distinctive traditions – not a product of any textual problem.

In this light it is important to consider the evidence of the priestly text. Once it is admitted that the priestly work, whether as a layer or a source,
continued directly from the patriarchs into the Exodus – thankfully the ques-
tion of where it may have ended is not relevant here – there are significant ramifications for what we do with the non-priestly material. If it is claimed that the non-priestly material was connected before P, or at least separately from P – so that there was a non-priestly narrative that ran from the patriarchs into the Exodus – then what is at stake is simply the historical development of an independent non-priestly pentateuchal document.

But if it is claimed that the non-priestly connection between the patriarchs and the Exodus is a post-priestly redactional process, with originally disparate non-priestly units being fitted into the overarching priestly framework, then the notion of these secondary linking verses becomes very problematic. If P already existed as a continuous narrative from the patriarchs to the Exodus, and these other pieces were added to that preexisting P text, then there would be no need at all for anyone, at any time, whether at the moment of combination or thereafter, to insert verses that explicitly linked the patriarchs to the Exodus. That link would have already been accomplished by P. The purported addition of blocks of non-priestly material would not suddenly undo the continuity already established by P, such that more evidence of continuity would be needed.

This is a methodological problem in biblical scholarship that extends well beyond the boundaries of the Genesis-Exodus question, or the Pentateuch as a whole. Secondary additions that serve to explicitly link two textual units are necessary and reasonable only when those two units are being conjoined for the first time and in isolation. Such linking passages exist to overcome that moment when the reader says, “Wait – these are the same story?” If that question is already answered – by, for example, the preexisting P narrative – or if it is not really a question at all, because there is no great contradiction or gap in the text, then such additions serve no purpose at all.

To put it in brief: there is no need to explicitly connect a text that is already continuous. If P exists, and the non-priestly text has been added to it, resulting in a combined priestly and non-priestly narrative, then a continuous text has already been produced – not only by the explicit verbal links already present in P, but by the actual physical existence of a continuous text. The only readers who would require explicit verbal links connecting two units are those who believe that the patriarchal story and the Exodus story were once separate; and, again, such people have only existed for the past century or so. Without a preordained conclusion that these were separate literary units, there is no reason to search for or expect any sort of explicit literary link – much less any reason to then remove that link as a secondary addition. The fact that verses serve to connect parts of a narrative does not make them automatically redactional; and the removal of those verses does not therefore render the resulting narrative discontinuous.
With that in mind, there are some curious aspects of the non-priestly and priestly texts in Gen 50 and Exod 1 that seem to go unnoticed. P, the supposedly continuous text, is the one with the extremely clear literary joining. It has a classic resumptive repetition, as noted above, with Exod 1:1–5, 7 picking up from Gen 46–47*: it leaves absolutely no doubt as to the fact that what we have read in Genesis is being continued here in Exodus, and that what we are reading in Exodus is a continuation of what we have just read in Genesis. But why is this necessary? P either was a self-standing continuous document, or it created a self-standing continuous document by virtue of its redactional work. In either case, what reader, of either P alone or of the P redaction, would have doubted that the patriarchs and the Exodus went together, when, once P existed in any putative form, they already did?

In this regard, the expected features of the priestly and non-priestly texts have been reversed. If they were originally separate, we would expect the non-priestly texts to contain the overly explicit links between the patriarchs and Exodus; but they don’t. If it was originally continuous, we wouldn’t expect the priestly text to bother too much with overly explicit links between the patriarchs and Exodus; but it does.¹⁰

There are other such oddities. The non-priestly text of Gen 50, as noted above, ends with the Israelites in Egypt, which, if it was originally independent from the Exodus story, is strange. The priestly text of Gen 50 ends with the Israelites in Canaan, in 50:13: ישהא אザー בנו ארצה קנען ויקברו אתו במערה לשדה המכפלה which, if it was originally continuous with the Exodus story, is strange. It should be exactly the other way around.

We may also note the ostensible problem that is entailed by the Exodus story opening with the Israelites having already been in Egypt for many generations, a problem that is seemingly solved, secondarily, by the extension of the narrative back into the Joseph story and the patriarchal period. Yet it should be observed that the claim of a lengthy Israelite enslavement in Egypt – those four hundred years – is made entirely and exclusively in P. The non-priestly story, when read continuously from Genesis into Exodus, makes no such claim, nor is such a claim at all necessary for it. In the non-priestly story (or, more accurately, stories – but that is an argument that can be left to the side for present purposes), the Israelite oppression begins immediately after Joseph’s death, and Moses arises in the next generation. In the non-priestly story, there is no four hundred years. There is one generation of oppression, then comes Moses.¹¹

In other words, the “problem” of the temporal gap between the patriarchs and the Exodus is one created by P – by the very author who, it is imagined, was writing the continuous narrative that spanned the two periods. What’s

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¹⁰ For a fuller version of these arguments, see BADEN, ‘Continuity’.
¹¹ See BADEN, ‘From Joseph to Moses’.
more, P, the author who claims that the enslavement lasted four hundred years, never narrates the passage of that time. It is referred to only retrospectively in Exod 12:40:

ומושב בני ישראל אשר ישבו מצרים שלושים שנה וארבע מאות שנה. We have to imagine that this time passed somewhere in Exod 1:13–14.

Without the *a priori* belief that P is continuous while the non-priestly material is not, there are good reasons to wonder whether P might in fact be the one with the artificial links between two originally separate textual compositions. It has all the hallmarks: the patriarchal story ends in Canaan, where it should; the Exodus story requires a large temporal gap from the patriarchal period that is not really narrated; and the transition is marked with a resumptive repetition, usually taken as a sure sign of redactional work.

It is not my intention to suggest that P is not continuous. I want only to point out that the “evidence” we use to make claims of discontinuity, and to identify passages as secondary links, is dependent on what we already think we know. And, therefore, I want also to suggest that what scholars see as problematic in the transition from the patriarchs to the Exodus in the non-priestly material might not really be so. I see very few, if any, problems at all – especially if we stop taking out the verses that connect the two units.

For those who want to separate Gen 50 from Exod 1 on a compositional level, there are two questions that must be addressed: if the patriarchal story did not continue into Exodus, then where did it originally end? and if the Exodus story is not a continuation of the patriarchal narrative, where did it originally begin?12

If the patriarchal narrative is supposed to be an independent story of Israel’s origins, then it surely could not have ended where it currently does, with the Israelites all stranded in Egypt (Gen 50:26). The entire Joseph story, really, needs to go – as so many have suggested that it should.13 But the problem is not thereby resolved: the patriarchal cycle before the Joseph story ends with the entire family, Jacob included and still living, roaming their way through Canaan (Gen 35:21–22). That is not an origin story – it is the beginning of one, quite possibly, but it fails at the basic task of explaining how it is that the Israelites came to be settled where they are settled.

Similarly, if the Exodus story didn’t begin with the patriarchs, then it surely cannot have started where it currently does, which is with reference to the patriarchs. So Exod 1:1–8 cannot serve as an independent introduction. Neither can 1:9–12, which are dependent on v. 8 (as the subject of ויאמר in 1:9 is given only in the previous verse). Exodus 1:13, יתביה מצרים את בני ישראל, is not the beginning of a story. Nor, for that matter, is 1:15, ויאמר מלך מצרים, etc. The problem, it seems, is that none of Exod 1 really

12 For the following, see in greater detail BADEN, ‘Continuity’.
13 See recently RÖMER, ‘Joseph Story’.
works as the beginning of an independent Exodus story. But it is impossible to push further into Exodus looking for the true beginning, because every other passage in the book is dependent, directly or indirectly, on what is established in Exod 1.\textsuperscript{14} It is not impossible to have an independent Exodus story without an explicitly narrated eisodos. But one does need a beginning of some sort.

In both cases, it seems, there is a gap: at the end of the patriarchal story and at the beginning of the Exodus story. We might, as many have done, posit that we are simply missing these endings and beginnings, and then suggest what they might look like. But when we have texts that are explicitly marked as continuous, forward and backward, why should we throw them out and then try to recreate what may have stood in their places? We do that only when we have already decided that the patriarchal and Exodus traditions cannot have been continuous; and that is, again, a decision that does not emerge from the text itself, which strenuously asserts otherwise.

In light of the foregoing, I want to raise two issues that deserve closer attention, because they are of significant theoretical interest but, I believe, have not been fully thought out yet.

The first is the entire question of the individual scroll of Genesis, or Exodus. As I have made clear, I do not believe that there was ever a composition that covered only the patriarchal cycle – at least not one that we have preserved in our Bible. But I recognize the possibility that, once the entire Pentateuch was compiled, and it was separated into its five volumes, each of those scrolls could have, in principle, been treated as an independent text. One can imagine someone adding bits and pieces here and there to individual scrolls (especially at the ends, for material reasons – as we see, for example, in some of the prophetic books\textsuperscript{15}). There is nothing theoretically impossible, or even improbable, about such a thing.

That said, the possibility of something happening and the demonstration that it did happen are very different things. I have yet to see, in any of the individual scrolls of the Pentateuch, any addition that could be reasonably attributed to an edition of that individual scroll. In order to be identified as such, a passage would have to meet certain criteria. It would have to incorporate a mixture of strata or sources – preferably priestly and non-priestly – otherwise, it would be far simpler to simply attribute it to whichever individ-

\textsuperscript{14} Thus the attempts to locate the beginning of the Exodus story in the second chapter, with the birth of Moses (e.g., KRATZ, Composition, 282–283; SCHMID, Genesis and the Moses Story, 141–144), strain to dissociate Moses’ mother hiding her newborn son without any reference to Pharaoh’s decree in Exod 1.

\textsuperscript{15} E.g., broadly, Amos and Micah, and, differently, Isaiah and Ezekiel.
ual stratum or source it agreed with.\textsuperscript{16} This, for example, is why the additions at the end of Numbers – chapters 27, 28–29, 30, 36 and perhaps others – do not look like additions to the book of Numbers to me: they are purely priestly in character, and so far as I can tell they are additions only to the priestly text, not to a canonical book of Numbers.\textsuperscript{17} A scroll addition would also have to somehow disrupt the structure of the overarching narrative in a way that could be sensible only within the context of the individual scroll. The closest I can imagine to something like this is the conclusion of Leviticus: אָלֵי המַצָּות בְּני יִשְׂרָאֵל. And yet even there it is not necessary to see the final verse as closing a scroll; the internal structure of the priestly narrative, and of the canonical narrative as a whole – in both of which the law-giving is an event that takes place in the middle of a larger story, indeed in the middle of the wilderness, and is followed by instructions, in the opening chapters of Numbers, that prepare for the departure from the mountain for the land of Canaan – is not really changed by the seemingly “final” words of Leviticus 27.

Thus while discovering evidence of individual book shaping is possible in theory, in practice it is a very high bar to cross. On the other hand, it is, I think, quite likely that there was some post-redactional shaping of the Pentateuch as a whole (though far less than most of my colleagues would allow: I would restrict it almost entirely to the addition of the final two verses of Deut 34\textsuperscript{18}). In any case, there appears to be no such shaping in the cases of Genesis and Exodus, which is yet another sign, perhaps, that we should stop referring to these books as meaningful literary units.

My second main theoretical point has to do with the notion that in the patriarchs and the Exodus we have two originally independent origin traditions for Israel. With this position I have come to strongly agree. I am utterly convinced that the patriarchal traditions were originally an etiology of how Israel came to possess its Canaanite lands, and that they had nothing to do with, knew nothing of, any trip to Egypt and back. And I am utterly convinced that the Exodus tradition was originally an etiology of how Israel came to possess

\textsuperscript{16} On this principle regarding the distinction between secondary additions occurring after the compilation of sources and those that should be attributed to editions to the sources before compilation, see BADEN, ‘Source Stratification’.

\textsuperscript{17} An important counter-example to this is Num 33, which does have numerous indications of being an insertion made on the canonical level, rather than merely to the priestly writings (from which it still derives much of its information). Yet, tellingly, Num 33 makes explicit reference not only to material from Numbers, but looks all the way back into Exodus (33:3–15). This chapter is thus a datum that stands against the notion of a “book of Numbers” redaction.

\textsuperscript{18} See, for an argument regarding these verses (though I differ on the analysis of the rest of Deut 34), RÖMER/BRETLER, ‘Deuteronomy 34’, 405–407.
its Canaanite lands, and that it had nothing to do with, knew nothing of, any patriarchs who had occupied those lands previously.  

However: all of those claims about the patriarchal and Exodus traditions have absolutely nothing to do with the compositional history of the literary works we find in the Pentateuch. The most important shift in recent pentateuchal scholarship, and to me the most mystifying, is the changed meaning of the word “tradition.” Traditions are, by definition, not texts, not passages, not biblical verses that can be isolated and separated. Texts are literary manifestations of traditions. If an idea, or theme, or story, is entirely created in the process of writing it, then it is not a tradition. It is a literary invention.

When we say that the patriarchal traditions were an originally independent etiology of Israel’s origins, we are saying nothing about the text of Genesis. The claim about traditions is a guess, a reasonable proposal based on the nature of some of those stories when considered in the abstract, and based on the manner in which the patriarchal traditions are treated elsewhere in the biblical text, and based on comparative considerations. But it is not a literary analysis: it is not driven by any problems in the continuity or cohesion of the biblical narrative. It is not addressed to the literary level at all. Tradition criticism is not literary criticism.

To speak about originally independent traditions of Israel’s origins does not then require that we find corresponding originally independent textual units, written passages, in our canonical Bible. Such a position requires that every idea in the Pentateuch was invented by one of the pentateuchal authors. And that, in turn, requires that we believe that all of those ideas were preserved, successively, over time, in our canonical text, and that none of them is derivative of or dependent on a text or an idea or a tradition that has been lost to us. I would suggest, gently, that such a position is so conservative, historically and theologically, as to be almost reactionary.

The pentateuchal narratives are distillations, precipitations, of numerous traditions and ideas, not all of which we will ever be able to identify or describe with any precision. The intellectual and traditional background of the pentateuchal narratives, however, is not a substitute for a literary analysis, and is not in any way an answer to the literary questions raised by the text. Nor does tradition criticism somehow override the text: it seems to me methodologically illegitimate to alter the text solely for the purpose of maintaining

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19 See the classic, and I believe still most probable, statements of Noth in his descriptions of the two independent “major themes”: Pentateuchal Traditions, 47–51, 54–58.
20 This is the fundamental insight of Noth, Pentateuchal Traditions, and it remains strong even in the face of the direct challenges of Rendtorff, Problem – which, despite being the methodological cornerstone of much current pentateuchal research, fails precisely in Rendtorff’s signal lack of understanding of the clear difference Noth (and his predecessors, especially Wellhausen and Gunkel) recognized between tradition and text, orality and writing.
a tradition-critical position. It is not only illegitimate – it is unnecessary. We can have our cake and eat it too: we can say that the biblical text is continuous from Genesis into Exodus and also say that there were originally independent patriarchal and Exodus origin traditions. The two are not in conflict. They are, in fact, barely even related.

Finally, to the leading question of this volume: the transition between Gen 50 and Exod 1 and the division between Genesis and Exodus as a whole. In this regard I want mostly to comment on where the burden of proof lies. When we talk about whether or not Genesis and Exodus are continuous, we are not starting from an open question. Today, as two thousand years ago, as all evidence from all periods and places shows, Genesis and Exodus are continuous. We do not need to prove it: we do not need to find absolutely explicit linking passages. We do not need to find verbal associations, or thematic developments, or anything else beyond simple narrative continuity: first this happened, then that happened. For all the reasons stated earlier, no continuous composition needs to announce its own continuity. It is continuous by virtue of being materially continuous.21

On the other hand, it is the claim of discontinuity that has the burden of proof. We have before us a continuous text. Proof that it is or was otherwise must emerge from the text itself – it is a literary question, after all, and thus the evidence must be drawn from the literary level, not from any tradition-critical conclusion. I agree with the tradition-critical conclusion. But the narrative remains continuous from Gen 50 to Exod 1, materially and compositionally.

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21 This material continuity is confirmed by our earliest evidence, i.e., those scrolls from Qumran that contain these “books” in a single document: 4Q1 (4QGen-Exod⁴) and 4Q11 (4QpaleoGen-Exod⁴).