

The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures

ISSN 1203-1542

<http://www.jhsonline.org> and

<http://purl.org/jhs>



Articles in JHS are being indexed in the ATLA Religion Database, [RAMBI](#), and [BiBIL](#). Their abstracts appear in Religious and Theological Abstracts. The journal is archived by *Library and Archives Canada* and is accessible for consultation and research at the Electronic Collection site maintained by [Library and Archives Canada](#) (for a direct link, click [here](#)).

Volume 10, Article 12

JÜRGEN HUTZLI,
TRADITION AND INTERPRETATION IN GEN 1:1–
2:4a

TRADITION AND INTERPRETATION IN GEN 1:1–2:4a *

JÜRGEN HUTZLI
COLLÈGE DE FRANCE
PARIS, FRANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

In the early part of the 20th century several scholars (among others F. Schwally, J. Morgenstern, and M. Lambert) argued that Gen 1:1–2:4a consists of two different layers: one containing a *Tatbericht* (account of the divine act) and the other consisting of a *Wortbericht* (account of the creative divine word).¹ This view became dominant in scholarship.² The main reason for the literary-critical differentiation was the recognition of two dissimilar theological conceptions behind the text of Gen 1:1–2:4a: creation by word on the one hand, creation by act on the other. J. Morgenstern states:

(...) the present form of the narrative is the result of the literary fusion of two originally independent and even contradictory versions of the creation story. The one told that God created the universe and all its contents by his word alone, while the other told that God actually worked and made the

* An earlier version of the present paper was presented at the SBL meeting 2009 in New Orleans. I would like to thank Peter Altmann, Zúrich, who kindly revised my English.

¹ B. Stade, *Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments I* (Tübingen: J. C. Mohr, 1905), 349; F. Schwally, "Die biblischen Schöpfungsberichte," *ARW* 9 (1906), 159–175. J. Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1910), 8; J. Morgenstern, "The Sources of the Creation Story. Gen 1:1–2:4," *AJSL* 36 (1919/20), 169–212; M. Lambert, "A Study of the First Chapter of Genesis," *HUCA* I (1924), 3–12; O. Procksch, *Die Genesis* (KAT, 1; 21924), 444, 453.

² Cf. R. Kittel, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel I* (Stuttgart: 1932⁷, 246, n. 7); G. von Rad, *Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch literarisch untersucht und theologisch gewertet* (BWANT, 65; Stuttgart/Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1934), 11–18, 167–171, 190–192; M. Noth, *Die Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuchs* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948), 10 (n. 21), 255; H. Lubczyk, "Wortschöpfung und Tatschöpfung. Zur Entwicklung der priesterlichen Schöpfungslehre in Gen 1,1 – 2,4a," *BiLe* 6 (1965), 191–208; W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*; C. Levin, "Tatbericht und Wortbericht in der priesterschriftlichen Schöpfungserzählung," *ZThK* 91 (1994), 115–133, here 121–125; J. Vermeulen, "Tradition et rédaction en Genèse 1," *Transeuphratène* 16 (1998), 127–147.

various creatures, heavenly bodies, monsters, fish, fowl, animals, and man, by his very hands, as it were...³

These two conceptions are found throughout the entire story. In addition to the repeated expression *ויהי כן* “and it was so” (and *ויהי אור*), which in each case corresponds to the preceding divine commandment, several statements relating to creative acts of God occur (expressed by *ויעש אלהים* and *ויברא אלהים*). As a result a lively debate emerged around the question of which layer—the “deed account” or the “word account”—is older. The majority of scholars came down on the side of the layer reporting God’s deeds.⁴

In 1975 Odil Hannes Steck⁵ presented a detailed argument for the literary unity of the story marking an important turning-point in the history of scholarship. Steck’s main argument for the literary unity of the two accounts is that the term *ויהי כן* in the Hebrew Bible never refers to the fulfillment of a command in itself but is always accompanied by an additional report of execution. Steck believed that the *ויהי כן*-formula only expresses the adequate correspondence between an order and his fulfillment.⁶ As for Gen 1, Steck concluded that the three elements—divine order / *ויהי כן*-formula / report of fulfillment—form a coherent unity. Steck also argued against both the idea of an independent “word account” and the claim of an independent “deed account” because the two reconstructed accounts would lack at least one important work. The impact of Steck’s investigation continues to be felt strongly today. His interpretation of the *ויהי כן*-formula in particular has found support in scholarship.⁷

³ J. Morgenstern, “Sources,” 169–212, here 170.

⁴ Cf. among others: J. Skinner, *Genesis*, 1910, 8; O. Procksch, *Genesis*, 444, 453; M. Lambert, “First,” 3–12; G. von Rad, *Priesterschrift*, 17; W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 16, 160–193; C. Levin, “Tatbericht,” 115–133, here 121–125.

⁵ O. H. Steck, *Der Schöpfungsbericht der Priesterschrift. Studien zur literarkritischen und überlieferungsgeschichtlichen Problematik von Genesis 1,1–2,4a* (FRLANT, 115; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975).

⁶ The term would express “the assertion of a consistent equivalence” (“Feststellung folgerichtiger Entsprechung”) cf. O. H. Steck, *Schöpfungsbericht*, 36.

⁷ Cf. G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC; Waco, Tex.: Word Books Publisher), 7–8; E. Zenger, *Gottes Bogen in den Wolken. Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Theologie der priesterschriftlichen Urgeschichte* (SBS, 112; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983), 52–53; C. Levin, “Tatbericht,” 123–124; R. G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann, Art. “Schöpfer / Schöpfung II”, *TRE XXX* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1999), 258–283, here 270; O. Keel and S. Schroer, *Schöpfung. Biblische Theologien im Kontext altorientalischer Religiosität* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002, 176.

The present paper will critically examine Steck's arguments (cf. 2.). This examination will be followed by a discussion of the important thematic and linguistic differences between the "divine-word" statements and "divine-act" statements (cf. 3.). On the basis of this evidence the literary-historical relationship between the two layers will be reexamined (4.–5.), and the content of the two accounts will be tentatively determined (6.–8.).

2. DISCUSSION OF STECK'S ARGUMENTS FOR THE LITERARY UNITY OF GEN 1

2.1 STECK'S DEFINITION OF THE **וַיְהִי כֵן**-FORMULA

Steck first reconsiders the **וַיְהִי כֵן**-formula in the Hebrew Bible outside of Gen 1, which appears in Judg 6:38; 2 Kgs 7:20; and 2 Kgs 15:12⁸:

Judg 6:36–38: Then Gideon said to God: "... I am going to lay a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand ..." / And it was so (**וַיְהִי כֵן**). / When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water.

2 Kgs 7:19–20: The captain had answered the man of God, "Even if YHWH were to make windows in the sky, could such a thing happen?" And he had answered, "You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat from it." / It did indeed happen to him (**וַיְהִי לוֹ כֵן**); / the people trampled him to death in the gate.

In these two instances the notice of fulfillment **וַיְהִי כֵן**-formula is followed by a short report of fulfillment.

In the third instance, 2 Kgs 15:12, a notice of fulfillment is lacking:

2 Kgs 15:12: This was the promise of YHWH that he gave to Jehu, "Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." / And so it happened (**וַיְהִי כֵן**).

However, the historical events to which the equivalence formula refers are reported in the *preceding* narrative context (2 Kgs 10:35 – 15:11). After Jehu, four descendants (Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II and Zechariah) rule.

Finally, Steck provides a fourth instance (Judg 6:39–40), in which the fulfillment notice is varied: instead of **וַיְהִי כֵן** the verb **עָשָׂה**

⁸ Cf. O. H. Steck, *Schöpfungsbericht*, 32–39.

is used. Like the two first instances above, the correspondence formula is followed by “the assertion of a consistent equivalence” (see above):

Judg 6:39–40: Then Gideon said to God, “Do not let your anger burn against me, let me speak one more time; let me, please, make trial with the fleece just once more; let it be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew.” / And God did so (ויעש אלהים בן) that night. / It was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

These four instances form the basis for Steck’s interpretation of the בן ויעש formula. In his eyes the formula itself cannot express the notion of fulfillment, but instead must be accompanied by an assertion of fulfillment.

I see two problems with Steck’s argument. (1) Since in the third example (2 Kgs 15:12) the preceding context in which the events of “fulfillment” are mentioned is quite large, it is questionable whether the בן ויעש formula here only functions as an expression of the equivalence of the predicted events as Steck claims. (2) More important is a second objection: Steck provides only one example (Judg 6:39–40) of the formula with the elements עשה and בן. This is problematic since the formula with עשה appears frequently and there are several cases in which the בן ויעש formula occurs *without* the accompaniment of a fulfillment report (cf. Gen 42:25; Ex 14:2–4; 17:5–6; Judg 6:20; 2 Sam 5:23–25; Jer 38:12; Esth 2:2–4). In these instances the formula with עשה + בן must *itself* express the fulfillment. Cf. Ex 17:5–6:

YHWH said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people ..., take in your hand the staff Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.” / Moses did so (ויעש בן), in the sight of the elders of Israel.

The continuation of the narrative omits any (additional) report of fulfillment (cf. v.7):

He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested YHWH, saying, “Is YHWH among us or not?”

Also in Judg 6:20–21 a report of accomplishment is lacking:

And the angel of God said to him (Gideon), “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.” / And he did so (ויעש בן). / Then the angel of YHWH reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of YHWH vanished from his sight.

Neither does the evidence in Gen 1 support Steck's understanding of the **וַיְהִי כֵן** (וַיְהִי אֲוֶר) - formula.⁹ Only three (MT) or six (LXX)¹⁰ out of the eight passages (relating to the eight works of creation) place the formula between the divine order and the notice of fulfillment. In fact, in 1:9 (MT)¹¹ and 1:30 the **וַיְהִי כֵן**-formula obviously stands alone, without an accompanying fulfillment statement.

Cf. Gen 1:9–10 (MT):

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so (**וַיְהִי כֵן**). God called the dry land Earth, and the waters (...) he called Seas (...).

Cf. Gen 1:26–31:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, ..."

And it was so (**וַיְהִי כֵן**). And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

In the verses following the **וַיְהִי כֵן**-formula a report of fulfillment does not occur.

From this reevaluation of the texts used by Steck we may conclude that there is little evidence supporting Steck's strict definition of the **וַיְהִי כֵן**-formula as a statement of only "consistent correspondence" between an order (prediction) and its fulfillment (but not as statement of the fulfillment itself): It is possible to interpret the two instances Judg 6:36–38 and 2 Kgs 7:19–20 as Steck does, but at the same time nothing hinders us from understanding the **וַיְהִי כֵן**-formula in these contexts as a "proleptic summary" of the fulfillment and seeing the following sentences as additional concretizations.¹² It is of considerable importance that counterexamples occur both in Gen 1 (Gen 1:9, 30) and outside this chapter (several instances with the similar **וַיַּעַשׂ כֵן**-formula) without a report of accomplishment. On the base of this evidence we conclude that the **וַיְהִי כֵן**-formula in Gen 1 *can* express the notion of fulfillment.

⁹ Cf. O.H. Steck, *Schöpfungsbericht*, 39–61 (and also 144–149).

¹⁰ Cf. MT Gen 1:11, 15, 24; LXX 1:6, 9, 11, 15, 20, 24.

¹¹ In the Septuagint and 4QGen^k a fulfillment report occurs, see below.

¹² Cf. J.-L. Ska, "Sommaires proleptiques en Gn 27 et dans l'histoire de Joseph," *Bib* 73 (1992) 518–527; idem, "Quelques exemples de sommaires proleptiques dans les récits bibliques," J.A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume. Paris 1992* (VTS, 61; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 315–326.

2.2 INCOMPLETENESS OR COMPLETENESS OF THE PRESUPPOSED SOURCES?

Steck's second argument against both the idea of an independent "word account" and the claim of an independent "deed account" is that the two reconstructed accounts would lack at least one important work, rendering them incomplete.

Steck is right to argue that the "deed account" misses one or even two works. Since the phrase **ויהי אור** "and it was light" it is to be attributed to the "word account" (cf. the similarity with the **כן ויהי**-formula)¹³ and a fulfillment sentence like, for instance, **ויעש אלהים את האור** "... and God made the light" does not occur, the "deed account" lacks the creation of light. Attempts to reconstruct a meaningful original "deed account" which lacks the creation of light are not convincing (see below¹⁴).

The MT also omits a fulfillment report about the gathering together of the waters and the emergence of the dry land (cf. 1:9–10). We could follow the LXX and 4QGen^k and argue that the missing passage has dropped out of MT's verse 9.¹⁵ There is, however, no such explanation on offer for v. 4. Therefore Steck's claim of incompleteness seems sound with regard to the "deed account."

As for the assumed "word account," Steck considers a report of man's creation would be missing.¹⁶ But in the respective section actually we find a sentence that has the same form as the preceding "word account" sentences (cf. 1:26):

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמּוּתֵנוּ

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"

This statement is unique when compared with the other "divine word statements" because it reports the *act of God himself*, whereas in each other passage the "word account" contains a divine order addressed to *other entities* (light, firmament, the waters under the heaven, earth, luminaries, sea waters again, earth again). The fact

¹³ Cf. also W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungserzählung*, 57; C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (BKAT, 1/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1974), 153, 155.

¹⁴ Cf. below 4. The literary relationship between the "word account" and the "deed account".

¹⁵ J. R. Davila, "New Qumran Readings for Genesis One," H. W. Attridge, J. J. Collins and T. H. Tobin (eds), *Of Scribes and Scrolls. Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism and Christian Origins. Festschrift J. Strugnell* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1990), 3–11, claims that in the MT the phrase was lost by haplography due "homoioarkon". The eye of a scribe would have skipped from **וַיִּקְוּ** "and they were gathered" (first [retroverted] word from the "plus") to **וַיִּקְרָא** (first word of v. 10).

¹⁶ O. H. Steck, *Schöpfungsbericht*, 246–247.

that in v. 26 God's word relates to an act done by God himself has led scholars to believe that this verse belongs to the "deed account." However, the feature actually makes better sense in the context of the "word account." The last act of creation is indeed peculiar and forms a climax.¹⁷ Of all beings only humanity is created "in God's image and likeness": he has the closest relationship to God. This makes the feature that only man is made by *'Elohim* himself insofar fitting.

Nonetheless, there is one difficulty with the assumption of an independent "word account." According to the Masoretic Text in the section of the creation of the sea animals and birds the *וַיְהִי כֵן*-formula is lacking. The Septuagint, however, has the respective sentence, and, with regard to the presence of the *וַיְהִי אֹרֶךְ* (*וַיְהִי כֵן*) - formula in all other sections, one should assume that this is the original text. A motif for omitting one of the occurrences could be following: It is imaginable that the *וַיְהִי כֵן*-formula has been left out of the MT in order that there would be seven total occurrences of the phrase. One might explain the curious lack of the approbation-formula in the MT of the section 1:6–8 similarly: it could have been omitted to meet the "requirement" of seven occurrences of the approbation-formula.¹⁸

In conclusion we agree with Steck in rejecting the idea of an independent "deed account" source. For the "word account," however, it seems insofar complete because it includes all eight works found in the present text of Gen 1.

3. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE UNITY OF THE "WORD ACCOUNT" AND THE "DEED ACCOUNT"

Having rebutted arguments against the existence of an older source behind Gen 1:1–2:4a, we will now discuss evidence that suggests a literary-critical differentiation between the various strata in the present text. A close reading reveals remarkable tensions with regard to the content between certain commandments by *'Elohim* ("word account") and the following report of fulfillment ("deed account"):

The reports relating to the creation of the sea animals (cf. 1:21) and the land animals (cf. 1:25) by *'Elohim* does not match the preceding commandments (1:20, 24) which are addressed to the sea waters and the earth:

¹⁷ In the "word account" the passage on the seventh day of rest, which forms a climax in the present text, does not exist (see below).

¹⁸ See below 7.

1:20: And God said, “Let the waters bring forth (יִשְׂרְצוּ הַמִּיִּם) swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.” And it was so.¹⁹

1:21ab $\alpha\beta$: And God created (וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים) the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind.

1:24: And God said, “Let the earth bring forth (תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ) living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth (וְחַיֵּיתוֹ אֶרֶץ) of every kind.” And it was so.

1:25a: And God made (וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים) the wild animals of the earth (חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ) of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind.

In the “word account” the respective living space of the sea animals and of the land animals is also the place of their origin.²⁰ In the “deed account” *'Elohim* is the lone creator. There is also a linguistic difference between 1:24 and 1:25 (חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ/חַיֵּיתוֹ אֶרֶץ).²¹

Different subjects are also observed in the passage on the creation of the firmament. In *'Elohim*’s commandment the action of separating between waters above and waters beneath is attributed to the firmament whereas in the “deed account” the deity itself is responsible for the separation:

1:6: And God said, “Let there be a firmament (יְהִי רָקִיעַ) in the midst of the waters, and let it separate (וַיְהִי מַבְדִּיל) the waters from the waters.”

1:7a: And God made the firmament and separated (וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָרָקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין) the waters that were under the firmament from the waters that were above the firmament.

There is an ambiguity in the “deed account” of MT: the firmament could also function as the grammatical subject of וַיַּבְדֵּל. But in light of the fact that God functions as subject in the foregoing sentence and also because a characteristic of the sentences relating to the creative acts consists in stressing God’s role as the lone creator we

¹⁹ The text of MT is supplemented according to the Septuagint. See above 2.2.

²⁰ Cf. also W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 121, n. 3.

²¹ B. Wysshaar, Zurich, points to this difference (oral communication). Another divergence between the “word account” and the “deed account” concerning the language use (spelling) can be observed in the section reporting the genesis of the vegetation: Whereas in the word account לְמִינֵהוּ is used (cf. 1:11[2x]), the deed account prefers לְמִינֵהוּ (cf. 1:12bis; cf. also 1:21.25).

assume that the author sees the deity as subject in 1:7 as well. In contrast to MT the Septuagint makes the subject explicit.²²

A fourth difference: According to the “word account” the heavenly bodies have the task of separating between day and night (cf. 1:14). In a sentence of the “deed report”, in v. 4, however, the division between light and darkness (identified later as day and night) is reserved for God.

1:14a: And God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to separate (להבדיל) the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years”

1:4b: and God separated (ויבדל אלהים) the light from the darkness.

Finally we note a tension in the section of humanity's creation as well. The idea of the “plurality” of God, found in the announcement sentence 1:26 (three times the 1. p. pl. is used), does not reoccur in the following verse (deed account):

1:26a: And God said, “Let us make (נעשה) man in our image (בצלמנו), according to our likeness (כדמותנו)”

1:27: And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

We have to stop briefly to ask if 1:26 really expresses a “polytheistic” conception (which then would bring tension into the statement of 1:27). In scholarship there are three interpretations of the use of the 1.p. pl.: (a) The formulation stands in relation with the conception of the “Royal Household of God,” it expresses (b) a “self-consultation” (grammatical explanation: *pluralis deliberationis*) or (c) the idea of sovereign rule and majesty (*pluralis majestatis*). As for the first and the second understanding of the formulation there are several instances in the Hebrew Bible where the respective use may be intended by the authors. The third proposed interpretation of the pl. form, however, seems less probable, since there is only one late instance (Ezra 4:18) where the *pluralis* is used in this way. A decision between the first and the second explanation seems difficult since other possible instances: Gen 11:7; Isa 6:8; 2 Sam 24:14 are open to both interpretations. Nevertheless, in what concerns Gen 1:26 there is an argument for the first explanation. Given that the idea of the royal household of God is well attested in the Hebrew Bible (cf. 1 Kgs 22:19–23; Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6; 38:7) and that an Assyrian text uses the same plural formulation for the creation of humanity (some deities confer and announce the decision by using 1. p. pl., cf. AOT 135 [B 13–17.22f]), it is in principal *possible*

²² Cf. καὶ διεχώρισεν ὁ θεὸς...

to understand 1:26 in relation to the conception of the royal household. *The author of the text must have been aware that if he uses the respective formulation, the statement is open for a “polytheistic” interpretation. He would not have chosen the formulation if he judged the idea of the royal household incompatible with his own theological perception.*

Besides the fact that the peculiar *pluralis*-forms (1. pl.) of v. 26 don’t appear again in v. 27, we should point to other differences between the “word account” and the “deed account” in this final work of the deity: They concern the choice of the verb (עָשָׂה in v. 26 / בָּרָא in v. 27), the use of the expression אָדָם (without article in v. 26 / with article in v. 27), and finally the fact that the statement of the two sexes of humanity is only found in v. 27.

Steck generally explains the divergence in formulation and conception between the commandment and the fulfillment sentences as follows: the announcement sentence relates to the enduring permanent living form (“andauernde Daseinsgestalt”)²³ whereas the execution sentence focuses on the respective creation act as an initial act (“Erstausführung im Rahmen der Schöpfung”).²⁴ This explanation would fit the conception of the second day (creation of the firmament), but it does not match the conceptualization present in the sea animals’ and land animals’ creation. Here the image used in the commandment sentence expresses appropriately the *punctiliar* event of creation (sea and earth “give birth” to the sea animals and the land animals) but hardly expresses the ever-lasting process of furnishing the animals with “life energy,” as Steck claims.²⁵

Because of the demonstrated theological tensions and linguistic discrepancies between the “word account” and “deed account” assertions we do not share the opinion of the majority of modern scholars that views Gen 1:1–2:4a as a unity. Since the aforementioned observations relate to the differences between the “word account” and the “deed account” the argument is also valid with regard to the positions of scholars like D. Hermant²⁶ and P. Weimar,²⁷ who find different layers in Gen 1 but nevertheless refrain

²³ O. H. Steck, *Schöpfungsbericht*, 65.

²⁴ O. H. Steck, *Schöpfungsbericht*, 65.

²⁵ According to Steck the earth provides “die für den Fortbestand der Landtiere entscheidende Kraft,” cf. O. H. Steck, *Schöpfungsbericht*, 121.

²⁶ D. Hermant, “Analyse littéraire du premier récit de la création,” *VT* 15 (1965), 437–451. The point of departure for his redaction-critical differentiation is the incongruence between the alignment of the 6/7-day scheme and the eight creation works. As a solution for this problem he attributes the entire fifth section to the Priestly redaction (cf. below 7.) and proposes a creation account of seven works realized in seven days as the original report.

²⁷ P. Weimar, “Chaos und Kosmos: Gen 1,2 als Schlüssel einer älteren Fassung der priesterschriftlichen Schöpfungserzählung,” A. Lange, H.

from distinguishing between “word account” and “deed account” statements in the traditional text.

4. THE LITERARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE “WORD ACCOUNT” AND THE “DEED ACCOUNT”

Above (2.2) we tried to show that whereas the “word account” is complete and contains all works of creation, the “deed account” lacks one or two important works. Scholars who advocate a “deed account” as the original layer of the creation story have a problem here. Attempts by W. H. Schmidt and by C. Levin to reconstruct an independent “deed account”—which lacks the creation of light—are not convincing:

“And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the wind of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God separated the light from the darkness” (W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*²⁸).

“But the earth was waste and void. And God separated the light from the darkness.” (C. Levin, “Tatbericht”²⁹).

In both reconstructed texts the sudden, unprepared emergence of the light is awkward.

The fact that one or two works are lacking in the “deed account” can be solved better by viewing this account as a *later redaction layer*. A redactor appears to have reworked the “word account” by adding a “deed account”; however, he did not find it necessary to insert a “deed report” for every act of creation. For instance it would be inappropriate to supplement the statement: וַיְהִי אֹרֶךְ with

Lichtenberger and D. Römhild (eds), *Mythos im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt. Festschrift für Hans-Peter Müller zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (BZAW, 278; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 196–211; = P. Weimar, *Studien zur Priesterschrift* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 135–150. Weimar posits an older source text behind the present Priestly text that is especially evident in the description of the primordial world in 1:2. The dissimilarity in the use of the term הָאָרֶץ in v. 1 and in v. 2 and the peculiarity of the motifs in v. 2 are indices favoring a redaction-critical differentiation between the two verses (cf. below 6.). Weimar also sees a tension between the first (light) and the fifth creation work (heavenly bodies) and ascribes 1:3–5 to the Priestly redactor; this argument, however, is not convincing (cf. below 7.).

²⁸ Cf. W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 161: “Und die Erde war wüst und leer, und Finsternis (lag) auf der Urflut, und der Wind Gottes bewegte sich über dem Wasser. Und Gott trennte zwischen dem Licht und der Finsternis.”

²⁹ Cf. C. Levin, “Tatbericht,” 116: “Die Erde aber war wüst und öde. Da schied Gott das Licht von der Finsternis.”

a “deed report” (ויעש אלהים את האור “... and God made the light”).

The hereby proposed genetic relationship between the two accounts (the “word account” as the original report and the “deed account” forming the redaction layer) is supported by a further argument. The four above discussed differences between the two accounts (1:20/21; 1:24/25; 1:6/7; and 1:14/4) suggest the following theological explanation: The idea expressed in the word account—that heaven, earth, sea and stars are addressed by the divine commandment in order to carry it out—seems to have been problematic for the author of the “deed account.” This author (or better: redactor) aimed to correct the “word account” *by limiting the creation activity to 'Elohim alone*.

There is, however, one case which seems to contradict this theological explanation. In the “deed account” concerning the emergence of vegetation on the earth, it is not God, but rather the earth that is the actor (cf. 1:12: ותוצא הארץ דשא “And the earth brought forth vegetation...”). Remarkably, this is the only example among the whole “deed account” sentences about creation where *'Elohim* is *not* the grammatical subject.³⁰ How is one to explain it? In contrast to the more mythical conceptions of other sections (preserved only in the word account; cf. 1:20: the water bringing forth sea animals; cf. 1:24: the earth bringing forth land animals), the idea that the earth brings forth *vegetation* is realistic and corresponds to human experience. For this reason the “deed account” redactor agreed with the “word account” and conceded to the earth an active role.

5. THE “DEED ACCOUNT” LAYER AS THE PRIESTLY REDACTOR’S CONTRIBUTION

Since there are—as shown above—several reasons to conclude that the “deed account” is a later supplement, we may ask if the “deed account” should be ascribed to the Priestly author of P^g. There is in fact some evidence for this assumption:

(1) The lexeme ברא occurs several times in statements relating to *'Elohim*’s deeds, but is missing from the “word account” statements.³¹ This verb often appears in P^g and occurs mainly in exilic

³⁰ In the version of the Septuagint and 4QGen^k we note another exception. In the fulfillment report about the gathering of the waters and the emergence of the dry land (1:9) *'Elohim* is not the subject either. However, a statement that the deity have made sea and earth is, of course, impossible within the previous context (1:2, 9).

³¹ In the sections dealing with the eight single acts of creation ברא is used in 1:21 and 1:27(3x). The lexeme also occurs in 1:1; 2:3, 4a. 1:1; 2:4a should probably be attributed to the “deed account”; for 2:2–3 an attribution to a second redactional layer seems possible, see below 6.

or postexilic texts.³² The distribution of **ברא** in the “deed account” sections concurs with the blessing motif: **ברא** is used for the creation of the sea animals and birds (1:21) and humanity (1:27, three times). These are exactly those beings which receive a blessing by God. In contrast, for all other “products” of God’s creation the verb **עשה** (and once **יצא** Hi.) is used and at the same time they are bereft of God’s blessing:

Creation of the firmament (1:7a)

ויעש אלהים את הרקיע ויבדל בין המים אשר מתחת לרקיע
ובין המים אשר מעל לרקיע

Creation of the vegetation (1:12a)

ותוצא הארץ דשא עשב מזריע זרע למינהו ועץ עשה פרי אשר
זרעו בו למינהו

Creation of the luminaries (1:16–18a)

ויעש אלהים את שני המארות הגדלים את המאור הגדל
לממשלת היום ואת המאור הקטן לממשלת הלילה ואת
הכוכבים ויתן אתם אלהים ברקיע השמים להאיר על הארץ
ולמשל ביום ובלילה ולהבדיל בין האור ובין החשך

Creation of the sea animals and the birds (1:21abαβ, 22)

ויברא אלהים את התנינם הגדלים ואת כל נפש החיה הרמשת
אשר שרצו המים למינהם ואת כל עוף כנף למינהו
ויברך אתם אלהים לאמר פרו ורבו ומלאו את המים בימים
והעוף ירב בארץ

Creation of the land animals (1:25a)

ויעש אלהים את חית הארץ למינה ואת הבהמה למינה ואת כל
רמש האדמה למינהו

Creation of humanity (1:27–28)

ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו בצלם אלהים ברא אתו זכר
ונקבה ברא אתם
ויברך אתם אלהים ויאמר להם אלהים פרו ורבו ומלאו את
הארץ וכבשה...

In this respect it is important to see that this well-planned alignment, that is, the parallel use of the verb **ברא** and the blessing mo-

³² Cf. K. H. Bernhardt, **ברא** II 2., G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 245. It occurs predominantly in Second Isaiah (17x) and the P-strata of Gen (11x). It is found less often in Ps (6x); Ezek (3x) and Third Isaiah (3x). According to Bernhardt only two instances can maybe considered preexilic (Num 16:30, twice, and Ps 89:13, 48).

tif, is observable only in the “deed account.” The verbs used in the preceding announcement sentences differ from those which occur in the “deed account” sections. It is especially remarkable that the “word account” of the creation of humanity uses the verb עשה (cf. 1:26 נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ), which does not concur with the threefold use of ברא in verse 1:27 (“deed account”).³³

Since the blessing motif plays an important role within Pg,³⁴ the parallel use of the verb ברא and the blessing sentences is a strong argument for the attribution of the “deed account” layer to Pg.

(2) The attribution of the “deed account” to the Priestly redaction seems clear for a second reason as well. While the “word account” contains certain motifs that are difficult to combine with the theology of P (cf. the “birth” of certain beings by the earth and the sea), the “deed account” fits well with P. Because it stresses God’s role as the lone creator, it is strictly monotheistic.

6. FURTHER ELEMENTS OF THE REDACTION LAYER (“DEED ACCOUNT”)

ברא also occurs in the frame sentences of 1:1 and 2:4a. A third instance is found in the report of the seventh day (2:3). In these three sentences the verb is used in a summarizing way for the entire creation. Are all respective clauses to be attributed to the redaction layer?

³³ Scholars have always been troubled by the fact that two verbs of similar meaning—ברא and עשה—are used within the same passage. No satisfying explanation has been found yet for the distribution of the two verbs in the “final text” (cf. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 164; Westermann, *Genesis*, 120–21). Mark Smith (*The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010], 48) is right in pointing out that the verb ברא “frames the account, and in this way it stresses God’s unique role as the Creator.” As for the use in between, however, he lists the occurrences of the two verbs ברא and עשה without giving an explanation for their distribution: “In between, this verb [i.e. ברא, J. H.] applies to the creation of sea creatures and humanity on days 5 and 6 of creation (1:21 and 27). In contrast, a more generic verb, ‘to make’ (עשה), occurs on days 2 and 4 and in combination with the verb, ‘to create’ (ברא) on day 6 (see also 2:3).”

³⁴ Cf. M. Bauks, “Genesis 1 als Programmschrift (P^g),” A. Wénin (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Genesis. Literature, Redaction and History*, Leuven 2001, 342–343; Thomas J. King, *The Realignment of the Priestly Literature. The Priestly Narrative in Genesis and Its Relation to Priestly Legislation and the Holiness School*, Eugene, OR, 2009, 85–87 (attributing all passages to PN [Northern Priestly Document]).

Title (1:1) and Subtitle (2:4a)

The two sentences frame the present text Gen 1:1–2:4a. That they relate one to the other is obvious because of the use of three identical expressions (ברא, השמים, הארץ):

1:1 בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ

2:4a אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם

The occurrence of ברא, which is only found in “deed account” sections, suggests ascribing these verses to the Priestly redaction as well. It is imaginable that the redactor considered the use of this verb to render a special qualification necessary also for these framing statements that refer to the ensemble of *’Elohim’s* creation deeds.

Are there other arguments for the attribution of the respective sentences to the “deed account” redactional layer?

As for the opening v. 1 it has been observed that it stands in tension to the succeeding v. 2:

1:1 בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ

1:2 והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום ורוח אלהים

מרחפת על פני המים

According to Gen 1:1 heaven and earth are created by *’Elohim*, whereas v. 2 reveals that the earth has existed *ab initio*.³⁵ Like Gen 1:2 several creation accounts from the ancient Near East begin with a description of the primordial world.³⁶ Furthermore some scholars have argued that the syntax at the beginning of v. 2 (*w-x-qatal*) often is used at the commencement of a story.³⁷ These could be indications that “1:2 originally was an opening verse”³⁸. The preceding verse, Gen 1:1, would be a later supplement. It naturally fits well with the above outlined theological profile of the Priestly redaction layer. Immediately at the beginning of the unit *’Elohim* appears as lone creator.

³⁵ This tension between the two first verses is observed by P. Weimar, “Chaos,” A. Lange et al. (eds), *Mythos*, 196–211, here 198–199; = P. Weimar, *Studien*, 135–50, here 137–38; M. Weippert, “Schöpfung am Anfang oder Anfang der Schöpfung: Noch einmal zu Syntax und Semantik von Gen 1,1–3,” *ThZ* 60 (2004), 5–22, here 12.20–21.

³⁶ Cf. *Enuma Elish* (cf. *TUAT* III, 569); “Eine zweisprachige Beschwörung mit Schöpfungsmythos” (cf. *TUAT* III, 608); “Cosmogony from Nibru” (cf. *TUAT* III, 253–354).

³⁷ Cf. Gen 3:1; Exod 3:1; Judg 11:1; 2 Sam 3:17; 2 Kgs 6:8. The pattern *w-x-qatal* occurs also in Gen 2:5 (this verse is often seen as the original beginning of the creation story in Gen 2:4b–3:24).

³⁸ Cf. M. Bauks, *Welt*, 84, n. 123: “... ein ursprünglicher Erzählbeginn gewesen ist.”

As for 2:4a, also here the idea that heaven and earth have been *created* is underlined by the final expression **בהבראם**. So, also with regard to contents, the two sentences form an *inclusio*. Since the expression **תולדות השמים והארץ** (“genealogy/posterity of heaven and earth”) does not match the theology of the Priestly redaction, it is possible that the sentence **אלה תולדות השמים והארץ** had been formulated by the author of the “word account” (cf. below 7), and later on, through the addition of **בהבראם**, was reinterpreted by the Priestly redactor (“these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth *when they were created*”).

The section relating to the seventh day (2:2–3)

The occurrence in 2:3 is found in the section of the seventh day (2:2–3).

2:2 ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה
 וישבת ביום השביעי מכל מלאכתו אשר עשה
 2:3 ויברך אלהים את יום השביעי ויקדש אתו
 כי בו שבת מכל מלאכתו אשר ברא אלהים לעשות

Because acts of creative “by the word” are not strenuous, this section concerning the divine rest on the seventh day does not fit the “word account,” but rather the “deed account.”³⁹ For this reason one might be inclined ascribing the entire passage to the Priestly redaction as well. Such attribution seems also credible because of the blessing motif found in 2:3, which is a characteristic of P^g (see above). However, besides of **ברא**, also the verb **עשה** occurs three times in the section of the seventh day. The two verbs are utilized here in the same way: both refer to God’s work of creation as a whole (cf. the identical formulation: **עשה** **מכל מלאכתו אשר עשה**.../**ברא** **מכל מלאכתו אשר ברא**...). Because of the somewhat different use of the lexeme **ברא** (it is paralleled with **עשה**) in this section one should also take into account the possibility that a secondary Priestly redactor rather than the first Priestly redactor is responsible for this addition. Y. Amit and J. Milgrom point to typical “H terms” (**שבת**; **קדש** pi.) in this section.⁴⁰

The section of the seventh day is related with the six/seven-day schema that shapes the present text Gen 1:1–2:4a. This probably means that the arrangement with six working days and a rest day was devised by the (first or second) Priestly redactor.

³⁹ Cf. already J. Morgenstern, “Creation Story,” 174–175.

⁴⁰ Cf. Y. Amit, “הבריאה ולוח הקדושה,” M. Cogan, B. Eichler and J. Tigay (eds.), *Tehillah le-Moshe. Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 13*–29* (Amit argues that 2:1–3 are “H”); J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22* (AB, 3A; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1991–2001, 2000), 1344 (for Milgrom only 2:2–3 form the “H” insertion).

7. FURTHER ELEMENTS OF THE “WORD ACCOUNT” AS ORIGINAL REPORT

Is it possible to attribute further elements, apart the announcement sentences and the subsequent **כִּן וַיְהִי**-formula, to the word account layer, too? In Gen 1:2 one may see the old beginning of the creation story of Gen 1 (“word account,” see above 6). It is probable that the main part of v 2:4a—**אלה תולדות השמים והארץ**—belonged to the assumed source text, perhaps as its “title,” as some scholars suggested.⁴¹ The sentence goes much better with the theology of the “word account” than that of the Priestly redaction layer (cf. the idea that the earth brings forth living beings).

We may now consider how this report ended. One possibility is the concise concluding sentence of Gen 2:1: **ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם** “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts.” With regard to the occurrence of the lexeme **כלה** pu., at first sight we might be inclined to attribute this sentence to the Priestly redaction layer, since **כלה**, pi. (and q., but not **כלה** pu.) often occurs in P.⁴² A number of recent treatments see Gen 2:1 in close relationship with Exod 39:32a and attribute it to P.⁴³ However, we should also take into consideration the possibility that this verse already belonged to the “word account” as source text of P.⁴⁴ There are indeed two arguments against the ascription of the verse to P.^g. Its passive voice contrasts the style of the redaction layer: the Priestly redactor generally chose the active voice and mentioned explicitly *Elohim* as subject.⁴⁴ In what concerns the use of the lexeme **צבא** “hosts (of beings)” (cf. **וכל צבאם** “and all their hosts”) it is noteworthy that in the context of Gen 1 the expression refers to the heavenly bodies (as often in the Hebrew Bible like for instance in Isa 40:26), but also to the creatures of the sea and the earth. In P, however, **צבא** occurs only in plural and relates only to Israel in connection to its “regiments”

⁴¹ Cf., among others, H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (HKAT, 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922³), 101; M. Witte, *Die biblische Urgeschichte: redaktions- und theologieggeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1-11,26* (BZAW, 265; Berlin/New York: W. de Gruyter, 1998), 55.

⁴² Cf. Gen 17:22; 49:33; Ex 39:32; 40:33; Lev 16:20; Num 4:15; 7:1.

⁴³ Cf. A. Schüle, *Der Prolog der hebräischen Bibel: der literar- und theologieggeschichtliche Diskurs der Urgeschichte* (Gen 1–11) (AThANT), 86; Zürich: TVZ, 2006, 72; K. Schmid, *Literaturgeschichte des Alten Testaments. Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008), 147; idem, “Der Sinai und die Priesterschrift,” R. Achenbach and M. Arneith (eds), “*Gerechtigkeit und Recht zu üben*” (Gen 18,19). *Studien zur altorientalischen und biblischen Rechtsgeschichte, zur Religionsgeschichte Israels und zur Religionssoziologie, Festschrift für Eckart Otto zum 65. Geburtstag* (BZAR, 13; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 114–127, here 121.

⁴⁴ See above 3.

(cf. Exod 6:26; 7:4; 12:17, 41, 51). Both observations favor ascribing Gen 2:1 to the ancient “word account” (as its conclusion) rather than to the Priestly redaction layer.

As a further element of the present text Gen 1:1–2:4a, the *naming* of the creation works (“and God called...”) probably is also to be ascribed to the supposed ground layer.

Sentences with a naming occur after the formation of light (1:5a), after the creation of the firmament (1:8a), and after the gathering of the water and the appearance of the dry land (1:10a). For the following reason the attribution of this redundant element to the “word account” seems probable. The designations שמים “heaven” (1:9, 14, 20, 26), ארץ “earth” (1:11, 20, 24, 26), ים “sea” (1:26), יום “day” (1:14) and לילה “night” (1:14), which all occur in “word account” statements, presuppose the preceding naming.

Finally the *approbation formula* (“and God saw that it was [very] good”) might have been part of the “word account” as well. Because of its seven occurrences (according to MT)⁴⁵, at first glance one is inclined to ascribe it to the Priestly redaction, which implemented the six/seven-day scheme in the text.⁴⁶ Furthermore the formulation of the seventh and last statement with the verb עשה (1:31a: “And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good”) points to the “deed account.” However, the sequence of the occurrences of the formula does not match the sequence of the days; the formula does not occur in the section recounting the second day (according to MT) nor in that of the seventh day (according to all text witnesses). Having its climax in the section addressing the creation of humanity (cf. the alteration of formulation: “...behold, it was *very* good”), the approbation formula matches the “word account” which—as the analysis above has shown—culminates in the same section and lacks the motif of rest. If we follow the text of the Septuagint and insert the missing approbation sentence in 1:8, then the sequence of the approbations sentences matches the structure of the proposed “word account” layer.

According to R.S. Hendel⁴⁷ the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint harmonizes and brings up the number of all occurrences of the formula to seven. However, the opposite is more plausible: Including the variation of 1:31 in the counting (which seems reasonable), the Septuagint has eight occurrences, and it is the MT which has the harmonization-suspicious number of seven occurrences. I suppose that in the MT a tendency to *bring the number of redundant elements* (i.e.

⁴⁵ In the second section the MT lacks an approbation sentence, the Septuagint however provides it in 1:8 (see below).

⁴⁶ The first Priestly redaction (P^s) or another subsequent Priestly redaction (see above 6.).

⁴⁷ R. S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1–11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23–24.

the approbation formula, the *ויהי כן* / *ויהי אור*-formula) up to seven is at work (with regard to the importance of the seven days in the day-alignment). As for the *ויהי כן* / *ויהי אור*-formula, an astonishing “lack” is observable as well (after the announcement sentence in 1:20); it could be that here as well the respective sentence was deliberately omitted.⁴⁸ For this reason tentatively I attribute the approbation formula to the “word account” as the assumed source text.

Two of the eight works from the above reconstructed “word account,” the creation of light and the formation of the heavenly bodies, are considered to be in tension with each other by certain scholars (D. Hermant, J. Vermeylen, P. Weimar). These interpreters, operating with various redaction-historical models, attribute one of the two respective sections (in full extent; including the “word account” statement as well) to the redactional layer. While Herman⁴⁹, followed by Vermeylen⁵⁰, views the creation of the astrological bodies as a later addition, Weimar⁵¹ claims that the first work, the genesis of light, has been supplemented by the Priestly redactor.

For Dominique Herman and Jacques Vermeylen the section of the fifth day disturbs “*la progression logique*”⁵² of the account: Having located its point of departure in the installation of the “cosmic frame works,” the account then descends to earth (cf. the fourth section: the coming forth of the vegetation). The subsequent return to the firmament (fifth section) seems to form a disturbance of the movement since the latter continues again on earth (sixth, seventh and eighth section).⁵³ However, the direction of movement is ambiguous in other sections as well: In the “word account” statement of the sixth section the firmament is mentioned again (cf. v. 20: “... and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of the heavens [על פני רקיע השמים]”). The main argument against the reconstruction of the traditional account without the fifth section is as follows: It seems natural that a creation account like Gen 1, which aims to describe systematically every domain of the cosmos would also include the heavenly bodies, which are of great importance in ancient societies. One support for the inclusion of the fifth section in the assumed source text is the occurrence of the expression “all their hosts” in 2:1 (ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם), which certainly refers also to luminaries of heaven.

⁴⁸ See above, 2.2.

⁴⁹ D. Hermant, “Analyse,” 437–451.

⁵⁰ J. Vermeylen, “Tradition,” 127–147.

⁵¹ P. Weimar, “Chaos,” A. Lange et al. (eds), *Mythos*, 196–211; = P. Weimar, *Studien*, 135–50.

⁵² J. Vermeylen, “Tradition,” 133.

⁵³ D. Hermant, “Analyse,” 445; J. Vermeylen, “Tradition,” 133.

Peter Weimar, with regard to the significance of the formation of light and the separation of light and darkness for the seven-day framework, tends to take it for granted that the respective section belongs to the Priestly redaction; as for the fifth section, in contrast, certain parts of it he ascribes to the traditional account.⁵⁴ Also this idea seems problematic: if one assumes that the formation of light (first section) was lacking from the original account, it is hardly imaginable that its author would place the formation of the luminaries after the creation of beings that are dependent of light sources (cf. the coming forth of the vegetation). It is not credible that the author—an accurate observer of the nature⁵⁵—would ignore this causality. A second argument is as follows: with regard to the possible attribution of the approbation formula to the “word account” (see above) the creation of light is for all subsequent creation acts an essential work and indispensable; the idea that *’Elohim* approves a work when still being girded by darkness seems awkward.

Taking into account the ascription of the assertion on *’Elohim*’s separation of light and darkness in 1:4b to the redactional layer (cf. 3),⁵⁶ the “word account” statements of the two sections do not share same elements and thus there is no tension or contradiction discernable between them.

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As for the further elements of the present text Gen 1:1–2:4a, identifying which layer they should be attributed to seems more difficult. Questions remain concerning single sentences: for instance, in the section of the creation of the heavenly bodies the “word account” is quite long and one may ask if v. 15a with the repetitive expression *והיו למאורות ברקיע השמים* is a later addition. In this case and also elsewhere we might consider the possibility of insertions by a second redactor or a later scribe.

However, the main question addressed here is whether it is possible to identify the full extent of the text of the redactional

⁵⁴ Cf. P. Weimar, “Chaos,” 199: “Angesichts der grundlegenden Bedeutung der Erschaffung des Lichts sowie der damit einhergehenden Scheidung von Licht und Finsternis für die als Strukturierungsmerkmal der priesterschriftlichen Erzählfassung dienende Tageszählung erscheint für Gen 1,3–5 eine Herkunft aus der Hand des priesterschriftlichen Erzählers unabweisbar, wohingegen für Gen 1,14–19 manches dafür spricht, dass die Erschaffung der Leuchten im Gegensatz zum Werden des Lichts schon ein Element der Tradition darstellt.”

⁵⁵ This is evident especially from his differentiated, “scientific” enumeration in the forth section on vegetation (cf. 1:11).

⁵⁶ The statement of 1:15a in the fifth section might also be considered as a later addition (s. below 8.).

layer (Priestly “deed account”) of Gen 1:1–2:4a on the one hand and that of the basis-layer (“word account”) on the other. The difficulty of accurately identifying the texts of the different layers could have resulted from the fact that not only one but two redactors are at work (see above). Furthermore we have to take into account the possibility that the redactor perhaps decided to cite only some parts of his source text. Nevertheless, the foregoing analysis has shown that for every mentioned act of creation a “word account” exists, which means that the redactor seems to have preserved his source text to some extent at least in the eight sections of creative works.

This result of the foregoing investigation of Gen 1 is important for the study of P-texts in general. In recent research on P the main focus has focused on the questions of the extent and the composition of the final redaction of P^g. Since it has been shown that the present story of Gen 1:1–2:4a was not created “*ex nihilo*” but reflects the innovative and critical dialogue with an older traditional text, one might posit a similar procedure for other text complexes in P. In Gen 1 the author (redactor) aimed to correct the theological conception of his source. While the latter contains assertions that could be conceived as “polytheistic,” the Priestly redactor maintains a strict monotheistic theology.

From a religious-historical point of view it is noteworthy that the “word account,” as the assumed source text, is less “theocentric” and not strictly monotheistic. The fact that certain creatures function as the grammatical subject within narration of creative acts expresses the idea *that they participate in this act*. Most evident is participation in the case of the creation of the sea and land animals: sea and earth bring forth the various beings belonging to their respective living spaces. Furthermore, the threefold use of the 1. p. pl. in the announcement sentence of 1:26 indicates that the conception of God in the ancient “word account” deviates from a strict monotheistic theology.