

Critical History of the Documentary Hypothesis

Critic	Major Publications	Author/Compiler/Redactor	Source Analysis	Historical-Critical Conclusions
Jean Astruc 1684-1766 (French)	1753 <i>Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paraît que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le Livre de la Genèse</i> (a treatise on the book of Genesis published anonymously)	Moses compiled Genesis from several centuries of oral and written materials, laying them out in four columns; later editors combined these columns to produce a continuous narrative. This explains why some of the narrative material is not in chronological order.	Basic criteria: Employed duplicate narratives and the divine names Elohim and YHWH for recognizing two primary and parallel sources, as well as some 10 minor fragmentary sources. Underlying sources: Two major sources and some ten minor fragments of non-Israelite material—the primary source, based on Elohim, he titled A; the other source, based on YHWH, he titled B; the remaining material he placed in two other columns, C and D.	Traditional: The material of Genesis antedated Moses.
Johann Eichhorn 1752-1827 (German)	1780-83 <i>Einleitung in das Alte Testament</i> (3-volume introduction of the Old Testament)	In the beginning, he was ready to accept that Moses had used previous sources in his composition of Genesis—he eventually rejected Mosaic authorship in favor of an unknown final redactor.	<i>Early Documentary</i> Basic criteria: Extended the criteria of duplicate narratives and the divine names used by Astruc to include literary style and thought content, broadening his approach to include the entire Pentateuch. Underlying sources: Changed Astruc's A and B to E and J respectively, in keeping with the first letters of the corresponding divine names—he also identified several smaller sources.	Traditional: The material of Genesis may or may not have antedated Moses.
Karl Ilgen 1763-1834 (German)	1798 <i>Die Urkunden des jerusalemischen Tempelarchives in ihrer Urgestalt als Beytrag zur Berichtigung der Geschichte der Religion und Politik</i>	An unknown redactor compiled the work of three authors responsible for seventeen individual documents from archives in the Temple at Jerusalem, during the time of Solomon.	<i>Early Documentary</i> Basic criteria: Developed even more criteria for identifying further sources, such as precise differences of content and outlook. Underlying sources: Divided the E source into E ¹ and E ² , coming up with a total of three main sources underlying Genesis.	Traditional: All the material comprising the Pentateuch antedated the building of the Temple in Jerusalem by Solomon.
Alexander Geddes 1737-1802 (Scottish)	1792 <i>The Holy Bible or the Books accounted Sacred by Jews and Christians, otherwise called the Books of the Old and New Covenants, with various readings, explanatory notes and critical remarks</i> 1800 <i>Critical Remarks on the Hebrew corresponding with a new translation of the Bible</i>	A single unknown redactor compiled the Hexateuch from numerous fragments, some time during the reign of Solomon. These fragments originated from two circles of tradition, E for Elohist, J for Yahwistic	<i>Fragmentary</i> Basic criteria: Accepted the symbols of the divine names, E and J, to identify two different groups or traditions of fragments. Underlying sources: Numerous fragments from two different circles—one Elohist, the other Yahwistic.	Traditional: The material of Genesis antedated Moses, and at least some of the material from the rest of the Pentateuch came from his time.

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Johann Vater 1771-1826 (German)	1805 <i>Commentar über den Pentateuch</i>	Regarded the book of Deuteronomy as nucleus around which the Pentateuch had been constructed, and he separated it from the other books. Unknown redactors compiled the Pentateuch from a mass of fragments shortly prior to the period of the exile.	<i>Fragmentary</i> Basic criteria: Not looking for documents—not usually considered in fragmentary approaches. Underlying sources: As many as 39 fragments—the symbols E and J were retained, but for identifying two circles or traditions of fragments.	Traditional: Similar conclusions as Geddes—some of the material of the Pentateuch antedated Moses, and some of its material belonged to his time.
Wilhelm DeWette 1780-1849 (German)	1805 <i>Dissertatio Critico-Exegetica qua Deuteronomium a prioribus Pentateuchi libris diversum alius cuiusdam recentioris auctoris opus esse monstratur</i> (his doctoral thesis which highlighted the book of Deuteronomy) 1807 <i>Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament</i>	The different books of the Pentateuch, aside from Genesis, were compiled by separate redactors who drew upon independent fragmentary sources of an E and J type. The book of Deuteronomy had been composed in the time of King Josiah. A final redactor gave the Pentateuch its final shape during or shortly after the exile, in the sixth century BC.	<i>Fragmentary-Supplementary</i> Underlying sources: More of a supplementary approach to Genesis and the early chapters of Exodus—an Elohist document augmented by several J-type fragments.	Non-traditional: The first to use the critical method to construct an Israelite history different from the one presented in the Old Testament. Rejected the history of the pre-kingdom period, and most of the early monarchy. Deuteronomy a pious fraud written by the reforming circles around Josiah.
Heinrich Ewald 1803-1875 (German)	1823 <i>Die Komposition der Genesis kritisch untersucht</i> (A commentary on Genesis)	Although he did not adhere to the traditional view that Moses authored Genesis, he still assigned the work to a relatively early period. A J-type redactor supplemented an Elohist document to give us the Hexateuch in its final form.	<i>Supplementary</i> Basic criteria: Presented strong philological arguments for the underlying unity of the Hexateuch. Underlying sources: A primary Elohist document supplemented by numerous fragments of a J type	Traditional: Regarded the text as reliable with respect to the actual history of Israel.
	1843 <i>Geschichte des Volkes Israel</i> (A History of Israel) 1848 <i>Die Altertümer des Volkes Israel</i> (On the origins of priestly rituals and festivals.)	Numerous narrators and editors participated in the composition of the Hexateuch; the final narrator put the first four books of the Pentateuch and Joshua together in the seventh century, and the independent work of Deuteronomy was added during the exile.	<i>Crystallization</i> Underlying sources: Each of the six books of the Hexateuch contained cores or centers around which other parts clustered—a variety of other sources other than E, J, or D.	

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Hermann Hupfeld 1796-1866 (German)	1853 <i>Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung von neuen untersucht</i> (The Sources of Genesis and the Manner of their Composition from a New Investigation)	A final redactor was responsible for the first four books of the Pentateuch in their final form—all material not a part of the three main sources, E ¹ , E ² and J, were authored by the redactor. E ¹ was composed in the reign of David, and E ² and J in the period of the divided kingdom.	<i>Early Modern Documentary</i> Basic criteria: E ² was closer in linguistic peculiarities and style to J than it was to E ¹ , which distinctly manifested priestly tendencies. Underlying sources: The <i>Urschrift</i> , or “Original Document,” was actually two source documents—E ¹ and E ² ; the J document also constituted a major source rather than merely fragments that supplemented E. (E¹E²J)	Semi-traditional
Eduard Riehm 1830-1888 (German)	1854 <i>Die Gesetzgebung Moses im Lande Moab</i>	E ¹ dated to the early monarchy, E ² and J to the 8th century BC, and D to the late 7th century; the Deuteronomic redactor was responsible for putting together the entire Pentateuch.	<i>Early Modern Documentary</i> Underlying sources: Identified Deuteronomy as a self-contained independent source; four main sources established. (E¹E²JD)	Semi-Hegelian
Karl Graf 1815-1869 (German)	1865 <i>Die geschichtlichen Bücher des AT: Zwei historisch-kritische Untersuchungen</i> (On the historical books of the Old Testament)	A significant role for Ezra in the exile—he compiled the priestly and other materials into E ¹ , and then combined it with E ² , J, and D to form the Pentateuch in the post-exilic period.	<i>Late Modern Documentary</i> Basic criteria: Added historical criticism to the basic criteria, by drawing from the philosophical-historical conclusions established by Hegel. Underlying sources: The priestly interests of the <i>Grundschrift</i> , E ¹ , indicated a date of composition subsequent to the contents of Deuteronomy, and Deuteronomy was clearly later than J; the final chronological sequence was now E²JDE¹ .	Hegelian: Rejected the historical witness of most Old Testament material
Abraham Kuenen 1828-1891 (Dutch)	1870 <i>Die Godsdienst van Israël</i> (The Religion of Israel)	Ezra and the priests put all the material of the Pentateuch together for the first time during and after the exile.	<i>Late Modern Documentary</i> Basic criteria: Philosophical-historical based on Hegel Underlying sources: Reversed the sequence of E ² and J; the J source was basic to the Pentateuch, and older than E ² , making the sequence JE²DE¹ .	Hegelian: Contained much non-historical material—God had not acted in history.

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Julius Wellhausen 1844-1918 (German)	1877 <i>Die Komposition des Hexateuchs</i> 1878 <i>Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels</i> 1889 <i>Die Komposition des Hexateuch und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments</i> 1897 <i>Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte</i>	Three major redactors who were not merely compilers but who freely shaped, reshaped, and in some cases authored their own material—the first combined J and E about 650 BC; the second added D to JE about 550 BC; and the third added P to JED about 400 BC. The entire corpus was revised and edited to form the extant Pentateuch some time around 200 BC.	<i>Classic Documentary</i> Underlying sources: J source; an independent E source closely related to J; D as Deuteronomy; and a P source consisting of numerous smaller sources plus the former E ¹ , making a final sequence, JE,D,P .	Hegelian: A major reconstruction of Israel's history along lines that are evolutionary—from simple to intricate.