The story of Adam and Eve has been read, meditated and interpreted for over two and a half millennia, yet there is nonetheless considerable merit in taking a new look at its message in today’s context. For all that, to return today to an ancient story in order to probe its meaning is far from a simple task. The two biblical creation stories, narrated in Genesis 1-3, have occupied an important place since the early stages of critical research on the Pentateuch in the eighteenth century. The idea that the Pentateuch could have been composed of several sources was provoked mainly by the existence of the two stories in Gen 1-3. H.B. Witter and J. Astruc had both been struck by the fact that the two stories (Gen 1 and Gen 2-3) were using different names when speaking of God, Elohim and Yhwh.¹ Even today, these two creation stories continue to capture attention of the scholars. The present thesis attempts to study one of these creation stories, namely the one narrated in Gen 2:4-3:24 (hereafter referred to as Gen 2-3).²

1. Genesis 2-3 in the Current Scholarship

In the current scholarly debate on the Torah, a growing number of authors have cast aside the classical Documentary Hypothesis as an appropriate model for explaining the composition of the Pentateuch, including the theory of a distinct Yahwistic source or author (J). In this debate, scholars have raised several problems about Gen 2-3. A quick round-up of these issues is pertinent in order to situate the second story of creation in the context of current research and also to set the subject of the thesis in its literary context.

1. Problem of its Delimitation: It has long been discussed whether the story of Eden begins in Gen 2:4 or 2:4b or 2:5.³

² The debate over the delimitation of the text concerning the second story of creation will be discussed later in chapter 2.
2. **Author, “a hero with thousand faces?”** It has to be said that it is difficult to define the portrait of the so-called Yahwist with any precision. He is “variously regarded as author, editor, redactor or circle of tradition.” H. Gunkel understood J as a school of collectors who were interested in faithful transmission of the oral traditions of the Hebrew Bible. With G. von Rad, the Yahwist is not only an author but above all a theologian and the architect of the Hexateuch. For J. Van Seters, J is more a historian than a theologian, living five centuries later. For C. Levin, J is foremost a collector and a redactor; his Yahwist shares the exilic location with Van Seters’ Yahwist, but Van Seters would never agree with the idea of J as a redactor. The recent history of Pentateuchal exegesis therefore shows that the so-called Yahwist is “a hero with thousand faces.”


5 W. Brueggemann, “Yahwist,” IDBSup, 971-975, 971.

6 H. Gunkel, Genesis, Macon, Mercer University, 1997.


8 J. Van Seters, Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis, Zürich, theologischer Verlag, 1992.


10 For J. Van Seters, the notion of ‘redactor’ or ‘editor,’ which is so frequent in recent Biblical studies, is an anachronism and should be abandoned, first of all because of its dubious origins. The ‘editorial’ or ‘redactional’ activity, according to J. Van Seters, is more adequately described as that of an ‘author’ in the full sense of the word (J. Van Seters, “The Redactor in Biblical Studies: A Nineteenth Century Anachronism,” JNSL 29 [2003] 1-19). B. Lemmelijn explains the way in which the understanding of ‘redactor’ has undergone a radical change. In the 19th century, the ‘redactor’ was merely considered to be a collector of pre-existing literary data or traditions, which he subsequently combines in a more or less successive way. Gradually, redactional questions in the text have gained more attention, to such an extent that the work of the redaction is nowadays no longer interpreted in the narrow but rather in the comprehensive sense of the word, namely as the original, creative, and innovating reworking of traditional material (B. Lemmelijn, “The So-called ‘Priestly’ Layer in Exod 7,14-11,10: Source and/or/nor ‘Redaction’?” RB 109/4 [2002] 481-511, 496-497; “Setting and Function of Exod 11,1-10 in the Exodus Narrative,” in M. Vervenne, [ed.], Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction – Reception – Interpretation, Leuven, Peeters, 1996, 443-460). On the other, J.-L. Ska expresses his difficulty in calling the Biblical writers as authors. For him, surely the term
3. Farewell to the Yahwist? The name ‘Yahwist’ has existed since the beginning of the Documentary hypothesis. But from the 1970s, all research on the Pentateuch was submitted to radical critique, and the “Yahwist” was in the front line of the debate. After the premonitory motion launched by F.V. Winnett, the decisive works in reopening the discussion on the Yahwist were those of Van Seters, H.H. Schmid and R. Rendtorff. As a result, it is no longer possible today to speak of the “Yahwist” without acknowledging that former consensus has vanished. The attacks against Noth’s and von Rad’s Yahwist increased and his existence was widely contested.

The Yahwist’s existence was questioned because the biblical texts attributed to him do not all have the same style. Since Schmid underscored the close literary relationship between the Yahwist and the Deuteronomistic style and theology, some scholars have proposed that J must be closely related to the Deuteronomistic school. The well known representatives of this tendency are the Canadians Winnett, N.E. Wagner and Van Seters and in Switzerland and in Germany, Schmid, M. Rose, H. Vorländer and H.-Ch. Schmitt. It should

‘author’ is problematic, and does not really describe with enough precision the multifarious activity of the Biblical writers. He leaves it open to further discussion whether one should avoid the terms ‘redactors’ and ‘editors’ and speak of ‘compilers’ and ‘composers’ (J.-L. Ska, “A Plea on Behalf of the Biblical Redactors,” Studia Theologica 59 [2005] 4-18, 15).

11 Two volumes have come out in recent years with such expression “farewell to the Yahwist” (J.C. Gertz, K. Schmid, M. Witte, [eds.], Abschied vom Jahwisten: die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion, Berlin, W. de Gruyter, 2002; T.B. Dozeman and K. Schmid, [eds.], A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation, Atlanta, SBL, 2006).


be noted that the Leuven school of C. Brekelmans,\textsuperscript{25} M. Vervenne\textsuperscript{26} and H. Ausloos\textsuperscript{27} speaks about the link between the Tetrateuch and the Proto-
Deuteronomistic thinking. Others, on the contrary, claim that the Yahwist has nothing to do with the language and concerns of this school (C. Levin, H. Seebass). Thus for Van Seters, even though J may use some Deuteronomistic vocabulary and expressions taken from the Deuteronomistic History, his theology should definitely not be described as “Deuteronomistic.” R. Rendtorff and E. Blum went to the extent of replacing the Yahwist by “Deuteronomistic type” and “Deuteronomistic composition” respectively. Recently, Levin has sought to produce a list of J’s favourite expressions. Furthermore, scholars like A.M. Dubarle, L. Alonso Schökel, G.E. Mendenhall, J. Blenkinsopp and E. Otto have demonstrated that the influence of the sapiential style exists in Gen 2-3. Since the author seems to have correspondence with different theological trends (Deuteronomistic and Sapiential), it is difficult to identify him, which is the reason why he is simply called “non-P” author(s).


31 C. Levin, Der Jahwist, 399-408.


34 J. Wellhausen, Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments, Berlin, G. Reimer, 1866.

35 H. Seebass, Genesis I. Urgeschichte (1,1-11,26), Neukirchen, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1996.
Budd)\(^{36}\) and sixth century (Van Seters, Levin).\(^{37}\) Recently, R.M. Wright has produced a book searching for linguistic evidence for the pre-exilic date of the Yahwistic source.\(^{38}\)

5. Its Literary Genre: von Rad says that it is difficult to decide about the literary form of Gen 2-3, since there are many different theories including folklore (R.P. Lagrange), a sapiential story (Dubarle), a narrative (von Rad), a faded myth (H. Gunkel), a filtered myth (J. Blenkinsopp), a mytho-historical story (T. Jacobsen), a tale (G.W. Coats), a myth (R. Detweiler), a proto-historical story (G.J. Wenham), an archetypal story (D.E. Gowan), a historical aetiology (N. Lohfink), a story (T.E. Fretheim) and a parable (G.E. Mendenhall).\(^{39}\)

6. Validity of Comparison with the Ancient Near Eastern Literature: In the last century and a half, considerable use has been made of the emerging ancient Near Eastern literary background of the OT. As far as the Eden story in Gen 2-3 is concerned, its parallels outside the Bible and its indirect sources of inspiration are thought to be found in Sumero-Akkadian texts, such as the Dilmun text, the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Adapa myth.\(^{40}\) However, it remains a matter of debate whether the comparative evidence really lends any credibility to the narratives, or says anything about the dating of them. Resistance to comparative studies continues in some critical circles typically with the purists who insist that

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comparative study is dependent on simplistic generalizations. It is maintained that each culture is autonomous and unique, and we should not dare to blur the lines of distinction by superficial correlations.\textsuperscript{41}

7. Between Synchronic and Diachronic Methods: From a synchronic mode of reading Gen 2-3, it is argued that the story is carefully constructed, and that there are elaborate interconnections between scenes.\textsuperscript{42} On the contrary, taking into account the tensions and literary problems in the text, scholars have explored its tradition history and have proposed different stages of its redaction. Gunkel (1910) holds that a redactor compiled this story out of two sources, namely $J^j$ and $J^e$.\textsuperscript{43} Two redactions are posited by I. Lewy and J. Dus.\textsuperscript{44} C. Westermann holds that the text of Gen 2-3 is the result of the combination of two independent narratives (A and B) that existed in the remote past.\textsuperscript{45} D.M. Carr distinguishes two main layers in the composition of the text and two redactional additions.\textsuperscript{46} J.-M. Husser proposes three stages in its formation\textsuperscript{47} and M. Witte, four.\textsuperscript{48} R.G. Kratz maintains that in the creation story we have a basic stratum, and in the paradise story a first revision. The basic stratum and the revision were subsequently glossed abundantly.\textsuperscript{49}

8. Its Function and Position in its Literary Context: A growing number of scholars (Alonso Schökel, Mendenhall, Blenkinsopp, Van Seters and others) have argued that Gen 2-3 summarises the history of Israel up to the catastrophe of the exile and is a reflection thereof. For them, its negative theme of crime and


\textsuperscript{43} $J^e$ stands for a Yahwist using the divine name elohim and $J^j$ for a Yahwist using the Tetragrammaton (H. Gunkel, \textit{Genesis}, 10-12).


punishment points to its exilic context. Given this, some scholars such as H.H. Schmid, Rose and Van Seters go to the extent of proposing Gen 2-3 as a prologue to the Deuteronomistic History. B. Gosse proposes that the narration from the second story of creation until the second book of Kings should be considered as a single literary composition going from the loss of the Garden of Eden to that of Jerusalem. E. Zenger also argues for an exilic Deuteronomistic inspired history work beginning in Gen 2:4b and ending with 2 Kings 25. Thus, according to the above exegetes, the second story of creation could be considered as a prologue to a wider literary composition (Gen 2:4b - 2 Kings 25), which is called by various names such as “Enneateuch,” “Primary History,” a “Sala-

tion-Disaster History Work,”56 “Historiography Corpus of the Bible,”57 “Late Deuteronomistic History Work,”58 “Primary Narrative”59 and others.

2. Problem considered in the Present Thesis

This thesis takes up the last mentioned scholarly hypothesis and it examines its viability. In what way could it be truly possible? In fact, when reading the end of Gen 2-3 and that of 2 Kings 25, one can observe that they are similar from a narrative point of view: at the end of Gen 2-3, the man and the woman are expelled from the garden and lose it. In the same way, at the end of the second book of Kings (2 Kings 25:21), the people of Israel meet with destruction, exile and loss of their land. Yet is this thematic parallel alone sufficient to point to the existence of a composition beginning from Gen 2-3 and ending with 2 Kings 25? Such a hypothesis leads us to further questions. If Gen 2-3 were to have existed as a prologue to a literary composition which extends up to 2 Kings, how can we explain the presence of Gen 1 before Gen 2-3 in the current text? If the Enneateuch were to have existed, who, then, is responsible for the concept of Pentateuch? The thesis, in focusing on the second story of creation (Gen 2-3), seeks to explore the following questions: 1) Can Gen 2-3 be a prologue to a composition which goes from Gen 2:4 to 2 Kings? 2) If Gen 2:4-2 Kings existed as a unit, what is its function in relation to Gen 1 (and also to Gen 6-9)? 3) If such a great composition ever existed, when and why has the Pentateuch been created?

3. Methodology and Principal Stages

The questions of this thesis call for the choice of a methodology that is suitable for the interpretation. These questions are concerned with the composition of Gen 2-3 and its literary place in relation to Gen 1 and in the formation of the Hebrew Bible. That being so, it calls for a diachronic method which will be used for the literary analysis of Gen 2-3 and for the interpretation of the results in the formation of different compositions such as Pentateuch, Hexateuch and Enneateuch in the books from Genesis to 2 Kings.

In view of these objectives, the thesis will comprise the following four main parts. The first part will try to situate the issues in the context of the recent scholarship. Chapter 1 will investigate the concept of Enneateuch, its origin and its development in recent research. This study will lead us to formulate the three questions raised by the thesis. The second part will supply some synchronical remarks on Gen 2-3. Chapter 2 will focus on the delimitation of Gen 2-3. Chapter 3 will seek to discover the structure of the story. In detailing the occurrences of particular terminology and the correspondence of different narrative elements, this chapter will allow us to highlight the link which unifies the two chapters. The third part consists of the diachronic analysis of Gen 2-3. It will first of all attempt to explain the literary problems raised by the text (chapter 4) and will be followed by a study (chapter 5) that surveys the diachronic analysis of Gen 2-3 by four exegetes and makes a critical evaluation of their approaches. Subsequently, it will try to explain the history of the composition of Gen 2-3 through detailed, verse-by-verse, analysis (chapters 6 & 7). The third part will be concluded by gathering the conclusions of the literary analysis with regard to the history of the composition of the text. This chapter will enable us to reply to the questions raised by the thesis (chapter 8). Finally, in the light of recent research the fourth part will evaluate the diachronic method which we employ here and it will be concluded by drawing out the methodological and theological issues of Gen 2-3 (chapter 9).

4. Limits of this Research

Two limits of the study should be mentioned at the outset. The first concerns the method we follow. The diachronic mode of interpretation of Gen 2-3 will aim at identifying the different compositional stages which it underwent. The historical context of each layer will be investigated. This method will highlight how each redactor was presumed to have passed on the document which he inherited. Such a premise has been attested in biblical and non-biblical texts. Nevertheless, this method has its own limits. It cannot claim to reconstitute completely each individual stage in the composition of the story. What is possible in this diachronic mode of interpretation is identification of the principal indications likely to reflect the redactional work, and on this basis to an attempt to reconstitute the major stages in its composition. For all that, the various stages and the delimitations proposed will always remain hypothetical.

The second limit is the delimitation of the research area. The thesis is situated in the context of the concept of Enneateuch, one that could be examined from several different perspectives. It can be explained by showing the various links that exist between different books within the Hebrew Bible, but the present thesis will not engage in such a task. Here, the research begins specifically with the text of Gen 2-3 which alone will be analyzed to show whether it can give a
sense of beginning to the narration which ends in 2 Kings. With the results of this literary analysis, we will attempt to reply to questions such as whether this story could have served as a prologue to the Enneateuch, when it was put side by side with Gen 1 and when the Pentateuch came to existence. The conclusions of this study will be applied with regards to its literary function in the Hebrew Bible.

It is recognized that this study must avoid other methodological pitfalls. Its starting point is the actual text of Gen 2-3, with its specific terminologies and themes. The analysis will seek to avoid any preconceived understanding of the text from the perspectives of theology and its problems. On the contrary, it will focus on analysis of the literary context in which Gen 2-3 is inserted. The analysis will delimit the different layers of Gen 2-3 and investigate the milieu in which each layer was composed. As such, one of the primary tasks of this study will be to bring out the theology of this biblical text.