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The methods and results of the Wellhausen school are too well known to require extended discussion or full documentation. This school was characterized first of all, of course, by its meticulous care for literary analysis. It was here that there was developed and perfected that documentary criticism which is still, in its essentials, accepted today.

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The documents were held valuable for illuminating the beliefs and practices of Israel in the centuries in which they were written; they were not regarded as reliable sources for writing the history of the centuries about which they purport to tell.

This scheme had its origin, of course, in a Hegelian or a positivist philosophy. But even when the philosophical understructure that supported it no longer commanded acceptance, the tired clichés continued to be repeated faithfully--as some outworn creed is repeated even when the theology that gave it birth is no longer believed or understood.

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'It is true, we attain [from the Genesis narrative] to no historical knowledge of the patriarchs, but only of the time when the stories about them arose in the Israelite people; this later age is here unconsciously projected, in its inner and outward features, into hoar antiquity, and is reflected there like a glorified mirage.'¹

¹ J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel, English trans. by Black and Menzies (Edinburgh, A. & C. Black, 1885), 318 f.

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³ . . . But the extreme is surely in Matthews, op. cit., where some dozen phases in the development of Israel's faith are isolated and described.

The god of the Mosaic period is viewed as a tribal god: such epithets as 'mountain god', 'storm god', 'war god', and the like, are used to describe him.²

² e.g. Lods, op. cit., 308-316; Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit. Vol. I, 88-96; Olmstead, op. cit., 215 f; Mould, op. cit., 130 f; etc.