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The first forty pages of UG are devoted to an extremely closely reasoned analysis of the Pentateuch documents, which one is certain to find most helpful and good. And his conclusions are, in general, those of the 'classic' criticism--as he expressly states (UG, 24). With Volz and Rudolph he agrees that J is the basic literary material of the Pentateuch, although P provides its literary frame.

Noth is equally constructive when he comes (UG, 40-44), to evaluate the relationship between J and E. While he finds them too alike to be independent of one another, he denies that E is dependent on J, or J on E. In fact, it cannot be proved that E is later than J, nor can absolute dates be given for either (UG, 40, n.143).

² G. von Rad, Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs (Giessen, 1938).

Here Noth takes issue with von Rad² and goes a step beyond him. Von Rad had argued that the main themes of the Hexateuch are already to be found in the ancient Cultic Credo, examples of which may be seen in Deut. 26.5-9; 6.20-24 and Josh. 24.2-13, but that it was the Yahwist who so filled out this basic framework that the Pentateuch was given its definitive form. The Yahwist, said von Rad, was responsible for three major additions: working in the Sinai tradition ('Einbau der Sinaitradition'), which is not mentioned in the ancient credos and which had had a separate history; expanding the patriarchal tradition with a host of material available to him ('Ausbau der Vätertradition'); adding as a grand introduction the primeval history of Gen. 1-11 ('Vorbau der Urgeschichte'). But Noth will not allow the Yahwist so much credit for, says he, except for the last of these, all this is present already in G. To be sure, the Yahwist did fill out the tradition with additional material (e.g. the Hebron-Mamre traditions, the Abraham-Lot traditions), but it is clear 'that the major themes of the Pentateuch narrative were already contained in G and in the order of arrangement which is known to us' (UG, 42). This means, further, that 'the all-Israel orientation of the Pentateuch narratives belongs to its basic material (Grundbestand)' (UG, 45).