

I Importance of this argument

If this argument can be proved it will establish the fact of different documents. Is there such a thing as distinctiveness of style? Is it something that can be immediately recognized or not? There is such a thing as difference of style which can be recognized by those who are familiar with that style. If you had two different books by two different authors you could go through them and compare them and find certain expressions and distinctive features of their preference for certain types of sentences and particular words that are characteristic of one and not of the other. There is such a thing as distinctiveness of style.

However, in the case of the Pentateuch there is no solid basis for assigning authorship to different writers on the basis of style since no separate document by these alleged writers has been preserved. Aside from Deuteronomy you do not have any long document of which it can be truthfully said, "This was all written by P and that was all written by J." It is purely an imaginary thing that there were once documents of that type. Therefore there is no basis upon which to establish their peculiarities

II There is no basis for establishing a style of distinct writers since no such separate documents by these alleged writers have been preserved.

To have a solid basis for establishing a style of distinct writers there must be an acknowledged authentic writing by the author to begin with. Otherwise there is tremendous danger of arguing in a circle. It will not do to go through ^{portions of the} ~~the~~ Pentateuch and try to divide it into different sections on the basis of alleged parallel passages or on differences in the use of Divine names and then try to prove that there is a distinct style in ~~in~~ these sections and go on to try to divide up the rest of the Pentateuch according to these styles.