The Source Documentary Hypothesis at a Glance

*This hypothesis applies only to the first 5 books of the Bible.*

**The “J” Source**

This source is called “J” because of how he uses the proper name of God – YHWH. J says that the proper name of God was revealed from the beginning of creation. From 922 to 722 – the period known as the Divided Kingdom, the people of God were divided between 2 kingdoms: Israel to the North and Judah to the south. The source known as J was composed during this time period. From the start, God is known as YHWH.

* Uses YHWH in all of his works as the name of God. The Name YHWH is revealed to us from the beginning of creation
* Sees God as an Anthropomorphic God – portraying Human emotions or actions
  + He’s a gardener, shows regret, makes clothes for humans, smells the sacrifices, walks in the garden.
* His language indicates he is from Judah/southern locations
* The mountain of God is called “Sinai”
* The Boundaries of the Kingdom is from the Nile to the Euphrates – which is roughly the territory David had during his reign.
* The Ark of the covenant represents the presence of YHWH, but is never mentioned in E
* The name of Moses’ father-in-law is called Ruel
* Does not seem to be aware of the stories of Joshua.

**The “E” Source**

E calls God “Elohim” or “El” meaning “God” in English. The “E” stands for the first letter in Elohim. E also wrote during the same time period as J ~922-722. It is likely that E comes from the North – Israel. E seems to understand that the proper name of God was not given to humanity until the Burning Bush encounter. Until Moses, God was known as God. Once he revealed his name to Moses, God is then known as YHWH.

* Uses “Elohim” or “El” as the name of God until it is officially revealed (according to E) with Moses. After which will interchange YHWH and Elohim.
* Sees God as a distant deity who does not interact with his creation directly, but instead interacts through prophets, dreams, and visions.
* His language indicates he is from Israel/ northern locations.
* The mountain of God is called “Horeb”
* The tabernacle represents the presence of YHWH, rather than the ark.
* The name of Moses’ Father-in-law is Jethro.

**The “P” Source**

The third source is P. P was chosen because of this authors emphasis on the Priesthood. There are two theories of when P wrote 1) around a similar time as P or 2) after the exile once God’s people returned to the promised land. It is not super important for our study when exactly P wrote his work, but all you need to know is that P shares a lot of stories by both J and E and likely knew of both of these works when writing his own.

* Is either Early or Late – Most evidence points to early.
* Largest of all the sources in the Torah.
* Uses Elohim and El Shaddai before Moses, then after the Burning Bush uses YHWH. 🡪 aligns with E in the name of God piece.
* God is remote and transcendent
* God shows up as his “glory” rather than his actual self.
* Structured around a lot of covenants: Noah, Abraham, Sabbath covenants.
* The mountain of God is called Sinai and not Horeb.
* Phrases like “be fruitful and multiply,” “male and female,” and other repeated formulas.
* Talks a lot about: Dates, ages of people, measurements, numbers, etc.
* Does not talk about dreams, talking animals, etc.
* Sacrifices are the most important act of worship and only by priests from the line of Aaron.
* Argues that the Aaron Priests are superior to the priests from the line of Moses (Shiloh priests)

**The “D” Source**

D takes up most of Deuteronomy. Specifically, Deuteronomy belongs to a much larger work consisting of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Sam, and 1 and 2 Kings. This is known as the Deuteronomistic History. The person or group that composed this whole work is known as “Dtr”. This expands beyond the Source Doc. Hypothesis, because these works go beyond the first 5 books of the Bible.

* Essentially the book of Deuteronomy, especially the law code in Deut. 12-26.
* This is possibly the document that Hilkiah found and brought to Josiah claiming “this is the law of Moses!”
* D and DTR as a whole are often very critical of the Kingship and see it as a concession rather that God’s original design.
* Possible D/DTR was a Shiloh priest. These priests were often kicked out of places because they were always critical of the King because they were not being faithful to God, kings didn’t like that, so that got them in trouble.
* Likely dates to around the time of King Josiah in 609 BCE. An early copy may have come down from the Northern regions (where J was) when Assyria came in and exiled Israel the first time in 721. The core of the law existed for a long time before this, but this is the earliest copy that we had.