

CHAPTER 1
Two Centuries of Pentateuchal Scholarship
(Joseph Blenkinsopp)

In the Pentateuch, nowhere is affirmed that Moses was the author or by anyone else. Traditionally, the view in both Judaism and Christianity is that Moses authored the entire Pentateuch. Therefore, one would think that what calls for an explanation is not why most people stopped believing in the dogma of Mosaic authorship, but rather why anyone believed it in the first place.

The close association between Moses and the law, first clearly and consistently attested in Deuteronomy and commonplace during the Second Temple period, goes far to explain how the entire work came to be attributed to him.

During this first period of critical inquiry there were also those who while rejecting the traditional belief, remained unconvinced by the arguments for parallel sources. One alternative was to suggest a plurality of quite disparate sources which, when eventually put together long after the time of Moses, eventuated in the Pentateuch.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, all Old Testament scholars outside of the ecclesiastical main stream rejected the idea that Moses had authored the entire Pentateuch.

Few of the scholars had a great interest in the purely literary and visual aspects of the text they submitted to such minute examination. The practice of extracting religious ideas from sources was not free of difficulty. Building a religion of Israel on the basis of these ideas begs

the question to what extent the ideas of the writers and compilers related to what people in ancient Israel were actually doing and thinking in the religious sphere.

Juliua Willhausen (1844-1918) represents a kind of scholarship that is practically extinct today. He also wrote commentaries on the gospels and was one the pioneers in pre-Islamic Arabic studies in addition to his text-critical and philological works.

As closely argued and brilliantly original as it is, Wellhausen's historical reconstruction is very much a product of the intellectual environment of the late nineteenth century. While there can be no doubt about Wellhausen's hatred to Judaism and the popularity of anti-Semitism in academic circles at that time, it becomes clear as we read to the end of the introductory that his animus is directed more at the tendency of religious institutions.

The four-sources documentary hypothesis in the form proposed by Wellhausen quickly established itself as the critical orthodoxy and was reproduced in a great number of introductions to the Old Testament and monographic works with considerable variations.

Few Old Testament scholars evinced any great interest in the possibility of a comparative approach to the biblical texts during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Wellhausen himself made no effort to exploit what was then available from the ancient Near East.

Gunkel did not challenge the documentarians, whose contributions he acknowledged and made use of in his Genesis commentary known as form criticism and the history of traditions were eventually to elicit questions which the documentarians would find difficult to answer.

Von Rad was not the first to propose a cultic origin for the traditions of ancient Israel. Some year earlier the Norwegian scholar Sigmund Mowinckel has argued that the Decalogue originated as part of a great New year Festival in the period before the monarchy (Mowinckel 1927, 120-45).

The Pentateuch in its final form is certainly a product of the post-exilic period, but Engnell failed to demonstrate how the traditions in question could plausibly have been transmitted over a period of at least five or six centuries exclusively in oral form. In any case there is much in the Pentateuch that is not patient of this explanation, so that we are left with a literary work which at most incorporated and modified some segments of early epic material.

When normal scholarly activity could be resumed, many of the scholars whose work we have been discussing remained active for several years after the end of World War II. In fact, it was more or less business as usual in Old Testament studies for at least two decades. Practically all introductions which appeared during those years continued to expound the documentary hypothesis as the consensus opinion and the received wisdom.

A question which still needs to be asked is whether the history of traditions approach pioneered by Hermann Gunkel is in the last analysis reconcilable with the hypothesis of distinct documents. Other problems arise in connection with the dating of the sources. Especially in the United States, there seems to be a correlation between theologically conservative opinion and a predilection for higher dating in one prominent strand of English-language scholarship.

Attempts to establish the great antiquity of the religious traditions of Israel on nonliterary ground also had implications for the dating of the sources in which they came to expression. This is especially the case with the covenant, the great antiquity of which, as idea and institution, was argued by George Mendenhall of the University of Michigan, using the analogy of Hittite suzerainty treaties dating from the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C. (Mendenhall, 1955).

The thesis of the Deuteronomism, and therefore late origin of the covenant idea, first presented systematically by the German scholar Lothar Perlitt (1969), raises serious issues for the dating of the sources. For if Perlitt is correct in arguing that the Sinai covenant periscope in Exodus 19-34 is essentially a Deuteronomism composition, rather than a narrative based on a

combination of J and E, his thesis would pose a direct threat at one crucial point to the postulate of one or more continuous narrative sources from the early period of Israel's history.

Similar to a point made by Wager, Rendtorff's main contention is that the larger units or building blocks of the Pentateuchal narrative attained their present form independently of each other and were combined editorially only at a late stage. Therefore, there are no continuous pre-exilic narrative sources corresponding to the J and E of the documentarians.

CHAPTER 2

The Basic Features of the Pentateuch: Structure and Chronology
(*Joseph Blenkinsopp*)

the Pentateuch or Torah is first and foremost a narrative, though the basic meaning of *Torah* is "instruction" or "law." . The sequence of events may be summarized as follow; God created the world and everything in it in six days and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, God formed a man and set him in the garden of Eden. God allowed him access to everything in it with the exception of a certain tree. The animals, also formed out of dirt, did not provide suitable companionship for the man. God made out of the man's body a woman whom he joyfully acknowledged as a suitable companion. A snake skillful in speech persuaded her, and through her the man, to eat fruit from the forbidden tree, resulting in their expulsion from Eden. Children were born, one son killed the other, and the initial evil flowered throughout the wider society. Their evil doing led to the destruction of all life in a great deluge with the exception of Noah, his immediate family, and the species taken with him into the ark. A new order was established, but another aberration within Noah's family tainted the new humanity, and with the confusion of tongues at Babel the nation were dispersed over the earth.

In the tenth generation after the great flood, Abram , later Abraham, was called by God to emigrate from Mesopotamia to Canaan with the promise that from him would spring a great nation.

This is the story within which resides the meaning the reader of the Pentateuch is invited to decode. Not this or that sources, it is this text in its narrative integrity which in the last analysis

is the object of the interpretation. If we compare the Pentateuch with other literary works of comparable length either ancient or modern, we cannot help noticing some obvious anomalies.

To address of the narrative integrity of the Pentateuch obliges us to consider its relation to the continuing the narrative in the Former Prophets, a narrative covering the period from the occupation of Canaan to the Babylonian exile to a point around the middle of the sixth century B.C. If we ignore the tripartite division of the Hebrew Bible and the division of each part into books, we have before us a consecutive history from creation to exile. This we may describe as a national history with a long introduction connecting the history of the nation with its own prehistory and the early history of humanity.

Therefore, this issue of narrative integrity is complicated by the fact that the first nine books of the Bible form one connected historical continuum. If we consider the following features of the Pentateuchal narrative which point beyond its conclusion, the point will be made clearly. 1) Omission of the conquest of Canaan leaves a prominent motif in Genesis, the promise of land, up in the air. 2) In passages dealing with the sanctuary and worship we detect a pattern extending beyond the limits of the Pentateuch. 3) A major theme and especially exile is the threat of disaster in consequence of disobeying the divinely revealed commandments.

Therefore, there is little doubt that Pentateuch and Former Prophets may be and at some stage of the tradition were intended to be read as one consecutive history.

The debate took a new and interesting turn when the possibility of comparison with other works from antiquity was raised, while this issue of the narrative integrity of the Pentateuch, and the related question of its relation to the historical work following it.

Comprising about a third of the total length, the prominence in the Pentateuch of moral instruction and of laws also sets it apart from the Greek historiographical tradition. For example,

indications not just of sources but of major editorial restructurings as the incorporation of Deuteronomy into the Priestly history must also be taken into account.

The Pentateuch, in this limited sense, is an incomplete and truncated work. It remains to be determined how it came into existence and achieved the authoritative status it enjoyed, a status superior to Prophets and Writings in Judaism, and a uniquely authoritative status in the Samaritan community.

The division into five books is much more important for grasping the basic structural features of the Pentateuch. It is well known that titles in use in most modern translations derive from the Old Greek or Septuagint version (LXX), whereas in the Hebrew Bible, in keeping with the common practice in antiquity, the title is simply the first word or words of the book.

The most obvious explanation is that division of the material was dictated by the length of scroll considered convenient for either private or public liturgical use. Theoretically, a parchment scroll could be of almost any length.

Therefore, it would not be remarkable if the division of Torah into five books, rather than four or six, was the outcome of a similar decision rather than being merely a matter of convenience. The fivefold arrangement highlights Leviticus as the central panel of the pentad, containing as it does the prescriptions identifying the reconstituted Israel of the Second Commonwealth as a holy community distinct from the nations of the world.

The Pentateuchal narrative reveals a distinctive feature in the frequent occurrence of precise dates when reading along its temporal axis. It will not be difficult to demonstrate that, as precise as they may be, these chronological markers are undoubtedly fictive.

The task of decoding has also been greatly complicated by the different figures of the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch, not to mention the Book of Jubilees and Josephus. On

this matter, there have been many attempts to explain the differences in terms of competing systems.

Whatever we make of these numerological speculations, they illustrate the belief that the course of events in the past determines the future and provides the essential clue to the divine plan for humanity. Perhaps no longer our way, it is one way of saying that in spite of appearances to the contrary, God controls the course of events which therefore have a direction and a goal.

CHAPTER 3
Human Origins (Gen 1:1-11:26)
(*Josheph Blenkinsopp*)

The desire to trace the course of history backward to human origins arose not only from a natural curiosity about the remote past, but also from a need to validate the present social and political order. The basic idea was that normative value is to be found only in the past, and the more remote the better.

The pattern is essentially the same in the *Babyloniaka* of Berossus from the Hellenistic period. Berossus also gives great value to the remote past as normative, and to the all-sufficient divine revelations communicated to humanity at that time by the seven primeval sages.

Comprising in effect Israel's own version of human origins, the conclusion seems to be warranted that the first eleven chapters of Genesis stand within the same historiographical tradition. It remains for us to determine, by a closer scrutiny of its several parts, where it stands within that tradition and what its distinctive features are.

With modifications, even a fairly casual reading of these first eleven chapters will confirm that the *Atrhasis* pattern is reproduced to a quite remarkable degree. Though we may be hearing a faint echo of it in the *toledot* (generations) of the heaven and earth Gen 2:4a, there is no theogony which is hardly surprising in an officially monotheistic society.

It is equally apparent that in Genesis 1-11 the deluge is structurally the decisive event. While the situation obtaining after this point is in some important respects different, the narrative signals the correspondence between the before and the after more clearly than in the parallel

versions. The extensive use of genealogies and lists aligns Genesis 1-11 with both the Mesopotamian king lists and the early Greek historians.

One of the most distinctive features of Genesis is the series of *toledot* (generations) organized in two pentads covering (1) the early history of humanity, and (2) the prehistory of the Israelite people. The presence of such significant structures in an ancient narrative like Genesis 1-11 is hardly surprising, and similar features have in fact been identified by commentators in different parts of the book.

Heaven and Earth in Gen 1:1-4:26 is the first of the ten *toledot* in Genesis, all identical with the exception of Gen 5:1, "*this is the book of the generations of Adam*" (*zeh seper toledot adam*).

The Creation of Heaven and Earth (1:1-2:3); the most distinctive and obvious of these structural features is the arrangement in seven days, six of which are occupied with the work of creation arranged in parallel triads as follows; (1) The works of creation, eight in all, have been fitted into six days, resulting in a double assignment on the third and sixth days. (2) The seven days represent the liturgical week, the day beginning in the evening, and the week crowned by Sabbath. (3) The work of separation is confined to the first four day, a cosmic counterpart to the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" in the ritual law. (4) The formula "God saw that it was good" occurs five times, the last occurrence couched in a more solemn form. (5) The arrangement in parallel triads is certainly not accidental. (6) The seven-day structure also directs attention to the creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day, the midpoint of the creation week.

The Eden Narrative (2:4b-3:24); following immediately on the systematic presentation of creation in 1:1-2:3, the Eden narrative carries the message that the emergence of evil is subsequent to the creation of the world and humanity.

The Cain and Seth Lines (4:1-26). Most commentators treat the story of the fratricide, the partially segmented genealogy of Cain , and the Adam-Seth-Enosh line separately, but it is also possible to read the entire chapter as one segmented Adamic genealogy with narrative developments. Since the birth of Seth is recorded after the history of the seven-generation Cain family, it might seem that the YHWH cult was introduced after a dark period when the "true religion" was unknown. The contrast between the technological advance and moral regression in the Cain line and the one "invention" of the Sethites, the introduction of the YHWH cult, is clearly deliberated.

Humanity Before The Deluge; The Adam Line (5:1-6:8); the second section of the first pentad consists in a ten-member linear genealogy, segmented only at the end with the three sons of Noah, and a reflective comment on the growth of evil in antediluvian society, continuing a theme broached in the first section.

The Adam Line (5:1-32). The ten-member genealogy from Adam to Noah inclusively runs parallel with the ten postdiluvian ancestors in 11:10-26, both together providing a comprehensive outline of the early history of humanity.

The Spread of Evil in the Antediluvian World (6:1-8); the passage immediately following the genealogy comprises an explanation in mythical terms of the incidence of arbitrary power in the prehistoric world followed by a reflective comment on this situation .

By way of inclusion, the final passage in the second *toledot* alludes again to the creation of humanity and at the same time serves as a transition to the central panel of the pentad by recording YHWH's decision to destroy.

Noah and the Deluge (6:9-9:29). The biblical story of the deluge is a fairly late version of a familiar narrative tradition attested from the time of the Sumerians to the Hellenistic period.

From the early days of historical-critical investigation the story of the deluge has been one of the principal testing grounds for source analysis.

Title and Introduction (6:9-10); the formulaic language of which is taken up again in the conclusion to this section, the superscript and the notice about the three sons place the long narrative following in the context of the overall genealogical framework. That Noah, like Enoch before him, "walked with God" obliges us to draw the same conclusions for the generation of the deluge as for that of Enoch.

The Deluge as Divine Punishment (6:11-13). This opening statement in 6:11-13 simply draws out the implications of Noah's righteousness in contrast to those of his generations.

Instruction for Building the Ark (6:14-18a). The instructions conclude with the repetition of the decision to destroy, recalling the language used earlier. There is also an advance announcement of the post-deluge covenant, illustrating once again the concern to bind the stages of the narrative into a unity.

Command to Board the Ark (6:18b-7:5). The command to board the vessel seems to have been featured in all versions of the deluge story, though unfortunately there is a gap at this point in the Sumerian tablet. There are also significant similarities in the description of the catastrophe.

Embarkation (7:6-16); the base narrative continues with the execution of the order to embark. The most salient feature of this passage is the repetition of the movement of people and animals into the ark, following the resumptive that repeats in almost identical terms the information given.

The Deluge Itself, Its Duration and Effects (7:17-24). The description of the actual deluge is quite restricted compared with the Mesopotamian versions. Emphasis is placed rather on what leads up to and follows it and the establishment of a new order on the purified earth. At this

point, with the water standing fifteen cubits over the highest mountain, the narrative has exhausted its forward movement.

Subsidence of the Floodwater (8:1-5); the wind blowing over the earth and the fountains of the deep recall the original creation, watery chaos from which the created order first arose. By the same token, the new order established after the subsidence of the water is a new creation, an inference which will be drawn out even further in the conclusion to the deluge narrative.

The Birds (8:6-12). Since it disturbs the symmetry of the three expeditions by the same bird at seven-day intervals, several commentators have decided that the first reconnaissance by the raven is intrusive. They also note that an explanation is offered only when the dove is launched for the first time.

Noah Leaves the Ark and Sacrifices (8:12-22). At this point the voice of God is heard for the first time since the command to enter the ark, which means that the deluge is the time of the silence of God. The sequence of the story is interrupted by the sacrifice which corresponds to a regular feature of this narrative tradition.

The New Order in the Postdiluvian World (9:1-19). The deluge story ends with the establishment of a new world order communicated in two discourses of God, both clearly marked by the stylistic device of inclusion. Basically, the new order consists in a return to the original creation with the divine blessing and command, a central motif of the narrative as a whole.

Noah the Vintner (9:20-29). The final chronological notice serves as an inclusion to the *toledot* as a whole and completes the pattern according to which the Adam-Noah line is laid out: when Noah was 500 years old he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japhet; when the flood came the sons were about 100 years old; after the flood Noah lived 350 years more; thus all the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

Descendants of Noah (10:1-11:9). The fourth section of the history falls into the pattern of a threefold division of postdiluvian humanity. The standard documentary view has it that the basic structure is provided by P, to whom are assigned the titles and conclusions of each section, short lists of descendants arranged conventionally in two generations with a predilection for the number seven, and the finale to the section as a whole in Gen. 10:32.

Title and Japhet List (10:1-5); the title introduces the fourth *toledot*, that of the three sons of Noah. The descendants of Japhet, whose name is probably related to that of the titan Iapetos, son of Uranus and Gaia and father of Atlas, Prometheus, and Epimetheus, are arranged in a list of seven "sons" and seven "grand-sons." Most of them can be identified with ethnic groups settled in Asia Minor.

Hamitic List (10:6-20). Mostly to the south, this list of places and peoples is organized according to the four ethnic groups of Ethiopians, Egyptians, Libyans, and Canaanites. Ethiopia and Egypt each have seven "sons," consisting in places for the former and ethnic groups for the latter, many so far unidentified. The most substantial and certainly the most interesting expansion of the Hamitic list is the report about Nimrod Gen 8:12.

The Shem List (10:21-32). The Priestly Source lists only five peoples and four descendants of Aram in this third branch of the human family. Elamites, Assyrians, and Arameans are well known. Arpachshad is sometimes identified with Babylon, but the name appears to be Hurrian, and Arrapha is a better candidate.

The City and Tower of Babel (11:1-9). The literary skill of the author of the Tower of Babel story, the same author encountered often in the preceding chapters of Genesis, has been the subject of considerable commentary in recent years. It is a perfectly balanced narrative that turns on the pivot or *Schweppunkt* of its central statement in verse 5, the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the humans had built.

Humanity After the Deluge: The Shem Line (11:10-26). This last section of the first pentad corresponds to the second section, which traces descent from Adam to Noah. The names in the Shem genealogy suggest a work of *bricolage*, an artificial composite put together to serve as a parallel to the antediluvians and bridge the gap between the deluge and Abraham, first of the Hebrews. The first five names occur in the "table of the nations" immediately preceding Gen 10:21-25. The genealogy is filled out with both ethnic names (e.g., Arpachshad) and place names (Serug, Naho, Terah in Northern Mesopotamia). It ends by narrowing down to one of the three great branches of the human family, arriving via Eber, eponymous ancestor of the Hebrews, to Abraham.

CHAPTER 4
The Story of the Ancestors (Gen 11:27-50:26)
(*Josheph Blenkinsopp*)

To begin with the fairly brief story that unfolds in these chapters is most simply described as a family history traced through four generations. From the literary point of view there are also significance differences between larger sections of the story. The characters receiving most attention are Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph.

While it is common practice to divide the story into three sections corresponding to the principal characters, the most explicit structural feature, as in Genesis 1-11, is the fivefold *toledot* arrangement. Since this is the way the text is actually organized it would be reasonable to take it as the starting point of our investigation.

Gen 11:27-25:11 Terah (Abraham).The first episode begins and ends with familiar genealogical formulas relating to Terah.Terah links the story of the ancestors with the first postdiluvians, a point clearly indicated by the much longer life span allotted to him.

All of the themes that follow are present implicitly in this *mise en scene*: the first stage of the journey to the promised land, the infertility of Sarah, the presence of Lot, son of Haran.

As we have seen, the issue of an heir focuses on Sarah and Lot. We detect some tension between the roles assigned to these two, since the infertility of Sarah would seem to consign her to at best a walk-on part in the danger of losing her to foreigners attracted by her beauty.

The presence of Lot, Haran's son, is emphasized from the beginning and at each stage of

the journey in and through Canaan. His separation from Abraham is part of a larger process by which Abraham's descendants in direct line are set apart from the Aramean kingdoms descended from Nahor, the Arabs from Abraham's marriage with Keturah, those descended from Ishmael, the Edomites from Esau, and Moab and Ammon from Haran and Lot.

Abraham's relation to the land is also paramount in two other episodes. The first records a troubled period when he was residing in a part of the Negev controlled by Abimelech, later identified as king of the Philistine.

The mission of Abraham's servant going to Mesopotamia to find a bride for Isaac assures the continuity of the line uncontaminated by Canaanite intermarriage. But the focus is no longer on Abraham but on Isaac, and it is with Isaac in the Negev, not with Abraham at Mamre, that the return journey terminates. There remains only to record the Arab line through Abraham's second wife, Keturah, the disposal of his goods, his death, and his burial in the field bought from Ephron Gen 25:1-11.

Gen 25:12-28 Ishmael; the Ishmael *toledot* itself is rounded off in the conventional way with the length of his life span and his death. The title of this second panel has been prefixed to a list of twelve Arab settlements-described as sons of Ishmael and princes-which has its own title and concluding formula. The role of Ishmael in relation to Isaac parallels that of Esau in relation to Jacob, hence the correspondence between the second and the fourth panels of this second pentad.

Gen 25:19-35:29 Isaac (Jacob). This record begins by recapitulating the birth of Isaac and his marriage to Rebekah and ends in the usual formulaic way with his life, death, and burial. The narrative in between, however, deals almost exclusively with Jacob and his relations with his brother Esau and his cousin Laban.

Gen 36:1-37:1 Esau-Edom. This Edomite chapter has preserved a great deal of onomastic

material-about eighty names-presented in familiar schematic arrangements: three branches of the Esau line and three "sons" of Esau by his wife Oholibamah, seven chieftains of the Eliphaz line and seven Horite, twelve descendants of Esau by Adah and Basemath, and perhaps originally twelve chieftains of Esau. The Edomite king list also follows an ancient pattern in presenting the eight rulers in chronological sequence, though it is quite clear that there is no dynastic succession.

The main purpose of this section is to record the territorial separation of the brothers. The history of sibling rivalry is thus brought to a conclusion favorable to Jacob's family, and their claim to Canaan survives unchallenged.

Gen 37:2-50:26 Jacob (Jacob's sons): Not least in its literary character, this last and longest section is distinctive in several respects. The story of Joseph's treatment at the hands of his brothers, his rise to power in Egypt, and his eventual reconciliation with his family has generally been characterized as a Novella, though one which has incorporated a number of subsidiary genres. While narrative interest in this final *toledot* obviously focuses on Joseph, it still keeps to the pattern of dealing with the family of Jacob as a whole, and indeed with Jacob himself, the final chapter of shoes life history comes only near the very end.

The story of Judah and Tamar has generally been read as an intrusive element spliced into the Joseph story with the purpose of providing additional genealogical information on one important branch of the Jacob/Israel family. This, then, is the way in which the great medley of stories about Israel's ancestors has been put together. The fivefold arrangement of the early history of humanity and the history of the ancestors looks like a well-planned narrative continuum from creation to the descent into Egypt.

Through genealogies and lists take up little space in the story of the ancestors, the entire narrative is presented within a complex genealogical structure encompassing four generations. If

the genealogy is viewed horizontally in its various segmentations, the emphasis will be seen to fall on relations with other ethnic groups: Arameans (Nahor-Bethuel), Moabites and Ammonites (Haran-Lot), Arabian trines (from Abraham's marriage with Keturah), Ishmaelites (from Hagar), Edomites and "Hittites" (Abraham-Esau). Viewed vertically, along its linear axis, it exhibits a successive narrowing down, leaving the descendants of Abraham in the direct line as sole claimants to the land of Canaan.

At significant moments the ages of the ancestors are carefully noted, and these notations have been synchronized with the overall chronological system. Therefore, Abraham is allotted twenty-five years in Canaan to the birth of Isaac, Isaac sixty to the birth of Jacob, and Jacob one hundred and thirty years in Canaan before going down into Egypt. Chronology therefore plays an important integrative role, obliging the attentive reader to place this sequence of episodes within the forward movement of a history the goal of which lies in the distant future.

The theme should be distinguished from motif, understood as "a type of incident, a particular situation, an ethical problem, or the like, which may be treated in a work of imagination." Theme is not merely a summary of the content or plot of work. A satisfactory solution would be the accept Clines's working definition of theme as the central or dominating idea of a literary work which serves to orient the reader and constitutes a proposal about how best to approach in (Clines 1978, 18).

In recent years debate has tended to concentrate on those pronouncements of the deity in which the ancestors were assured of the continuance of their line, numerous progeny, nationhood, secure possession of the land of Canaan, and a state of blessedness in general.

However, There is one resource which, if it cannot break the deadlock, may at least serve as a control, and that is the fact of so many allusions to the ancestors in the Hebrew Bible outside

of Genesis. Since the so-called wisdom books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs) nowhere refer to them, we are limited to the narrative material in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, the Deuteronomistic corpus including Deuteronomy, and prophetic books. Psalms, notoriously difficult to date, contain occasional allusions that at best serve a corroborative function.

In spite of the problems posed by their often complex editorial history, we begin with the prophetic books since they seem to offer the best prospect for sequential dating. A survey of retrospective allusions to ancestors in these books permits the following conclusions: 1) In numerous instances the term "father" refer to the forebears of Israel subsequent to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the emphasis is more often than not on their religious infidelity. 2) In several of these instances the allusion is more specifically to the ancestors of the exodus and wilderness period. 3) In pre-exilic prophetic texts the population of one or other of the two kingdoms is referred to frequently by the designation Jacob, less frequently Isaac and Joseph. 4) In those places where pre-exilic prophets appeal to historical traditions, the allusions generally go back no further than the sojourn in Egypt, the wilderness experience, and the occupation of the land. 5) Especially Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, in exilic prophetic texts we find a very noticeable preference for Jacob as an ethnic designation .

In Deuteronomistic corpus includes the book of Deuteronomy, conventionally dated to the seventh century B.C., the Deuteronomistic History, from the mid-sixth century B. C., and editorial expansions of prophetic books, especially Jeremiah, from about the same time.

In all these parts of the corpus we find a preponderant emphasis on the gift of the land as the fulfillment of a commitment made to the ancestors. But at the same time we note that wherever historical reminiscence is introduced, the perspective goes back no further than the descent into Egypt of Jacob and his seventy descendants.

An interesting feature of the narrative from Exodus to Deuteronomy is the relative paucity of reference back to the story of the ancestors in Genesis 12-50.

We may draw the following conclusions from this brief survey. Before the publication of Deuteronomy during the later period of the monarchy, the patriarchs, with the probable exception of Abraham, were known by name.

The story of Israel's ancestors can be read through from beginning to end as a reasonably coherent narrative without regard to sources. In fact, that is how it was read for centuries before the rise of historical criticism, and that is how many people still read it today with profit.

Looking over the entire Genesis narrative, we can now see more clearly some of the main concerns of the Priestly writer. One of the most prominent of these has to do with the covenant idea in response to the pressure of new situations and new exigencies.

Therefore, there are sufficient indications to suggest that P reflects the experience of exile and the hopes for a better future after the destruction of the state apparatus by the Babylonians in the early sixth century B.C.

Our discussion of the formation of Genesis 12-50 leads to the following conclusions. The final edition was organized around the Priestly work with its concern for precise chronology and its highly distinctive ideology. Comparison between the two works may also help to put in perspective the criterion of divine names which has played such a large part in the debate since the early days of critical inquiry.

It is still necessary to insist that we cannot even begin to address historical issues until we have come to terms with the literary problems, since so many readers of the Bible today have a stake in the historical accuracy of the narrative contained in it.

However speculative, the first requirement for saying anything about the historicity of the ancestral narratives is the identification of the traditions incorporated in the text.

Therefore, Traditio-historical investigation shifted the focus from the time of composition of the documents to the period in which the traditions behind the documents originated. The task then was to correlate these traditions with the archaeological record bearing on the social and cultural history of the ancient Near East.

The popularity of E. A. Speiser's commentary on Genesis in the Anchor Bible series has ensured that the best-known archeological parallels are those drawing on the Nuzi tablets from the fifteenth century B.C. Several of these texts illustrate various aspects of customary law in force among the predominantly Hurrian population in and around Nuzi, and these seemed to parallel rather closely certain features of Genesis stories that had puzzled earlier commentators.

CHAPTER 5
From Egypt to Canaan
(Joseph Blenkinsopp)

The opening paragraph in Exodus 1:1-7 recapitulate the longer list of the extended family of Jacob in Gen. 46:8-27. Therefore justifies a new book, it signals a new chapter in the history by noting that the entire generation of which we were reading in the later part of Genesis has passed away. The division into three allowed the final editor to place Leviticus, easily the shortest of the five books, in the central position between Exodus and Numbers, of almost exactly equal length, the entire section being then enclosed by the much more distinctive and self-contained first and fifth books.

This first section tells a fairly straightforward story of rescue from a life-threatening situation and of conflict leading to the victory of the weak over the strong, the oppressed over the oppressor. Beginning with small victories-the unnamed Pharaoh outwitted by the Hebrew midwives, a brutal Egyptian foreman assassinated by Moses. It moves to the contest in magic between Moses and Aaron on the one hand and the Egyptian sorcerers on the other, and eventually to a protracted trial of strength with a stubborn Pharaoh culminating in the death of the Egyptian firstborn, emigration en masse, and the crowning victory at the sea.

It is safe to say that no narrative in the Hebrew Bible has played such a central role in the Jewish and Christian interpretative communities, and in sub-groups within these communities, as the Exodus story.

Wed can do no more than give one or two examples of what has been called the exodus pattern in the Bible. It forms the subtext for the historian's description of the crossing of the Jordan. It comes through very clearly in the way the exilic Isaiah looks forward to an exodus from Babylonian captivity and return to the land.

It has been common practice to explain at least some of these puzzling features as resulting from a conflation of sources, the first stage of the oppression and the decision to drown the male infants belonging to J source, and the story about the midwives to E source.

The story continues with the birth of the savior, Moses, and his two escapes from death, first as an infant, then as a young man. The two episodes are linked as stages in his growth and the second indicates the passage of a considerable amount of time by the vague temporal phrase in those days.

The mysterious revelation at the burning thorn bush is one of the exegetical pressure points of the Torah history and as such has been the object of an immense of interpretative activity. Biblical interpretation is the lifeblood of the Jewish and Christian communities and we have seen that its earliest stages are embedded in the biblical texts themselves.

As we approach the moment of Moses' return to Egypt, the reader needs to be aware of the passage of time, not always explicitly noted by the narrator. The time spent in Median did not perhaps amount to forty years, but enough time had passed for the situation of the Hebrew slaves to have reached such a critical point that Moses could wonder whether they were still alive.

After the failure of the first mission, Moses embarks on a second attempt to free his people, this time with the assistance of Aaron. It is abundantly clear that this entire passage was originally the alternative P version of the mission just recorded.

Little need be added to the remarks made earlier on this long passage forming a bridge between oppression and liberation. A close reading reveals the care with which the editor has arranged the material at his disposal to communicate a message. The passage leading up to the plague narrative speaks of the signs to be performed, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, and the departure of the Israelites from his land.

The account of the final stage of the long sojourn in Egypt incorporates extensive ritual prescriptions. The Passover ritual is preceded by the announcement of the tenth plague which follows immediately afterward, and other ritual law has been spliced into the account of the departure.

The account of the Passover ritual, which services to delay and thus strengthen the impact of the mass death of the Egyptian firstborn, has incorporated an older version with closer links to this climax of the plague narrative. The additional instructions about the consecration of the firstborn and Unleavened Bread were added for good measure and are clearly Deuteronomic in character.

This reading of the narrative is confirmed by those liturgical hymns that speak of YHWH leading his people out of Egypt but either do not mention the Sea episode, or allude to it as distinct episode without reference to the exodus, or as an event subsequent to their being led by YHWH out of Egypt.

More significantly, the incident at the Sea, as described in the song, is part of a historical recital including the wilderness experience, the conquest of the Transjordanian kingdoms, entry into Canaan, and the eventual establishment of the sanctuary in Jerusalem.

While the account of what happened at Sinai in Ex. 19:1-Num 10:28 is integral to the wilderness narrative and contains many of its themes, divine guidance and rebellion-both its length and the complex issues involved in its interpretation counsel separate treatment. The

journey begins at Raamses in Egypt and ends in the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan, but in its final phase it includes an account of the conquest of territory in the Negev and Transjordan region together with measures preparatory to the conquest and occupation of Canaan.

The Pentateuch contains one complete and two fragmentary itineraries of Israel's trek from Egypt to the border of the promised land. To these we can add numerous topographical notices in the journey narrative in Exodus and Numbers. The shorter and more fragmentary lists in Num 21:10-20 and Deut 10:6-9 cover only the last phase of the journey, the passage through the Aravah and then east of the Dead Sea in the direction of Moab.

Much of the material in this late section therefore reflects the situation of the Judean community during the early post-exilic period. From the writings which have survived from this period, especially Ezra-Nehemiah, we know something of the problems facing this community, the issues being debated, and the factional struggles that were going on.

One of these is the curious incident of the bronze snake icon set up by Moses. In the course of his religious reform Hezekiah destroyed a cult object in the form of a snake believed to have been made by Moses but probably associated with a Canaanite fertility cults.

After arrival at the final staging area for the occupation of Canaan, no further movement forward is recorded. From this point to the end of the book, and in fact until the end of the Pentateuch, the Israelite base of operations is in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, opposite Jericho.

The guidance theme is developed with the help of several types which coalesce into a rich theological mosaic. The column of cloud by day and of fire by night appeared as the Israelites prepared to enter the wilderness, and stayed with them throughout the journey.

The cloud is also associated with the oracular tent in which Moses received communications concerning the governance of the people. Its presence signified divine

authentication of decisions promulgated from the tent, concerning the subdelegation of authority to the seventy elders and the rejection of the claims of Miriam and Aaron.

In Ex 23:20-33 the angel will guard Israel on the way and bring them to their destination; he must be obeyed; he will not pardon those who rebel against him; the divine name is in him. The mal'ak is therefore no human agent but a manifestation or hypostasis of the deity. It is closely related to the divine presence that accompanies Israel on the journey.

During the wilderness sojourn the ultimate authority, as communicator and interpreter of the divine will, was of course Moses. In the most general sense the authority of Moses stands for the authority of the revealed law, but law requires interpretation, and interpretation derives from specific individuals and groups with their own agendas and interests.

The basis for a claim to exercise authority often emerges more clearly when that authority is challenged. Moses confronts challenges to his leadership with the counterclaim that to challenge him is to oppose God. The Moses of the wilderness period not only mediates the law but also interprets, teaches, and administers it.

The Deuteronomic law mandates the setting up of judicial procedures throughout the country and the creation of a central judiciary composed of priest, Levites, and laity to deal with cases of special difficulty. However the system originated, it is reasonably clear that here too the wilderness period has provided a paradigm for the institutional life of the community.

The interest of the contemporary reader of the Bible tends to focus, much more than his counterpart in antiquity, on historical issues.

It may therefore be useful to state certain facts bearing on this issue of historicity. The first is that with the exception of the Merneptah stele from the last decade of the thirteenth century B.C., no source external to the Bible prior to the ninth century B.C. provides any direct information on the history of Israel.

CHAPTER 6
Sinai, Covenant and Law
(Joseph Blenkinsopp)

A series of events is recorded beginning with the arrival in the Sinai wilderness and ending with the move to the next stopping place, though laws take up the greater part of the space in this central section of the Pentateuch. The delivery and promulgation of the laws are therefore part of the story, and this circumstance invites the conclusion that they are to be understood in the context of the narrative to which they belong.

The Priestly Source strand in the Sinai periscope is part of an extensive narrative work beginning with creation. We shall see that there are good reasons for taking it down to the establishment of the wilderness sanctuary in Canaan and the allotting of tribal territory under the leadership of the priest Eleazar and Joshua.

According to this source, Israel then arrived at the mountain in the wilderness of Sinai. Whereupon Moses immediately entered the cloud blanketing the mountain in order to receive instructions for the setting up of the sanctuary and its cult.

We had occasion to note language and thought patterns characteristic of Deuteronomistic Source, at several points in our survey of the story from Genesis 12 to the end of Numbers. One of the most disputed issues now on the agenda in Pentateuchal studies is the extent of the Deuteronomistic Source contribution to the story of the founding events in Genesis 12-50,

Exodus, and Numbers. The Sinai periscope is at the center of the debate, and in view of its pivotal position in the narrative and its crucial theological importance.

At the conclusion of this address the phrase "YHWH said to Moses" is repeated in order to introduce instructions to prepare for what is to follow on the third day. The consecration and washing of clothing are reminiscent of preparations for the Schechem covenant in Gen 35:1-4, the people are to stay distant from the sacred temenos under pain of death, and the event is to be announced by the blowing of the ram's horn.

With its appeal to the Israelites to recall what they themselves have seen, the brief introduction to the covenant book is cast in the by now familiar Deuteronomistic Source style. The same must be said for the sequel to the laws which introduces the theme of divine guidance and the conquest of the land.

The origin and early development of the traditions about Moses continue to be debated. Probably few scholars today would subscribe to the minimalist view of Martin North, who shrinks the original historical nucleus to the grave tradition.

Ancient tradition has also been transmitted in the account of the oracle tent at which Moses received communications from God. The account of the remarking to the covenant is preceded and followed by passages the purpose of which is to explore the unique status of Moses.

The paragraph following the remade covenant records how, when Moses finally came down the mountain with the two "tablets of the testimony," his face was transformed from intimate contact with the godhead.

As an essential feature of the Sinai/Horeb covenant, the earliest compilation of Israelite laws takes its name from the document written by Moses and read publicly by him. According to the narrative context it was delivered privately to Moses following the promulgation of the decalogue and the request of the faithful, fearful of longer exposure to the divine presence.

Providing one more illustration of bracketing or ring composition, the covenant law book begin and ends with cultic prescriptions. More precisely, the final admonition against invoking deities other than YHWH forms an inclusion with prohibiting the making, and presumably also the invoking of images of deities. The final section, which is closely related to the so-called cultic decalogue, has been tacked on as an appendix.

At an early stage of development, on brief analysis of the components of the covenant law book provides a fairly broad sample of Hebrew law. Many attempts have been made to fix the date of the compilation more precisely, ranging from the time of Moses to the reign of Jehu in the ninth century.

A case law is a specific kind of legal article that states the facts of the case in the protasis (when a person does X) and the legal consequences in the apodosis (then Y follows), as the name suggests. A common-law tradition develops through the gradual accumulation of such precedents covering different aspects of the social life of the individual. With increasing urban development this basic system would clearly have undergone modification.

Case law presupposes an underlying ethical consensus transmitted from one generation to the next within the kinship network. Certain attitudes and kinds of behavior are recognized as incompatible with the common ethos of the social group; certain things are "not done in Israel."

There are significant differences between these types of legal or quilegal sentences. While they would certainly have required further interpretation, those listing capital offenses are quite specific, and the same can be said for several of the prohibitions, especially the detailed list of forbidden sexual relations in Leviticus 18.

Apodictic laws are characteristically presented in series. This does not emerge very clearly in the covenant law book since they have been edited into the larger framework of a collection of case law. In fact, the seven apodictic sentences in the first section have been

inserted at two different points, as have the prohibitions, possibly amounting to ten, in the second section. A decalogue has also been identified in Ex 34:13-26, though in its present form the covenant contains either eleven articles or twelve if verse 13 is included.

With its even less elegant derivatives Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic, the title Deuteronomy comes to us from the Old Greek (LXX) translation of Deut 17:18 and Josh 8:32. Respectively, these texts refer to the writing by the king and Joshua of a copy of the law of Moses, and it is generally assumed that the Greek version mistakenly took this to mean a second law.

The laws in Deuteronomy are presented in a highly distinctive fashion, compared with the covenant law book or the Code of Hammurabi with its prologue and epilogue,. Scholars are accustomed to speak of the law code in Chapters 12-26 and the framework to the code in the remaining chapters, but the laws are simply a continuation of the first-person discourse of Moses addressed to the Israelite assembly.

If only because of the successive editions through which the book has passed, it will be obvious by now that there can be no simple answer to this question-who wrote Deuteronomy? Since these measures tally fairly closely with the corresponding cultic laws in Deuteronomy, it was concluded that the book in question contained at least these laws with the curses and blessings attached to them.

The historicity of this report, which comes to us from the author of Dtr for whom the Deuteronomic law was of paramount importance, has been variously assessed.

As possibility not easily discounted is that the discovery of the book is a fiction of the historian the purpose of which was to explain how this allegedly Mosiac and therefore ancient text could have been unknown and neglected for so long.

Whoever it was that actually wrote the book, it seems that it was this constituency that found a voice, the voice of Moses, in the political, social, and religious program of Deuteronomy.

The recurrence in the Priestly Source narrative of formulaic expression, and especially expressions indicating the completion of a significant work commanded or carried out by God, highlight aspects of a clearly articulated and carefully designed structure. Without going into detail, we may note simply that the most solemn of these conclusion formulas occur at three points of the Priestly Source history: (1) Creation of the world (Gen 2:1-2). (2) Construction of the wilderness sanctuary (Ex 39:32; 40:33). (3) Setting up of the sanctuary in Canaan and allotment of territory (Josh 19:51).

We saw the Priestly Source version of the Sinai event consists exclusively in the revelation of instructions for the setting up of the cult and the showing of the model according to which the sanctuary is to be built.

Throughout the nineteenth century the tendency in liberal Protestantism was to identify morality as the core of Christianity and therefore of true religion in general, and to interpret progress as a gradual abandonment of the archaic, materialistic, and magical world view in which rituals of avoidance played a dominant role. Most discussions of the subject in Old Testament scholarship of the last two centuries have been colored in one way or another by assumption about the place of ritual in Christian practice.

A survey of some of the more influential theologies of the Old Testament and monographs on biblical law written by Christian scholars in the present century will show how persistent this prejudicial view of the ritual law has proved to be.

The insertion of a manual on sacrifice at this point interrupts the narrative connection between the instructions for the establishment of the priesthood in Exodus 29 and the ordination ceremony, and therefore the official inauguration of worship, in Leviticus 8-10.

There are two kinds of sacrificial offerings: those that are optional and unscheduled and those mandated for the removal of sin and curability. 1) The burnt or whole offering, perhaps the oldest; the cereal or tribute offering, probably the most popular because the least expensive. 2) The peace or well-being offering, eaten by the donor and his family. Of the two kinds of mandatory sacrifice, the purification offering is required for the removal of involuntary infractions and specifies the offerings to be made by the high priest, the congregation as a whole, a tribal head, and a member of the common people.

The fivefold occurrence of a recapitulatory conclusion formula divides this manual into the following section: clean and unclean animals; uncleanness resulting from childbearing; skin diseases and, by extension, rot or mildew in buildings and clothing; the appropriate rituals of purification; uncleanness through bodily discharges.

The criteria according to which living things are categorized as clean and unclean are clearly stated, but the rationale determining the criteria has long been a matter of speculation. The general idea behind this taxonomic system seems to be to preserve the order and distinctness of the original creation, the importance of which can be gauged from the tenfold occurrence of the phrase "according to its/their kind" in Genesis.

The name "Holiness Code" was suggested by the frequent repetition of the call to imitate the holiness of God ("you shall be holy, for I YHWH your God am holy").

A consecutive reading of the homiletic conclusions to the sections will highlight the connection between observance of the ethical and ritual law and secure possession of the land.

CHAPTER 7
Concluding Reflections
(Joseph Blenkinsopp)

The Final Stage, the Pentateuch begins with creation and ends with the death of Moses. But the terminus would seem to call for an explanation that it begins with creation is to be expected. In the original form of the main-line Priestly Source narrative it seems that the death of Moses was recorded as an event on the way, following on the death of Miriam and Aaron, the latter described in similar terms. It was then necessary to transpose the commissioning of Joshua and the death of Moses from their original position in the Priestly Source narrative to the end of Deuteronomy. This revised version, the Priestly character of which has always been acknowledged, was subsequently disturbed by the insertion of the poetic Blessings of Moses and minor expansions in the Deuteronomic style.

We need to take another look at its major components, before discussing the implications of this restructuring of the narrative of founding events and the social situation which precipitated it, Deuteronomy and the Priestly History.

The character of the Deuteronomic law as a blueprint is especially interesting when we turn to what it has to say about prophecy. By speaking about prophets in the section of the law dealing with the state apparatus-monarchy, priesthood, prophecy, judiciary-it betrays a concern to bring it within the institutional grid of the commonwealth.

As some scholars have argued, an early draft of Deuteronomy may have been part of this literary activity, but the link between the book and the reforms of Josiah a century later is much

more clearly in evidence, however the connection is formulated. There is also a consensus that further editions of both Deuteronomy and Dtr were produced some time after the deportations in the sixth century B.C., either in Judah or somewhere in the diaspora.

The general line of argument advanced here would be confirmed, if the first collection of prophetic writings was put together during the exilic period by the same school that produced Deuteronomy and Dtr, a hypothesis which has much to recommend it. The existence of an official corpus of prophetic writings would not in itself exclude ongoing prophetic activity, but it would tend inevitably to shift the emphasis from the present to the past, from the spoken to the written word, and from direct prophetic utterance to the interpretation of written prophecies.

We, therefore, have the following situation with the publication of the Deuteronomistic corpus in its several parts: (1) a document claiming immunity from later editorial intrusion containing a law and constitution that may not be altered; (2) a characterization of Moses as prophet and a redefinition of prophecy as Mosaic; (3) a collection of Mosaic-prophetic books, the exact contents of which are unknown, ending with Jeremiah last of the line; (4) a history of the period subsequent to Moses which depicts it as one of religious infidelity followed by disaster, and therefore a period which in no sense could be regarded as normative.

We recall at this point the arguments advanced in a previous chapter for a much more extensive D editing of the history from Abraham to Moses than the classical documentary hypothesis contemplated. We saw that the focal points of this editorial activity were the promissory covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 and the account of the making, breaking and remaking of the Horeb covenant in Exodus 19-34. We also saw that the sequence of events in the Exodus passage reflects events in the religious history of Israel.

Deuteronomy came to form part of a much more extensive complex of narrative and law,

in spite of its claim to finality. The narrative span within Deuteronomy itself takes in only one day, the last day in the life of Moses, and the historical reminiscence which it contains extends the horizon back only as far as the giving of the law at Horeb. On the other hand, the Priestly history begins with the creation of the world and ends with the setting up of the wilderness sanctuary at Shiloh in Canaan and the distribution of territory to the tribes under the direction of Eleazar the priest and Joshua.

It seems most likely that the Priestly *Gundschrift* was composed in the Babylonian diaspora, in light of the little that we know of the situation of Jewish communities during this period. With the exception of the chief priest of the Jerusalem temple and his deputy, who were executed by the Babylonians, most of the priestly class must have been deported together with others belonging to the higher strata of Judean society.

The combination of the Priestly history with Deuteronomy, resulting in a narrative from creation to the death of Moses, and the concentration of all the legal material within this narrative framework, cannot be explained exclusively in terms of circumstances, exigencies, and events inherent to the Jewish community.

According to the biblical record Ezra arrived in the province in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, probably Artaxerxes I and therefore in the year 458 B.C., with a mandate to oversee the administration of "the law of your God and the law of the king," set up appropriate judicial procedures, and enforce penalties for nonobservance. The law in question was not a new creation since it is assumed that it was known in the province.

The traditional view identifying Ezra's law with the legal content of the Pentateuch has been held by many scholars in the modern period, including Wellhausen. But several indications in Ezra-Nehemiah suggest that the final stage of formation came at a somewhat later time.

A further and final consideration concerns the quantitative preponderance of ritual law and its central position in the Pentateuch. There is ample evidence that Achemenid rulers favored local cult establishments and went to considerable pain to ensure that they operated smoothly.

By whatever play of circumstances it attained that status, one of the characteristics of a canonical text is its capacity to generate commentary. In this respect the Pentateuch has been accorded in both Judaism and Christianity a relative rather than absolute position. In Judaism functional canonicity belongs also to the Mishnah and Gemarah, and perhaps to a lesser degree to the midrash and the work of the great *parshanim* of the Middle Ages; while in Christianity it has been interpreted from the standpoint of a new source of authority, that of the Christ event. But a canonical text is also by definition a text to which one must always return in the unavoidable, ongoing dialectic between tradition and situation. In this process, it is safe to say, no text has played a role comparable to that of the Pentateuch.
