I. The Pentateuch’s Makeup, Unity, Structure, & Message

A. Titles:
1. “Pentateuch” from the Greek *penta* (five) *and* teuchos (tool, vessel, book)
2. “Torah”: usually translated “law,” which suggests rules, regulations, and restrictions; better “instruction” for holiness—i.e., how to live in relationship to God in his world.

B. Narrative & Canonical Flow
1. Narrative Flow:

---

**Narrative History vs. Covenant Legislation**

- **Primeval History:** Gen 1–11
- **Patriarchs:** Gen 12–50
- **Exodus:** Exod 1–19
- **Wilderness:** Num 1–20
- **Deuteronomy:** Deut 1–34

---

Jason S. DeRouchie, PhD © 2013
2. **Canonical Flow: The Old Covenant Established in the Law (God as Savior)**
   a. Genesis: Prologue to God’s Universal Kingdom
   b. Exodus: King Yahweh & His Global Purpose through Israel
   c. Leviticus: Holy Yahweh & the Necessity for Holiness
   d. Numbers: Faithful Yahweh & His Unfaithful People
   e. Deuteronomy: A Call to Lasting Covenant Relationship

**C. Major Characters in the Plot:**
1. Adam & Eve the first humans & Noah the preserver of the human race (Gen 2–11)
2. Abraham & his offspring, especially Jacob & Joseph (Gen 12–50)
3. Moses (Exod 1–Deut 34); *explains the covenant and leads Israel to the border of the promised land
4. Yahweh is the most dominant and ever present character; the Torah first and foremost tells us about him

**D. Component Parts:**
1. **Introduction:** Gen 1:1–2:3
   a. The formal narrative begins in 2:4.
   b. The chapter provides an ideal lens for understanding how humans are to live in God’s world God’s way for God’s glory.
   c. Answers the key question being asked by the generation entering into Canaan (where the Pentateuch closes): How do I live and not die?
2. **Central Concern:**
   a. Cluster of themes:
      • Supremacy of Israel’s God as creator and sustainer
      • Divine revelation in deed & word
      • Yahweh’s covenant with Israel in light of his covenants with Adam/Noah & Abraham
      • Abraham’s posterity
      • Divine election
      • Need for faith overflowing in obedience to enjoy life
      • Blessing & curses
   b. All related to the Kingdom of God—God, the Great King, grants to his obedient vassal the right to dwell in his land and promises sustained provision & protection from enemies, by which he will expand his worldwide kingdom.
Fig. 2.5. Component Parts of the Pentateuch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Gen 1:1–2:3 – The chapter provides an ideal lens for understanding how humans are to live in God's world, God's way, for God's glory; answers the key question being asked by the wilderness generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Concern</td>
<td>The restoration &amp; expansion of the Kingdom of God: the Yahweh-Israelite covenant becomes the lens for life, not only for Israel but for the whole world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Deuteronomy – the Constitution of the United Tribes of Israel for life in the land and for the fulfillment of God's intentions for them as channels of kingdom expansion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**E. The development of “God's kingdom” in the Pentateuch:**

1. Introductory comments:
   a. The author wants to link God’s original plan of blessing for humanity with his establishment of the covenant with Israel at Sinai, which is God’s plan to restore his blessing to the world through the offspring of Abraham (Gen 12:1–3; Exod 2:24; 19:4–6).
   b. The author wants to show that the covenant at Sinai will ultimately fail to restore God’s blessing to humanity because Israel will fail to trust God and obey his will.
   c. The author wants to show that God’s promise to restore blessing will ultimately succeed because God himself will one day make possible in and through Israel what they cannot do on their own, thus giving God all the glory (Deut 30:1–10).
   d. The message of the Pentateuch is future oriented (eschatological) and focused on hope for the fulfillment of God’s world-wide kingdom expansion.

2. Progressive Movement in the Pentateuch toward a goal yet realized:
   a. *Pentateuch* – Ends with a point of tension and expectation:
      i. Israel has become a great people, but the Promised Land (the goal of the journey) has not yet been reached.
      ii. Israel’s leader is dead.
      iii. Israel’s future is open-ended: The previous generation failed to enter the Land; how will the new generation do?
   b. *Genesis* – The deaths of Jacob (with his bones buried in Canaan) & Joseph (with the request that he be buried in Canaan once the conquest is complete) anticipate movement from Egypt to the Promised Land.
   c. *Exodus* – Ends at Sinai (a stop in the journey) with the glory of Yahweh taking up residence in the movable tent, anticipating the journey that lies ahead.
   d. *Leviticus & Numbers* – Shift from the commandment at Sinai (Lev 27:34) to the commandments given to the people in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho (Num 36:13) with narratives within regarding the movement toward the Land.
   e. *Deuteronomy* – A statement principally directed toward the future: the “statutes and ordinances that you shall be careful to do in the land” (12:1).

Jason S. DeRouchie, PhD © 2013
3. **Main theme:** The fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs to expand God’s kingdom through a blessed, God-oriented community, as a reaffirmation of God’s original intentions for the human race, through God’s mercy and the collaboration of Moses

**Fig. 2.6. Unity of the Pentateuch**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 1–11</td>
<td>The Need for Blessing (the curse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 12–50</td>
<td>The Provision of Blessing (an heir)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus–Leviticus</td>
<td>The Context for Blessing (the covenant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers–Deuteronomy</td>
<td>The Realm of Blessing (the land)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Thrust</td>
<td>God’s covenant with his people is established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Theme</td>
<td>The fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs to expand God’s kingdom through a blessed, God-oriented community, as a reaffirmation of God’s original intentions for the human race, through God’s mercy and the collaboration of Moses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. **Pentateuchal Authorship, Composition, & Historicity**

*Colossians 2:8.* See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

**A. The Traditional View**

1. The Pentateuch itself attests to Moses’ composing at least some of its parts.
   a. Moses wrote divine promises to instill faith:
      - Exod. 17:14. Then Yahweh said to Moses, ‘Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amelek from under heaven.
   b. Moses inscribed God’s instructions to Israel as a lasting guide and warning:
      - Exod. 24:4; 34:27. And Moses wrote down all the words of Yahweh…. And Yahweh said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and Israel.”
      - Deut. 31:24. When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end, he commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the Covenant of Yahweh, “Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.” (see 31:9)
   c. Moses journaled Israel’s journey through the wilderness
      - Num. 33:2. Moses wrote down their starting places, stage by stage, by command of Yahweh, and these are their stages according to their starting places.
   d. Moses penned God’s warning song against Israel
      - Deut. 31:19, 22. Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel…. So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught to the people of Israel.

2. Later biblical figures identify Moses with the Pentateuch, some even noting his authorship its books.
   a. Titles used for all or part of the Pentateuch:
      i. *The Book of Moses* (Ezra 6:18; Neh 13:1; 2 Chr 25:4; 35:12; Mark 12:26)
ii. The Book of the Law (Deut 29:21; 30:10; 31:26; Josh 1:8; 8:34; 2 Kgs 22:8, 11; 2 Chr 34:15; Neh 8:3; Gal 3:10); ... of Moses (Josh 8:31; 23:6; 2 Kgs 14:6; Neh 8:1); ... of Yahweh (Neh 9:3; 2 Chr 17:9; 34:14); of God (Neh 8:18)


b. Key biblical voices:
   i. The narrator of the Book of Joshua stresses Moses’ hand in writing
      • Josh 8:32. And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written.

   ii. The Chronicler stresses Moses was the channel through which the Book of the Law came
      • 2 Chr. 34:14. Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of Yahweh given through Moses.

   iii. Jesus unequivocally speaks of the Pentateuch in connection to Moses.
      • Luke 24:44. These are my words that I spoke to you while I will still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

   iv. Jesus explicitly declares that he is spoken about in Moses writings (pl).
      • John 5:46–47. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?

3. Summary of Traditional View:
   a. Like all historical writing, the Pentateuchal narrative is selective and written from a particular viewpoint.
   b. God is Lord of history.
   c. The Pentateuch accurately records and interprets events from the creation through the death of Moses and provides a factual basis for Israel’s faith.
   d. Moses was the primary author of the Pentateuch.

B. An Introduction to the Challenges against the Traditional View

1. There are a number of editorial glosses that have led scholars to view the Pentateuch as having a late origin, from a time:
   a. When the Canaanites were no longer a threat;
      • Gen. 12:6. Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. (see also 13:7)

   b. When some would been ignorant of the origin of an Israelite practice;
      • Gen. 32:32. Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip on the sinew of the thigh.

   c. When the east side of the Jordan would be “beyond the Jordan”;
      • Deut. 1:5. Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to explain this law… (cf. 1:1; 3:8, 35; 4:41, 46–47, 49)

   d. When some would need historical-geographical commentary on the origin of a city;
      • Deut. 3:14. Jair the Manassite took all the region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called the villages after his own name, Havvoth-jair, as it is to this day.
e. When some would question the burial place of Moses;
   • Deut. 34:6. And he [Yahweh] buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.

f. When a comment about Moses’ prophetic uniqueness would be significant.
   • Deut. 34:10. And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses.

2. The Rise of Historical Criticism (for a more fully developed discussion and evaluation of historical criticism, see Appendix 2.1, “Pentateuchal Criticism”):
   a. 3 Presuppositions of Historical Criticism (E. Troeltsch, 1865–1923):
      i. Principle of Criticism: “presupposed skepticism of sources”
      ii. Principle of Analogy: “present human experience limits what can qualify as ‘historical’ in the past”
      iii. Principle of Correlation: When two events correlate, “potential historical causation is limited to either natural forces or human agency”

      NOTE: These convictions are nothing more than assumptions about the nature of reality—i.e., statements of faith; all worldviews are a web of interconnected beliefs about reality; such beliefs can be theistic or a-theistic, but all are nevertheless faith-based.

   b. Implications for the Study of the Pentateuch:
      i. No miracles or foretelling of the future: The supernatural realities expressed in the Pentateuch are beyond validation (thus unscientific) and therefore unhistorical.
      ii. The belief that God is the Lord of history is unscientific and thus unhistorical.
      iii. Developed beliefs come only by a long process of evolution.
          (1) The movement is always from naturalistic animism > polytheism > henotheism > monotheism.
          (2) The developed theology (monotheism + detailed laws) of the Pentateuch requires a long evolution in Israel’s history, suggesting the Pentateuch is a late creation grounded in myth and fiction, though filled with hope and moral teaching.
             (a) Primitive, simple, spontaneous, popular faith > ethical concerns and consciousness initiated by the prophets > ceremonial and ritual religion (“law”) influenced by the priests.
             (b) Various “sources” must, therefore, have been redacted into what we now have as the Pentateuch: J (“Yahwistic Source”); E (“Elohistic Source”); P (“Priestly Source”); D (“Deuteronomy”)

   c. Key Assumptions in the Historical Criticism of the Pentateuch:
      i. It is easy to determine the purposes and methods behind documents and redactions.
      ii. Civilization and religion progress slowly, and Israel’s history, literature, and religion developed in a simple, evolutionary manner. A great work of literature like the Pentateuch could not have been written
in the 2nd millennium B.C.; indeed, Greek epic and dramatic literature did not appear until 1st millennium. Furthermore, Israelite history and religion must have progressed from primitive tribal religion to prophetic ethical religion to advanced monotheism (animism > polytheism > henotheism > monotheism).

iii. Inter-textual markers or stylistic differences allow us to delineate source divisions in a text:

1. Different names for the deity (e.g., Yahweh vs. Elohim vs. El-Shaddai)
2. Variations in language and style (e.g., vocabulary preferences; dull vs. vivid writing style)
3. “Contradictions” and divergences in view (e.g., Gen. 6:11–22 [P] says to take two of every kind of animal but Gen. 7:1–5 [J] says to take seven pairs of clean animals)
4. Duplicate accounts and/or repetitions (e.g., passing off wives as sisters: Abraham in Gen. 12:10–20 [J] and 20:1–18 [E]; Isaac in Gen. 26:6–11)
5. Signs of composite structure in sections, where each separate “source” has a unity of theology and message
6. Anachronisms (i.e., chronological lapses) (e.g., reference to “Dan” in Gen. 14:14)
7. Textual references to Moses in 3rd person and the record of his death

iv. Individual authors of the various sources aimed to produce a single, continuous history but would not tolerate inconsistency, repetition, or narrative digressions; the redactors, on the other hand, were oblivious to and/or comfortable with contradiction and repetition when they combined their documents.

v. D assumed JE but not P, the latter of which revealed a developed monotheism not seen in Israel’s early national history. P must therefore be the latest source, and the Pentateuch must not have been completed in its present form until the post-exilic period.

d. Scholarly Consensus by 1970:

i. General agreement on sources.

ii. The final form has a pre-history that can serve to enlighten the history of Israel.

iii. Developmentalism/evolution (animism > polytheism > henotheism > monotheism)
e. Result of Such Presuppositions: The OT cannot speak for itself but must be re-conceptualized (from Garrett, “Historical Criticism,” in Foundations for Biblical Interpretation, p. 193):
   i. Most today reject Mosaic authorship.
   ii. Most today affirm that the stories in the Pentateuch likely differ radically from the early material behind the text (i.e., whether earlier sources or what actually happened).
   iii. Most last century and some today believe the Pentateuchal text resulted from a long process of joining and editing material that was often contradictory and had little connection with Moses.
   iv. Most today see the Pentateuch as a unified work void of long redaction or tradition histories; however, the same scholars tend to treat the text as out-and-out fiction with little or no historical moorings and having a very late provenance in the history of Israel.

C. An Initial Response to the Challenges Related to Authorship & Composition (for a more thorough overview of the history of this discussion with evaluation, see Appendix A.2.1 and A.2.2.)
1. The false assumptions of source analysis (some sample responses):¹
   a. While source criticism sometimes results in the delineation of discrete, well-shaped units that stand on their own, the result more often is internal confusion in each “document” that does not hold clearly together. An example is found in S. R. Driver’s proposed source divisions of Genesis 28:10–30:7 (An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, 16). While some may respond that details that would make the J and E versions more coherent have been suppressed in the redactional process, this only concedes the point that J and E, as we have them, are incoherent and cannot be used to support the documentary hypothesis.


Jason S. DeRouchie, PhD © 2013
b. R. N. Whybray has perceptively identified a challenge to the deconstructionist approach employed by traditional source critics (*The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study*, JSOTSup 53 [Sheffield: JSOT, 1999], 49): “The identification and reconstruction of the documents were based on the assumption that each document was consistent with itself, in language, style and theology or points of view. Without this concept of consistency the hypothesis would fall to the ground. Yet the hypothesis depends equally, on the concept of the inconsistency apparent in the larger works which are supposed to be the work of the redactors: that is to say, the actual distinction made by the critics between one passage or phrase and another as having originally belonged to different documents is made on the basis of the redactor’s having left two conflicting passages or phrases side by side with no attempt to conceal their incompatibility. Thus the hypothesis can only be maintained on the assumption that, while consistency was the hallmark of the various documents, inconsistency was the hallmark of the redactors.”

c. Different names for Deity

i. The variations are intentional because each name has a unique significance (e.g., Yahweh, the covenantal personal name of God; Elohim, the universal, cosmic God; El-shadai: the one who presides over the heavenly court).

ii. Other nations used more than one name for their gods (e.g., Baal = Aleyn Baal = Son of Dagon, etc.).

iii. The distinctions are not maintained consistently (e.g., Gen 22:11 is traditionally assigned to E, but it uses “Yahweh”).

iv. Since the names are used interchangeably elsewhere, the alteration may be unconscious, or it may be that the use of one title over another bears theological significance.

v. There is no legitimate reason why the proposed sources would have refrained from using the different names.

d. Variations in language and style

i. Style depends on context and is not a mark of authorship. One person is capable of writing many different types of material. Shakespeare wrote sonnets, tragedies, comedies, and prose.

ii. The alteration of words may be purely stylistic for the sake of variation, or it may be due to distinct nuances of meaning, even unknown to us.

iii. The “arid” style of the genealogies of P is simply a by-product of their nature as genealogies and has nothing to do with their being written in a different style. Furthermore, the genealogies of J look just like those of P.

e. “Contradictions” and divergences in view

i. General note: Every “contradiction” has to be examined on a case-by-case basis, but apparent contradictions hardly sustain the documentary hypothesis. The key teaching of the passages must be emphasized.
Inconsistencies can be forced on anybody’s writing if one is determined to do so.

ii. *Inconsistencies in the flood account.* Whereas Genesis 6:20 calls for one pair of every kind of animal to be brought on the ark, 7:2 says to bring seven pairs of clean animals. This difference is easily explained if 7:1–2 provides the precise figure given immediately before the flood, whereas 6:20 is a general figure given before the ark was built. Provision had to be made to ensure that there would be sufficient livestock after the flood, and thus the higher number of clean animals.

iii. *The inconsistent use of the term Levite.* The solution is best explained within the context of the history of Israel as it is traditionally and canonically understood (see Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis*, ch. 11).

iv. *Distinct portraits of God.* God is not a stone. He adapts his methods to meet the needs of people and circumstances.

v. *Different means of worship.* The view that approaching God by prayer stands in contrast to approaching him by ritual is highly subjective. Both are true and not contradictory.

vi. *Human faults.* The Bible is the most honest book of antiquity. Where it appears to tone down faults in descriptive material, the prescriptive texts must still serve as the norms for proper behavior.

f. Duplicate accounts and / or repetitions

i. In an ancient text, there is no stronger indication that a single document is present than parallel accounts. For example, in the Ugaritic Epic of Keret, large portions of the text are repeated verbatim (albeit from different perspectives). Similarly, in Genesis 24, a great deal of vv. 12–27 is repeated in vv. 34–48, albeit from the servant’s perspective.

ii. If two or more separate events were perceived to be similar to one another, ancient writers tended to give accounts of the events in parallel fashion, highlighting the similarities. In Kings, for example, a common formula is used of all northern kings to highlight their common evil in departing from Yahweh.

g. Signs of composite structure—the flood:

i. Nothing of that which is attributed to J is incompatible with P.

ii. Whereas Genesis 6:10–22 is attributed to P and 7:1–5 to J, the two texts, while containing some repetition, are actually consecutive. The P material is prior to the building of the ark and the J material is a speech of God after its completion but prior to the beginning of the flood. The repletion heightens the dramatic anticipation of the deluge to follow and is not indicative of two separate documents having been combined.

iii. Similarly, Genesis 7:21 and 22 are viewed as redundant, with v. 21 being assigned to P and v. 22 to J. However, the two verses are simply chiastic: (A) They perished (B) Every living thing that moves on the earth… (B’) Everything that has the breath of the living spirit… (A’)

Jason S. DeRouchie, PhD © 2013
They died. This suggests a single, unified narration (so F. Anderson, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, 40).

iv. Gordon J. Wenham has also observed a high level of literary balance and symmetry of structure that would be lost if the flood account was not originally a unified whole (so “The Coherence of the Flood Narrative,” *Vetus Testamentum* 28 [1978] 338).

Fig. 2.2. The Unified Structure of the Flood Narrative in Genesis 6:10–9:19

| A  | Noah (6:10a)               |
| B  | Shem, Ham, and Japheth (10b) |
| C  | Ark to be built (14–16)    |
| D  | Flood announced (17)       |
| E  | Covenant with Noah (18–20) |
| F  | Food in the ark (21)       |
| G  | Command to enter the ark (7:1–3) |
| H  | 7 days waiting for flood (4–5) |
| I  | 7 days waiting for flood (7–10) |
| J  | Entry to ark (11–15)       |
| K  | Yahweh shuts Noah in (16)  |
| L  | 40 days of flood (17a)     |
| M  | Waters increase (17b–18)   |
| N  | Mountains covered (19–20)  |
| O  | 150 days waters prevail ((21–24) |
| P  | GOD REMEMBERS NOAH (8:1–2) |
| O’ | 150 days waters abate (3)   |
| N’ | Mountain tops visible (4–5) |
| M’ | Waters abate (5)            |
| L’ | 40 days (end of) (6a)       |
| K’ | Noah opens window of ark (6b) |
| J’ | Raven and dove leave ark (7–9) |
| I’ | 7 days waiting for waters to subside (10–11) |
| H’ | 7 days waiting for waters to subside (12–13) |
| G’ | Command to leave the ark (15–17[22]) |
| F’ | Food outside the ark (9:1–4…) |
| E’ | Covenant with all flesh (8–10) |
| D’ | No flood in the future (11–17) |
| C’ | Ark (18a)                   |
| B’ | Shem, Ham, and Japheth (18b) |
| A’ | Noah (19)                   |

h. Anachronisms

i. General statement: No one questions that the grammar and some geographical references have been updated to clarify for later generations the meaning of the text; this is a far cry for complete editorial overhaul.

ii. The Philistines: While it is true that the Philistine inscriptions begin only in the 12th century, much of their early trade was in perishable goods. It is well known that at this time trade was wide spread in the Mediterranean, and Aegean goods have been found at Ras Shamra. Furthermore, the fact that Ramses II is the first to mention the

Jason S. DeRouchie, PhD © 2013
Philistines on his stele in 1195 does not mean that they were not in the area prior to that. This is an argument from silence.

iii. Camels: The first archaeological mention of the domesticated camel is on a cuneiform tablet dated in the 18th century B.C. (See J. Zarins, *ABD* 1:824–26). The Scriptures agree with archaeology that, although camels were domesticated early, their use was not widespread.

iv. Key expressions like “before any king ruled in Israel”: Mosaic authorship does not demand that every word was written by Moses. A later scribe may have inserted this as an observation, but if so, he did it without doing any violence to the truthfulness of the text, and with the blessing of the Holy Spirit. This stated, Moses elsewhere predicated the day when a king would be ruling in Israel (Deut. 17:14–20), and a royal Messianic hope is found from the earliest parts of Genesis (3:15; 17:6, 16; 22:17b–18; 35:11; 49:8–10; Num. 24:17–19). These texts show that Moses himself could have written such a phrase.

i. Textual references to Moses

   i. The use of the third person is common in early histories: Xenophon, *Anabasis*; J. Caesar, *The Galic Wars*. The fact that specific portions are attributed to Moses is more an argument for Mosaic authorship (he was involved in some writing task) than against it.

   ii. The comment regarding Moses’ death and succession at the end of the Pentateuch (Deut. 34:1–12) was likely an obituary or epilogue added by the editor of Deuteronomy, who also introduced the book (Deut. 1:1–4), clarified geo-historical data (2:10–11, 20–23; 3:9, 11, 13b–14; 10:6–7), and seamed together Moses’ messages (e.g., 1:5; 4:41–43, 44–5:1a; 29:1). The presence of such an editor in Deuteronomy is suggested within the final form of the text itself, for to Moses, the Promised Land to the west was considered “beyond the Jordan” (Deut. 3:20, 25; 11:30; cf. Num. 32:19), where, for the editor, Moses and Israel’s placement in Moab was “beyond the Jordan” (Deut. 1:1, 5; 3:8, 35; 4:41, 46–47, 49). The substantial Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is not called into question with the above view. When crossing the Jordan, Israel most likely had Genesis–Numbers in substantially the form we have them, along with a folder of the three Deuteronomic sermons, the warning song, and Moses’ death-bed blessing.

2. Conclusion:
   a. Traditionally, literary analysis has been defined as source analysis, which is by nature “excavative” or “deconstructive.” The attempt was to look behind the final form of the text as it comes to us in order to establish its compositional history. However, reconstructing the Pentateuch’s compositional history is a highly speculative task, and as R. W. Moberly has stated, “Critical conjectures that depend on reading between the lines are always more persuasive if combined with a cogent reading of the lines themselves” (*The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism*, OBT [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992],
Traditional deconstructionist source critics do an injustice to the biblical text by failing to appreciate what the text itself communicates in the form we have it.

b. The effort to establish sources is not by nature wrong, and the authors of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Luke, and likely every other historical book in the Bible used sources where the author himself was not a witness to the events. This means that the presence of sources can still be compatible with the idea of Mosaic authorship (see esp. Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis*).

c. However, any approach to sources must treat both alleged sources and the final form with integrity and authority and view the latter alone as the Scripture of the Church. Canonical analysis serves as a helpful corrective to approaches that see only individual trees or parts of trees without accounting for the forest.

d. Since the 1970s, a new, more helpful and balanced form of “literary criticism” has arisen that is focused on the final form. Robert Alter defines it this way (*The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 12): “The manifold varieties of minutely discriminating attention to the artful use of language, to the shifting play of ideas, conventions, tone, sound, imagery, syntax, narrative viewpoint, compositional units, and much else; the kind of disciplined attention in other words, which through a whole spectrum of critical approaches has illuminated [literary works of all kinds].” This kind of analysis is needed more in contemporary OT studies.

D. An Initial Response to the Challenges Related to Historicity

1. An example of the challenge—T. Thompson’s “Historical and Christian Faith,” in *Israel’s Past in Present Research*, 480–84:

   a. The biblical text alone is what is authoritative and that which gives rise to our faith; faith grows out of the Bible’s message and is not related to the historicity of the events addressed (481–82).
   
   b. The patriarchal traditions are *story* not history, for archaeological evidence has not validated the stories nor shown them to be likely (481).
   
   c. All of “salvation history” is a literary construct and did not actually happen (482).
   
   d. Faith, therefore, grows out of a created past that includes created promises to instill present hope (482–83).
   
   e. Faith’s “demands” cannot create the historical.

2. A Conservative Response—Relating Faith, Story, and History:

   a. **Priority lies with texts.** Social sciences (archaeology, anthropology, sociology, etc.) deal only with general features of societies and cultures; texts alone clarify specific events and individuals.
   
   b. **Historicity and authority go hand-in-hand.** Because the Bible is God’s revelation (2 Tim. 3:16), its historicity and authority are intimately united.
   
   c. **The mention of the divine or supernatural events does not mean unhistorical.** Even if one unhelpfully confines oneself to an a-theistic approach to history, the presence of “divine intrusion” or the supernatural must be understood as cultural or religious encoding and should not be seen as evidence that a narrative in whole deals with imaginary or fabricated
events. For example, Edwin Yamauchi has observed (“The Current State of Old Testament Historiography,” in Faith, Tradition, & History [Eisenbruans, 1994], 27–28):

i. Herodotus’ belief in the Delphic Oracles does not disqualify him as an accurate source for Greek history.

ii. Darius’ involving of Ahura Mazada (noted 69x in the text) does not stop Persian historians from viewing Darius’ Behistun Inscription as the most informative Old Persian text.

iii. No one doubts Joan of Arc’s arousal of her countrymen to push English forces out of France, even though this action was apparently grounded in an unverifiable divine call to action.

d. **Verifiability is not essential.** Confirming biblical claims with extra-biblical data must not be viewed as essential, for there are too many gaps in our knowledge of the past; “archaeological support” should not be expected for the patriarchs, but we do know that the details of the patriarchal stories fit nicely into the time period of which they propose to be a part.

e. **Innocent until proven guilty.** There is no evidence that Israel falsified or invented statements of fact, and this is highly unlikely due to the nature of the message and the judgment the text itself places on false teachers (e.g., Deut. 13:1–5); with this, no other field of historical research practices a “guilty until proven innocent” approach, so why should this be done in biblical studies?

i. The Egyptian Fourteenth Dynasty consisted of about 76 kings, most of whom are listed in the Turin Papyrus of Kings, which dates to the Nineteenth Dynasty, 500 years after the period of the 14th Dynasty kings were to have reigned. Although hardly a single definite contemporary monument of any Delta kings has been recovered, Egyptologists do not deny the existence of these kings. How much more should this be the case with the people and situations of Scripture that were of no interest to non-Hebrews who might otherwise have provided confirmatory source material. (Kenneth A. Kitchen, Ancient Orient and Old Testament [InterVarsity, 1975], 30)

ii. Most of the works of Livy, the first books of the history of the Franks by Gregory of Tours, contain events known only from these sources, yet historians do not deny that these events actually happened (G. J. Reiner, History: Its Purpose and Method, 90–91, as cited by Craig L. Blomberg, The Historical Reliability of the Gospels, 241).

iii. When writing about the historical veracity of the Israelite conquest of Canaan, B. S. J. Isserlin compares three conquests in later history that are well documented: (1) the Arab invasion of Palestine in the 7th century A.D.; (2) the invasion of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons in the 5th century A.D.; and (3) the invasion of England by the Normans in 1066 A.D. Like the Israelite conquest, each of these later “histories” speak of numerous destructions, but the archaeological evidence is minimal or non-existent. No scholars deny that these historical events occurred, so one may legitimately ask why an event like the Israelite
conquest of Canaan is questioned, though the archaeological witness is
difficult to line up. (Isserlin, B. S. J. “The Israelite Conquest of
Canaan,” 85–94, as cited by Yamauchi, “The Current State of Old
Testament Historiography,” 36)

iv. It was not until 1932 that the Babylonian exile of Jehoiachin was
recognized on extra-biblical tablets. Similarly, epigraphical attestation
of Pontius Pilate was only found in 1961 and of Felix the procurator in
Historiography,” 26–27)

v. Only in 2002 was there any archaeological or epigraphic evidence
uncovered that directly mentioned Jesus, his brother James, and their
father Joseph (see the James Ossuary).

f. God’s revelation in history is the source, not the product, of “biblical
faith.” Biblical faith is grounded in God’s revelation in history, and the
significance of the biblical testimony stands or falls on whether or not the
“central events” actually happened (e.g. whether Jesus was raised or not, see
1 Cor. 15:14); furthermore, if the “central events” are viewed as historical,
the other “non-central” events are given a certain amount of veracity.

g. Taking the Bible on its own terms requires a theistic rather than an a-
theistic approach to interpretation. Because all who approach the Bible
come with certain assumptions about the nature of reality (i.e., faith claims),
one must choose between theistic and atheistic approaches to Scripture.
Only the former allows the Bible to be taken on its own terms.

Fig. 2.3. Redefining the Canons of Historical Criticism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle of Criticism</th>
<th>A-Theological</th>
<th>Theological</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presupposed skepticism about sources</td>
<td>Thoughtful appraisal of the evidence in keeping with its source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle of Analogy</td>
<td>Present human experience limits what can qualify as “history”</td>
<td>Historical plausibility is judged by the reasonableness of arguments made for belief in occurrences with which the historian may have no personal acquaintance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle of Correlation</td>
<td>When assessing the relationship of correlated events, potential historical causation must be limited to natural forces or human agency</td>
<td>Allow for personal and not just natural or material forces in causation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Taken from W. J. Abraham, Divine Revelation and the Limits of Historical Criticism (Oxford, 1982).

E. Support for the Traditional View of Substantial Mosaic Authorship of the
Pentateuch
1. The Egyptian details in the Joseph and Egyptian plague stories strongly suggests
someone familiar with Egyptian culture.
2. The clear awareness of political treaty patterns of the 2nd millennium suggests a
2nd millennial origin from someone acquainted with international affairs.
Fig. 2.4. Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Forms & Biblical Covenants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(II) Early &amp; Mid-2nd Millennium</th>
<th>(III) Mid to Late 2nd Millennium</th>
<th>(IV) 1st Millennium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mari &amp; Leilan</td>
<td>Mid-Hittite</td>
<td>Sfire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriarchs</td>
<td>Later Hittite</td>
<td>Assyria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnesses</td>
<td>Title Witnesses</td>
<td>Title Witnesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oath Stipulations</td>
<td>Oath Stipulations</td>
<td>Curses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curses</td>
<td>Deposit Witnesses</td>
<td>Curses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oath</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3. In Genesis, a sense of homelessness and alienation combined with an optimistic anticipation of entering the Promised Land suggests the wilderness wanderings as the most likely context for the book’s origin.

4. Moses, the key human figure in the Pentateuch, is a perfect candidate for having penned most of the Pentateuch.
   a. He was raised as an Egyptian prince, educated in the house of Pharaoh gaining “all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22).
   b. He was the main messenger of deliverance from Egypt and the mediator between Yahweh and Israel through the covenant at Mount Sinai through the wilderness wanderings.

5. Numerous passages state that Moses had a key hand in writing at least some of the Pentateuch (e.g., Exod 24:4; Deut 31:24; John 5:46–47) (see above).

6. Many linguistic features point to a 2nd millennial origin of the Pentateuch (see Appendix A.2.2, “Linguistic Analysis and the Dating of the Pentateuch”).

7. Conclusion: the traditional view is a sound view.
   a. So long as one approaches the text theistically, one can justifiably view the Pentateuch as containing a historically accurate account of past events upon which faith can be based.
   b. As long as one allows for earlier sources (though not in the form of JEDP), later glosses, and later (though minimal) editorial elaboration and stitching, it is possible to affirm the substantial Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.