

A. OVERVIEW

The Torah, also known as the Pentateuch or the Five Books of Moses, constitutes the foundational work of both the Tanak in particular and all forms of Judaism in general. Indeed, the Hebrew term *tôrâ* means “instruction,” insofar as it is a noun derived from the *hiphil* form of the Hebrew verb root *yrh*, which means “to guide, instruct,” and it is employed especially in reference to divine instruction of Israel throughout the Tanak.¹ Such divine instruction includes the individual civil and ritual laws that appear throughout the Torah in order to provide the foundations for a just and stable society and a viable sacred religious establishment, but it also includes the metanarrative of Israel’s origins within the context of world history from the time of creation that provides identity for the people of Israel and the rationale for the creation of a just and holy society within that world.

The Torah presents an account of Israel’s origins and its relationship with YHWH, from the time of the creation of the world through the early history and development of humankind, the history of Israel’s earliest ancestors, the formation of the nation Israel through the Exodus from Egyptian bondage under the leadership of Moses, the revelation of divine Torah at Mt. Sinai, the period of wilderness wandering, and finally, Moses’ last addresses to Israel on the eve of its entry into the Promised Land of Israel. Although the Torah appears as five sequential yet discrete narrative books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—analysis of the literary features of the Torah narrative indicates that the five books do not constitute the synchronic literary structure of the work. Instead, the so-called *toledoth*, “generations,” formulae, a series of formulae based on variations of the phrase, *wē’ēlleh tōlēdōt PN*, “and these are the generations of PN,” in Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2; and Num 3:1 constitute the synchronic literary structure of the work. The *toledoth* formulae introduce successive segments of the Torah narrative that trace Israel’s history from “the generations of heaven and earth” in Gen 2:4, that is, humankind as descended from Adam and Eve, through “the generations of Moses and Aaron” in Num 3:1, that is, Israel under the leadership of its Levitical priesthood acting on behalf of YHWH.

Identification of the *toledoth* formulas as the structural markers of the Torah in its present form begins with the work of Frank Moore Cross, Jr. In his foundational study of the P stratum of the Pentateuch, Cross argues that P is not a self-standing source, but must be recognized as the final redactional stratum that edited and arranged the final form of the Pentateuch and wrote substantial sections of the work. The P stratum of the Pentateuch employed the *toledoth* formulae to organize the literary structure of the book of Genesis and itinerary notices concerning the movement of Israel from Egypt through Sinai and the Wilderness to organize the literary structure of the narrative in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.² For Cross, the *toledoth* formulae refer to the above-noted instances in Genesis in which variations of the formulaic phrase, *wə'ēlleh tōlēdōt* (*terah /PN*), “and these are the generations of (Terah/PN)” (Gen 11:27), introduce narratives that feature the lifetimes and activities of the descendants of the figure in question. The itinerary formulas refer to the notices concerning the locations of Israel’s encampment during its journey from Egypt to Moab prior to its entry into the Promised Land of Israel, for example, *wayyis’û bēnē yiśrā’el mēra’mēsēs sukkōtāh*, “and the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Sukkot” (Exod 12:37).

Cross’s hypothesis raises two important questions. The first question is the role of the initial *toledoth* formula in Gen 2:4a, *’ēlleh tōlēdōt haššāmayim wēhā’āres bēhibārē’ām*, “these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” Interpreters have been divided concerning the function of this statement. Some argue that it functions as a summation of the narrative concerning the creation of heaven and earth in Gen 1:1—2:3, whereas others point to its introductory role in relation to the following narratives concerning human origins beginning in Gen 2:4b.³ Although the references to “heaven and earth” and the use of the term *bēhibārē’ām*, “when they were created,” suggest a retrospective viewpoint that would support the former interpretation, several indicators point to a prospective viewpoint. First is the use of the term *tōlēdōt*, based on the verb root, *yld*, “to give birth,” which indicates what is generated *from* or *by* the heavens and the earth, that is, the human beings that are noted in Gen 1:26–28. Second is the literary function of the other *toledoth* formulae, which note the generations of an ancestral figure, and then proceed to discuss that figure’s descendants, for example, the notice concerning Adam in Gen 5:1 introduces a genealogy of Adam’s descendants in Gen 5:1—6:8; the notice concerning Noah in Gen 6:9 introduces the narrative concerning Noah and his sons in Gen 6:9—9:29; the notice concerning the sons of Noah in Gen 10:1 introduces genealogies of Noah’s sons in Gen 10:1—11:9; the notice concerning Shem in Gen 11:10 introduces a genealogy of Shem’s descendants in Gen 11:10–26; the notice concerning Terah in Gen 11:27 introduces the Abraham narratives in Gen 11:27—25:11; the notice concerning Ishmael in Gen 25:12 introduces a genealogy of Ishmael’s descendants in Gen 25:12–18; the notice concerning Isaac in Gen 25:19 introduces the Jacob narratives in Gen 25:19—35:29; the notice concerning Esau in Gen 36:1

introduces Esau's genealogy in Gen 36:1—37:1; and the notice concerning Jacob in Gen 37:2 introduces the Joseph narratives in Gen 37:2—50:26. As these examples indicate, Gen 2:4a may have somewhat of retrospective function in relation to Gen 1:1—2:3, but it also points forward to the accounts of Adam (and Eve) as the beginning of a sequence of accounts that take up early human history from the time of creation through the time of Joseph. In the case of the longer narratives, for example, Adam (Eve), Noah (sons), Terah (Abraham), Isaac (Jacob), and Jacob (Joseph), the narrative points to the key figures in the development of the people Israel. In the case of the shorter narratives, for example, Ham and Japheth, Ishmael, and Esau, the narrative points to those lines that spin off from the main characters to develop humankind at large. The resulting structure of Genesis therefore emerges as an introductory narrative concerning the creation of heaven and earth in Gen 1:1—2:3 followed by a sequence of narratives in Gen 2:4—50:26, each introduced by an example of the *toledoth* formula, that takes up the development of Israel within the context of humankind.

The second question takes up the role of the itinerary formulae in the literary structure of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Here, the structural role of the itinerary formulae is rather straightforward, insofar as the formulae point to the movements of Israel from Egypt to Moab as a basic plot element in the pentateuchal narrative. Thus, the narrative begins in Exod 1:1—12:36 with Israel in Egypt as the site for the initial enslavement and the encounter between YHWH (represented by Moses and Aaron) and Pharaoh that leads to the Israelite slaves' release at Rameses. Itinerary formulae, each of which introduces a narrative block that recounts a successive stage in the journey, then follow. Thus, the notice in Exod 12:37 introduces Israel's journey from Rameses to Sukkot in Exod 12:37—13:19 sees the redemption of the first-born; Exod 13:20 introduces the journey from Sukkot to Etam in Exod 13:20-22 that highlights YHWH's representation as a pillar of fire and cloud, replicating the image of a Temple altar in operation; Exod 14:1 introduces the journey from Etam to the Red/Reed Sea in Exod 14:1—15:21 that focuses on Israel's deliverance at the Sea; Exod 15:22 introduces the journey from the Sea to the Wilderness of Shur/Elim in Exod 15:22-27 that focuses on water in the wilderness; Exod 16:1 introduces the journey from Elim to the Wilderness of Sin in Exod 16:1-36 that focuses on quails and manna; Exod 17:1 introduces the journey from Sin to Rephidim in Exod 17:1—18:27 that takes up Amalek and Jethro; Exod 19:1 introduces the journey from Rephidim to Sinai in Exod 19:1—Num 10:10 that takes up the lengthy narrative concerning the revelation at Sinai; Num 10:11 introduces the journey from Sinai to the Wilderness of Paran in Num 10:11—19:22 that takes up the motif of rebellion in the wilderness; Num 20:1 notes the journey from Paran to the Wilderness of Zin/Kadesh in Num 20:1-21 that again notes water from the rock; Num 20:22 introduces the journey from Zin/Kadesh to Mt. Hor in Num 20:22—21:3 that takes up the death of Aaron; Num 21:4 introduces the journey from Hor to Edom/Moab in Num 21:4-35 that sees the defeat of Sihon and Og; and Num 22:1 introduces the

arrival at Moab in Num 22:1—36:13 that sees census and organization of the people prior to their entry into the Promised Land.

Two questions remain open when considering the *toledoth* organization of Genesis and the itinerary organization of Exodus—Numbers. First, what is the relation of Deuteronomy to the preceding material, particularly since Deuteronomy continues to portray the people of Israel in Moab prior to their entry into the land of Israel? Second, what is the relationship between the two textual blocks in Genesis and Exodus—Numbers that are organized according to such different principles?⁴

The first question is easily answered. Because Deuteronomy portrays the people of Israel in Moab in keeping with their arrival in Moab in Num 22:1—36:13, Deuteronomy must be subsumed into the structural organization of the itinerary pattern identified in Exodus—Numbers. It is clear that Deuteronomy is not written with this structural pattern in mind; indeed, diachronic research on Deuteronomy points to its compositional origins as an independent D source or literary composition that is quite distinct from the JEP material in Exodus—Numbers.⁵ Nevertheless, a synchronic reading of Deuteronomy in relation to Exodus—Numbers demands that Deuteronomy be subsumed into the structural organization of Exodus—Deuteronomy insofar as it presents Moses' final addresses to Israel following their arrival in Moab and prior to their entry into the land of Israel. Deuteronomy thereby presents an account of Moses' rehearsal of YHWH's Torah or expectations of Israel as the people take possession of the land.

The second question is far more difficult until one observes the presence of a previously unnoticed *toledoth* formula in Num 3:1, *wə'ēlleh tōlēdōt 'ahārōn ūmōšeh bēyōm dibber yhwh 'et mōšeh bēhar sīnāy*, "and these are the generations of Aaron and Moses on the day that YHWH spoke with Moses on Mt. Sinai."⁶ Although this example of the *toledoth* formula falls outside of Genesis, it is tied to the examples from Genesis by its similar formulation and by its increasingly narrow focus on Aaron and Moses as a group within the twelve tribes of Israel (see Gen 37:2), viz., the key Levitical figures who will provide leadership for Israel during the Exodus period (Moses) and as high priests once Israel is settled in the land (the descendants of Aaron; see Num 17–18). Whereas interpreters would see little relationship between Num 3:1 and the *toledoth* formulae in Genesis due to the role that diachronic reading strategies play in fragmenting readings of texts, a synchronic reading of this formula in relation to the others demands that it be viewed as a continuation of the sequence begun in Genesis. Thus, it points to the role that the *toledoth* formulae play in delineating the full literary structure of the final synchronic form of the Pentateuch. Although the itinerary notices clearly play an important structural role in Exodus—Deuteronomy, that structure is subsumed to that of the *toledoth* formula. Indeed, the different organizational patterns point to a diachronic literary history that must have led to the formation of the present form of the text, but once that text is formed, synchronic literary patterns then govern its overall structure. Thus, the *toledoth* formulae point to a

progression of textual blocks in the Pentateuch that traces the development of Israel within humankind from Adam through Moses and Aaron as the Levitical or priestly leadership of Israel within humanity. The itinerary notices trace the journey of Israel from Egypt through the lifetime of Moses, first as the twelve tribes of Israel (Exod 1:1—Num 2:34) and then under the leadership of Aaron and Moses (Num 3:1—Deut 34:12). The literary structure of the Pentateuch may be presented as follows:

Synchronic Literary Structure of the Pentateuch:

History of Creation/Formation of People Israel

I. Creation of Heaven and Earth	Gen 1:1—2:3
II. Human Origins	2:4—4:26
III. Human Development/Problems	5:1—6:8
IV. Noah and the Flood	6:9—9:29
V. Spread of Humans over the Earth	10:1—11:9
VI. History of the Semites	11:10-26
VII. History of Abraham (Isaac)	11:27—25:11
VIII. History of Ishmael	25:12-18
IX. History of Jacob (Isaac)	25:19—35:29
X. History of Esau	36:1—37:1
XI. History of the Twelve Tribes of Israel	Gen 37:2—Num 2:34
A. Joseph and his brothers in Egypt	Gen 37:2—50:26
B. deliverance from Egyptian bondage: Rameses	Exod 1:1—12:36
C. from Rameses to Sukkot: consecration of first-born	12:37—13:19
D. from Sukkot to Etam: pillar of fire and cloud	13:20-22
E. from Etam to the sea (Pihahiroth/Baal Zephon): deliverance at sea	14:1—15:21
F. from Reed Sea to Wilderness of Shur/Elim: water in wilderness	15:22-27
G. from Elim to Wilderness of Sin: quails and manna	16:1-36
H. from Sin to Rephidim: Amalek and Jethro	Exod 17:1—18:27
I. from Rephidim to Sinai: revelation of Torah	Exod 19:1—Num 10:10
1. arrival at Sinai	Exod 19:1-2
2. revelation from mountain: ten commandments; covenant code; building of the tabernacle	Exod 19:3—40:38
3. revelation from tabernacle: laws of sacrifice and holiness code	Lev 1—27
4. census and organization of people around tabernacle	Num 1:1—2:34

XII. History of Israel under the Guidance of the Levites	Num 3:1—Deut 34:12
A. sanctification of the people led by the Levites	Num 3:1—10:10
B. from Sinai to Wilderness of Paran/Kibroth Hattaavah: rebellion in the wilderness	10:11—11:35a
C. from Kibroth Hattaavah to Hazereth	11:35b—12:15
D. from Hazereth to the Wilderness of Paran	12:16—19:22
E. from Paran to Wilderness of Zin/Kadesh: water from rock	20:1-21
F. from Zin/Kadesh to Mt. Hor: death of Aaron	20:22—21:3
G. from Mt. Hor to Edom/Moab: defeat of Sihon and Og	Num 21:4-35
H. arrival at Moab: Balaam; census and organization of the people	22:1—36:13
I. Moses' final address to Israel: repetition of the Torah	Deut 1:1—34:12

Having delineated the synchronic literary structure of the Torah, discussion must now turn to its diachronic dimensions. From the Talmudic period on when Joshua was identified as the author of the account of Moses' death and burial in Deut 34:5-12 (*b. Baba Batra* 15a), interpreters have been concerned with the question of the composition of the Pentateuch.⁷ Indeed, the question is crucial within Jewish thought because it points to the ongoing process of revelation throughout history as Jewish interpreters have read earlier texts and attempted to discern their meaning in relation to divine intention by updating and editing earlier compositions as well as by writing commentary upon them. In modern times, Christian interpreters have played a key role in developing models for the composition of the Pentateuch, notably the Graf–Wellhausen hypothesis which posited a four-stage process of growth, beginning with the J source, which employed the divine name (JHWH) and derived from the earliest periods of the Davidic monarchy in the tenth and ninth centuries BCE; the E source, which employed the divine designation ELOQIM until the time of Moses and derived from the northern kingdom of Israel in the eighth century BCE; the D source, which comprised Deuteronomy and derived from the late seventh-century reign of King Josiah of Judah; and the P source, which likewise employed the divine designation ELOQIM until the time of Moses, focused on priestly law and ritual, and derived from the late exilic or early post-exilic periods in which Ezra and Nehemiah emerged as the leadership of Israel following the fall of the house of David.

Problems have emerged in the Graf–Wellhausen hypothesis from its inception. A full history of discussion is hardly possible here,⁸ but several glaring issues are noteworthy. First is the inherent anti-Semitism in the proposal to identify priestly

and ritual concerns with the late emergence of Judaism as a degeneration of the ideal religious models identified in the earlier J source, particularly since temple and priesthood constituted the foundation of ancient Israel's religious establishment from well before the period of the monarchy. Indeed, Wellhausen attempted to privilege his own understanding of Protestant Christianity as a prophetic ideal of a direct human relationship with G-d in the J source and to identify priestly mediation as an obstacle to the divine-human relationship that would be identified with Judaism, the Roman Catholic Church, and his own Protestant theological opponents in the church of his day. Readers may also note the degree to which Wellhausen argues the case for source differentiation in his treatment of the primeval history and the Abraham-Sarah narratives in his foundational work, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs*,⁹ but simply presupposes and applies his earlier conclusions as he works through the balance of the material from the Jacob narratives on.

Second is the appearance of features in the J material that are identified with the later interaction between Israel/Judah and Assyria/Babylon in the eighth to sixth centuries BCE,¹⁰ such as the Tower of Babel narrative that presupposes the ziggurat of Babylon in the J narrative of Gen 11:1-9; the reference to "Ur of the Chaldeans" in the J statement of Gen 11:28, a designation identified only with the Neo-Babylonian empire of the late seventh and early sixth centuries BCE; the identification of Assyrian *palu* campaigns in which the Assyrian king would march through his land each year to assert his authority with Abram's march the length of the land of Canaan in the J narrative of Gen 12:1-9; the influence of Assyrian treaty rituals the ceremony of passing through the halves of sacrificed animals in the J material of Gen 15:7-11; the identification of Pithom and Rameses as the cities of Egypt where Israelite resided in the J statement in Exod 1:11 although the name Pithom (*pr 'itm*, "House of Atum") is known only from the end of the Saite period in 525 BCE;¹¹ the influence of Assyrian vassal treaty language, particularly the apodictic statements, throughout the corpus of biblical law in the early Covenant Code in Exod 20-23; the seventh-century law code of Deut 5: 12-26; and elsewhere.

Third is the evidence that comes from redaction-critical study, such as the long-standing insight that J, E, and P cannot stand as independent sources, but must be viewed as strata that successively take up, update, and reinterpret earlier layers of material. Likewise, scholars continue to note the role that D appears to play in Genesis—Numbers and both thematic and historical differentiation within the purportedly monolithic P source.¹² Noteworthy examples of redaction-critical observations that challenge aspects of classical source theory include the placement of the narratives concerning the Judean-oriented patriarch, Abraham, at the head of a sequence in which the northern Israelite figures, Jacob and Joseph, follow; the relatively ideal characterization of the Judean-oriented Abraham in relation to the more flawed characters of the northern-oriented Jacob and Joseph; the role that Judah plays as moral agent and protector, displacing Reuben as the

brother who would spare Joseph's life in Gen 37 and protect Benjamin in Gen 42–43; the concern to avoid intermarriage with Egypt and Canaan in Gen 12; 20; 26; 34; and 38 in contrast to Joseph's marriage to Asenath daughter of the Egyptian priest Potiphara and the birth of their sons Manasseh and Ephraim, the two chief tribes of Israel, in Gen 41 and 48; the influence of D materials in the characterization of Israel's sins in worshipping a golden calf at Sinai as those of the later northern kingdom of Israel in Exod 32–34; and the identification of the fearful spies with the northern Israelite tribes in contrast to the faithful Judean Caleb in the JP narratives of Num 13–14.

These observations do not negate the fundamental enterprise of reconstructing the compositional history of the pentateuchal narrative as many have argued.¹³ Instead, they point to the need to reconceive the fundamental conceptualization of the JEDP model advocated in the Graf–Wellhausen hypothesis with a model that avoids the anti-Semitic theological presuppositions inherent in Wellhausen's work; the extensive evidence of eighth- to sixth-century Assyrian and Babylonian influence in the J stratum of the Pentateuch; and redaction-critical evidence that points to J redaction of earlier E material, D redaction of earlier E and J material, P redaction of earlier JED material and differentiation within the P material itself. Such a model would presuppose a foundational northern Israelite E stratum from the early eighth-century BCE materials now found in Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers; a J stratum that would redactionally expand and rework E in the late eighth through the seventh century BCE in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers; a Judean D source from the late seventh century BCE that was redactionally worked into the earlier framework of Genesis—Numbers; and the final P stratum from the early Persian period that would organize and give shape to the final form of the Pentateuch. Specific aspects of this model will be addressed as discussion turns to the individual structural sub-units of the Torah narrative at large.

NOTES

¹ Though the Hebrew term *tôrâ* is frequently rendered as “law,” this is an erroneous translation derived from the New Testament Epistles of Paul, who translates *tôrâ* with the Greek term, *nomos*, “law,” in an attempt to characterize Torah polemically as a static, monolithic, unbending, and ultimately useless obstacle to human salvation in contrast to Christ. See “*Nomos*,” *TDNT*, 1022–85; cf. *HALOT*, 1710–12 “Torah,” *EncJud* 15:1235–46.

² Frank Moore Cross, Jr., “The Priestly Work,” in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 293–325.

³ See the discussion in David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures in Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 73–75, 93–101, 120–25.

⁴ For discussion of the relationship between Genesis and Exodus—Numbers, see the essays published in Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid, eds., *A Farewell to the Y-hwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).

⁵ See now Moshe Weinfeld, “Deuteronomy, Book of,” *ABD* 2:168–83; idem, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1–122; Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 137–69.

⁶ I am indebted to Matthew Thomas, former Ph.D. student in Hebrew Bible at Claremont Graduate University, who pointed out the significance of Num 3:1 (see his Claremont dissertation, “These are the Generations: Identity, Promise, and the Toledoth Formulae” [Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate University, 2006]); see also Sven Tengström, *Die Toledotformel und die literarische Struktur der priesterlichen Erweiterungsschicht im Pentateuch* (ConBibOT 17; Uppsala: Gleerup, 1981), 54–59.

⁷ For discussion of the history of research on the Pentateuch, see “Pentateuch,” *EncJud* 13:231–62; Albert de Pury and Thomas Römer, “Le Pentateuch en question. Position du problème et brève histoire de la recherche,” in A. de Pury, ed., *Le Pentateuch en Question* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1989), 9–80; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1–30; Ernst Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 96–164. For an overview and discussion of the Pentateuchal sources, see Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O’Brien, *Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

⁸ For discussion of the problems with the Graf–Wellhausen hypothesis, see especially Nicholson, *The Pentateuch*, 95–268; Ska, *Introduction*, 127–64.

⁹ *Die Composition des Hexateuch* (Berlin: Reimer, 1889).

¹⁰ See, for example, Thomas L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives. The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (BZAW 133; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974); John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); idem, *Prologue to History: The Y-hwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992); idem, *The Life of Moses: The Y-hwist as Historian in Exodus—Numbers* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994); for an overview discussion, see Nicholson, *The Pentateuch*, 132–60.

¹¹ Tom F. Wei, “Pithom,” *ABD* 5:376–77.

¹² See, especially, H. H. Schmid, *Der sogenannte J-hwist. Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Pentateuchforschung* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976); Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1984); idem, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990); Christoph Levin, *Der J-hwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); Nicholson, *The Pentateuch*, 161–221.

¹³ See Nicholson, *The Pentateuch*, 222–48.