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A Brief History of Modern Criticism In Old Testament Study

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METHODOLOGY IN OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

The Literary-Historical Approach

Modern study of the OT, as the modern study of other documents and histories, is an outgrowth of the eighteenth-century renaissance in learning. Prior to this, the study of the OT was largely carried out as a subdiscipline in dogmatic theology (as were NT studies and church history). **J. G. Eichhorn** (1780–1783) is generally regarded as the “father of OT Criticism” for his attempt to locate sources used in the writing of the Pentateuch on the basis of literary study. **Jean Astruc** had done a similar work in 1753, but Eichhorn refined and established the methodology.

Eichhorn and his students, such as **K. H. Graf** and **H. Hupfeld**, located four major documents in the Pentateuch and explained their relation to each other. This resulted in the famous “four-document hypothesis” widely referred to as the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. The four documents were described as “J” (for the Yahwist source, which referred to God as Yahweh [the *J* comes from the German spelling, *Jahweh*]); “E” (a source calling God Elohim);

"D" (a revision of the law by a "Deuteronomist" author with a prophetic theology); and "P" (the final document by a writer with "priestly" concerns). This solution, while no longer used as originally formulated, has had an abiding influence for over a century of OT study.

The synthesis of earlier ideas by J. Wellhausen gave a classic formulation in OT criticism, especially in his work *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1878). It was he who first clearly formulated a reconstruction of the history of Israel based on the four-document solution. His reconstruction was so complete and widely accepted that subsequent study, even beyond literary criticism, has characteristically used it as a starting place, whether endorsing or refuting it. His work is a good example of the liberal approach which consciously rejected all theological interpretation for a naturalistic history (based on an evolutionary view of history).

For Wellhausen, the history of Israel began with the exodus from Egypt, that is, with Moses. At this initial stage Israel had a primitive nomadic religion replete with rituals (Wellhausen was deeply sympathetic to primitive, uncorrupted society). This primitive religion was complicated by adoption of Canaanite practices. The second stage of Israel's religion was the prophetic creation of an ethical monotheism in protest to these primitive practices. The prophets in turn called forth the legal teachings of the OT and a centralized worship at Jerusalem. This third stage was the development of a church-state union which deprived Israel of a free and spirited religion and resulted in cold formalism.

With this reconstruction, Wellhausen felt he had given a "life situation" for the development of the literature of the OT. Subsequent OT scholarship tended to reverse his conclusions and see the prophets as the later stage in the development of Israel's religious thought and as the opponents of the cultic worship.

Wellhausen's solution became almost canonical for OT study in subsequent generations. *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* is a good example of

the literary-historical concern in English. It contains neither homiletical nor theological emphasis.

Others in this tradition of OT study pressed the search for literary documents contained in present books of the OT. Using the criteria of linguistic style and historical setting, increasingly they found more documents. Especially the Pentateuch was subdivided by scholars such as **R. Smend**, **J. Hempel** and **O. Eissfeldt**. But this proliferation of sources produced an increasing dissatisfaction at what seemed a sterile approach.

Even in Europe, the literary-historical school was not without conservative critics. They pointed to this embarrassment of riches in the numerous sources as a refutation of the method. And the explicit disinterest in theology (and an accompanying bootlegging of a naturalistic theology) was found especially offensive. **J. Dahse**, **B. D. Eerdmans** and **W. Moeller** attacked the use of divine names as a criterion for locating sources. Eerdmans also claimed the literary school failed to account for much older traditions which were formalized at a later date (thus prefiguring the tradition-history approach). Moreover, he said Wellhausen's reconstruction was too unappreciative of the patriarchal age.

The literary-historical method has never been generally rejected by OT scholars, but issues have changed. This resulted in new methodologies, such as *form criticism*, developed around World War I. Form criticism sought to move behind the literary documents to the earlier oral period, before the life and religious teachings of Israel were put into written form. Then the *comparative religions* approach sought to understand Israel's religious life and thought in its historical context. A third approach emphasized the use of archeology to illuminate the OT.

Each of these will be discussed individually, but it is crucial to realize that they are not separable from each other. Each method interrelates with the others (including the textual and literary-historical methods) in varying ways. Whether a particular scholar's approach is placed in this category or that is largely a question of emphasis. Nor can any approach be wholly aligned with a particular theological

persuasion (although some conservative scholars have rejected all but archeology as denying the integrity and inspiration of the Bible).

The Form-Critical Method

This approach is similar to the literary-historical in that it concentrates on traditions as contained in the OT. It arose when there appeared a need to supplement literary criticism by asking new questions. Both form and literary approaches seek to locate an earlier stage of traditions now found in the canonical books. While literary study seeks earlier *written* sources, form criticism seeks earlier *oral* sources. Thus the latter concentrates on oral forms, rather than on documents.

Most prominently recognized as the initiator of the form-critical school is **H. Gunkel**. Gunkel observed that creativity was not as prized in the thought expressions and faith of the ancient world as it is in the modern. Rather the ancient world, including Israel, had a customary form which was expected to be followed in composing a victory song, a lament, a prayer of thanksgiving or a request. From this insight Gunkel drew several implications. First, these forms, being stylized, could be recovered from our written OT. Second, doing this would move one to the preliterate stage, and thus to the ideas and beliefs of the common people (rather than to an exceptionally creative writer). Finally, one could discover the *situation* in which these forms were used and thereby recover the worship of ancient Israel.

Gunkel investigated both Genesis and the Psalms with his new method. Rather than seeking various documents now incorporated into the OT historical books, he sought to find individual stories which he felt were told and retold orally over a long period before being written down (e.g., the story of Abraham's migration from Ur). Gunkel found this method of study less formal and cold than the literary school's use of documents.

H. Gressmann applied Gunkel's form study to the Pentateuch, especially the various stories about Moses. He stressed that OT narratives were not creations of artistic

writers, but were old stories transmitted orally by generations of Israelites. They were a community heritage.

Gunkel's most famous work was on the Psalms, where he isolated various styles of songs used virtually unchanged in generations of Israelites. Gunkel's view was supplemented by historians who investigated other ancient Near Eastern cultures and found similar poetical forms. S. Mowinckel, one of Gunkel's pupils, contributed the most in continuing the study of the Psalms. Mowinckel stressed the community, rather than individuals, as composing religious songs (see his *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*). Mowinckel also went beyond Gunkel in postulating a situation for which these Psalms were created. He thought they were designed to be used in an annual New Year Festival in which God was praised as the King. (Mowinckel has often been criticized for this. Others have noted there is not explicit evidence for such a festival in Israel. Mowinckel assumed there was such from analogy with other contemporary cultures, especially Babylon.) But even if many scholars remain unconvinced by the New Year Festival, most accept the thesis that the OT traditions are closely related to worship in Israel.

Following the same method, others have sought to locate forms used in Israel in addition to stories and songs. In particular the prophetic literature has been studied for such forms. Three basic forms are widely used: *accounts* of the prophet's call and other biographical material; *prayers*, the most famous being Jeremiah's "complaints;" and *oracles*, which have been subdivided into more specific forms. The oracle of judgment is the most easily described (see Amos 1:6-8). It begins with a formula like "Thus says the Lord . . ." which is followed by a reason for the coming disaster, then a "therefore" (or "so," "thus") and a description of the coming judgment, and is concluded by a formula like "says the Lord God." (A convenient summary both of these forms and of the history of their investigation appears in C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*.)

The last of the OT to receive serious attention with the form-critical method was the legal portion of the Pentateuch.

A. Jirku and A. Jepsen both gave pioneering form research into this material in 1927. But the most famous form study of the legal traditions is that of A. Alt. Using the form-critical method, Alt located two distinct forms of legal materials. The first was "decisions," or "case law," which followed the common practice in the ancient world of describing a situation ("If any man . . .") and its legal result ("He shall . . ."), often called "casuistic law." Alt felt that the second form, more unique to Israel, came from the covenant at Sinai. This is the "apodictic" law, which is formulated as an injunction ("Thou shall not . . ." or "Cursed be the man who . . ."), the most famous of which are the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. (A succinct introduction to Alt's work can be found in his essay "The Origins of Israelite Law" in his *Essays on OT History and Religion*.)

The form-critical method has been a dominant methodology in OT study up to the present time. It made two important contributions beyond the method itself. First, it showed that the OT traditions were the common property of Israel and what gave them a peculiar sense of identity and unity. Second, it suggested that the old liberal view of the prophet as the antagonist of the priest was wrong. Form criticism showed that prophet, priest, and lawgiver were all closely related in the religion of Israel. Even when the prophets denounced the cult worship, they did so on the basis of old and well-known teachings and laws.

Finally, mention must be made of the most recent trend in methodology which builds upon both literary and form-critical methods. This is variously called *redaction criticism* and *editorial criticism*. This method is a direct heir of the preceding methods of OT study. It begins with locating the older oral forms but then seeks the intent of the present arrangement of those forms in the books as they now stand. In this way, redaction criticism is concerned to move beyond the analytical work of locating old traditions. For example, given the fact that the final compiler of Jeremiah possessed oracles, biographical stories, and prayers (according to form-critical study) of the prophet, why did he arrange them as he did in the final book of Jeremiah?

Redaction criticism's interest in *written* work reflects its closeness to the older literary method, but it is drastically different because of form study.

This method is still in its formative stage in the study of the OT. For that reason it is less clear which scholars may be taken as pivotal. The important point in relation to the two previous methods of study is that redaction study is a step forward in that it deals with the books *as they now exist*.

The History of Religions School

Unlike redaction criticism, the history of religions method does not directly build on literary and form methods and thus is not a specialized type of those methods. But neither should the history of religions approach be considered a competitor; it is more a compatriot. This method, now over a century old, emphasizes the comparison of OT ideas with those in the cultures contemporary with, and prior to, the national life of Israel. Thus there is a built-in tendency to attend to the similarities, but the differences are also noted. The key point is that it is necessary to place OT religion in a broad context and to understand it in relation to other ideas in the ancient world.

There has been a tendency to think that, when two cultures (for example, Israel and Canaan) have similar religious practices or theological concepts, one must have borrowed from the other, or both from yet a third. Thus when similarities were found between Israelite law and the code of Hammurabi, history of religions scholars tended to see Israelite dependence on the Babylonian traditions. Even if this were so, what could one conclude? Some have used it to show Israelite law as a poor stepchild; others see in the similarities proof of the antiquity of OT law codes. But both positions are using the history of religions approach.

Wellhausen, and the early literary study, had tended to consider Israelite religion and its developments as a rather self-contained entity. But Gunkel and the form-critical school turned outward, because they sought to learn about oral forms in other cultures as an aid in understanding forms

among the Israelites. It was really the great strides of archeology beginning in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that furnished the raw materials for the history of religions approach by making possible the comparative study of many ancient cultures.

One of the most famous names in the development of the history of religions approach is **F. Delitzsch**, remembered for his view that everywhere the OT showed a deep dependence on Babylonian thought and life (the old "Bible" vs. "Babel" debate early in this century). But Gunkel and others made a more careful use of the approach by focusing on the OT materials as the place of investigation and proceeding from it to other cultures. **H. Gressmann**, examining Israelite eschatology, demonstrated that apocalyptic thinking was not a late development after the exile, but a way of thinking with century-old precedents in Babylon and Egypt (thus undercutting many literary scholars who denied that eschatological portions of the prophetic books could have been authentic).

Conservative response to this new method of OT study was divided. Some rejected it, thinking that the concern for old non-Israelite parallels was a move to deny the genius and originality of the OT faith itself. Conversely, some appropriated it as a means of securing confidence in the accuracy of the biblical record. For example, **P. Volz** examined Egyptian texts to show that the ethical principles of the decalogue could be established in Egyptian records before Moses. He then claimed to prove the Mosaic authorship of the decalogue and its significance in Israel's early history. In a similar way **B. D. Eerdmans**, by studying Babylonian and Assyrian religion, sought to show the Mosaic character of the Levitical worship. (To properly appreciate this point, one must recall that Wellhausen's followers tended to see Levitical laws and worship as added to Israel's life *after* the prophetic period.)

Between the "Babylonists," who sought to explain the OT as a mere shadow of older non-Israelite ideas, and the orthodox response which sought to prove the total originality and truthfulness of Israelite faith, there developed a

mediating position. **R. Kittel** was a founding member of this group. For example, while not accepting the view that from Moses onward Israel had been wholly monotheistic, Kittel also rejected the view that monotheism was a postprophetic belief in Israel. He said Moses had taught an ethical monolatry, one high God worthy of worship, who was the ruler and judge of Israel (although in the Mosaic period other gods may have been recognized as belonging to the other nations). **E. Sellin** also sought to work out this thesis and to give equal attention to development and antiquity in the religion of Israel.

Another facet of the mediating position of Kittel and Sellin was their insistence that Israelite faith was never uniform but had always consisted of different levels of theology and practice. Thus even in the prophetic period when monotheism was normative for Israel, many Hebrews could be found flocking to the Baals. Loyalties to God had always persisted but were widely varied and distributed among the different groups in the nation.

In the middle half of this century, a wealth of new and exciting archeological discoveries became very important for the history of religions approach. The Ras Shamra tablets found in 1929 revealed a great deal about Canaanite civilization. **S. H. Hooke** examined the similarities between the Canaanite and Levitical priesthoods using these tablets. Other history of religions scholars pointed out also the differences in Israelite and Canaanite religion, including the latter's essential polytheism and fertility focus.

The similarities between the Canaanite culture and that of the OT gave rise to a movement within the history of religions school known as the "myth and ritual" school. These men, led by Hooke, emphasized that OT worship had close relations with the patterns of religion in Canaanite cultus and that the prophetic protest could best be understood as a criticism of Israelite adoption of Canaanite ideas. Others said the basic flaw in the "myth and ritual" approach is its tendency to assume that similar practices and language proved a similar meaning and understanding.

The Archeological Approach

In the last century there has been a rapid increase in the knowledge of the ancient Near East from archeology. Most of the significant discoveries have taken place in the last fifty years. It is difficult to exaggerate the way such knowledge has multiplied. Cities, temples, and palaces have been unearthed, along with countless documents. Archeology has provided physical and written remains to allow for a good reconstruction of the background of OT history.

The lead in archeological study has been held by American scholars. **W. F. Albright** was probably the most knowledgeable mind on ancient Near Eastern archeology in this century. In copious writings he brought the available information into relation to the OT. Between the two world wars, great archeological projects were done in the area of Palestine; and, when World War II temporarily interrupted the physical research, time was found for synthesis and the interpretation of such findings.

As far back as the world of the Patriarchs, archeology provided insights. Some earlier scholars had doubted there ever were such OT heroes as the pre-Mosaic figures and had viewed the accounts of the patriarchs as totally fanciful. But Albright and others have demonstrated by archeological findings a high accuracy of the world described in these early stories. The nomadic life-styles of the patriarchs, their legal customs, and even an occasional name of Abraham's descendants have been documented in the world of the time in which they are presented in the OT (that is, between 2000 and 1700 B.C.). (A useful summary is available in **W. F. Albright's** *From the Stone Age to Christianity*.)

Others using archeology, such as **H. H. Rowley** and **J. Garstang**, have examined the exodus with the aid of findings in Canaan and Egypt. The evidence is, of course, given varying interpretations, especially in regard to dates. Albright and **G. E. Wright** concluded that the remains of the cities referred to in the conquest narratives of Joshua and Judges confirm a quick and destructive invasion of southern Palestine in the period the OT describes. Of course, beyond

locating places and dates for the study of the OT, archeology has also done a great deal to advance knowledge of culture in early Canaan.

One of the pioneering attempts to use this archeological method to rewrite Israelite history was by **W. C. Graham** and **H. G. May** in *Culture and Conscience*. It has been superceded by other worthwhile contributions, such as Albright's *From the Stone Age to Christianity* and **R. K. Harrison's**, *Archaeology of the Old Testament*. Because of the wide availability of popularly written reports on the work of archeologists, little more needs to be said here.

In conclusion it should be noted, first, that the archeological school had a real impact in securing serious attention to OT history, especially those early chapters once so shrouded in mystery. Second, there has been a lack of clarity about what can and cannot be done with archeology, especially by nonarcheologists writing on "Archeology and the Bible." Archeology cannot prove the accuracy of the biblical narratives, much less the inspiration of Scripture, partly because archeology is less than a precise science, but also because archeology cannot investigate certain questions. For example, even if all scholars were convinced by archeological evidence that a group of slave laborers left Egypt in a certain year, that would not confirm that it was God who provided the means for the exodus and gave it his stamp of approval. What archeology has done, and rightly can do, is to help interpret OT events and thoughts by throwing light on their background. Finally, archeology has been able to raise certain issues in a way that requires that they be investigated. In this way some of the "assured results" of other approaches have been called in question. Archeology will continue to exercise great influence in OT study insofar as it avoids the tendency either to dominate interpretation or to neglect it completely.

The Theological Approach

To many it will seem strange that a "theological approach" to OT study has only come to the fore in the last generation. In a way, this new method and the previous

refusal to use a theological approach are both results of a desire to be serious in recent OT study. The originators of the literary school wished to be *nonthological* in reaction to orthodoxy's use of church traditions to determine what the OT must mean. They sought to study Israel's religious history, not its theology. But scholars who were first trained in this method also first raised the objection that to analyze documents and forms, and to relate archeology's findings, was too shortsighted. They also wanted to understand the *theology* of the OT.

Of course there had always been some who felt such "objective" study was both impossible and inadequate. But this objection, even when raised by men of H. Gunkel's stature, was not heeded. Among such scholars, the first modern study of the OT which was avowedly interested in theology was W. Eichrodt's two-volume *Theology of the Old Testament*. Eichrodt's work went behind the study of individual details and events in Israel's history to locate the basic unity of Israelite faith (which he saw as the covenant). He did not neglect differences and development in Israel's religion but sought its core, its center, also. Thus Eichrodt combined historical and literary investigation with interpretation of theological interests.

The crises in the Western world evoked by two world wars and the world depression of the 1930s raised theological questions to the foreground. In this way the view of Eichrodt and a few others was vindicated. Many books were written during and immediately after World War II which sought once again "the relevance of the Bible" (from the title of such a book by H. H. Rowley. A similar book was produced in America by B. W. Anderson, *Rediscovering the Bible*). The most recent major example of the theological approach is G. von Rad's *Theology of the Old Testament*. Many similar studies have been done with more limited scope, such as D. Hillars' *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea*.

Since the theological approach is not definable in respect to methodology, it is difficult to point to common assumptions of scholars using it. Perhaps the real common factor is

the insistence that, while other approaches (literary, form, historical, and archeological) are necessary, they are not sufficient for an adequate understanding of the OT. It has a significance and a message beyond the simple historical meaning.

Summary

This survey indicates that OT study has changed from a subdiscipline under church doctrine to a field of great interest and variety of its own. It has also been noted that new methods of study develop to answer questions for which the older methods were not adequate, but these new methods in turn also evoke new questions. How these questions have been treated with regard to specific portions of the OT will be the concern of the remainder of this chapter.

THE NARRATIVE BOOKS

There are basically two subdivisions in the narrative books: the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) and the historical books (Joshua through Esther). These divisions have been widely assumed in Christian scholarship on the OT. The Jewish tradition, based on the Hebrew OT, has a slightly different arrangement. In it the first five books constitute the *Torah* (law), and the rest are included in the *Former Prophets* (Joshua to Kings) or the *Writings* (Chronicles, Esther, Ruth, Ezra, and Nehemiah).

Because of necessary limitations this section will focus on the Pentateuch (where modern scholars have been most active) and give some attention to Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. Only slight space will be devoted to Ezra and Nehemiah, and Esther and Ruth will not come under discussion.

The Pentateuch

A good deal of attention to Pentateuchal study was given in the introductory section. This is appropriate both because that was the locus for modern study's beginnings and because it continues to receive such a large share of OT

study. One recalls the rise and dominance of the so-called "documentary solution," also known as the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. This emphasized that earlier documents (J, E, P, D) had been united into the present Pentateuch. Through World War I this theory dominated OT study, although most conservative scholars rejected this approach altogether. Roman Catholics denounced it as disloyal to the church. Some "mediating" scholars disagreed with the Wellhausen consensus, although they used similar methods of study. Of course the majority of critical scholars were unconcerned about the opinions of Protestant orthodoxy or Roman ecclesiology. And the minor dissident voices within their own circles were few enough not to evoke serious attention.

The Jewish tradition, continued in the NT, generally held that the first five books were written by Moses. The JEPD solution replaced the idea of a single author, Moses in particular. The reasons given included: (1) The common references to Moses in the third person, rather than the first person; (2) some apparent anachronisms such as Genesis 36:31, "before any king reigned over the Israelites"; (3) differences in the names referring to God—in the Hebrew language Yahweh, Elohim, El Shaddai (this was the phenomenon that began the source theory); (4) differences in language and style, a point which must be seen with a Hebrew OT.

These observations and others the documentary hypothesis explained by positing different *sources* for the Pentateuch. The crucial source was D or the Deuteronomist (a source including the present Deuteronomy, but also found in the other historical books). This document was equated with the law code discovered in the temple and used as a basis of Josiah's reform. (See 2 Kings 22:8ff.) Since Josiah's reform began in 621 B.C., the law code, D, was dated shortly before this. From this "fixed document" the documentary theory located the other three documents (J, E, P) and dated them. J (so named because of a preference to call God "Yahweh," [German *Jahweh*]) was dated between 950 and 850. It was believed to have been

written in Judah and found largely in Genesis and Exodus 1-16. The third document, E (from the preference for the name "Elohim" for God), was thought to have come from North Israel between 850 and 750. The fourth document, P (for its "priestly" interests), was held to have been written during or after the exile. These four documents were thought to have been combined after the return from exile.

Conservative replies to this reconstruction may be divided into two basic types, with much overlapping. The first is that Moses must have authored these five books because the Christian (and/or Jewish) community had said he did for so long. A special form of this judgment is that NT references, particularly words of Jesus (e.g., Matt. 19:8; John 5:46-47; and 7:19), assume Mosaic authorship and thus the matter is settled by inspiration. A good presentation of this is by **E. J. Young**, *Introduction to the Old Testament*.

Another conservative approach defending Mosaic authorship is investigative, that is, joining issue on the accuracy of the various traditions and on the defects of the four-document hypothesis. Here the various individual issues remain open for investigation. For example, the argument depending on the different names used for God in the books was assessed and demonstrated to be far from evident as was being claimed by **W. H. Green** and others.

A more surprising critique of Wellhausen developed among critical scholars and those without confessional concerns. **G. Hoelscher** and **R. H. Kennett** argued that D was to be dated a century after Josiah. **A. C. Welch**, on the other hand, sought to push D back to Solomon's time, and **E. Robertson**, to the entrance into Canaan. These investigations had an unsettling effect upon the one assured date, and thus the viability, of the Wellhausen solution.

More distressing for the theory was the tendency to find more documents than four. **O. Eissfeldt** and **G. von Rad** with one more, and **P. Baentsch**, with seven sub-P sources, are typical and atypical representatives of this tendency. Other literary critics proposed reducing the sources to two (**P. Volz**) or even one, with supplements.

This does not mean that OT scholars have rejected the

Wellhausen solution. They have modified it and become less dogmatic about dates and contents of the documents, yet the solution is still widely accepted. It was not that it was deemed inaccurate by its users, but rather inadequate. This led to the form-critical work of the "Uppsala school."

The Uppsala school of OT study replaced the Wellhausen interest in documents with an emphasis upon oral tradition. In 1931 **J. Pedersen**, an eminent Scandinavian OT scholar, announced his break with the documentary theory. He suggested that various stories and narratives had been retold in overlapping traditions. While their sequence cannot be established on the basis of documents, *each* individual story, law, or song can be studied and dated on its own merits.

One of Pedersen's students, **I. Engnell**, proposed "traditio-historical" OT study, which he envisioned as superseding literary and form criticism. He rejected documents in favor of two "circles of tradition" which shaped and preserved Genesis through Numbers, and Deuteronomy through 2 Kings, respectively. But even these two circles (loosely termed P and D) interwove written and oral traditions. Thus any search for a "foundational document(s)" is misdirected. Engnell thought these traditions were first written down in the time of Ezra or Nehemiah but had received their shape centuries before.

A similar shift in German OT study was worked out by **G. von Rad**, who still allows for JEPD but is less strict about defining their limits or dates. He allows for a long, formative oral period of the various stories and theology. He speaks of a Hexateuch (the first six OT books) with sources drawn from particular cultic traditions, rather than creative authors. One basic tradition, nurtured at Shechem's annual autumn festival, centered around the events of Sinai and the law. The second major tradition was the conquest of the land, celebrated at Gilgal.

Von Rad's reconstruction has been challenged for a lack of hard evidence of the festivals so important to his view. The "creeds" of Joshua 24 and Deuteronomy 26 that he elaborates may have repeated Israelite confessions, but

there is little evidence for the festivals he assumes they represent. (For more criticism of von Rad, see A. Weiser, *The Old Testament; Its Formation and Development*.)

The more recent trends in Pentateuch study have not emphasized sources, written or oral, but have either looked at possible parallels to certain points in other cultures (E. A. Speiser on Genesis in *The Anchor Bible*) or have sought to account in other ways for the present form of the Pentateuch.

Two important issues in Pentateuch studies have been (1) the historical value of the descriptions from Genesis 1 to the death of Moses and (2) the use of the Pentateuch in reconstructing Israelite history from the exodus to the return from exile. Recently, the more common practice has been to avoid searching for "bare history" and to concentrate on the traditions telling of God's dealings with men as now recorded in the OT. Regarding the second question, one view, following the Uppsala school, eschews documents and attempts to write a developmental history of Israel's religion (I. Engnell is representative). The second view, still working with documents, is more confident of demonstrating to some degree the development of Israelite religion (von Rad is representative).

The American Albright school, foremost in the archeological approach, has tended to emphasize the basic trustworthiness of these traditions as well as their confessional role in Israel. They consider the OT traditions to contain both event and interpretation. For example, the conquest of the land includes both the history (in a degree demonstrated by archeology) and the interpretation as being God's work, not simply Israel's. This seems to be something of a mediating position between some who use archeology to prove the truth of biblical claims and Uppsala scholars who have contented themselves with traditions alone.

The Former Prophets

Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah are the "Former Prophets" in the Hebrew Bible (the prophetic books are

called the "Latter Prophets"). All these are anonymous books, both in their present form and in tradition. In modern study two focal questions have been discussed: (1) whether for Joshua through 2 Kings the JEDP sources are continued and, if so, to what extent, and (2) whether the Deuteronomic element is decisive or only one of a number of layers in the editorial production of these books.

The book of Joshua has received perhaps the most attention among these books. Those who argue for the continuation of JEDP beyond the Pentateuch believe the strongest case can be made for Joshua. As early as Wellhausen it was common among some who felt Joshua shared more with the first five books than with those following it to speak of the Hexateuch (rather than Pentateuch). **C. R. North** and **J. Bright** believe J and E are thoroughly interwoven in Joshua. Others (e.g., **W. Rudolph**) find only J. Generally those who have emphasized the sources in the Pentateuch have been more open to their presence in Joshua.

M. Noth has been a leader among those who deny JEDP in Joshua. Noth suggests that stories about cities and places preserved at Gilgal (chs. 1-9) and two collections of hero stories all come from the time of the division of the kingdom. A similar emphasis upon stories about places (aetiologies) is made by **A. Alt** and **Engnell**. Aetiologies are explanations of the origins of some observable phenomenon (a stone heap, a destroyed city, etc.). These have been particularly located in Joshua 5-11. The aetiological approach has found both acceptance and criticism. **W. F. Albright** criticized the extreme use of this method and argued that these places and persons were more substantial than many have suggested.

E. J. Young has sought to show that Joshua does not have such close ties to the Pentateuch (which he holds to be Mosaic) and therefore does not make a "Hexateuch." He does not think Joshua himself wrote the book, however.

Much research has been given to the date and character of the conquest of Canaan. The "traditio-historical" approach emphasized the theological focus: *God gave* the land. Others, agreeing with this, still think the historicity of the

conquest is important. Albright and Bright have emphasized the archeological evidence of a major onslaught in southern Palestine about the thirteenth century, in which several leading cities were thoroughly and quickly destroyed. They argue that this confirms the accuracy of the Joshua account.

The book of Judges presents similar questions, and scholarship is similarly divided over whether aetiologies or JE are at the base of the writing. Most agree the Deuteronomist has been involved, but few like R. Pfeiffer still find J and E. The aetiological approach of Alt, von Rad, and Pedersen has been prominent. Also Albright, Bright, and Wright have emphasized the historical reliability of Judges and renounced the aetiologists' excesses.

There are many similarities between Joshua and Judges which suggest they are more like contemporary books than successors (for example, note the references to parallels given in the RSV footnotes in Judges 1-2). In the modern study of Judges there have been two tendencies: first, to study the individual stories (of the judges) and, second, to explain the present framework (the work of the Deuteronomist editor).

Our 1 and 2 Samuel are all one book in the Hebrew Bible. In the Greek Bible of the early Christians they were 1 and 2 Kingdoms with our books of Kings being 3 and 4 Kingdoms. In this way the divisions followed by most English translations agree with neither the Hebrew nor the Greek version. The books of Samuel form a unit in that they cover the rise of the Israelite kingship to David (under Samuel's guidance). While Samuel is a key figure, especially in the first fifteen chapters, he was never considered the author of these books, nor were the other chief figures, Saul and David.

Two traditions have been located in these books by many scholars: The older critics (K. Budde) identified these with J and E, and recently O. Eissfeldt defended this view. (The origin of this speculation notes two accounts of how Saul became king in 1 Sam. 8 and 9 and two accounts of how David came to Saul's notice in 1 Sam. 16 and 17.) Others, doubting two documents, have suggested two different

traditions in Israel, one recognizing kingship, the other antagonistic to it (see A. Bentzen).

Apart from these two traditions, another document has been widely accepted. This is the section of 2 Samuel 9-20 and 1 Kings 1 and 2, where David's rule and succession by Solomon is given. This is often called the Davidic Court History, or the Succession Narrative. It is recognized as one of the best pieces of historiography in the ancient world because, although probably written under the patronage of the Davidic kingship, it is very honest about the good and bad aspects of David's rule. Young rejects this "succession narrative" as a source, but thinks 1 Chronicles 29:29 suggests that possible documents were used. The date of the finished books is difficult to estimate, but it is usually thought to have been after the division of the nation under Rehoboam. (See 1 Sam. 27:6.)

There is widespread agreement that the purpose of 1 and 2 Samuel is to describe and evaluate the kingship in Israel. This was a religious issue, because the Sinai covenant had assumed God was Israel's king, so how could there be a human king? The books of Samuel see it as a mixed blessing and perhaps a necessary evil. David, Israel's great king, was a paradigm of how kingship is both a blessing and a curse.

Like the books of Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings were originally one book. Their contents divide into four sections: 1 Kings 1:1-2:10 deals with the transfer of the throne from David to Solomon (thus uniting these books with Samuel); 1 Kings 2:12-11:43 describes the united kingdom after David; 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17 pictures the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah; and 2 Kings 18-25 deals with Judah and the beginning of the exile. Because of the similarities between Kings and Samuel many have argued that the same editor was responsible for the final edition of both works.

The same trends noted in regard to sources in the books of Samuel are continued in the case of 1 and 2 Kings. Some (Eissfeldt and Hoelscher) find J and/or E, but most do not. One type of source that is located is the court annal (such as the Acts of Solomon in 1 Kings 11:41), the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (see 1 Kings 14:19), and the

Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. (See 1 Kings 14:29.) Perhaps other official records were also used. A second source type proposed by many is the story collection about key persons such as Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah. Understandably, those scholars who have de-emphasized literary sources find some embarrassment at this wealth of documents acknowledged by the biblical writers.

It has been observed that the various kings are presented in a stylized way (date of accession, age upon taking the throne, mother's name, a judgment of each king's rule, and an obituary notice). These forms constitute a framework used by the writer to present material from official annals.

Modern study has found little interest in the Kings. There has been some interest in a chronology of the kings (see H. G. May, *Oxford Bible Atlas*, p. 16) or in nonbiblical information from archeologists. The other main interest has been in the persons of Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah, but these have been mostly studied as a prelude to the later prophetic writings, rather than focusing on the Kings' account.

Another interest has been whether the Kings are a part of a "Deuteronomic" history, running from Deuteronomy through 2 Kings. M. Noth is widely known for this thesis, which sees the Deuteronomist as interpreting the history of Israel using the criterion of loyalty to God (understood as support of the Jerusalem temple and opposition to the "high places"). Thus all the northern kings are unfavorably viewed, and only a few Judean kings are favored. This thesis emphasizes the theological viewpoint of the writer(s) of Kings. Conservative scholars such as Young and Harrison criticize unnecessary skepticism about the historicity of these accounts. They think the possibility of a single, final author for the entire collection is possible.

First and Second Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah in recent study have been widely regarded as originally parts of a single work. This view is accepted by such divergent people as R. H. Pfeiffer, G. E. Wright, H. H. Rowley, and A. Bentzen. Others (A. C. Welch and Young) have found more than one author.

The reasons for holding one author for these four books

include: (1) a similar religious standpoint emphasizing the temple and the priesthood, (2) the same interest in statistical records and genealogies, (3) language and style, and (4) the seeming overlap between the conclusion of Chronicles and the beginning of Ezra.

The books are usually dated between about 400 and 250 B.C. W. F. Albright, who thought that Ezra was the author, dated them ca. 427. Those favoring a late date point to the Aramaic (a late-developing language from biblical Hebrew) sections of Ezra. But recent discoveries have shown the use of Aramaic in Egypt ca. 400 B.C. and has muted that objection.

The question of sources in Chronicles is somewhat confused. Accepting a date after about 300 B.C., it is conceivable that the author had the use of Genesis to 2 Kings. This would explain the frequent overlapping with these works. Those scholars who have not thought that the author had access to these books have tended to stress his affinities with the D and P documents, especially the "Deuteronomist's" style of evaluating the kings of Israel.

Ezra and Nehemiah, as separate works, have received little attention. There has been some discussion on the dating of Ezra (ca. 457 or 397, that is, before or after Nehemiah). Many have accepted "memoirs" of Ezra and Nehemiah as sources for the books bearing their names, whether or not they wrote the books. The theological focus of both is the solidifying of Israel as the elect people by reforming worship in Jerusalem and severing relations with non-Jewish (i.e., Samaritan) neighbors. One matter of considerable interest has been the "edict of Cyrus" in Ezra 1:2-4, and 6:3-5, recently discovered in Cyrus' own records (see J. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*). A great value of all four books is the information they provide about a dark period in Israel's history, during which the Judaism of Jesus' and Paul's day was being formed.

THE PROPHETS

In the Hebrew OT the "Latter Prophets" is the designa-

tion given those books most English readers consider the prophets. The Hebrew Bible includes them in four scrolls: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve (Hosea to Malachi). Of course stories about prophets of God are found in the books of Samuel and Kings, but these are usually distinguished from the "writing prophets."

The number of the prophetic books and the amount of scholarly attention given them make it impossible to study them separately here. We will examine six major areas of modern study of the prophets.

What Is a Prophet?

There are a variety of words used in the OT to designate prophets. The most common Hebrew word, *navi'*, has received a good deal of attention in seeking to know who the prophets were. An early view (T. H. Robinson, T. J. Meek), taking the designation to stem from a word meaning to "bubble forth," argued that a *navi'* was one who was seized in ecstasy, lost control of his words, and became a mouthpiece for God. But the more recent interpretation derives *navi'* from an Akkadian word meaning "to call." Thus the prophet is one who "calls out" to Israel (E. Koenig) or, conversely, who was "called out" by God (R. B. Y. Scott, and especially W. F. Albright).

Two other common terms for a prophet are *ro'eh* and *hozeh*, both basically meaning "to see." The relation of these terms has been studied, because 1 Samuel 9:9 reads "he who is now called a *navi'* was previously called a *ro'eh*." Some (e.g., G. Hoelscher) have concluded from this that a seer was one who received special knowledge in dreams, and this was true of the later *navi'* (the development being in terminology for the same calling). Others have suggested a development in function: In the time of the kings, prophecy was moving out of a work of clairvoyance and becoming an institution of moral and religious instruction (thus a *navi'* was different from a *ro'eh* both in name and function). In the last half-century the discussion about the nature of a prophet has shifted away from the focus on philology.

The Call of the Prophet

Beyond the term *navi*', many scholars have sought the significance of prophecy in the "call" of the prophet by God to become his messenger (this is one of the "prophetic" aspects of Abraham and Moses, Gen. 20:7 and Deut. 18:15f.). Some of the prophetic calls are explicit (Isa. 6) and are more than simply a report of how a man came to be a prophet. They also include his message given by God (see H. H. Rowley).

The idea of the call as a constitutive part of prophecy was developed by S. Mowinckel; G. von Rad makes a good deal of the call of the prophet in his study of the prophetic books. A general consensus (with some differences) suggests the call includes: (1) an autobiographical report, (2) an audience with God (described in the report), (3) the call of the individual as a prophet, (4) the prophet's response (often expressing reluctance to accept), (5) the prophet's authority and his message from God, (6) God's promises to support the prophet, and (7) the prophet's dismissal by God.

Prophet and Priest

In recent study no greater question has been raised than the relation of the prophets to the priestly cultus. In Wellhausen's view, the prophets proposed a new monotheistic faith developed after the settlement in Palestine. Because of their work the worship was centralized at Jerusalem, which prepared the way for later ritual worship conducted by the priests. Thus, in a sense, the prophets contributed to the growth of the sacrificial cult. Later students, early in this century, tended to reverse the roles (priests were prior to prophets) and picture a radical disjuncture or even hostility between prophets and priests.

The prophet vs priest view won widespread acceptance, especially in liberal American Protestantism. In this view the prophets were very sensitive individuals who saw that true faith was a proper respect for God as the loving Father and all men as his children. Thereby the prophets became spokesmen for ethical monotheism and antagonists of sacrificial worship, which they deemed the perversion of true

religion (see R. H. Pfeiffer, and especially J. P. Hyatt's *Prophetic Religion*).

A third stage in interpretation placed the "classical" (or "writing") prophets in antagonism with the "false prophets" who were associated with the kings and made their work to insure stable politics in Israel by proclaiming "Peace be with you." (See Jer. 28.) These "cultic" prophets, attached to Israel's sanctuaries, were a common feature in OT study after the World War I. G. Hoelscher said they were derived from the Baal worship of the native Canaanites. But they were seen as completely different from the writing prophets.

The next stage proposed a close connection between the "cultic prophets" and the "classical prophets." This stemmed from the work of Gunkel and Mowinckel, who allowed a place in Israel's worship for a prophet to pronounce a word in God's name. But Mowinckel assumed the "cultic prophets" were ecstatics, who had little in common with the writing prophets except stylized forms of speech. He still considered the writing prophets a high-water mark in moral and religious development. A. Haldar strengthened Mowinckel's form studies by showing a similar prophetic aspect in the worship of other cultures.

Others, building on Mowinckel, argued for closer connections in function, words, and roles between the "cultic" and "writing" prophets. A very close association was defended by England's S. H. Hooke, who emphasized the centrality of the ritual for *all* life and institutions in Israel.

A. R. Johnson proposed that there was an established place for the prophets in the Jerusalem temple worship and that the prophets were part of the temple staff (thus they disappeared with the fall of the temple). I. Engnell championed a similar view in his work on the role of the king in the ancient Near East, especially in connection with cultic festivals.

In the 1940s the idea of a cultic base for the OT prophets came to dominate OT study, with dissident voices by B. D. Eerdmans (a conservative scholar who denied the existence of all cult prophets, true or false!), H. H. Rowley (who warned of making a theory a dogmatic assumption)

and, of course, by "unreconstructed" liberal theologians like **J. P. Hyatt** (who continued to maintain prophets were anti-cultic).

A more mediating position held that the prophets were not against the cultic worship, including sacrifices, but did oppose some excesses, the appropriation of some Canaanite worship features, and/or lack of daily life character in the worshipers. Thus Amos, Isaiah, and Hosea attacked a debased and misused cult, but not sacrifice itself (**H. H. Rowley, R. K. Harrison**).

In summary, the view that the prophet was the antagonist of the priesthood finds few supporters today. Most scholars assume some connection between the prophets and the cult (perhaps only that the prophets delivered their oracles in the cult). Even so, this consensus has been recently challenged for neglecting the originality of the individual prophets, and their attacks on the cult are taken more seriously by **J. Ward** and **G. Fohrer**, who argue the eighth-century prophets foretold the total overthrow of Israel's institutions, both cult and king.

Prophetic Inspiration

When scholars saw the prophets as individuals with a loose relation to the cult, their "inspiration" was viewed as something like being a religious genius (perhaps an eccentric one). This rationalistic understanding is the antithesis of the ecstatic theory of Hoelscher and **T. H. Robinson**. The ecstatic view was congenial with prominent theories in sociological anthropology which stressed the significance of a "holy man" in primitive societies (assuming Israelite society of the eighth century was primitive). They declared that the "holy man" had an experience and was seized by the divine Spirit.

J. Lindblom distinguished between an ecstasy of "absorption" (where the individual is fused with God) and the ecstasy of "concentration" in the prophets. Mowinckel, still accepting some extraordinary experience (ecstasy) in the prophets, came to emphasize more the *message* of the

prophets. He thought the ecstatic experience was more basic to the false prophets. H. H. Rowley summarized that "ecstasy" was not proved by etymology with *navi*, that such "ecstasies" must have been shared by "true" and "false" prophets, and that what was constitutive of the true prophets was their message (recently G. Widengren has reintroduced the parapsychic experiences as foundational to prophecy).

The Prophetic Message

The message of the prophet has been the focus in prophetic studies for the last quarter-century, in both *form* and *content*.

For most of Christian history, the essence of the prophetic message was held to be predictions of future events, especially the details of Jesus' coming. Often this view minimized the work of the prophets in their own time and neglected their religious and moral teachings. Some modern scholars revolted against both the idea of prediction and the neglect of prophetic teachings.

Old Testament study for the first quarter of this century tended to diminish or deny prediction in the prophetic message. J. P. Hyatt and W. R. Harper stressed the ethical teaching of the prophets as social reformers in Israel. Predictions found in prophetic books were often deleted as later additions. A classical formulation of this view was the slogan that prophets were "forthtellers" rather than "foretellers." Many scholars, especially the more orthodox, objected that this was a criterion grounded in modern prejudices rather than in study of the OT books themselves.

The more rigid application of this principle quickly fell into disrespect among most scholars. For one thing, there were too many predictions in the prophets (especially of an impending political disaster for Israel) which were really constitutive of the book. Moreover, history of religions study revealed that prediction was a common work of "divine men" in ancient Greece, Egypt, Babylonia, and Phoenicia. Thus the Hebrew prophets would have been

abnormal in *their time* if they refused to offer predictions.

But scholars have retained the emphasis on the role of the prophet in his own times. The classical prophets gave a word from God to kings and peoples, rebuking sins, threatening divine judgment, and warning of the nation's fall. This prophetic work has been enrichingly studied in the last half-century.

Possible predictions have become more acceptable, and the differences among scholars have been on *whether certain prophecies* have either a primary or secondary reference to Jesus as the Christ. Here there is a relative division between conservative and liberal scholars according to assumptions about the nature of inspiration.

An aspect of the question of prediction is whether the classical prophets (especially Amos, Hosea, and Micah) spoke only a message of coming doom or if they included a word of hope. The dominant view since the turn of the century has been to limit or eliminate "hopeful" words in these prophets. Scholars have argued that a message of utter disaster facing Israel (found in these prophets) would have been rendered innocuous by any words of hope (J. M. Ward, *Amos and Isaiah*). Others have replied that the prophets may not have been too exercised about such an apparent lack of consistency.

This "despair" view of the prophetic message is related to recent studies on the form of prophetic oracles. Gunkel had proposed that the prophets were not basically writers, but orators who spoke in short oracles—only a few lines. This view holds that the prophets were sent with a message for a specific occasion. Gunkel analyzed the prophetic oracle as consisting of a *reproach* (Because you have . . .) and a *threat* (thus will I do to you . . .). This basic analysis has been widely accepted and developed by others and given a classical presentation in C. Westermann's *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*.

H. G. Reventlow, building upon the work by E. Würthwein, has argued there was an oracle of salvation form as well as of condemnation. T. Raitt suggests Jeremiah's message also included a call to repentance and

that Israel's decision would determine either a hope-filled future, or destruction. A similar view has been defended recently by **G. Fohrer**, who argues that prophetic messages took account of both the action of God and the decision of men. These last two scholars have written recently, and it is still too soon to see what acceptance their proposals may find.

Conservative scholars have had little interest in the study of forms but have concentrated on the completed prophetic book. Young, in fact, is very critical of the form-study approach as a "foe of true exegesis." But such hostility is not expressed by other conservative scholars such as **R. K. Harrison**.

The Origin and Transmission of Prophetic Books

The work of Gunkel and Mowinckel gave impetus to the view that the oral stage of prophetic messages could be recovered out of the written books. With this theory, scholarly study turned increasingly towards the study of the *forms* of the oral prophetic speech.

Around World War I three stages in the production of prophetic books were widely recognized: (1) the oral stage, when the prophet gave short oracles to his contemporaries, (2) a later collection of these oracles which had been transmitted by his disciples, and (3) the production of prophetic books from such collections, with frequent additions not from the prophet himself.

H. S. Nyberg modified this view by insisting that the oral transmission was the longest period and that as a result it is highly doubtful that any *exact word* of the prophet survived. **H. Birkeland** argued for a highly faithful remembrance of the prophetic message but also doubted that any specific wording of that message was recoverable.

From the theory that the prophets had office at the cultic shrines, **Haldar and Engnell** argued that the prophetic words were passed on by cultic prophetic guilds. Placing even greater emphasis upon the oral transmission, Engnell once thought the bulk of the OT was not written down until the

exile (he later accepted some books, such as Nahum and Habakkuk, as being written from the beginning).

Comparing the transmission of traditions in other ancient cultures, G. Widengren argued that written transmission played a greater role than scholars had allowed. Reversing the emphases, he places a greater significance on the written tradition, noting suggestions in Isaiah 8:1-4; 30:8; and Ezekiel 43:11-12. In the case of Jeremiah, there is an explicit description of one prophet committing his words to writing (Jer. 36).

In reply, J. Muilenburg and others have pointed to the style (poetic) and the content ("hear," not *read*, "this word!") as demanding an oral transmission. Muilenburg says, "The prophets were not primarily literary men, but speakers." This leads him to analyze the prophetic book by identifying the smaller individual parts (i.e., oracles) and defining them by form critical study. (See the article "Old Testament Prophecy" in *Peake's New Commentary on the Bible*, p. 478.)

Apart from the criticism of Widengren, conservative scholars have refuted the oral transmission approach on other grounds: (1) the Jewish tradition considered the prophetic books to have been authored by the prophets themselves, as they evidenced by adding the later superscriptions to them; (2) R. K. Harrison and others have said that the many interpolations which have been located in the prophetic books assume a process of editing and re-editing the prophets' words with little respect for the divine source of their message; (3) it has been noted that in Egypt and Babylonia important messages were characteristically committed to writing, to avoid any chance additions.

In summary, the nature of the origin and development of prophetic books is still far from having a consensus among OT scholars. While most agree the prophetic message was first presented orally, there is no real agreement on when it was subsequently put in written form and whether this was the work of the prophet himself or of his "disciples" (a phenomenon vital to the Uppsala School's view of oral transmission but questioned by many scholars).

THE WRITINGS

The Psalms

Probably the best-loved of the OT books is the Psalter. Like the Pentateuch, it has also been a major focus in modern OT study, especially since the work of H. Gunkel. Prior to Gunkel, the common view (whether orthodox or liberal) considered the Psalms as basically individual creations arising from personal faith. Gunkel overturned this view so that today the consensus is reversed, with most OT scholars emphasizing the *community* character of the Psalms.

Nineteenth-century critics tended to date the Psalms very late, after the return from exile and most even from the Maccabean Age. In the view of C. H. Cornill and W. Robertson Smith, the individual Psalms were collected as a "hymnbook of the second temple." Gunkel reversed this, arguing that the Psalms arose in Israel's public worship and were later "democratized" by individuals in Israel and appropriated for expression of individual piety. His pioneering work sprang both from his interest in form-critical study (see below for his classification of the Psalms) and from a study of Israel's neighbors and their cultic practices. Gunkel explained the possible significance of Babylonian and Egyptian worship for understanding the Psalms.

Gunkel's student S. Mowinckel represents the next major shift in Psalms study. He, too, saw the origins of the Psalms in cultic worship, but, unlike his teacher, Mowinckel was favorably disposed toward the cultus. Thus he came to explain the Psalms as almost entirely cultic, both in their origin and in their use in Israel. Mowinckel's most original contribution was to suggest a life setting for many of the Psalms in connection with an annual New Year Festival at the temple, where God was enthroned as the king of the world. Specifically, Mowinckel proposed a type of "enthronement psalms" (e.g., Pss. 93, 95, 100) used in this festival.

Mowinckel's theory has been widely accepted to explain the purpose and use of the Psalms. But many have criticized

his idea of an enthronement festival because it is totally dependent on assumed analogies with Babylonian worship (see criticisms by O. Eissfeldt, L. I. Pap). Some have accepted a basic, annual, cultic use of Psalms without an "enthronement festival." H.-J. Kraus suggests that they were used in conjunction with a covenant-renewal ceremony where Israel rededicated herself to God. G. Widengren and I. Engnell, following their overall reconstruction of the life of Israel, proposed an ancient ritual of a dying and rising deity.

One of the most important aspects of Gunkel's work was to classify the "forms" of various Psalms. Of course the Psalms had long been classified by their subject matter (hymns of joy, meditation, penitence, royal songs, etc.) by conservative scholars like B. D. Eerdmans and J. Cales, an approach still favored by R. K. Harrison. But Gunkel's classifications were by *function* rather than *subject matter*.

Gunkel suggested five basic forms for the Psalms, with several additional less important types: (1) *hymns* praising God, such as individuals and/or choirs might have sung—Pss. 8, 19, 33; (2) *community laments*, evoked by a national crisis such as war or famine and begging God's intervention—Pss. 44, 79, 80; (3) *individual laments*, similar to type 2, except basically an individual's petition in personal crisis—Pss. 7, 13, 51; (4) *individual thanksgivings*, used in public worship, but chanted or sung by individuals; and (5) *royal psalms*, celebrating significant events in the life of an Israelite king—Pss. 2, 20, 101, 110. (Gunkel also allowed for "mixed" forms, which used parts of two or more of these.)

Basically Mowinckel worked with Gunkel's categories but greatly reduced the role of individual Psalms, partly by interpreting their "I" in a communal way (as today many songs used in public worship are first person singular). Mowinckel gave greatest attention to the category of "royal psalms" because of his view of an annual royal festival. His work refined Gunkel's theory and is in no way a refutation of it. H.-J. Kraus' suggestion of a cultic origin and development of the Psalter is similar, but without Mowinckel's king theory. Finally, the most recent major treatment of the

Psalms, by M. Dahood (*Anchor Bible*), still utilizes Gunkel's thesis, although it also makes extreme revisions of the actual text readings in the Psalms (for which his work has been widely and severely criticized).

The significance of the superscriptions ascribing authorship of the various Psalms has been variously assessed. Older critical scholars thought the Psalms claiming David as author (seventy-three in the Hebrew text) were a device to help give them importance in postexilic worship. R. H. Pfeiffer, perhaps an extreme example of this view, doubted there were any pre-exilic hymns in the collection.

Since then two major changes have occurred. First, scholars were increasingly agreeable to assign pre-exilic dates for many Psalms (most, I. Engnell) and also to accept David as the author of some. Second, linguistic study suggested the Hebrew phrase translated "psalm of David" could equally be rendered "a psalm for David" or "a psalm in the Davidic style." This view has been acceptable to conservative scholars like Young and Archer.

Other superscriptions in the Psalms were similarly discussed. Many conjectures were given, because in many instances the meaning of the Hebrew terms is difficult. Some were apparently for musical accompaniment; others gave directions to singers or choirmasters. Even the frequent word "selah" is of uncertain meaning.

Gunkel's proposals are still the watershed for modern Psalms study, because his insistence on the *communal* locus for the Psalms is foundational in almost all modern studies. It has undergone real refinement, but, unlike other important theories in OT study, it has not been rejected by any sizeable number of scholars.

Proverbs

The earliest representative of Hebrew wisdom literature, Proverbs, was a focal point in the recent increase of interest in the wisdom movement of the ancient world. Wisdom was the last major segment of OT literature to receive study by modern scholars, and that really began about fifty years ago with the discovery of other wisdom writings from the

ancient Near East. In 1922 E. A. W. Budge began publishing extracts from an ancient Egyptian writing *The Wisdom of Amen-em-opet*, which appears to have parallel sections with Proverbs 22:17—23:11. A. Erman and later O Eissfeldt argued that this Egyptian text was used by the writer of Proverbs. Egyptologist E. Drioton argued that Proverbs was the source for *The Wisdom of Amen-em-opet*.

The discussion of who copied from whom was mitigated by the discovery that there was a widespread, international wisdom movement in the ancient world, including Egypt, Babylonia, Phoenicia, and Israel (W. O. E. Oesterly and H. Gressmann). This internationalism gives the Proverbs and other OT wisdom writings their uniqueness because they have a more universalist orientation (in content, form, and origin), make little or no use of distinctive Israelite ideas (the Sinai covenant, the exodus, the Davidic rule), and are more empirical in outlook.

Such internationalism provided frequent cross-exchange of ideas affecting the questions of authorship and date of the Proverbs. In few areas of OT study is there such disagreement among scholars employing the same methods of study. Very few would hold that Solomon was the author of the entire book (the book does not claim so; see 24:23; 30:1; 31:1). But some (including Albright) suggest Solomon was responsible for many of these proverbs (Young thinks for most). Others have thought Solomon the author of very few, if any (J. Skinner). Most recent scholars hold that Solomon was directly responsible for some, and indirectly for many, in that he was the patron who encouraged wise man/scribal schools in Israel (J. C. Rylaarsdam and W. Baumgartner). Thus Solomon was to the development of Proverbs what David was to the development of Psalms.

Of course the dating of the Proverbs is closely tied to the question of authorship, if one holds Solomon as their writer. Otherwise the date of the collection ranges from the time of Hezekiah (Albright, see Prov. 25:1) to after the exile (S. R. Driver, C. H. Toy). Of course the "oral transmission" theorists suggest a long oral history in the cult prior to a rather late date for writing (I. Engnell, A. Bentzen).

One of the questions arising in Proverbs studies is the "hypostatization," or personification, of Wisdom in Proverbs 8. Some have suggested that wisdom is pictured here as a divinity separate from God (similar to Christ). This has been seen to reflect Greek speculation about the Logos (E. Sellin, R. Kittel) or Canaanite thought (H. Ringgren). Others have suggested that wisdom is personified but not a distinct person (R. K. Harrison). H. Wheeler Robinson explained the idea as use of a poetic style. Apart from studies of ancient parallels to other particular proverbs, little modern study has been done on Proverbs. J. C. Rylaarsdam made the suggestion it was a "copybook" used by wisdom teachers to instruct their students.

Job

Of all the "Writings," Job has received the most attention in modern OT study. For centuries it has excited the minds and hearts of a great variety of readers. In the last century it was considered by some to be modeled on Greek drama (a parallel may be seen in A. MacLeish's modern play *J. B.*). Five basic sections within the book can be identified: (1) the prose prologue, chapters 1-2; (2) the dialogues of Job and his friends, 3-31; (3) Elihu's speeches, 32-37; (4) the speeches of God, 38:1-42:6; and (5) the prose epilogue, 42:7-17.

These five divisions have been variously interpreted. Some have regarded the entire book as a unit (E. Sellin, H. Hertzberg), while others have thought that the prose prologue and epilogue were earlier than the poetic materials (Wellhausen, C. Cornill, and K. Budde). Other scholars (e.g., Eerdmans) have reversed this. Several have suggested that the Elihu speeches are not originally part of the work (Dhorme, Koenig). The variety of possible combinations is examined in Young's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, although this is now rather dated.

Although one Jewish tradition ascribed the book to Moses, most scholars (ancient and modern) agree that the author of the book of Job is anonymous. With regard to dating, distinction must be made between the date of the story of Job and the present written form. Albright, by

examining the customs presumed in the book, proposed that the hero himself belonged to the patriarchal age. The completed work has variously been dated in Solomon's time (Young, M. Unger, F. Delitzsch), in the time of Hezekiah (Gunkel, Koenig, and Albright), and after the exile (A. Weiser, S. R. Driver). If the book is divided into parts, these are often dated differently. Such great variety in dating among scholars from all theological positions suggests that any consensus is unlikely, pending new facts.

Despite the popular view that Job is focused on the question of God's justice (theodicy, accepted by W. Harrelson and W. A. Irwin), there are other suggestions. E. Kraeling thought the purpose was entertainment. J. Pedersen thought Job posed the problem of theodicy but did not seek to solve it (similarly, H. H. Rowley says it does not solve this problem). J. Hempel saw it as one man's complaint against the stereotyped answers of the wisdom school.

Perhaps part of Job's power to evoke interest, thought, and meditation about basic religious questions and at varying levels of study is the enigmatic quality which also makes it open to diversity in interpretations.

Ecclesiastes

This third example of OT "wisdom" books shows the variety within that category. If Proverbs is basically optimistic about human life and reasoning, Ecclesiastes is the reverse. It has been viewed as very pious (F. Delitzsch) and skeptical (Heine). As with Proverbs, Solomon has been considered its author (H. Moeller, R. K. Harrison) or its patron (Young), while others have denied any connection with Solomon (C. C. Torrey).

With regard to date, suggestions range from Solomon to the time of Herod the Great (H. Graetz; this is no longer possible since a copy was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, insuring a date before 170 B.C.). Earlier in this century a late date was suggested on the basis of alleged dependence on Greek philosophies (G. Siegfried, H. Ranston).

Ecclesiastes has been regarded as a collection of earlier writings (Ranston) or as one writing with various inter-

polations to make an originally skeptical work more pious (P. Volz). Among critical scholars, the unity of the book has found a competent defense from C. Cornill and R. Gordis.

The older critical view located Greek influence in the book (O. Eissfeldt, R. Pfeiffer), but Babylonian (G. Barton, W. F. Albright), Egyptian (P. Humbert, W. Baumgartner), and even Phoenician (M. Dahood) origins have been proposed. As with Job, the purpose of Ecclesiastes has been variously explained. J. Pedersen saw it as a statement of Hebrew skepticism; W. Zimmerli thought that it was a critical assessment of wisdom theology. R. Gordis, a Jewish scholar, thinks it is a spiritual testament given to reject attempts to explain God's favor on the basis of success or failure in this world.

Only in recent years, since G. von Rad's *Theology of the Old Testament*, has there been real interest in assessing the significance of "wisdom" within the overall thought of the OT. W. Zimmerli tried to show that the idea of God as the Creator is behind Hebrew wisdom theology. One of the most recent attempts to explore this question, in relation to the prophetic writings, is J. Crenshaw's *Prophetic Conflict*.

This brief survey of the history of modern criticism in OT thought is necessarily very incomplete. The author's desire has been to fairly represent major positions, although often it has been necessary to oversimplify. Refutation of erroneous views would require a massive, book-length undertaking, along with a much more detailed study of the history of the discipline.

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