

## РЕЛИГИОВЕДЕНИЕ И КОНФЛИКТОЛОГИЯ

UDC 222

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## STRUCTURE, GENRE, AND RHETORIC OF THE ENNEATEUCH

The article seeks to fill a major lacuna in modern biblical scholarship. Although the studies of the last four decades (since the late 1970s) have done much to explore the literary properties of the Hebrew Bible, the exegetes tend to focus upon relatively limited pieces of text — a few chapters, a book at most — and hardly ever take a look at the larger literary entities to which these texts belong. A glaring example, considered in the present article, is Genesis-Kings. The author demonstrates that despite being divided into several books (nine in the Jewish tradition, hence the modern scholarly term Enneateuch; twelve in Christian) Genesis-Kings is an integral and self-contained composition, held together by a continuous and reasonably coherent plot as well as by stylistic homogeneity: all of its parts are dominated by narrative, to which all other literary formats are subordinated. This composition was, in the author's opinion, created in Babylonian exile. The article further shows that the Enneateuch displays a harmonious, symmetric overall structure resembling that of ancient Near Eastern treaties between suzerains and vassals. The rhetorical purpose of this structure is, first, to foreground the sections that contain commandments (from Exodus 20 through Deuteronomy), and second, to convince the readers of the necessity to follow them. Thus, although the biblical books that constitute the Enneateuch are usually termed "historical," for its creators recounting the past was just a means of ensuring observance in the present and thus preserving the community of exiles from assimilation. Refs 23.

*Keywords:* Hebrew Bible, Enneateuch, Genesis-Kings, genre, rhetoric, literary structure.

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## СТРУКТУРА, ЖАНР И РИТОРИКА ДЕВЯТИКНИЖИЯ

Цель статьи — заполнить крупный пробел в современной библеистике. Хотя исследования последних четырех десятилетий (с конца 1970-х годов) внесли значительный вклад в изучение литературных аспектов Ветхого Завета, экзегеты, как правило, сосредоточивают свои усилия на сравнительно небольших его отрывках — нескольких главах, в лучшем случае одной книге — и почти никогда не рассматривают более широкие литературные композиции, в которые эти тексты входят в качестве составных частей. Яркий пример тому приведен в данной статье. Автор доказывает, что весь Ветхий Завет от Бытия до Царств (девять книг по еврейской традиции, двенадцать по христианской) представляет собой единое, законченное произведение благодаря своему последовательному, логично развивающемуся сюжету и жанровому единообразию: во всех его частях преобладает повествование, которому подчинены остальные литературные формы. Это произведение было, по мнению автора, создано в период Вавилон-

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ского пленения. Автор статьи показывает также, что литературная структура Девятикнижия отличается гармоничной симметрией и что в этом отношении оно сходно с древневосточными договорами между сюзеренами и вассалами. Риторическое предназначение этой структуры — во-первых, вывести на первый план те разделы, в которых содержатся заповеди (от 20-й главы Исхода до конца Второзакония), и, во-вторых, убедить читателя в необходимости следовать им. Таким образом, хотя Девятикнижие и считается «исторической» частью Ветхого Завета, для создателей этого произведения повествование о прошлом было лишь средством обеспечить соблюдение заповедей в настоящем и таким образом предохранить общину изгнанников от ассимиляции. Библиогр. 23 назв.

*Ключевые слова:* Ветхий Завет, исторические книги, Девятикнижие, жанр, риторика, литературная структура.

The last three decades have been marked in biblical scholarship by rapid proliferation of synchronic literary studies<sup>1</sup>. Rarely, if ever, practiced theretofore, this approach has since generated hundreds of articles, monographs, and commentaries that may appear to cover, in a dense and overlapping network, every biblical text and every tier of its structure. However, that is not entirely true: at least one literary component of the Hebrew Bible has largely, if not entirely escaped the exegetes' attention. The component in question is the enormous but relatively integral textual continuum that stretches from what is commonly known as Gen 1: 1 all the way to 2 Kgs 25: 30 and contains, by volume, about 49% of the Jewish and Protestant canons. Spanning two canonical corpora (the Torah and the Former Prophets of the Jewish Tanak; the Pentateuch and most "historical books" of the Christian Old Testament) and therefore lacking a single traditional designation, it is increasingly referred to by modern scholars as the Enneateuch because the Jewish tradition divides it into nine books (versus twelve in the Christian Bibles)<sup>2</sup>. The present article demonstrates that the Enneateuch is identifiable as a literary entity, uses generic and syntactic considerations to uncover its structure, and discusses the rhetorical purposes operative in this structure.

### 1. The Enneateuch as a literary unit

It may appear at first glance that the very status of Gen 1: 1–2 Kgs 25: 30 as an Enneateuch disqualifies it as a literary unit in its own right. Yet, the Bible's division into books (as well as into chapters and verses) is a primarily canonical phenomenon and as such does not necessarily do justice to its literary layout. While the canon's compilers doubtlessly tried to preserve this layout where possible (and to the best of their understanding), technical, liturgical, and other considerations could also play a major role; with the Enneateuch, whose volume far exceeds the capacity of a single scroll and whose first five books are pivotal in the weekly synagogue service, such considerations likely preponderated<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> I use the term "literary studies" in the sense that has been prevalent of late, as denoting analysis of the received biblical text as a literary composition, not of the hypothetical documents or sources that served as its building blocks.

<sup>2</sup> The only major difference between the Jewish and Christian canons with regard to Gen 1: 1–2 Kgs 25: 30 is that the latter include Ruth between Judges and Samuel while the former places it elsewhere. On this issue, largely irrelevant for the purposes of the present article, see [1, p. 32 n. 21; 2, p. 34–35]. Otherwise, the discrepancy in the number of books is caused by the fact that the Christian tradition, going back to the Septuagint, divides Samuel and Kings of the Jewish canon into two parts each.

<sup>3</sup> The tradition of Torah readings on Sabbath emerged already in the Second Temple period (e.g., Josephus, *Against Apion* 2: 175; Acts 15: 21), although fixed weekly portions (*parashot*) are not attested before the Talmud (Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Megillah* 29b). Those used today (and going back to the

Of course, it is difficult to deny that many of the biblical books are entirely self-contained entities, connected to the rest of the Bible only by intertextual means, but they are not defined as such by the para-textual elements added in the process of the canon's formation, e.g., the *masora finalis* or the free-standing titles of the modern English translations. Only a feature or property of the book itself, such as a superscription (e.g., Jer 1: 1; Eccl 1: 1), a well-rounded plot (e.g., in Ruth and Esther), or generic distinctiveness (obvious, for example, in Psalms, Proverbs, Lamentations, and the Song of Songs), isolates it from what precedes and what follows. Accordingly, the bare fact of the Jewish and Christian canons regarding Gen 1: 1–2 Kgs 25: 30 as a sequence of books does not preclude the possibility of its constituting a single, integral composition<sup>4</sup>. Evidence contra this proposition can only be found in the text proper.

Such evidence is in manifestly short supply. To begin with, the Enneateuch is almost entirely devoid of superscriptions — short opening fragments that function as title lines of sorts by summarizing the book's distinctive content and (implied) authorship. Five constituent books of the Enneateuch begin with phrases that report single punctual developments and thus have no introductory sense whatsoever (Gen 1: 1; Lev 1: 1; Num 1: 1; Josh 1: 1; Judg 1: 1)<sup>5</sup>. In three others, the opening line does serve as an introduction, but only on a very limited scale: Exod 1: 1 introduces Jacob's family (1: 1–4), 1 Sam 1:1 that of Elkanah (1: 1–3), and 1 Kgs 1: 1, David's waning days (1: 1–2: 10). The only potential exception is Deut 1: 1–2: its reference to “the words that Moses spoke to all Israel on the other side of the Jordan, in the desert of Arabah” is applicable to Deuteronomy as a whole because the latter consists almost entirely of Moses' quoted speech. As will be argued further, this exception is of major importance as far as the structure of the Enneateuch is concerned, but arguing that the Enneateuch is not a literary unit would also require comparable superscriptions in Gen 1: 1 and Josh 1: 1, the first pertaining to Genesis — Numbers and the second to Joshua — Kings.

Further, the Enneateuch is generically uniform: all its books are primarily narratives. This is not to deny the obvious fact of their employing, at times very heavily, other literary formats, such as commandment, admonition, genealogy, or poetry (to mention just a few basic ones)<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, below I will argue that the distribution of these formats to a certain extent defines the Enneateuch's structure<sup>7</sup>. At the same time, almost all of them

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practices of Babylonian Jews) clearly presuppose the canonical books: each of them is divided into ten to twelve complete *parashot*.

<sup>4</sup> Some practitioners of synchronic exegesis assume that canonical books are literary units in their own right, e.g., [3–4], while others apparently presume that they are not and, accordingly, feel free to cross the boundaries between them, e.g., [5; 2, p.28–76]. However, the concept of the Enneateuch as a library is attested mainly, if not exclusively, in diachronic scholarship: see, e.g., [6; 7, p.409–418].

<sup>5</sup> The same is true of 2 Sam 1:1 and especially of 2 Kgs 1: 1. Some scholars regard the impersonal וַיָּבֵי (and it came to pass) (Josh 1: 1; Judg 1: 1; 2 Sam 1: 1) as a structural marker; see, e.g., [4, p.81–82]. The construction does sometimes open major literary units, including the books of Ezekiel, Ruth, and Esther, but it is simply too common to delineate such units. Additionally, in all three cases listed above the phrase ushered in by וַיָּבֵי refers back to the events recounted in the preceding book (the deaths of Moses, Joshua, and Saul), contributing thereby to the continuity of the Enneateuchal narrative.

<sup>6</sup> Although it has been common, since at least the times of the Septuagint, to refer to the normative portions of the Enneateuch as “the law,” in fact for the most part they do not follow the casuistic template (“if X, then Y”) of the law codes in the ancient Near East and elsewhere. Their clear, albeit by no means absolute, preference for the apodictic format (“thou shalt,” “thou shalt not”) makes “commandments” a better term. See [8, p.101–171; 9, p.45–50].

<sup>7</sup> As is well known, this distribution also looms large in diachronic studies, especially in the

are subordinated to the narrative. Some appear only in the characters' speech quoted by the narrator (this is especially true of the commandments, invariably enunciated by Yhwh or Moses, but also pertains to the sermons and poems). Others are assimilated to the narratorial discourse (for example, the patriarchal genealogies in Gen 5: 3–31; 11: 10–26 are laid out as such) or integrated in it by means of the syndetic ואלה "and these are" (e. g., the table of nations in Genesis 10 or the lists of Jacob's family in Gen 46: 8–27; Exod 1: 1–4). Again, the only major exception is the series of Moses' discourses introduced by the asyndetic אלה "these are" in Deut 1: 1 and constituting the bulk of Deuteronomy. Otherwise consistent throughout the Enneateuch, its generic master pattern does not extend past its boundary in both Jewish and Christian canons, thereby isolating it from the biblical texts that follow: Isaiah is mostly prophecies (not to mention that the superscription in Isa 1:1 defines it as an entity in its own right), and Chronicles begins with a nine-chapter self-standing genealogy.

Finally, the Enneateuch's discourse is both reasonably coherent and perfectly self-contained. Its backbone, a chronologically ordered account of past events, is easily traceable throughout despite occasionally moving sideways (as in Genesis 37–50 with its repeated switches from Joseph to his family and back) and even in reverse (with such flashbacks as Judg 2: 6–9 and 1 Sam 28: 3) because there are few, if any, significant breaks<sup>8</sup>. If the plot requires a substantial temporal gap between the reported developments, the narrator always ensures continuity by various creative means, such as the sequences of ancestral ages in Genesis and wilderness stations in Numbers or the (supposedly) precise relative chronology of the cycle formulae in Judges and regnal formulae in Samuel and Kings<sup>9</sup>. Local preponderance of commandments and admonitions (for example, in Exodus 20–31 and Leviticus) likewise does not obscure the narrative thread because, as already mentioned, all of them are presented as quoted discourses and therefore as links in the chain of the recounted events. Even in Deuteronomy, whose opening asyndetic אלה to a certain extent sets it apart from the balance of the Enneateuch (see above), all individual speeches of Moses are ushered in syndetically (e. g., Deut 1: 3; 5: 1; 27: 1; 29: 1; 31: 1; 31: 30) and thus implicitly included in the same chain (see below).

A crucial corollary of this continuity is that no part of the Enneateuch can be described as a completely self-contained piece, not even its constituent books, each of which

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documentary hypothesis that associates the narratives primarily with the sources J and E, lists and cultic commandments with P, and sermons with D. For a concise summary of this approach, see [10, p. 6–10].

<sup>8</sup> There is, of course, the issue of what looks like repetitions and tensions, but these features, instrumental as they might be in diachronic delineation of sources, traditions, and redactional layers, in the synchronic, literary perspective can only be construed otherwise or discounted as inconsequential. One good example is the contradiction between the claim of Josh 21: 41–43 that the Israelites took possession of the entire Canaan and the admission of Judg 1: 27–36 that much of the country remained beyond their control. While this may signify, diachronically speaking, that the two texts belong to different hands, what matters from the synchronic standpoint is that together they enable the narrator both to impress the audience with the deity's willingness to keep its repeated promises concerning the land (e. g., Gen 12: 7) and to create the groundwork for Israel's eventual loss thereof. See [11, p. 315–323].

<sup>9</sup> The trend in question is traceable all the way through the report on Jehoiachin's release from prison that concludes the Enneateuch (2 Kgs 25: 27–30): isolated as it is, the event is nevertheless carefully positioned vis-à-vis the king's regnal years (v. 27). In some cases, the integrity of the Enneateuch's main story line is preserved by purely stylistic means. Thus, Judges 17–21 and 1 Samuel 1–12 are incorporated into it primarily via the opening formula "and there was a (certain) man/youth" in Judg 17: 1, 7; 19: 1; 1 Sam 1: 1; 9:1 that is also used in Judg 13: 2 and thus implicitly associates the stories told in these texts with the period of Philistine oppression (Judg 13: 1).

builds upon what precedes it and serves as a foundation for what follows. Significantly, the boundaries between them do not even correspond to those between definable chronotopic stages of the narrative<sup>10</sup>. Genesis includes both the early history of the world and that of Israel's ancestors; the people arrive at Sinai in Exodus 19 and leave only in Numbers 10; they remain on the east bank of the Jordan from Numbers 33 through Joshua 2; the period of conquest begins in Joshua 3 and ends in Judges 1; that of the judges extends all the way through 1 Samuel 12; and even David's biography not only spans 1 and 2 Samuel, but also spills into Kings<sup>11</sup>. By contrast, the Enneateuch as a whole stands entirely on its own. It has no prequel (obviously) and no sequel: the account of subsequent events in Ezra and Nehemiah is a continuation of Chronicles rather than 2 Kings (as the catchline 2 Chr 36: 22–23 = Ez 1: 1–3 proves beyond reasonable doubt).

In sum, there is nothing in the biblical text per se (as distinguished from the biblical canon) to disqualify the Enneateuch as a literary unit — or, rather, a mega-unit, one that can only be subsumed under the Hebrew Bible as a whole. Its examination as such is consequently in order, starting with its structure, which will be analyzed in the next part of the article.

## 2. The structure and genre of the Enneateuch

As noted above, although the generic master pattern of the Enneateuch is that of a narrative at times its text is dominated, in terms of volume, by other literary formats. Even though none of them is confined to a single book or section and many are found throughout the mega-unit, their distribution is highly uneven and therefore potentially meaningful:

Genesis 1 — Exodus 19: mostly narratives; some commandments, lists, genealogy, and poetry.

Exodus 20 — Leviticus 26/27: mostly commandments (articulated by Yhwh), some narratives.

Leviticus 27/Numbers 1 — Numbers 36: mostly alternating narratives and commandments (articulated by Yhwh); some genealogy, lists, and poetry<sup>12</sup>.

Deuteronomy 1–34: mostly commandments (articulated by Moses) and admonitions; some poetry.

Joshua 1 — 2 Kings 25: mostly narratives; some admonitions, lists, and poetry.

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<sup>10</sup> The term “chronotope” was introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin; according to his definition, it denotes “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships” that serve as “organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events” [12, p. 119].

<sup>11</sup> This is not to say that these boundaries are haphazard. On the contrary, the canon's framers did their best to keep with the Enneateuch's texture, either using death or emergence of a major character as a milestone (Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel; Kings is a major exception) or, where no such event was available, circumscribing the books by the type of materials they contain (Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). It is precisely because of the Enneateuch's narrative integrity that such efforts had only limited success.

<sup>12</sup> Despite coming on the heels of the Exodus-Leviticus block, the commandments in the first ten chapters of Numbers belong with the balance of the book because they mostly deal with preparations for the journey it describes and are enunciated in “the wilderness of Sinai” (Num 1:1; contrast “on Mount Sinai” in Lev 26: 46; 27: 34) on the “second year after exodus from Egypt” (Num 1: 1; contrast “third month after exodus” in Exod 19: 1). The status of Leviticus 27 is ambiguous: the postscript in v. 34 lumps it with the commandments in Exodus and Leviticus, but the fact that it comes after the blessings and curses in Leviticus 26 speaks otherwise (note that there are no commandments after an analogous section in Deuteronomy 28).

This overview reveals a harmonious, symmetric organization: two blocks of commandments, each featuring its own speaker, separated by a generically heterogeneous stretch of text and flanked by substantial pieces of narrative, one including genealogies and commandments but no admonitions and the other displaying predilection for admonitions but shunning genealogies or commandments. Further strengthening the symmetry is the unique syntactic status of Deuteronomy. As already mentioned, the discourses of Moses that constitute its bulk are individually subordinated to *waw*-consecutive imperfect *verba dicendi* and thereby implicitly included in the narrative master sequence of the mega-unit, carried forward by this syntactic pattern. However, Deuteronomy's opening line (1: 1–2) sets these discourses apart by using an asyndetically formulated nominal clause to refer to their totality and thus identifying the book (except, perhaps, for the all-narrative chap. 34) as by far the largest discontinuity in the Enneateuchal narrative. A plausible way to account for this combination of features is to regard it as drawing a major boundary within the mega-unit while keeping its overall integrity intact. If so, the Enneateuch falls into two concentrically arranged major parts, Genesis-Leviticus and Deuteronomy-Kings, with Numbers functioning as a buffer between them; the first part builds towards the commandments enunciated by Yhwh at Sinai or around it, while the second traces Israel's struggle to live with those enunciated by Moses on the left bank of the Jordan.

#### I. Sinai Commandments

A Preparing the Commandments	Gen 1: 1 — Exod 19: 25
B Commandments Proper	Exod 20: 1 — Lev 26: 46/27: 34

#### II. Intermezzo

C From Sinai to the Jordan	Lev 27: 1/Num 1: 1 — Num 36: 13
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#### III. Transjordanian Commandments

B Commandments Proper	Deut 1: 1 — 34: 12
A Living with the Commandments	Josh 1: 1 — 2 Kgs 25: 30

Thus construed, the literary structure of the Enneateuch closely resembles that common in ancient Near Eastern diplomacy and to a limited extent traceable in both Exodus 20 — Leviticus 26/27 and Deuteronomy 1–34. Assyrian and especially Hittite treaties between suzerains and vassals usually begin with the former's identification and a historical preamble that outlines the history of the relationship between the parties with a special emphasis on the suzerain's benevolence, continue with the vassal's (but not the suzerain's) obligations, and end with blessings for fulfilling these obligations and curses for transgressions against them [13; 14, p. 1–93]. In a similar fashion, the Enneateuch begins by introducing Yhwh vis-à-vis the humankind as a whole (Genesis 1–11) and tracing the deity's relationship with Israel with a special emphasis on liberation from the Egyptian bondage (Genesis 12 — Exodus 19). Only after this it stipulates the people's responsibilities (Exodus 20 — Deuteronomy 34) and shows them enjoying the benefits of observance (Josh 1: 1 — Judg 1: 26) and suffering the consequences of disobedience (Judg 1: 27 — 2 Kgs 25: 30)<sup>13</sup>. Both Exodus 20 — Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 1–34 also crown the commandments with long lists of blessings and curses (Lev 26: 3–45 and Deut 28: 1–68 respectively), but the historical preamble is rudimentary in the former (Exod 19: 4) and strictly focused in the latter, despite its length, on post-Sinai developments (Deut 1: 6 — 3: 29). It

<sup>13</sup> On Judg 1: 27–36 as a major watershed in Joshua-Kings, see [11, p. 320–321].

is consequently the Enneateuch as a whole that primarily functions, at least from the literary standpoint, as a treaty, or covenant, between Israel and its God. The next part of the article examines the Enneateuch's rhetoric in the light of this finding.

### 3. The rhetoric of the Enneateuch

Spelling out the terms of an agreement between a suzerain and a vassal was by no means the only purpose of the ancient Near Eastern treaties mentioned above; their structure was obviously meant to convince the latter — the discourse's addressee — to abide by these terms. In the Enneateuch, this structure meets the same rhetorical objectives. First, it foregrounds the commandments by according the sections that contain almost all of them (B, C, and B' on the diagram above) an honor of a place in its structural center. Second, it insists that Israel — the recipient — is already indebted to Yhwh — the promulgator — for his spontaneous acts of kindness, thereby framing compliance with the deity's stipulations as a matter of gratitude and consequently of honor. Third, it vividly exhibits Yhwh's seriousness about rewarding observance and punishing lack thereof; tellingly, just like Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, Joshua-Kings devotes much more space to the curse than to the blessing<sup>14</sup>. Ancestral narratives also contribute to this thesis by demonstrating that although the deity's vows may take excruciatingly long to come true (none of the grand promises to Abraham works out in his lifetime), in the end they always do.

The same concern would seem to underlie the Enneateuch's most drastic deviation from the format of a suzerain-vassal treaty, its presentation of the commandments (= the obligations of the subordinate party) not as a single block but rather in two well-defined sections separated — and connected — by a substantial generically diverse fragment. This arrangement places them in two distinctive contexts. The Sinai section (Exodus 20 — Leviticus 26/27) comes on the heels of Israel's deliverance from 400-year bondage; this association goes a long way in neutralizing any misgivings about the many limitations that the commandments place on personal freedom. The Transjordanian section (Deuteronomy 1–34), addressed to Israel on the cusp of entering the promised land, presents the commandments as rules of behavior in it and the price of holding it. Given that the Enneateuch conceptualizes the land as Israel's ultimate prize (in a certain sense, almost the entire mega-unit is a story of the people's quest for it and their ultimate inability to keep it), the commandments are thus endowed with significance that is difficult to overestimate<sup>15</sup>. By keeping these rhetorically potent perspectives apart, the Enneateuch prevents them from obfuscating each other; at the same time, by including some commandments in the connecting section it arranges the bulk of them as a continuum leading from oppression in Egypt to ascendance in Canaan.

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<sup>14</sup> In this, the Enneateuch appears to strike the middle ground between the Hittite treaties that contain short blessings and curses in an approximately equal proportion and those of the Assyrian kings, extremely heavy on curses and containing no blessings. See the discussion in [13, p.76–79] and translation of select treaties in [13, p.179–205].

<sup>15</sup> As demonstrated by Israel's experience in Egypt, the promise of land functions as a linchpin of the three divine promises to Abraham in Genesis 12. Without a country of their own, the people's "being fruitful and multiplying" (Exod 1: 7; cf. Gen 12: 2) does them more harm than good (Exod 1: 8–14), and instead of becoming a blessing for Egyptians (Gen 12: 3) they bring about the curse of the plagues.

The Enneateuch thus presents itself, overall, as narrative paraenesis, designed to ensure the audience's compliance with the stipulations of its normative part<sup>16</sup>. The Enneateuch also implicitly weighs in on the issue of authority behind the norms. As mentioned above, all genealogies included in the mega-unit are confined to Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers, while admonitions occur only in Deuteronomy through Kings. Since genealogies are by definition a record of the past and admonitions address future behavior, the Enneateuch's perspective is that of Israel encamped on the east bank of the Jordan and poised to cross into Canaan; it is from here that the mega-unit faces, Janus-like, both forward and backward<sup>17</sup>. In other words, for the narrator and his or her intended listeners or readers direct enunciation of the commandments by Yhwh (with Moses serving only as a mouthpiece), typical for Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, is a thing of the past. Their present is that of Moses articulating the divine stipulations, as he does in Deuteronomy, with a reference to past revelations (see especially Deut 4: 10–14) but without any direct prodding or prompting from the deity (that does not even command him to speak, much less tell him what to say). The Enneateuch thus assumes the prerogative of a community leader to “clarify” the commandments (something that Moses sets out to do in Deut 1: 5) at will, perhaps even adjusting them in the process<sup>18</sup>.

#### 4. Conclusion

The above discussion suggests that the Enneateuch can be plausibly and profitably read as a literary entity, structured in a harmonious and meaningful way. Arrived at in a strictly synchronic framework, this conclusion does not preclude the possibility of the mega-unit's constituent elements coming from different sources, traditions, or redactional layers. At the same time, one clear implication is that there is an alternative to seeing the received text of Genesis-Kings as a more or less haphazard assemblage of such elements, a library, or a combination of two corpora.

The findings of the present article also broadly confirm the idea, most prominently represented in the twentieth-century scholarship by Martin Noth's Deuteronomistic hypothesis, of Deuteronomy-Kings as a literary unit [17, p. 1–110]. Conversely, they militate against the rival concept of Genesis-Joshua as a Hexateuch<sup>19</sup>. Transition from Joshua to

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<sup>16</sup> This does not preclude, of course, the possibility of its addressing other themes on other levels of its literary structure, that of the monarchy in Deuteronomy-Kings being an obvious example.

<sup>17</sup> The rabbinic tradition that highlights Sinai as a reference point likely goes back to the Second Temple period when the Transjordanian perspective was less relevant because most Jews lived in their homeland; conversely, the Enneateuch would appear to reflect an exilic stance. Emergence of the Torah as a canonical corpus, in which Deuteronomy functions as a postscript of sorts, may be due to the same shift in outlook.

<sup>18</sup> The issue of differences in style, substance, and focus between different “law codes” of the Hebrew Bible is as old as biblical scholarship itself, and its history is just as convoluted; discussing it here would, accordingly, take us far beyond the framework of this short article. Suffice it to note that in the Enneateuch's predominantly oral sociohistorical milieu these differences would not necessarily be seen as significant [15; 16, p.83–101]. It is possible, for example, that the relationship between the blocks of commandments in Exodus-Leviticus and Deuteronomy follows the pattern of poetic *parallelismus membrorum*, with the two sections creatively varying the message rather than disagreeing with each other. In any case, from the Enneateuch's standpoint outlined here (with direct divine revelation largely in the past) a measure of fluidity in the commandments enhances the role of the community's literate members (such as the mega-unit's authors) as uniquely capable of mediating the differences and thus renders them natural leaders.

<sup>19</sup> Already Wellhausen confidently stated that, “the five Books of Moses and the Book of Joshua constitute one whole, the conquest of the Promised Land rather than the death of Moses forming the true



Judges, unlike that from Numbers to Deuteronomy, is almost entirely smooth in terms of both syntax and content (in particular, Judg 1: 1 is not a superscription: it reports a punctual development, positioned vis-à-vis Josh 24: 29), and a major structural boundary between them would not yield a harmonious structure for the mega-unit as a whole<sup>20</sup>.

That, in turn, raises tantalizing possibilities with regard to the Enneateuch's sociohistorical matrix. Elsewhere, I have argued that Deuteronomistic History as per Noth was most likely produced at Jehoiachin's court-in-exile during the brief reign of the Babylonian king Amel-Marduk (biblical Evil-Merodach) between 562 and 560 BCE [22]. With this text seen as an integral part of the Enneateuch, it stands to reason that the whole mega-unit comes from the same time frame and the same scribe(s).

Confirming as much is the overall thrust of Genesis-Kings that has substantial ramifications as far as biblical theology is concerned. Although other priorities may be detected in its synchronic constituent parts and diachronic "building blocks," overall its primary concern is observance — and, ultimately, the Israelite/Jewish identity as shaped by it. In other words, its creators were first and foremost interested in delineating what it means to be an Israelite and explaining why it is important to be one; their goal was to preserve the community that was under a distinct threat of assimilating and vanishing in exile. The Enneateuch doubtlessly presupposes the concept of Yhwh as the creator and Israel's ultimate suzerain, but it is invoked mainly to convince the audience to uphold its end of the covenant; the lengthy accounts of the deity's activity, both salvific and punitive, in human, and specifically Israelite, history serve the same rhetorical objective<sup>21</sup>. The opening and by far the largest literary entity in the Hebrew Bible appears to be interested in orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy; its focus is upon Israel rather than Israel's God.

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conclusion of the patriarchal history, the exodus, and the wandering in the wilderness. From a literary point of view, accordingly, it is more accurate to speak of the Hexateuch than of the Pentateuch" [10, p. 6]. For an incisive diachronic discussion of the relationship between the Deuteronomistic History and the Tetrateuch/Pentateuch/Hexateuch, see [18, p. 139–149]. Cf. also [19, p. 1–78].

<sup>20</sup> Some scholars argue that Genesis-Joshua displays a symmetric structure; vulnerability of such claims is best demonstrated by David Dorsey [20, p. 97–102]. He maintains, for example, that Deuteronomy 4–11 (a fragment that among other things contains the Decalogue) is a structural counterpart not of Exod 19: 3 — Num 10: 10 (which also features the Decalogue) but rather of Genesis 37–50. His argument is that both Moses' admonitions and Joseph's story deal with the theme of obedience and disobedience to God, but while prominent in the former the theme in question is barely noticeable in the latter. Likewise dubious is Dorsey's assertion that the commandments in Deuteronomy 12–26 mirror the Jacob cycle in Genesis 28–37 because they are designed to prevent the kind of transgressions and strife recounted in this cycle. Even apart from the fact that only a handful of the Deuteronomic commandments deal with such issues and that much of the cheating, thieving, and jealousy in the Jacob stories works out to his (and therefore Israel's) advantage, the situations that arise in Genesis 28–37 do not exactly match those addressed in Deuteronomy 12–26. In particular, Deut 21: 15–17, prohibiting transfer of primogeniture away from the son by a "hated" wife, has to do, *pace* Dorsey, with neither the rivalry between Leah and Rachel (Deuteronomy says nothing about the relationship between the favored and disfavored wife and generally does not prohibit the husband from treating them differently) nor Jacob's appropriation of birthright (he and Esau were full brothers). In addition, Dorsey sometimes arbitrarily divides the text (e.g., by drawing a boundary after Gen 21: 1 and Gen 28: 5 in the total absence of any signs of discontinuity). Jacob Milgrom's reconstruction [21, pp. xvi–xviii] is more sophisticated, but it is not exactly symmetric, with no structural counterparts for such major texts (in terms of both length and significance) as Genesis 1–11 and Deuteronomy.

<sup>21</sup> In this respect, von Rad's highly influential theological study [23] is correct in identifying covenant as a pivotal concept of the Hebrew Bible, but his insistence on *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history) as its purpose unto itself is questionable.

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