

Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative

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Very few will dispute that the Hebrew Bible, except for several undistinguished parts such as genealogies, is literature of the highest rank. Its excellence might even have served the Jews in their past polemics as a welcome argument for the incomparable uniqueness of their book, but, surprisingly, this argument seems never to have been advanced. To be sure, they always felt their book to be exceptional, but they never based their case on its literary superiority. It is therefore paradoxical that the first evidence of such appreciation is probably not older than two hundred years and due to R. Lowth, a Gentile.¹ Lowth drew specific attention, among other things, to the phenomenon of parallelism in biblical poetry, which accounts for much of its beauty and for which he coined the term *parallelismus membrorum*. When classifying the various forms of parallelism, however, he overlooked the inverted or chiasmic form, i.e., whose sequence of members is not ABC: A'B'C', but ABC: C'B'A' or some variation of this grouping. Nevertheless, such literary structures in ancient Hebrew poetry have recently evoked a steadily increasing amount of scholarly interest and comment.

A glance at this scholarly literature, however, discloses that it has almost exclusively been concerned with chiasm in poetry, and indeed only as it occurs in single verses or very short passages. One fundamental reason for this reluctance to search for chiasm in prose can be attributed to the attitude of many literary scholars that prose lacks the artistic sophistication of drama and poetry. Patterns and stylistic idiosyncrasies so effectively evinced in poetry are often thought to be absent or insignificant in prose. To wit Thackeray: „Novels are the sweets,” not the meaty course of a literary diet. In addition, biblical scholarship in the nineteenth century, and until quite recently, concentrated either on Lower Criticism, i.e. reconstructing an allegedly corrupt Massoretic text, or on Higher Criticism, i.e. differentiating the sources from which the Massoretic text was thought to be composed. Lower Criticism, as it would be, finds little need to attend to matters of structure, while Higher Criticism, which takes any repetition in the flow of a narrative as evidence of separate source materials, is by definition bound to overlook the very essence of chiasm, namely the fact that such repetitions may have been employed in a given composition as an intentional stylistic device. The result, in the final analysis, is that both approaches, and indeed the somewhat myopic scholarly fixation on detailed and minute analysis generally, can combine to preclude even the most dedicated scholar from perceiving the overall structure of many compositions which reveals the presence of chiasm in longer passages and entire books.

But scholarly attitudes are changing. The general attitude toward biblical exegesis has become less text-critical, especially as the discoveries of Ugaritic and Essene literatures frequently sustain the Massoretic text against its major detractors. Furthermore, disillusionment with the crass rationalism of the last century has brought about a more cautious posture vis-à-vis ancient literatures than the confident attitudes which spawned much of Higher Criticism. These changes in the intellectual climate have slowly enabled scholars to agree that several techniques other than the naturalistic manner of telling a tale may exist in the Bible.

Nevertheless, the question whether longer pericopes in the Bible are or are not chiasmically built still generates a great deal of heat. First, if these texts are indeed so constructed, this may well undermine the validity of certain other hypotheses concerning the composition of the Hebrew Bible. In addition, most readers, laboring until this day under the notion that a story should be related in a straightforward fashion, find it odd that „doublets”, inconsistencies, pro- and parachronisms should serve any deliberate literary purpose. The contemporary mind, nurtured on and believing in scientific publications, is disinclined to acknowledge that an artist should intentionally deviate from the „logical” sequence of narration in order to follow another pattern of his own. That this may

happen in the visual arts is slowly being recognized by the general public, but some are still reluctant to treat literature in the same light. As it becomes more evident, however, that particular forms of structuralism are deliberately employed in modern literature – witness works of Faulkner, Kafka, Huxley, Hemingway and Joyce – why should it seem unlikely that the same was true of ancient literature as well?

Proving that this is exactly what happened in the Hebrew Bible is the purpose of this study. It will make three claims:

First, that many narrative sections of Scripture are chiastically built. This proves to be equally true for entire libraries such as the Torah, for single books, for many pericopes, and especially for those chapters that occupy positions in the text of paramount importance. In short, chiasm was *de rigueur* in Biblical times. The investigation will proceed on the assumption that the Massoretic text is essentially intact and will disregard all variants and conjectures regarding possible additions and omissions to the text. Text criticism which proceeds by postulating rearrangements sheds little light on literary structure.

Chiastic structure, it will be seen, is more than an artificial or artistic device. If it were nothing else, it would hardly warrant more than a passing illustration of a few exemplary passages. It is rather, and most remarkably so, a key to meaning. Not paying sufficient attention to it may result in failure to grasp the true theme.

This leads to the second claim, that biblical authors and/or editors² placed the main idea, the thesis, or the turning point of each literary unit, at its center. This fact has been recognized before by certain biblicists such as Lund, who, however, have failed to take this to its necessary conclusions.

If true, the significance of this salient feature cannot be overestimated. As they stand, for example, the books of the Bible are silent as to the express purposes for which they were written. For instance, we know nothing of the reasons which induced an anonymous writer to write the Book of Samuel. Is it an autobiography, a court chronicle, or a treatise disguised as a story? If the importance of the central passage is properly recognized, however, all we have to do in order to find the answer to this question is open the book to its middle and read. This reveals the book's focal concepts. As soon as the fundamental purpose of a book is known, all the rest of it will become readily comprehensible.

It will be shown that these first two claims apply to all pre-exilic books, the prominence and elaborateness of the chiastic pattern varying. But these two literary conventions seem to have gradually fallen into disuse in the course of the centuries.

Third, it is therefore observed that the beauty and completeness of the chiastic construction bears a direct correlation to age: the older, the more chiastic. Close to the termination of biblical Hebrew literary activity, practically nothing survived of the former literary constraints, except, in certain creations, the bi-partition of a book into two halves. The incidence of chiasm may therefore also serve in roughly dating a book as pre- or post-exilic. That its perfection is an indicator of the author's skill goes without saying.

The members making up a chiastic pattern will be marked by A, B, C, etc., and their „echoes” in the palistrophe by A', B', C' etc., and displayed in diagrams. The diagram of a perfect chiasm will therefore show the sequence to be ABC–D–C'B'A'. Such perfection however will not emerge everywhere. Not infrequently, we shall find the sequence to be ABC–D–B'C'A' or even less ordered and more scrambled, particularly when the number of members is large

May such a pattern still be called chiasmic? Does it perhaps even approach direct parallelism? Or is its second half a mere random rearrangement of the members of the first?

Routine statistical tests are available for providing answers to such questions. For a more detailed explanation of how to apply them, the statistical note to this essay (p. 252) should be consulted. At this juncture, it should be mentioned only that all diagrams demonstrating chiasmic patterns (except those that do not deviate at all from the paradigm sequence) will be assigned two numerical values, r and r^* . Values of r may fluctuate between -1.00 and $+1.00$. Whenever r is negative, the pattern is an inverted one, and the closer r lies to -1.00 , the more complete is the inversion. Thus, r measures the degree of chiasm. Whenever r is greater than r^* , there is a 95 percent probability that the chiasmic alignment of the scheme members is not a product of chance, but of the author's intent. If r exceeds r^*_1 , then this probability is as high as 99 percent.

The narrative books of Scripture are:

(a) Torah: Genesis, Exodus (parts), Numbers (parts); (b) Early Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings; (c) Latter Prophets: Jonah; (d) Writings: Ruth, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

We shall deal with each of them (and also treat Leviticus and Deuteronomy *passim*), the post-exilic ones first, the pre-exilic later and the Torah last.

The RSV translation will serve for quotations except where it fails to reflect the structure of the original composition. References to scholarly publications will be limited, as the scholar will not need and the layman not read them. Further discussions of the problems posed by particular biblical books may be easily consulted in any introduction to the literature of the Old Testament. On the other hand, references to Jewish classical sources will be frequently supplied, since they are less known, less accessible, but not less instructive.

EZRA, NEHEMIAH AND CHRONICLES The consensus of scholars is that Chronicles was composed around the year 400 B.C.E., the chronicler using much older source material. With regard to Ezra and Nehemiah, opinions differ somewhat, but not substantially; whether they are two separate biographies, one single book, or constitute part of Chronicles, they too must have been written at approximately 400 B.C.E. If they represent attempts at autobiographical writing unlike the didactic historiography of the First Commonwealth, harmonistic structuralism such as chiasm would have no place in them, and if they were part of Chronicles, even less so. Accordingly, these books are not chiasmic and thus it appears that when they were written, chiasm was no longer *en vogue*.

DANIEL The Book of Daniel is probably the most recently composed book in the Hebrew Bible, though not the most recently incorporated in it. H.L. Ginsberg has convincingly shown that its composition should be dated to the sixties of the second century B.C.E.³ Although much of the book is written in narrative prose, as were many of the earlier canonical works, we search in vain for elaborate chiasmic construction here. Unlike the earlier texts in which chiasm flourished, all that remains of its early splendor and prevalence here are a few elementary features.

The book divides first into two equal parts: Chapters 1-6 recount a string of courtier stories, told in the third person; chapters 7-12 relate four apocalyptic accounts, cast in the first person. The book also opens (1:1-2:4a) and closes (8:1-12:13) in Hebrew, while the balance is written in Aramaic. By combining these two shifts, a chiasmic pattern A-B-B'-A' emerges, where A and A' stand for the Hebrew sections and B and B', for the Aramaic, and, in addition, where A and B contain the court stories and B' and A', the apocalypse.

A further chiastic characteristic may be identifiable in chapters 1–6, which relate three instances testing and proving the loyalty of Daniel and his friends to the God of Israel. They first refuse to eat unclean food (ch. 1), then to bow to an image (3:1–30), and finally to refrain from praying (ch. 6). The wondrous interpretations of dreams and ominous writings fill the interstices (chs. 2 and 4) creating an alternating A–B–A–B–A pattern.

Looking at Daniel from yet a different angle, it is possible that the book also draws upon ancient source material which may originally have shown chiastic features. This seems to be Lenglet's view, who proposes that chapters 2–7 form just such „une symétrie concentrique,” as follows:⁴

A Sketch of four empires finally destroyed by God's kingdom (2:1–49) B Three Jews cast into fire by a king and emerging unharmed (3:1–25) C The turnabout; their promotion (3:26–30) D A disturbing dream interpreted (4:1–37) D' A mysterious writing interpreted (5:1–30) B' A Jew cast into a lions' den by a king and emerging unharmed (6:1–23) C' The turnabout: his promotion (6:24–28) A' Sketch of world power finally destroyed by God's kingdom (7:1–28)

Even further traces of chiasm may be identified in the four visions (chs. 7–12).⁵ Chapter 7 and 12 each speak of three and a half time units and of white color; Chapters 8 and 11 each contain parades of rulers down to one by whom probably Antiochus IV Ephiphanes is meant. The principal visions are placed in the central chapters 8 and 9 where the same number of time units recur and where in climax, the two angels Gabriel and Michael communicate with Daniel.

The structure of Daniel is admittedly confusing, yet the four different analyses advanced are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Without arriving at a clear and unambiguous verdict, we may tentatively conclude that certain chiastic tendencies are present in its structure.

ESTHER Most critics of the Scroll of Esther readily assign it to the early years of the Greek period, around the late fourth or early third century B.C.E. Its purpose is also readily manifest: to explain the origin of the Jewish Feast of Purim. Thus, two basic questions posed by most of the canonical books are easily answered in the case of the Scroll of Esther.

The structure of the book is equally obvious. Its ten chapters divide into two parts, one progressing from a propitious beginning to a situation of mortal danger, the other from near catastrophe to a felicitous ending. The seemingly casual event, that on one certain night a king suffered from sleeplessness, turning imminent disaster into salvation, is aptly set at the middle:

A The King's debauch (1:1–22) B Esther's appointment (2:1–20) C Mordecai's loyalty (2:21)
 D Execution (2:22–23) E Haman's rise, the first royal decree, the Jews fasting (3:1–4:17) F Esther's first banquet (5:1–8) G Haman's boast (5:9–14) H „On that night, the King could not sleep” (6:1–3)
 G' Haman's humiliation (6:4–14) F' Esther's second banquet (7:1–4) E' Haman's downfall, the second royal decree, the Jews celebrating (8:1–17) D' Execution (9:1–28) B' Esther's decree (9:29–32) A' The King's greed (10:1) C' Mordecai's glory (20:2–3)

$(r = -0.929, r^* = -0.643, r_1^* = -0.833)$

This diagram shows the general sequence of the episodes here to be chiastic. However this far from exhausts all chiasm in the book, for its second part replicates its first in terms of the idioms, figures of speech, keywords and details repeated *en masse*, so to say, but to the opposite effect. The author himself brings this fact to the reader's

notice by remarking in 9:1, „the opposite happened.” There is an *embarras de richesses* of concentrically arranged items expressed in rather simple contrapositions and substitutions: Haman’s „up and down,” Mordecai’s „down and up,” three days of fasting stand opposite three days of revenge, the killers are killed, long festivities must be paid for by new taxes, etc. So many of the expressions occurring in chapters 1–5 are echoed in chapters 6–10, sometimes without the plot necessitating their repetition at all, that one is impressed that these dislegomena are introduced simply because the author delighted in so doing or because his listeners and readers responded favorably to such repetitions. There is also a touch of humor, and even irony, in this device. Here is a partial list of such twice repeated words and phrases:

from India to Ethiopia 1:1, 8:9

army 1:3, 8:11

these days 1:5, 9:27

the garden of the king’s palace 1:5, 7:7

fine linen and purple 1:6, 8:15

to do as desired 1:8, 9:5

near 1:14, 6:13

the anger of the King abated 2:1, 7:10

welfare 2:11, 9:30

Mordecai’s/Esther’s command 2:20, 9:32

wailing 4:1, 9:31

fast 4:3, 9:31

mourning 4:3, 9:22

the city square 4:6, 6:11

full account 4:7, 10:2

all that happened to him 4:7, 6:13

make supplication 4:8, 8:3

keep silence 4:14, 7:4

at this/that time 4:14, 8:9

the inner/outer court 5:1, 6:4

standing in the courtyard 5:2, 6:5

quickly 5:5, 6:10

multitude of sons/brethren 5:11, 10:3

Several word pairs, e.g. white (cotton) and blue (1:6), kindred and people (2:20), request and petition (5:3,6), are reiterated in their reversed order (8:15, 8:6 and 5:7, respectively). Similar cases of metathesis will be found below.

A number of rather unusual idioms occurs thrice: not only on either side of 6:1, but also approximately in the middle, for instance:

glory 1:4, 6:3, 10:2

the book of chronicles 2:23, 6:1, 10:2

promote 3:1, 5:11, 10:2

advance 3:1, 5:11, 9:3

it is not of any profit 3:8, 5:13, 7:4

All are more or less symmetrically concentric. Perhaps not entirely by coincidence, the name Mordecai occurs thirty-five and the name Shushan, nine times in each half of the book.

Moreover, several verses in the third chapter (3:10–15), too long to be quoted here in full, reappear in chapter 8, the third from the end (8:2, 7–15). They tell of the appointments of the two different viziers vested with the same signet ring, of the King's gifts to them, of summoning the same secretaries for the writing of two almost contradictory decrees, and of promulgating the letters by couriers to every province in its own script and language. In the latter retelling, a few special touches are added: the Jews' script and language are mentioned now, although they had no province of their own, and the letters were not sent by ordinary but mounted messengers who were instructed to make haste. The postscript of the first account says, „the city of Shushan was perplexed,” while the one of the second reads, „the city of Shushan was jubilant and rejoiced.”

The following diagram details these repetitions in the book's diction. Words in italics point to instances where a sequence is repeated in reversed order.

A the chiefs of *Persia and Media* (1:3) B the King's splendour, pomp and glory (1:4) C it may not be altered (1:19) D *Mordecai* . . . *Esther* (2:5,7) E a remission of taxes to the provinces (2:18) F the King took his signet ring . . . [see above] . . . Shushan was perplexed (3:10–15), and in every province wherever the King's command and decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and lamenting, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes (4:3) G [the King] held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand (5:2) H so the King and Haman came to dinner . . . and the King said to Esther, „What is your petition? It shall be granted to you. Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” But Esther said, „. . . *if I have found favor and it please the King*” (5:5–8) I Haman went out . . . joyful and glad of heart (5:9) J he went home (5:10) K he fetched *his friends and his wife Zeresh* (5:10) L and Haman recounted to them (5:11) M „so long as I see *Mordecai the Jew sitting at the King's gate*” (5:13) N then *his wife Zeresh*

and his friends said to him (5:14) O „Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made. . . to have Mordecai hanged upon it” (5:14) P On that night, the King could not sleep (6:1) M’ „and do so to Mordecai the Jew sitting at the King’s gate” (6:10) J’ Haman sneaked off to his home (6:12) I’ mourning and his head covered (6:12) L’ and Haman recounted (6:13) N’ to his wife Zeresh and all his friends (6:13) K’ his counsellors and his wife Zeresh said to him (6:13) H’ so the King and Haman went to dinner . . . and the king said to Esther, „What is your petition? It shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to

the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” And she said, „If it please the King and I have found favour” (7:14) O’ „the gallows . . . fifty cubits high” . . . „Hang him on that” (7:9,10) G’ the King held out the golden sceptre to Esther (8:4) F’ I have given Esther Haman’s house . . . seal it with the ring [see above] . . . Shushan

was jubilant and rejoiced . . . and in every province and in every city, wherever the King’s command and his edict came, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and holiday, and many . . . declared themselves Jews (8:7–17) C’ it may not be altered (9:27) D’ Esther . . . Mordecai (9:29) E’ the King . . . imposed a tax on the land (10:1) B’ [Mordecai’s] power, might and glory (10:2) A’ the kings of Media and Persia (10:2)

($r = -0.847$, $r^* = -0.425$, $r_1^* = -0.601$)

There is one further interesting feature in the pattern. Haman plays the main role in the first five chapters while Mordecai assumes that role in the last, both rising from humble origin to highest honor. Now the first half numbers ninety-one verses, the second seventy-five. On both sides of the critical night (6:1), the triumphs of Haman and Mordecai, respectively, are placed in the exact middle: the forty-sixth verse of the first section (3:1) says, „. . . the King . . . promoted Haman . . . and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes,” while in the thirty-ninth verse of the second section (8:15) it is written, „Thus Mordecai went out from the presence of the King in royal robes of blue and white, with a golden crown and a mantle of fine linen and purple.”

To be sure, in comparison with the chiasmic constructions which we shall presently meet in other books, Esther’s is somewhat crude. In more sophisticated chiasmic writing, the climax will often contain an expression of the fundamental theological tenet or a basic moral lesson, but here it is a case of sleeplessness, seemingly a chance occurrence. After all, drunkards like King Ahasverus are notoriously good sleepers. Nevertheless, his sleeplessness was the turning point of the narrative. In its way, it was a miracle. Classical Hebrew has two nouns for the word „miracle”: *nes* and *pele!* Medieval Jewish philosophers differentiate between the two and define *nes* as an entirely natural phenomenon which is extraordinary only by its timing. A *nes* is not an event which goes against the laws of nature, but is of very low probability. God intervenes in human destiny not by a means that nullifies the laws of physics, but by what is, statistically speaking, rather improbable. The Rabbis understood 6:1 precisely the same way:

„On that night, the King’s sleep was disturbed” – said R. Hamma bar Gorion: all who were supposed to sleep tasted no sleep on that night. Esther was busy preparing Haman’s dinner, Mordecai in his sackcloth was busy fasting, Haman was busy erecting the gallows. At that hour said the Holy One, blessed be He, to the angel in charge of slumber: My children are in trouble, and this good-for-nothing should sleep? Go down and disturb his slumber! (Yalqut Shim’oni 1057)

So there is ample theological justification for the central position of the King’s sleeplessness in the Book of Esther, despite its apparent lack of profundity.

JOSHUA The Babylonian Talmud (Baba Batra 4b) ascribes the Book of Joshua to Joshua himself. This view is untenable, the more so as it never says so itself, and the three passages in 8:32, 18:9 and 24:26 are not sufficient evidence. While most scholars agree that the book contains ancient material dating back as far as the tenth century B.C.E., most (except Kaufmann⁶) assume various later editors who were at work in the seventh and sixth centuries. Since the book is said to betray traces of such composite compilation from sources of different periods, Pfeiffer is induced to call the result „utter confusion”.⁷ Dischronisms, stories overlapping with those of the Book of Judges, and similar difficulties compel the reader to ask indeed what principle guided those responsible for creating the internal order of this narrative. The answer to this question may be found when the text is examined for chiasmic construction.

The book consists of two equal halves of twelve chapters each. The first deals with the conquest of the Land of Canaan; the second, with the apportioning of the tribal inheritances according to the lot cast at the central sanctuary at Shiloh. The first half recounts the following incidents:

A Preparatory: Joshua in charge of the people (ch. 1) B Outwitting the King of Jericho by spying (ch. 2)
 C Crossing the Jordan waters (ch. 3) D Laying down stones in the River (ch. 4) E The stone monument at Gilgal (ch. 5) F The covenant of circumcision (ch. 5) G The fall of Jericho (ch. 6) B' Outwitting the inhabitants of Ai by ambush (chs. 7 and 8) E' Building a stone altar on Mount Ebal (ch. 8) F' The covenant with the Gibeonites (ch. 9) D' Setting up stones at Makkedah (10:27) C' Victory at the Waters of Meron (11:1-15) A' Concluding: summary of conquests (11:16-12:26)

$$(r = -0.607, r^* = -0.714, r_1^* = -0.893)$$

The symmetry, it is true, is not perfect, but to some extent it is there. In disregard of chronology, the fall of Jericho is put in the middle, although it only occurred a few weeks after the crossing of the Jordan, while all the other events subsequent to the crossing stretched over a period of full seven years, according to Jewish tradition (TJ, Hallah 2).

Since the second half of the book consists of a rich collection of geographical source material proceeding roughly from the South to the North, a strict chiasmic order is naturally precluded. In spite of this, there are traces of chiasm here too. The erection of the sanctuary at Shiloh must, because of this city's proximity to Jericho, and in order to make the casting of the lots possible at all, have occurred before any of the conquered land was allotted. It is noteworthy, though, that establishing the Tent at Shiloh is not related until 18:1, the exact middle of the second half, a sign of the author's (or editor's) wish to balance his material symmetrically. We observe, for example, that the tribes are listed here in an order different from anywhere else in the Bible. The south-north and Transjordan-Cisjordan sequence would have demanded the series: Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Ephraim, Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, Naftali and Dan. What may have caused the author to deviate from it and to mention them as follows: (1) Reuben, (2) Gad, (3) Judah, (4) Ephraim, (5) Manasseh, [Shiloh], (6) Benjamin, (7) Simeon, (8) Zebulun, (9) Issachar, (10) Asher, (11) Naftali, (12) Dan? First of all, Naftali and Dan, two tribes of the Rachel group, are left to the end because these settled their land much later, probably after Joshua's death. The remaining tribes are named, in accordance with an ABB'A' scheme:

A Three of the Leah Group (Reuben, Gad, Judah) B One of the Rachel group (Joseph, comprising both Ephraim and Manasseh) C Shiloh B' One of the Rachel group (Benjamin) A' Five of the Leah group (Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Naftali, Dan)

The imbalance between A and A' was unavoidable: the tribe of Levi, of the Leah group, would have had its proper place in A, and would more or less thus have balanced the five tribes mentioned in A'. However, Levi, instead of receiving any tribal portion, was given forty-eight cities dispersed all over the country: including them under A would not have restored, but rather disturbed the equilibrium.

While the chiasmic structure of both parts is far from complete, the author, in the best tradition of biblical historiography, does not hesitate to sacrifice accurate chronology and actual geography where necessary to center his account on the two most significant details which, in his opinion, carried the spiritual message of the book: the fall of Jericho and the founding of the Shiloh sanctuary.

It is the explicit promise of the Torah (Deut. 9:3–5), and again the explicit conviction of the prophets (e.g. Amos 2:9–10), that the Land of Canaan has been or shall be, respectively, conquered through Divine intervention by the twelve tribes. The land should, therefore, be considered a gift rather than a territory acquired by might of arms (Lev. 26:34–43). This eventuality could hardly be demonstrated to the reader more vividly than by the miraculous fall of Jericho, the proper place of which is consequently in the middle of the first part.

But the essential purpose of this gift is not to improve the precarious physical conditions of Israel sojourning in the desert: it is the granting of the optimal opportunity for the fulfillment of the obligations which the tribes took upon themselves at Sinai. This task has an essentially religious character. There is no better symbol for the religious *raison d'être* of Israel than the sanctuary, and it is therefore most fitting that the account of the erection of the latter should occupy the prominent central place in the second part of the book.

Later accretions to the original may have obscured a former and perhaps more fully developed chiasmic pattern. But in any event, the book's narration of the events of the seven years of conquest and of the seven years of settlement in its present fashion is anything but confused writing, *pace* Pfeiffer.

JONAH Because of Aramaisms, anachronisms, mythical elements and parallels conflicting with other books, opinions vary greatly concerning the date of the composition of the Book of Jonah. It is quite probable that it recounts an early story first orally transmitted and only later committed to writing (around the fifth century B.C.E.?). Jonah's psalm (2:3–10) raises additional problems because it is a thanksgiving prayer rather than a plea for deliverance, but since it is poetry, we shall disregard it here. The argument sometimes voiced in favor of considering it an integral part of the book on the ground that its removal would destroy the symmetry between the first two and the last two chapters is unsound. The division of the Bible into chapters is not original, but was devised as late as the twelfth century C.E. (by Stephan Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury). Moreover, with the psalm removed, the book naturally falls into two equal parts of nineteen (chs. 1 and 2:1; 2:11) and twenty-one verses (chs. 3 and 4). This fact, just as the book begins and ends with the word of God, points in the direction of possible chiasmic structure. Its first part presents indeed a well-developed chiasm:⁸

A Narrative; the sailors' fright (1:4–5) B The sailors' prayer to their gods (1:5) C Narrative (1:5–6)
D The captain's speech (1:6) E The sailors' speech (1:7) F Narrative (1:7–8) G Jonah's confession (1:9)
F' Narrative; the sailors' great fright (1:10) E' The sailors' speech (1:10–11) D' Jonah's speech (1:12)
C' Narrative (1:13) B' The sailors' prayer to the Lord (1:14) A' Narrative; the sailors' great fright of the
Lord (1:15–16)

$$(r = -0.997, r^* = -0.714, r_1^* = -0.893)$$

The tale progresses from the sailors' undefined „fright” at the start and their „great fright” in the middle towards the proper „great fright of the Lord” at the end. The quite unusual word *besel* is found in the middle between A and F and again in the middle between F' and A'. Attention should also be given to the use and frequency of the Divine names: YHWH occurs four and Elohim two times from A to F, and YHWH alone six times from F' to A', with YHWH Elohim,” equating the two names, occurring once in Jonah's confession.

Chapters 3 and 4 are to be viewed as one unit. The scenes alternate: in the countryside (3:1–3), in town (3:4–4:4), in the countryside (4:5–11). Nineveh is called „the great city” at the beginning and at the end. More minute scrutiny of the text reveals the following chiasmic construction (omitting 3:1 as introductory like 1:1):

A The Lord's speech (3:2) B Nineveh, the great city (3:3) C Jonah enters the city (3:4) D The King sits in ashes (3:6) E Voluntary sufferings (3:7) F The people go back on their sins (3:8) G God repents of the evil (3:10) H „which He said He would do to them, and He did not” (3:11) G' God repents of the evil (4:3) F' Jonah prefers the people to continue sinning (4:3) C' Jonah leaves the city (4:5) D' Jonah sits in the shade (4:5) E' Involuntary suffering (4:8) B' Nineveh, the great City (4:11) A' The Lord's speech (4:10–11)

$$(r = -0.905, r^* = -0.643, r_1^* = -0.833)$$

The repetition here is evident at the center, yet it is less smooth overall than in the first part of Jonah, and we can only guess the cause of this. It may be that in addition to original inverted parallel characteristics, the book was also endowed with extensive directly parallel complements as well:

Part One

„Arise, go to Nineveh” (1:2)
 Jonah evades his mission by fleeing to the West (1:3)
 God's intervention by means of (a) a storm (1:4) and (b) a huge animal (2:1)
 „So Jonah rose” (1:3)
 The sailors pray (1:5)
 The Captain's speech (1:6)
 Shall all perish so that one be punished?
 He prays for his life (2:2)
 Three days (2:1)
 The Divine names 17 times repeated
 YHWH Elohim (once, 1:9)

Part Two

„Arise go to Nineveh” (3:2)
 Jonah fulfils his mission by going to the East (2:3)
 God's intervention by means of (a) a tiny animal (4:7) and (b) a sultry wind (4:8)
 „So Jonah rose” (3:3)
 The people believe (3:5)
 The King's decree (3:7)
 Shall all perish so that one be vindicated?
 He prays for his death (4:3)
 Three days (3:3)
 The Divine names 18 times repeated
 YHWH Elohim (once, 4:6)

The presence of dual structures, parallel and chiasmic, may then have impaired the elegance of both. Nevertheless, enough chiasm remains to help expose the purpose of the book. Its message has been explained by others in various ways: as a product of universalistic opposition to Jewish particularism, as an essay dealing with the prophet's profession, even as a parody on prophetic clichés. What does a chiasmic analysis yield?

At the center of Part One, Jonah proclaims the Lord to be the God of heaven, sea, and dry land, who punishes the disobedient; at the center of Part Two His grace and mercy („and He did not”) are affirmed. The two parts correspond to the two aspects of God's essence as known in Jewish tradition by the terms *middat ha-din*, His justice, and *middat ha-rahamim*, His mercy. That the latter outweighs the first is thus the message of the book, giving Jonah a prominent place among the many other books, episodes and messages in the Bible dealing with God's apparently contradictory attributes and with theodicy. And it stands to reason that this is a more probable purpose for the composition of a biblical book than any of the other themes alluded to above.

KINGS The Book of Kings is a composite work. Scholars have carefully and ingeniously, though not always convincingly, disentangled its sources and dated them over a period of 400 years (950–550 B.C.E). The integration

of the material was the work of a compiler who cannot have lived later than shortly before the accession of King Cyrus in 538 B.C.E. Since our approach is synthetic, we need not delay here to identify the types of material at the disposal of the ultimate compiler. Much rather, our concern is merely to clarify the principles which guided his composition. Since his sources were ancient in any case, we might expect to find strongly pronounced chiasmic features in it. Indeed, multiple chiasmic alignments of the material overlaid upon each other will perhaps emerge from the analysis precisely because of the multiplicity of sources, each of which may have been chiasmically built in itself.

The division of the Book of Kings into First and Second Kings is due to the way it was treated by the Septuagint. This division was unknown to the original author(s) and editor(s). At the time of its canonization, the book consisted of a single and uninterrupted narrative of certain length.

The First Book of Kings presently consists of twenty-two, and the Second, of twenty-five chapters, *i.e.* forty-seven chapters in all. Since the first two chapters (I Kg. 1–2) are a continuation of the preceding Second Book of Samuel (see below p. 77), they serve here as introductory material. The Solomon Cycle (I Kg. 3–11) is obviously an autonomous and homogeneous work. It is followed by the history of the divided Kingdom (I Kg. 12–II Kg. 17). Six chapters (II Kg. 18–23) are then devoted exclusively to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, which survived after the downfall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.E, and two more (chs. 24–25) to its final decline.

The original collection, therefore, appears to have begun with Chapter 3, when Solomon is firmly established as king (I Kg. 2:46) and seems to have continued up to and including the finale of praise of Josiah, Solomon's counterpart. The subsequent portions (II Kg. 24–25) are usually viewed as accretions, with one part added after Josiah's death in 609 but before the first capture of Jerusalem in 597, another added after the destruction of the Temple in 586, and a final one after Jehojachin's amnesty at the hand of the Babylonian king Evil-Merodach in 562 B.C.E. The overall structure of the Book of Kings can thus be represented as follows:

A Two chapters (I Kg. 1–2): Introduction and Rise B Nine chapters (I Kg. 3–11): A Single Kingdom, Solomon C Twenty-nine chapters (I Kg. 12 – II Kg. 17) : The Divided Kingdom B' Six chapters (II Kg. 18–23): A Single Kingdom, Josiah A' Two chapters (II Kg. 24–25): Conclusion and Fall

This indicates that the final editor intended and achieved a balanced chiasmic structure and that the book in its present form is not a haphazard conglomeration of various additions obscuring its original form. On the contrary, it is well organized and resembles a triptych with a centerpiece and two lateral panels. Consider the following:

R. Pfeiffer's contention is that the Solomon Cycle „has suffered in transmission.”⁹ He even claims to be able to apportion passages, verses and half-verses to various writers. In short, he views these nine chapters as a chaotic collection of disconnected and disjointed segments. Porten has analyzed the structure of these nine chapters in extraordinary detail, to such an extent that their overall design hardly became more intelligible.¹⁰ But this design can easily be distinguished as chiasmic:

A Solomon's justice and wisdom (3:1–15) B Solomon's wisdom exemplified concerning two women (3:16–28) C Organization of the realm within (4:1–20) D Solomon's magnificence (5:1–14)
E Negotiations with Hiram (5:15–20) F The building of the Temple foretold (5:21–25) G The corvée (5:26–32) H The Temple (6:1–8:66) F' The destruction of the Temple foretold (9:1–9) E' Negotiations with Hiram (9:10–14) C' Fortification of the realm against external attack (9:15–19) G' The corvée

(9:20–28) B' Solomon's wisdom exemplified concerning a woman (10:1–13) D' Solomon's magnificence (10:14–29) A' Solomon's apostasy and folly (11:1–43)

$$(r = -0.762, r^* = -0.643, r_1^* = -0.833)$$

Granted that deviations from perfect symmetry occur. Still the only substantial one concerns the corvée in the lower half of the diagram; but since the corvée explains the building of fortifications, it had to follow rather than precede the latter, as it does in the upper half with regard to the construction of the Temple.

The Temple is of course, for the author and/or editor, the climax of the Solomonic era. It is placed in the middle and occupies one-third of the nine-chapter section with three chapters leading up to it and another three completing it. Wellhausen too draws attention to the way in which the center of this section focuses on the erection and description of the Temple. And indeed this is noteworthy, for the centrality of the building of the Temple is by no means dictated by chronology. Chronologically, it should have been placed in the first quarter of the narrative because the building was already finished in the eleventh year of Solomon's forty-year reign.

The counterpart to the Solomon Cycle is formed by a final set of chapters (II Kg. 18–23). Here we do not find a unifying chiasmic pattern. Yet this last part of Kings equals the first approximately in size, and, like it, deals exclusively with the Kingdom of Judah. This, generally speaking, is evidence of chiasm. In addition, forty years are covered by the Solomon cycle, roughly three hundred by the central portion of the book, and about forty (609–561 B.C.E.) by the „Last Additions.” This, too, corroborates the claim that whoever was finally responsible for the extant edition of the entire book may have been led by considerations of internal literary harmony which dictated the length and contents of the respective segments of the text.

The central part of the book extends from I Kg. 12 to II Kg. 17. Achieving any degree of unity in this material could not have been an easy task for the composer, since his subject matter involves separate yet interacting scenes of concurrent historical action: the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms. At times, these two states led fairly independent existences; at others their ruling dynasties were alternately warring or intermarrying with each other. Under the circumstances, it is a testimony to the skill of the author that he succeeded in sustaining any internal structure at all, and, where this structure is found to be chiasmic, the persistence of this particular literary convention to which he adhered is reinforced.

It is apparent, of course, that the book was never intended to be a political history. Important political events are either omitted entirely (e.g. the battle of Qarqar) or only hinted at (e.g. the supply of water to the City of Jerusalem in II Kg. 20:20), and the writing of a political history was obviously superfluous, since one already existed in the no longer extant „Book of Chronicles,” very frequently referred to in Kings itself. To discover the author's central intentions, we turn again, in accordance with the chiasmic principle, to the central passages of the work.

At the center, no less than six chapters are devoted to the wicked King Ahab and to his protagonist, the prophet Elijah. No other king received such detailed treatment, and none is condemned in such severe terms (I Kg. 16:31–34). And among all prophets mentioned in the book, Elijah towers above the rest. The main „religious” precept embodied by the book is thus the confrontation between seemingly successful diplomacy and seemingly unsuccessful religion, or, in other words, between the expedient and the principled, ultimately showing the futility of the first when the latter is abandoned. Victory, „progress,” popularity at home, and prestige abroad are, at least in the case of an Israelite king, crimes and follies. The only true and reliable lodestar for Israel and its king is found in fulfilling its historical task as commanded by God.

Whether this thesis is true or not, is not the point: it was doubtlessly true for the author, who chose to illustrate this lesson by pitting the most successful of kings against the most unsuccessful of prophets, the most gifted ruler against the most unrelenting preacher. Yet in relating the clash between the two, the author found himself in a dilemma: his real heroes were Elijah, his forerunners and successors, whereas the kings merely serve as their foils. Nevertheless it could not be denied that Ahab emerged victorious in battle while Elijah was pushed to the brink of despair. Thus, while the theory was correct – as it had to be – the facts were wrong, and the least the author could do was to disregard Ahab's greatest success in war at Qarqar and to turn Elijah's temporary failure into victory *sub specie aeternitatis*. How the author achieved *volte face* transpires from a review of the Elijah Cycle.

Only twelve episodes are told of Elijah's lifetime, held by Jewish tradition to have lasted 120 years. Pfeiffer praises them as „masterpieces” and calls them „brilliant” and „effective.” At the same time, he notices that they are „abrupt” and „incomplete” and compares them to a Greek torso.¹¹ That they are incomplete is a truism, since no biblical „biography” is complete in the modern sense of the word. One can only wonder how Bible scholars of renown can lose themselves in banalities. The twelve episodes are definitely not the remnants of a mutilated piece of art thrown together at random. Fohrer recognized an anecdotal unity in them,¹² but failed, it seems, to observe that the cycle is chiastically articulated:

A Elijah's sudden appearance (17:1–2) B His flight to the Brook Kerit (17:3–7) C The woman of Zarephat (17:8–16) D A dead child revived (17:17–24) E Obadiah, a loyal follower (8:1–15)
F Theophany on Mount Carmel (18:16–48) F' Theophany on Mount Horeb (19:1–14) E' Elisha, a loyal successor (19:15–21) C' Nabot's vineyard (21:1–29) D' A sick king healed (1:1–8) B' The king's officers (1:9–16) A' Elijah's sudden disappearance (2:1–18)

$$(r = -0.943, r^* = -0.829, r_1^* = -0.943)$$

At first sight, the pairing of the twelve episodes may seem fortuitous. Closer inspection, however, disproves this impression. The conceptual contiguity of these pairs is not solely a matter of convenient nomenclature: each has a common denominator. Pair AA' relates an abrupt miraculous advent and a startling and equally miraculous departure, the one coinciding with a drought, the other occurring on the bank of a river. Pair BB' first tells of a flight from, and then the defeat of, Elijah's persecutors. Pair CC' demonstrates Elijah's assistance to innocent sufferers. Pair DD' juxtaposes Divine deliverance from death and useless recourse to false gods in a case of slight sickness. Pair EE' deals with two faithful disciples. Most marked is the sixth pair, the events on Mount Carmel (F) and on Mount Horeb (F'). If the Elijah Cycle is the climax of the Book of Kings, then these two occurrences are the climax of the Cycle and, therefore, of the whole book. They thus merit closer attention.

Both take place on mountain tops. Incidentally, other culminating events of chiastically designed biblical books, also came to pass on mountain tops, namely the binding of Isaac on Mount Moriah (Gen. 22), the Revelation of the Decalogue on Mount Sinai (Ex. 20), and Jotam's fable on Mount Gerizim (Jud. 9). What took place on Mount Carmel belongs to the domain of vision, and on Mount Horeb, to the domain of audition. It goes without saying that seeing and hearing form a complementary pair in the Bible. The events on Mount Carmel underscore Elijah's highest triumph, when as never before the king and the people broke out in one loud proclamation, „the Lord is God!” So strongly convinced was Elijah of his final and once-for-all victory over the abomination of syncretism that he ran before the king's chariot until he reached Jezreel, bearing the good tidings that he had saved Israel forever.

Directly, however, he was made to realize how deeply mistaken he had been. In order to escape the queen's messengers who had been sent to slay him he was forced to flee into the most distant southern tip of Judah. There on Mount Horeb, a theophany unfolds, and we have only to ask what meaning it should have. Allusions to Moses,

of course, abound: the name Horeb, the forty days and nights, the fast and the cave. Elijah, like Moses, his lonely predecessor, feels that he is a failure and that his labor is in vain. „I am no better than my fathers,” he says and asks that he might die. At this moment of abysmal despair Elijah receives an object lesson in prophecy, while the reader receives one in history. In the passage „What are you doing here?” stress must be laid equally on „you” and „here”: „What are you of all people doing here of all places?” Did Moses flee? Do prophets flee for lack of immediate success? Is history an instant process? Where is the place of those who strive to guide mankind: in the solitude of the desert or in the midst of their people? Therefore, „Go, return on your way . . . to Damascus!”

But is no reward at all due to a faithful messenger? Does not the Torah itself say „You shall give him his hire on the day he earns it” (Deut. 24:15)? The answer to this burning question, which must have been asked by all the prophets from Moses who was almost stoned by his people, to Jeremiah who was accused of high treason, lies in this theophany. Storm and earthquake passed Elijah by, but the Lord was not in them, not even in the fire like that which had descended from heaven only a few days earlier. „And after the fire, a still small voice,” that is, a continuous weak rustle or humming: this was the true voice of the Lord.

The lesson is easily understood: Israel and mankind will not be changed once and forever by any single, unique, flashing deed *coram populo*, but by the gray, day-to-day and thankless activity of men like Elijah over the centuries. Prophets will be victorious at the end of days, but they are not entitled to see, not even to expect to see, their work accomplished and bearing fruit. „It is not thy duty to complete the work, but neither art thou free to desist from it” (M. Abot 2,21).

In the center of the Book of Kings therefore, we read the credo of the author, displayed in vividly contrasting details between the events on Mount Carmel and Mount Horeb. At its heart, resignation follows upon triumph, and reprimand and encouragement follow upon resignation. The message implied is the paramount principle of the history of Israel and the world as the author conceived it. His intentions when writing the book were guided by this central chiastic organization of the narrative and the balance of the book should be viewed accordingly.

It would have been gratifying had it been possible to detect chiastic order in the fourteen anecdotes of Elijah’s successor, the prophet Elisha. Unfortunately, this is not possible, and the following may explain why. First, this cycle is very largely incompatible with the rest of the book, if not with the rest of Scripture. Its factual substratum is less than solid and, with few exceptions, it fails to achieve literary or dramatic power, for it lacks any inner unity or message. Pfeiffer, in this case, is right in calling it „an artificial literary product.”¹³ Moreover, its many miracles, bordering on the magical and fantastic, stand in contrast to the restrained and rational treatment given to the titanic personality of Elijah. It is no accident that it was Elijah who captured the Jewish imagination, both among intellectuals (in the Talmud he is expected to solve difficult legal problems upon his „second coming”) and in the popular mind (in folklore, he and no other prophet appears in dreams and comes to the rescue of the oppressed), while Elisha sank into oblivion in the national consciousness of his people. Thus it may be contended that this section is in many respects a foreign intrusion into the book. Although we cannot be sure that such an approach to the Elisha stories is sufficient to explain – and to explain away – their lack of cohesion, and more specifically, their lack of chiastic cohesion, this section of narrative is perhaps the exception that confirms the rule of analysis advanced in this investigation.

There is yet another angle from which the Book of Kings should be examined. Let us first recall that even the most severe critics affirm the historicity of the two dynastic king lists and admit the correctness of the general chronology of the Book of Kings, despite several confusing synchronisms. Yet one of these lists, and the „mysterious numbers of the Hebrew Kings,”¹⁴ display a number of surprising features.

In reckoning the number of years which elapsed from the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem until its destruction, the author of the Book of Kings attempts to make the sum of the regnal years of the Davidic kings equal to a multiple of forty. Now forty was also the number of years in the reigns of Solomon and Joash, not to mention David. The reader feels that the author would have preferred or expected Josiah, too, to have reigned for forty years, for in the author's historiosophy „good“ kings reign for forty years. Unfortunately, Josiah was killed at Megiddo nine years too early. The number forty, of course, has a specific connotative character in the Bible, and in some cases it may have been used intentionally as a numerological device, not to be taken at face value. But even where, as here, the historical evidence appears to be most objective, the number forty emerges with added significance. For example, forty is also the exact number of all the Hebrew Kings whose names are given in this book, twenty of whom reigned over Judah and twenty over Israel! Is it thinkable that Jewish factual history is based on numerology?

And there is more to ponder. It will be remembered that the first edition of the Book of Kings, before additions were attached to it, terminated at II Kg. 23. This edition would have related the history of fifteen Judean kings of the House of David from Solomon to Josiah, commencing and concluding with references to the anonymous prophet from Judah (II Kg. 12 and 23). Bearing in mind that the historicity of the list goes unquestioned, it is all the more remarkable that the sequence of Davidic kings seems to be in accordance with a chiastic scheme:

A Solomon B Rehoboam C Abiah D Asa E Joshaphat F Jehoram G Ahaziah H Joash G' Amaziah
E' Uzziah F' Ahaz D' Hezekiah B' Manasseh C' Amon A' Josiah

$$(r = 0.930, r^* = -0.791, r_1^* = -0.930)$$

Solomon and Josiah (AA'), at the beginning and the end of the list, and Joash (H) in its exact middle are the only ones who, without qualification, receive „good marks of behavior;“ these three were the most pious and the most deeply concerned about the building and maintenance of the Temple. Rehoboam and Manasseh (BB') were the most wicked. Abiah and Amon (CC') each reigned for two years only. Asa and Hezekiah (DD') purified the Temple cult, and both Joshaphat and Uzziah (EE') made peace with the Kingdom of Israel in the North and added territory to their kingdom in the South. Jehoram (F) was a faithful ally of the contemporary King of Israel, whereas Ahaz (F') waged war against his Israelite counterpart. Ahaziah (G) married into the family of the Israelite king of his time, in contrast to Amaziah (G'), who rejected an offer of intermarriage; and both were murdered.

Recognizing that certain aspects of the symmetry here are imperfect, in most cases the similarities between the paired kings cannot be denied. The remarkable thing is of course that we are dealing here not with literary, but with a historical concentricism. We may deal with this phenomenon in at least three ways:

First, we may always dismiss the symmetry as being so strained as to not exist at all. But in this case that does not appear to be justifiable in the face of several rather explicit facts which cannot be disregarded simply because they are uncomfortable.

Second, we may view this historical chiastic construction as a literary creation of the historian, who stressed precisely those feats and features of a certain king that would match those of that king's counterpart. Explaining the diagram in this manner would negate the unwelcome notion of „historical“ chiasm, but also lend considerable support to the claim that such structure was a pervasive and compelling literary convention in biblical narrative.

The third possibility is that the chiasm is wrought by history itself. The biblical author would not have been surprised by this fact, nor would be the believer. He who views world history as a process evolving according to a providential *Heilsplan* will not be astonished when told that this plan is, for unknown reasons, cyclically and even

chastically conditioned. But at this point, not much more can be said except that ultimately the reader will have to decide for himself how to assess the evidence and how to interpret and come to terms with these peculiar structural features of this particular part of Jewish history.

JUDGES Most scholars will agree that the Book of Judges is one of the most dramatic of the books of the Hebrew Bible, but this is probably the only point on which they will remain in agreement. Was it written in the twelfth century B.C.E., or in the late sixth? There is evidence for both views. Do the events told there precede, follow, or overlap with, those of Joshua? How can the sum of the „judgeships” mentioned be 410 years when 480 are said to have elapsed between the exodus and Solomon (cf I Kg. 6:1), especially since this time span would also have to embrace the forty years in the wilderness, twenty years of Samuel (I Sam. 7:2), and forty years of David (I Kg. 2:11)? Why are some of the judges treated at great length while others are given one verse only? What does the title „judge” signify, and does it denote the same office whenever mentioned, or two or three different ones?

In addition to these puzzles – and there are many more – we have the Samson Cycle as well as two further independent stories in the book where no „judge” or other hero is mentioned by name at all. The first (chs. 13–16) is a beautifully told short story totally unrelated (and in fact contradictory) to everything else in the Bible: it glorifies the physical strength of a Peer Gynt-like hero whose doings have little to do with the national emergency prevailing during his lifetime, whose behavior was uncouth and who lived, intermarried and died with the archenemies of his tribe. The other two tales, „Micah’s Idol” (chs. 17–18) and „The Concubine of Gibeah” (chs. 19–20), are obviously separate additions. Both are horror stories of theft, rape, forbidden worship and internecine warfare.

What these tales and the balance of the book are all about is not less in dispute than their date. Some scholars assert that the book is an appendix to the Book of Joshua, or an apologia for Joshua’s lack of success. Some claim that its purpose was to vindicate the God of Israel who did not keep His promise of a swift conquest; or that it served as a collection of ancient disconnected heroic tales designed to comfort the bewildered Judeans after the destruction of the First Temple; still others maintain that its intent is to show the pros and cons of monarchy. Each of these suggestions, however, fits only a certain part of the book, and all fail to account for the inclusion of another.

Boling recently tried to prove that what we read in Judges is the work of later redactors which grew around an original nucleus.¹⁵ His scheme is more or less the following:

- A Preview: Disintegration of national unity (1:1–36)
- B An angelic judgment speech (2:1–5)
- C The epic prologue (2:6–3:6)
- D Phase I „The Ideal: the Office of a Judge” (3:7–6:6)
- B’ A prophetic judgment speech (6:7–10)
- D’ Phase I „The Ideal, continued” (6:11–10:5)
- B “The Divine judgment speech (10:6–16)
- D Phase II „What is past is Prologue” (10:17–15:20)
- E Supplements: Lessons of the past (16:1–18:31)
- A’ Postview: The national unity restored (19:1–21:25)

Boling views C, D, D’ and D” as an ancient pragmatic collection, with B, B’ and B” as its seventh-century deuteronomic framework, and surmises that in the sixth century the deuteronomic framework A and A’ was attached. This scheme is anything but convincing. It separates the two appendices from each other although they are clearly meant to be mutually supporting. The captions of Phases I and II, if comprehensible at all, are hardly defensible. It even turns the story of the violated, killed and later dismembered concubine (19:1–21:25) into the happy end of the book. Finally, if Boling’s analysis is correct, then the book is probably the most unbalanced and shapeless in biblical narrative literature.

It cannot be within the scope of this investigation to solve the many riddles of the Book of Judges, but maybe a few ideas might be contributed for consideration. They will be set out upon the assumption that nothing is included in the book, or, for that matter, in the whole Bible, that does not serve the didactic aims of the writer(s). They will furthermore test the hypothesis that these aims become conspicuous through the symmetrical succession of details.

Let us start with the two appendices. Their overall theme is obvious: the abominable behavior of an entire tribe (chs. 17–18) and of a few individuals (ch. 19) could have occurred only because of the lack of unified and unifying leadership. This is explicitly emphasized in 17:6, 18:1, 19:1 and 21:25, *i.e.* at the beginning, in the middle and the end of the first appendix, and at the beginning and at the end of the second: „In those days, there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes.”

In the incident of Micah’s idol, an overt transgression of the second commandment of the Decalogue is reported in 17:4 and of the seventh in 17:2; disregard of the sixth (18:27) and the seventh (18:18–19) commandments is symmetrically recounted in the second part of the story. At the beginning are accounts of individual and collective theft, and at the end of the section appear accounts of individual and collective apostasy. The centerpiece is 18:1–10 where – *incredible dictu* – an entire tribe abandons the inheritance given to it by Divine oracle.

The second incident, that of the Concubine of Gibeah, begins with an individual outrage against one woman (ch. 19) and ends with a tribal outrage against many, namely the rape of the daughters of Benjamin (ch. 21). Its main theme standing at its center is lawlessness and warfare of Israelites against Israelites (ch. 20). No wonder that of the 218 occurrences in Judges of the word Israel (the name of the ideal national unit of the shamefully forgotten amphictyony), sixty are found in chapters 19–21 alone, and of these sixty, forty-two in chapter 20. This chapter accentuates the hoped-for reunification of the tribes by eight circumlocutions for national unity within eleven verses: „all the sons of Israel,” „the congregation as one man from Dan to Beersheba:” (v. 1), „the chiefs (cornerstones) of the entire people,” „all the country of Israel’s inheritance” (v. 3), „all the tribes of Israel” (v. 10), „all the men of Israel,” „united as one man” (v. 11).

In short, the two accounts each follow a general tripartite scheme, ABA’. The two respective main ideas are found in B and an *inclusio* is formed by the verses deploring the behavior which results from the absence of a king. This is chiasm on an elementary level.

Reading backwards from chapter 17, we reach the Samson Cycle (chs. 13–16). Neither the Rabbis nor the critics have ever offered a satisfactory answer as to why it was included in the book. All that the former have to say on the matter is that poetic justice reigns in the world – had not Samson „gone after his eyes” by courting Philistine women, he would not have been blinded (TB, Sota 9b). This is an insufficient reason for a biblical author to devote four long chapters to the subject of unrequited love, muscular horseplay and ultimate tragedy. Modern criticism is not helpful either: that Samson is a mythical figure or even a down-graded solar deity does not explain why his story is related in the book, but rather precludes that it should ever have been related there at all. We will be in a position to understand the Samson Cycle after examining the main section of the book.

The body of the Book of Judges comprises chapters 1–12. Its major figures are Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Barak, Gideon and Jephthah, with another six minor ones – Shamgar (3:3); Tola, Jair (10:1–15); Ibzan, Elon and Abdon (12:8–15) – mentioned only in passing. Unfortunately, the writer did not see fit to intersperse the „major” judges with the „minor” ones at even distances, but placed Shamgar at one and the remaining five at the other end of the Gideon story. That Gideon is meant to be the central figure is manifestly borne out by the fact that the author

devotes four out of the twelve chapters to him. Gideon stands for the ideal charismatic leader whose courage, greatness and modesty are forcefully juxtaposed against the meanness, deceitfulness and ambition of his son Abimelech, who promoted himself to kingship. The comparison is clearly intentional: in all his doings – even in his speeches – Abimelech tries to imitate his father, but, alas, without any success. *Si duo faciunt idem non est idem*: Gideon, worthy of being chosen king, refuses the honor; Abimelech, an upstart, usurps it. The anti-monarchist tendency is expressly pronounced in Gideon's answer when he was offered the crown: „I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you. The Lord will rule over you” (8:23), so that Gideon's declaration, the *idée matière*, occupies the central position.

Buber claims that there are similar, though less outspoken anti-monarchist hints hidden in the stories of Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Jephthah.¹⁶ Taking these allusions together with the four-times repeated regret (in the two appendices) over the lack of a central royal authority, Buber reaches the conclusion that Judges is composed of two parts of two contradictory tendencies: one pamphlet extolling a charismatic leader (chs. 1–12), and another trying to prove that a kingdom, possibly even a hereditary monarchy, is a preferred form of government (chs. 17–21). Buber's hypothesis would be acceptable if it were able to account for the function of the Samson Cycle in either the pro- or anti-monarchist sections. Nevertheless, the following hypothesis of chiasmic construction may perhaps sustain Buber's view to a certain extent.

The primary author of Judges wrote the ten chapters (3:6–12:15) of anti-royalist propaganda. He built his case upon five examples. Why he arranged them as found in the book is a matter of conjecture. It is not impossible that he was guided by geographical considerations. He started from the South with Othniel of the tribe of Judah and continued with Ehud of Benjamin and Deborah of Ephraim, those tribes that were located in the center of the country. Whether Deborah indeed belonged to the tribe of Ephraim as the text appears to believe (cf. 4:5) is immaterial. The writer finally reached the North with Gideon of Manasseh and Jephthah of Gilead.¹⁷ In order to balance his opus so that Gideon and his anti-monarchist declaration be found in the middle, he added five „minor” judges at the end. At some later date(s) chs. 1:1–3:6 were attached as an introduction. Since the book, *i.e.* its anti-monarchist part, had thus become lopsided and the second half was in need of further „padding” in order to restore the equilibrium, the Samson tales (chs. 13–16) were also appended.

This however created one further difficulty, for the Song of Deborah mentions the tribe of Dan as having settled the farthest North (5:17). How then could the Danite Samson have had his skirmishes with the Philistines in the southern Shephelah in chapters 13–16? In order to answer this question, at least in part, the author, just before introducing Deborah and quoting her victory hymn, made brief mention of the Philistines in 3:31, and how they were defeated by Shamgar, a „minor” judge who may also have been a Danite. Thus, it is possible that Shamgar too had his original place among the other „minor” judges somewhere in chapter 10 or chapter 12, but was transposed to chapter 3 in order to resolve this minor geographical complication. This would reflect greater unity in the book and would again increase the centrality of the Gideon pericope.

The first half of the Book of Judges, it is therefore suggested, consisted originally of ten chapters (3:7–12:15). It grew gradually to comprise sixteen: two were added at its beginning and four at its end. In sum, the chiasmic structure of the book in its present form appears to be but rudimentary. Nevertheless, its chief thesis remains in the exact center of those sixteen chapters that advised the reader to reject hereditary kingship in favor of judgeship, the central passage indeed being „The Lord will rule over you” (8:23).

RUTH As with most books of the Hebrew Bible, there is no unanimity among scholars concerning the reason for and the time at which the Scroll of Ruth was written. One school is persuaded that its idyllic atmosphere places it

firmly in the early period of the First Commonwealth. It should then be seen as a defense of the Davidic monarchy against those who disparaged the dynasty for its descent, on the maternal side, from a Moabite family. Another school conceives it as a piece of *littérature engagée* meant to counteract the animosity against non-Jewish women which expressed itself in Ezra's decree promulgated around 440 B.C.E. and dissolving and prohibiting mixed marriages.

The story of Ruth is told with much compactness, beginning with rural simplicity only to terminate with royal grandeur. It compresses into a mere eighty-five verses deep expressions of love and law, piety and patriotism, charity and chastity. It complies with the Aristotelian unities of time, place and plot: the entire action involves three persons, is located in Bethlehem and occurs on three (or four) days spread over the period of the forty-nine days of „Counting the Omer.” But above all, the book is a superb gem of chiasmic composition. Chiasmus in the Scroll of Ruth reaches to many levels, and this overall mastery of literary techniques, in the mind of this author, bespeaks a relatively early date for the book's composition.

The Scroll of Ruth divides naturally into four chapters, each being constructed as an independent chiasmic unit. In addition, however, to manifesting chiasmic arrangements within each chapter, the book as a whole has also been artfully created in accordance with chiasmic design. Marked similarities between the first and the fourth chapters, coupled with other strong relationships between the second and the third chapters are indicative of the composite chiasmic structure of this remarkable and durable narrative. The result produced is extremely pleasing and represents a masterful implementation of parallelism's inverted form, operating simultaneously in several dimensions.¹⁸

Chapter 1 consists of four parts: the first and the last (I and I' in the diagrams below) both deal with Naomi's emptiness, caused by the death of her husband and of her sons who had married Moabites; both also deal with the famine which took the family out of Bethlehem as well as the harvest which brings them back. In addition to paralleling each other, each of these sections is individually chiasmic, the pairings in each instance being very distinct. It is noteworthy that the ultimate source of Naomi's emptiness (I:C) is not aligned with the death of the men in her life but with the marriage of her sons to foreign women (I:D). The second and third sections juxtapose the unfaithfulness of Orpah (II) against the adamant devotion and resolution of Ruth to remain with Naomi (II'). The text employs the abrupt alternation of distinctly parallel lines in II to accentuate the radical inconsistency between the promise made in 1:10, (II:F) and the departure made in 1:15 (II.F'). On the other hand, Ruth's declaration of true devotion (II') is flowingly chiasmic, centered emphatically upon her testimony, „Thy people are my people, and thy God my God.” The structure of chapter 1 is thus detailed as follows:

I. A Famine in Bethlehem-Judah (1:1) B The move to Moab by Elimelech and his family (2). The arrival in Moab
C Elimelech dies; Naomi left (3) D Her two sons marry Moabites, Orpah and Ruth (4) C' Machlon and Chilion die; Naomi left (5) B' The move from Moab with her daughters-in-law (6). The news in Moab A' Bread in Bethlehem-Judah (7) II. E Naomi's release and her blessing of her daughters-in-law; „the Lord deal kindly;” „may you find rest;” weeping (7-9) F „Surely we will return with you unto your people” (10) E' Naomi's release and explanation: „I am too old to have a husband or a son; the hand of the Lord has gone out against me;” weeping (11-14) F' Orpah returns to her people and her gods (15) II' G „Entreat me not to leave” (16) H „Whither you go, I will go, where you lodge, I will lodge” I „Your people are my people, Your God is my God” H' „Where you diest, I will die and there I will be buried” (17) G' Ruth's oath not to leave (18) I' A The return to Bethlehem (19) B „Is this Naomi? Call me Mara („Bitter”), for the Almighty hath dealt bitterly with me” (20) C „I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty” (21a) B' „Why call me Naomi („Pleasant”)? for the

Lord hath testified against me and the Almighty hath afflicted me" (21b) A' The return to Bethlehem at harvest time (22)

We turn now to chapter 2. Chapter 2 is a three-part arrangement: the first and the third sections (III and III') being short exchanges between Ruth and Naomi, and the central section (IV) relating the encounter between Ruth and Boaz in the fields.¹⁹ Sections III and III' both identify Boaz as a kinsman and mention Ruth's undertaking to glean in his fields and in no others. But central to both of these passages is Ruth's expression of faith that she will find grace in his sight (2:2) and Naomi's expression of blessing and gratitude for that graciousness (2:19-20). Of primary attention is the chiasmic arrangement from 2:7 to 2:17 in section IV. Its completeness, including the focal acknowledgement by Boaz of Ruth's worthiness, requires little further comment.

III. A Naomi's kinsman of the family of Elimelech named Boaz (2:1) B „Let me go to the field to glean" (2) C „After him in whose sight I shall find grace B' „Go," and she went and gleaned in the field (3) A' Belonging to Boaz and the kindred of Elimelech IV. D Boaz blesses the reapers (4), the reapers bless Boaz, Boaz asks: „Whose damsel is this?" (5). A servant identifies the Moabitess (6) E Ruth's request to glean; her presence since morning (7) F Boaz grants permission generously; „Go not to another field" (8) G „I have charged the young men not to touch you" (9) H „Drink when you thirst" I „Why have I found grace in your eyes? I am a stranger" (10) J „I have seen all you have done for Naomi" (11) K „You have left father and mother and land" K' „And come unto a land you knew not" J' „The Lord recompense your work" (12) I' „ Let me find favor in your sight though I am not like your handmaidens" (13) H' „Eat when it is mealtime" (14) G' Boaz commands his young men not to reproach her (15) F' Boaz instructs the reapers to let grain fall generously (16) E' Ruth's request granted: she gleaned in the field until evening (17) III' A An ephah of barley (17) B Taken to Naomi: „Where have you gleaned? (18) Blessed be he that did take knowledge of you" (19) C „The man's name is Boaz" B' „Blessed be He who hath not left off kindness to the living and to the dead" (20) C' „The man is next of kin" A' „Stay until the end of the harvest of barley and wheat" (21-23)

Looking on to chapter 3, it, like chapter 2, has three parts: its first and third sections (V and V') are again short exchanges between Ruth and Naomi, while its central passage (VI) describes the encounter between Ruth and Boaz on the threshingfloor.²⁰ Sections V and V' begin and end, respectively, with Ruth being assured that she will have rest when Boaz rests (3:1,18). Both of these sections focus on strong statements by Naomi: her intervention (3:3) and her interrogatory, „Who (or what) are you?" (3:16). Moreover, both of these sections are recognizably chiasmic, due to certain salient recurrences around their centers, e.g. „threshingfloor" and „floor" (V.C and V.C'), „with his maidens" and „with him" (V.B and V.B'), the „six measures of barley" twice (V'. B and V'. B'), and Boaz' request for silence and Naomi's instruction to be still (V'. A and V'. A'). The central passage (VI) also appears to be chiasmic; especially noticeable are the references to „near kinsman" in 3:9 and 12.

But perhaps even more remarkable at this point is the exquisite balance achieved between chapter 3 and chapter 2: the middle lines (VI.H and VI.H'), which are directly parallel, are synonymous with the middle lines in the preceding chapter (IV.JK and IV.K'J'), which are chiasmically parallel. Each case expresses Ruth's merit to receive the blessing of the Lord. Both chapter 2 and chapter 3 end with references to the grain sent by Boaz to Naomi, „an ephah of barley" (III'. A) and „six measures of barley" (V'. B); in both the action is predominantly in the fields, and finally both begin with the women resolving to seek favor with Boaz. Chapter 3 is analyzed as follows:

V. A „I will seek rest for you that it may be well with you" (3:1) B „Boaz is our kindred with whose maidens you were" (2) C „He winnows tonight in the threshingfloor" D „Wash yourself, anoint yourself and put on your best clothes" (3) C' „Get you down to the floor incognito" B' „Boaz will lie down; lie down with him" (4) A' „He will tell

you what you shall do"; „I will do all you say" (5) VI. E Ruth goes to the threshing floor and lies down by Boaz (6–7) F „Who are you?" „Ruth your handmaiden: Spread your skirt over your handmaid" (8–9) G „For you are a near kinsman" H „Blessed be you of the Lord, my daughter, for you are kind and virtuous" (10) H' „My daughter, fear not, all the city knows you are virtuous" (11) G' „Indeed I am your near kinsman, but there is one nearer than I" (12) F' „Tarry this night; if he will not perform unto you the part of a kinsman, then I will" (13) E' Ruth lies at his feet until morning, then leaves (14a) V' A „Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor" (14b) B Boaz gives Ruth six measures of barley (15) C „Who are you?" (16) Ruth tells all that had been done B' Ruth gives Naomi the six measures of barley (17) A' „Be still; the man will not rest until the matter is finished" (18)

Chapter 4, like chapter 1, consists of four parts, some of which are chiasmic. This chapter as a whole is not chiasmic, but its first section (VII) is, as the duplicate references to „the gate" (4:1,11), to the „Elders" (4:2,9), to the public „solicitation for redemption" and public „testimony" (4:4,7–8) indicate. The natural turning point of this section is the changing of the kinsman's mind from „I will redeem it" to „I cannot redeem it" (4:4,6). The second section (VIII) is an attractively constructed chiasmic blessing pronounced by the chorus upon Boaz. Both this section and the last (VIII') speak of the building up of the House of Israel and of Judah through the seed which the Lord should give unto Ruth. Thus the epilogue parallels verses 4:11b–12 to this extent. Likewise, some continuity exists between section VII and verses 4:13–16 (VII'), in which Boaz takes Ruth and in which Boaz' redemption of the land parallels the Lord's restoration of Naomi (4:15).

But once again, perhaps most remarkable here, are the further parallels which exist between this final chapter and chapter 1, both of which focus on activity in town rather than in the field. The unfaithfulness of Orpah parallels that of Naomi's near kinsman,²¹ the devotion of Ruth, that of Boaz. In chapter 1, a family is lost; in chapter 4, a nation is gained. At the end of chapter 1, the name *Mara* is given; at the end of chapter 4, the name *Obed* is given. And Ruth's promise to remain with Naomi (II') is answered by the blessing she brings upon Boaz' house (VIII). While chapter 1 is chiasmic (I, II, II', I'), chapter 4 alternates (VII, VIII, VII', VIII'), perhaps to balance out the alternating pattern in II. Chapter 4 is thus displayed:

VI. A Boaz sits at the gate (4:1) B The Elders summoned and seated (2) C The kinsman told Naomi will sell land which was Elimelech's (3) D The public solicitation for the redemption (4) E „I will redeem it" C' The kinsman told that Ruth also sells the parcel to raise up her husband's inheritance (5) E' „I cannot redeem it"; (6) „Redeem your right to yourself"; „I cannot redeem it" D' The public testimony concerning redemption (7–8) B' The Elders witness Boaz' redemption (9–10) A' The witnesses at the gate (11a) VIII. F „The Lord make G „the woman H „that is come into your house like Rachel and Leah who did build the house of Israel (11b) I „May you prosper in Ephrath and be famous in Bethlehem H' „Let your house be like Perez whom Tamar bare unto Judah F' „of the seed which the Lord shall give G' „this woman" (12) VII' A So Boaz took Ruth and the Lord gave her conception and she bare a son (13) B „The Lord hath not left you this day without kinsman (14); „His name shall be famous", „He shall be restorer and a nourisher"; „Your daughter is better than seven sons" (15) A' So Naomi took the child (16) and laid it in her bosom and became a nurse unto it. VIII' A The name Obed is given (17). The father of Jesse, the father of David. B Genealogy of Perez to Obed (18–21) A' Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David (22)

The final literary achievement of the Scroll of Ruth, however, is not to be found in the chiasmic arrangements within its chapters, or even in the chiasm within specific sections making up those arrangements. Rather it exists in the book's overall composition. In an ultimate sense, the turning point of the entire story of Ruth is at the center of the book itself, at the end of chapter 2 and the beginning of chapter 3. There Naomi recognizes the goodness of Boaz,

blesses him, and charts the course which Ruth will follow to find rest and wellbeing. Many elements of association between the first and the fourth chapters and between the third and the second have already been identified. To complete the overview, the following thematic organization is now advanced:

A Progeny lost (I) B Orpah's unfaithfulness (II) C Ruth's devotion (II') D Naomi's emptiness (I') E Ruth to Naomi: her faith in finding grace (III) F Boaz to Ruth in the fields: „your good works shall be recompensed” (IV) G Naomi speaking with Ruth: blessing Boaz (III') G' Naomi speaking to Ruth: instructions in respect to Boaz (V) F' Boaz to Ruth on the threshingfloor: „Your kindness and virtue shall bring blessings” (VI) E' Ruth to Naomi: her report in finding grace (V')²² B' The kinsman's unfaithfulness (VII) C' Ruth a blessing to Boaz' house (VIII) D' Naomi restored (VII') A' Progeny regained (VIII')²³

Turning now to the question of why the book was written, consider its prominent chiasmic features. The book is clearly divided into two parts, and its turning point is chapter 3:1–3 where Naomi takes the matter into her own hands in order to expedite the „redemption” of her field on behalf of her daughter-in-law. Yet it is hardly conceivable that the book's message is that mothers should devote themselves to marrying off their widowed daughters-in-law. If accounting for the birth of the future king had been the reason for composing the book, nothing would have been easier for the writer than to put into Naomi's mouth an allusion, a pious wish or a „prophecy” to that effect in this central passage. Similarly, the opinion that the book was a protest against the Ezra-Nehemiah attitude toward foreign wives finds no basis at all, for were the story intended to express such a protest, this should have found expression in one way or another either in 3:1–3, or at least as a reason in the mouth of the kinsman who refused to marry Ruth. Nothing of this kind is mentioned anywhere. Nevertheless, the *raison d'être*, or *raison d'écrire*, may still be found in the middle, especially when conjoined with the middle passages of each chapter.

The account seems to be a natural story where everything moves by the intervention of human agents, and, as it were, without Divine interference.²⁴ In fact, however, the opposite is true: everything happens in accordance with God's will and ways. It is He who leads men's destinies – behind the scene, so to say. Ruth happens to choose, as if at random, the field of Boaz, and the anonymous kinsman has his own good reasons for not marrying her. However, both Ruth's choice and the kinsman's reluctance are parts of God's long-range plans. The righteous comprehend these plans by intuition, inspiration, or prophecy, and further them by walking in His ways, fulfilling his commandments and showing others how to do likewise. This is why Naomi is so eager to remind Boaz of this duty by asking Ruth, with an apology, to do an unheard-of thing: to risk her reputation, meet Boaz alone at night and offer herself to him. Naomi's action, bold and laudable, is meant to show how the Torah, in the present case regarding the levirate (Deut. 25:5–9) and the „redemption” of a field (Lev. 25:25–28), may and should be promoted by human initiative. Placing such initiative in the center of the booklet is therefore in harmony with our hypothesis. Hence, the purpose of the book is not social nor genealogical, but theological. This, too, has been recognized by the Rabbis: „Said Rav Zeira: This scroll, it does not contain matters of impurity or purity, prohibition or permission – why then was it written? To teach you how great the merit is of good deeds” (Ruth Rabba 2). Accordingly, the central panels throughout the book – all grouped around Naomi's unconventional intercession – speak uniformly of Ruth's devotion, her kindness and virtue, and of the blessing of the Lord that was hers because of that goodness.

SAMUEL There is virtually complete agreement among scholars that the first two chapters of I Kings (either up to 2:12 or 2:46) are part of the preceding Book of Samuel. They are written in the style and use the technique of characterization of the latter, and may therefore with certainty be taken as the work of the author of Samuel. The author of Kings attached them to his book as a short introduction, so that they consequently appeared in the biblical canon twice: at the end of Samuel and, immediately thereafter, at the beginning of Kings. To avoid

repetition, they had to be eliminated either here or there. For unknown reasons, they were struck out of Samuel, their original place, and left in Kings. In this inquiry, we shall consider the two chapters as if they had been left in place in Samuel.

Of the many problems posed by the Book of Samuel, only two are of our immediate concern: what is the book's message, and when may it have been written? It should be remembered that its division into two parts (I Sam. and II Sam.) is late and will be retained here only for the sake of convenience and reference to chapters and verses.

Very few will dispute the view that the author was a contemporary of King David or, at the latest, of King Solomon. In contrast to Joshua, Judges and Kings, the book is said to have suffered little from later additions apart from several harmonisms and some of its poetic sections. The reasons for such rare unanimity concerning the early dating of almost an entire book need not be gone into here, but should chiasm be found to pervade the book, another reason for an early date will be added.

The consensus about the purpose of the book is much more limited. It is allegedly either a biography of the first two Israelite kings, an autobiography, a court history, or the annals and the itinerary of the Ark of Covenant. While a possible chiastic design will, if detected, no more than corroborate the evidence concerning the date of composition, such design would perhaps throw fresh light on the intention of the book's author.

Most modern commentators are unwilling to accept the idea of a grand design in Samuel. Some incidents are reported twice or three times, and there are differences in viewpoint and style, especially in I Samuel. The term „style,” however, is regrettably used in biblical criticism in a rather loose way, nor is sufficient weight given to the fact that different occasions and literary genres may require different „styles”. As to repetitions, they are the very essence and necessary material of a chiastic design, and may therefore have been intentionally inserted at their befitting places by the author or editor. Let us then disregard „stylistic” nuances and examine the book for the alignment of its narrative material.

Two different patterns can be discerned in Samuel. The one is progressively climactic, the other centrally climactic, *i.e.* chiastic. We shall first consider Pattern I, in spite of its being the subordinate.

The four chief actors in the narrative are Eli, Samuel, Saul and David. This is the order of their first appearances as well as of their increasing importance and stature. The pattern unfolds as these characters enter the scene and in accordance with the amount of space the author allows each to occupy in his book. A diagram will demonstrate this.

The Climactic Structure of Samuel

(Diagram could not be included; see hard copy)

Here it seems we have a *prima facie* case for a „planned” narrative, written *grosso modo* by one single man who presumably was an eyewitness to the events described in the latter part of his work, *i.e.* the life of David to whom he apportioned three quarters of his book.

Apart from this basic pattern, which reflects the author's own biographical share in the events narrated, another pattern was devised by him which is symmetric and reflects his political, moral, and religious creed (the three being one and the same). Most obviously indicative are: (a) opening (I Sam. 2) and ending (I Kg. 2:27) the book with the fall of the House of Eli; (b) the three poetic sections placed at the beginning (I Sam. 2), in the middle (II Sam. 1) and at the end (II Sam. 22); and (c) the organic division of the whole story into two equal halves, i.e. the reigns of King Saul (I Sam.) and of King David (II Sam.). An *inclusio* is formed by (a) and (b).

Taking the reigns of the two kings separately we notice that both are divided into two sections of equal length, though thematically differing from each other. Each initial section records the king's successes, each second section tells of his failures. The turning points in their lives are placed by the author in the middle: of I Samuel, which contains thirty-one chapters, in chapter 15; of II Samuel, which contains twenty-four chapters (or twenty-six, if I Kg 1–2 are included) in chapters 11–13. In the author's opinion, the crisis in Saul's life was accordingly his war against Amalek, and in David's life, *l'affaire* Bath-Sheba.

The exquisite symmetry of the entire composition is manifest. Apropos, the three poetic sections (the three small triangles in the scheme) are also chiastically built, but not being in prose, they will not be discussed here.^{24a}

Incidentally, the curious expression *yarsia*, since it occurs before the breaking point in King Saul's life (I Sam. 14:27), should be translated in a positive sense as did RaDak (R. David Kimchi, Provence, 1160?–1235?) and RaLBaG (R. Levi ben Gershon, Languedoc, 1288–1344). Consequently the RSV's rendition of the passage, „he put [them] to the worse,” is sustained as opposed to the usual translation of the word „he did evil,” a good example of how structural analysis is capable of shedding light even on a single word.

After viewing the construction of Samuel comprehensively and having found it planned, we now turn to I Samuel and II Samuel separately.

Let us admit at once that it is difficult to discern a detailed pattern in I Samuel. The sequence of events from the birth of Samuel (ch. 1) to Saul's anointment (chs. 9–10) and from there to his triumph over the Philistines (chs. 13–14) is consecutive and quite chronological. Samuel's inconsistent attitude toward the institution of kingship and to Saul himself need not be ascribed to different sources, as it may be explained by Samuel actually having conflicting opinions about both. The apparent „doublet” where Samuel chooses Saul as king on one occasion and on another the choice is by lot, is in line with biblical theology: for even the Land of Canaan was partitioned among the tribes according to three criteria, by size, by taking account of claims, e.g. Joshua's and Caleb's, and by lot.

The real difficulties arise after chapter 15 where it cannot be denied that certain incidents are told twice. That David came to Saul's notice once as a rather insignificant court musician (ch. 16), and again when he slew Goliath (ch. 17), can be explained: in the second case Saul does not ask David's name, but his father's, which is plausible, since he had promised his daughter in marriage to the victor and so inquired after his family. But, for instance, the fact that Saul fell into David's hands and was at his mercy in the same circumstances both in chapters 24 and 26 is not so easy to account for.

That the author knew of the chiastic tradition and tried to adhere to it emerges from the overall structure of the book as shown before and from a number of other indications to be shown hereafter. Perhaps he found his material in I Samuel impossible to press into a chiastic frame and therefore did as well as he could. At any rate, he wanted the war against Amalek (ch. 15) to be placed in the middle. Therefore it is possible that he simply recounted his tale in a more or less straightforward manner until he reached this event, and then filled in the

remaining part of I Samuel by incorporating in it dual traditions of the same incidents so that the two halves of I Samuel were finally balanced. Recall that a similar procedure was hypothesized in Judges (see p. 206).

In spite of the limited leeway the author apparently felt he had when he tried to cast his tale in I Samuel into a chiasmic mold, we know for sure by one example at least, which was first discovered by Lund,²⁵ that he made use of the same mold when he wished to give special prominence to a particular event. Such an event was related in chapter 10. Chapter 9 merely introduces Saul but tells very little about him. Nevertheless, the complexity of his character as a warrior drawn toward prophecy, his suddenly changing moods and ambivalent attitude toward the seer are all foreshadowed in the powerful passage in chapter 10:1–16. We shall see when we reach Exodus that the author of that book similarly foreshadows Moses' tragedy by devoting an introductory chapter to a very small number of incidents significant for understanding Moses' later greatness and failure. Graphically represented, 10:1–16 tells its own, and Saul's, story with sufficient clarity. Its central verses are:

A Gibeah of Elohim (10:5) „a band of prophets”, „the spirit of the Lord will fall upon you” (6), „and you shall prophesy with them” B „and you shall be turned into another man”, „when these signs meet you” (7) C „do whatever your hand finds to do”, „go down before me” (8) D „behold I am coming to you” E „Seven days you shall wait” D' „until I come to you” C' „and show you what you shall do”; Saul goes away from Samuel (9) B' God turned him another heart (10). All these signs came to pass A' Gibeah, a band of prophets, „the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.”

The system of 10:5–10 puts Samuel's command to tarry for seven days in its center. Again, this is no accident. We read later that Saul's impatience led him not to await Samuel's arrival (13:8), but rather to rush into battle, the cause of the first rupture between the two men (13:10,14) and the anticipation of Saul's downfall.

There is, in addition, one peculiarity in 10:2–3. Two localities are mentioned there by name: Rachel's tomb and an otherwise unknown „oak of Tabor”. While there is no doubt about the tomb being located indeed near the southern border of Benjamin, the name Tabor in this context is puzzling. Only one place is known by this name, mentioned nine times in Scripture, Mount Tabor. That the oak mentioned in v.3 was situated on or at Mount Tabor is altogether impossible since the tree as well as the tomb must be sought close to Bethel, the main city of Saul's tribe Benjamin, as the text makes clear. It is, on the other hand, not impossible at all that the toponym Tabor was deliberately inserted by the writer into a chapter looking beyond the present time into Saul's future so that the southernmost and northernmost points of Saul's kingdom appear in one and the same verse – a sort of geographical *inclusio*. And if we take Rachel's tomb to be the starting point of Saul's career, and Mount Tabor, at the foot of which En-Dor is situated where he spent the last night before his death, then the *inclusio* is also a biographical one. Farfetched as this explanation might seem, it is quite in tune with other devices of biblical narrative technique. If *sesak* (Jer. 51:41) and *leb qamay* (Jer. 51:1) are cryptograms for *babel* and *kasdim* (by means of substituting the last letter of the alphabet for the first, the last but one for the second etc. – by the way, a principle in itself chiasmic!) – and if by the three hundred eighteen men of Abraham's retinue his *maior domo* Eliezer alone is meant because 318 is the sum of the letters of his name, then a slight anastrophe coupled with a prochronism is perhaps not incongruous in this instance.

In II Samuel we face an easier task. This part of the book deals with material more homogeneous and contemporary with the lifespan of the author, which perhaps enabled him to master it in a more sovereign, chiasmic manner:

A War against Saul's second son (ch. 2) B Lament over Abner's death (3:31–34) C Murder of Ishboshet (ch. 4) D Conquest of Jerusalem (ch. 5) E Moving the Ark to Jerusalem (6:1–19) F Negative interference of a woman (6:20–23) G Nathan's good counsel (ch. 7) H Conquests abroad (ch. 8) I Mephiboshet (ch. 9) J Victory in Transjordan (ch. 10) K David and Bathsheba: Adultery and murder (ch. 11) L The Poor Man's Lamb (ch. 12) K' Amnon and Tamar: Rape and murder (chs. 13–14) H' Internal revolt (ch. 15) E' Moving the Ark from Jerusalem (15:24) I' Mephiboshet (ch. 16) G' Achitophel's evil counsel (17:1–14) J' Flight to Transjordan (17:22–18:32) B' Lament over Absalom's death (19:1) F' Positive interference of a woman (ch. 20) C' Murder of the Saulides (ch. 21) D' Acquisition of the Temple Mount (24:18–25) A' Revolt of David's second son (I Kings 1)

$$(r = -0.811, r^* = -0.506, r_1^* = -0.712)$$

Lund suggests another and somewhat sketchy outline for the lower part of this diagram:²⁶

A Absalom's rebellion (15:1 ff.) David's concubines taken by Absalom (16:22) Shimei (16:5), Barzillai (17:27), Joab (18:14) B Shimei (19:16 ff.), Barzillai (19:31 ff.), Joab (20:7 ff.) C Sheba's rebellion; Joab (20:10) A woman saves the day (20:16) The Keritites and Peletites (20:23) Abiathar and Zadok (20:25) D Famine; God was entreated for the land (21:1–14) E War with the Philistines, David's heroes (21:15–22) F Psalm (22:1–51) F' „Last words” (23:1–7) D' Pestilence; The Lord was entreated for the land (24:1–25) C' Adoniah's first rebellion; Joab (I Kings 1:7) Bath-Sheba saves the day (1:1–31), The Keritites and Peletites (1:38), Abiathar and Zadok (1:25) B' Joab (2:5), Barzillai (2:7), Shimei (2:8) (note reverse order in B!) A' Adoniah's second rebellion (2:13 ff.), Abishag, David's concubine, demanded by Adoniah (2:17), Abiathar (2:26 ff.), Joab (2:28 ff.), Shimei (2:36 ff.)

Lund's scheme is more elegant than the one suggested previously, but it does not take II Sam. 1–14 into consideration. Both have one thing in common, however: they prove that the writer cherished the chiasmic principle.

The historian is basically an artist: he should not only tell, but also interpret what he is telling. By these criteria, the author of Samuel was a superb historian. He grouped his subject matter symmetrically around the two issues that were foremost in his mind, decisive in the lives of his heroes, and of paramount didactic importance for his future readers.

All this bespeaks a single author for the work; it accounts for the presence of repetitions and anachronisms, for the alignment of the incidents was never meant to be entirely chronological; and it offers insight into the *Weltanschauung* of the author himself. Central are the war against Amalek and the seduction of Bath-Sheba, both told in total disregard for the time sequence: neither incident occurred in the middle of the lives of the two kings. But why did the author choose to focus on these two events? Are their messages indeed so theologically and educationally important as to demand, as it were, that two whole books be written around them?

With respect to David's transgression, the answer seems clear: does not the Decalogue say „Thou shalt not commit adultery?” However, this answer is far from exhaustive. In fact, David sinned not only against the seventh commandment but the entire second tablet! He also coveted, „stole” Uriah's mind, as the Hebrew would express it, bore false witness by sending his letter, and murdered. Whereas it is immaterial whether or not these commandments were generally observed in David's times, it is beyond any doubt that it was generally known that transgressing any of them was a capital crime in Hebrew law. To expound that a married woman must not be

seduced may have been one aim of the author, but this still cannot be sufficient reason for him to write an entire book.

A second and more momentous reason was to give the reader a lesson in the doctrine of retribution. No supernatural punishment fell upon David, no angry Zeus struck him with his thunderbolt. On the contrary, David took Bath-Sheba for his wife and though her first-born child died after some time, she later gave birth to Solomon, a son of whom any father might have been proud. Yet David was punished. His eldest son Amnon did as David had done; he seduced a woman, his half-sister Tamar, and Absalom, David's second son, also followed his father's example by murdering a man, the same Amnon, whose existence he could not tolerate. While all this must have happened many years after Bath-Sheba's marriage to David, the author let Uriah's death immediately be followed by Amnon's and Absalom's crimes. This is more than poetic justice. It is a way of showing that a man is responsible for his actions; that the relation and proportion between crime and punishment are natural and rational; and that there is, in this world, reward and penalty, even though delayed, but again not further delayed than one or two generations (cf. the second commandment of the Decalogue).

Another and still more cardinal moral of the Bath-Sheba incident and its subsequent disastrous results for David is that God (as the author conceived Him) visits transgressions more severely upon kings than upon other people. Not only does an Israelite king stand under the law, he is at least equally subject to it as any Jew, if not more so. Thus, the central theme of II Samuel.

Turning to I Samuel, what is instructive about the war against the Amalekites? Let us first state again what has been established before: the author was less concerned with historical facts than with moral truths. It is therefore either futile or beside the point to search for the factual rationale of this war. All we know is what the author saw in it. The injunctions against Amalek in Exodus 17 and Deuteronomy 25 signify that Israel's political duty is to fight evil wherever and whenever it raises its head, and Scripture conceives of Amalek – down to Haman the Amalekite – as evil personified. Hence, an Israelite king, as our author views him, is duty bound to exterminate Amalek – one is tempted to say Amalekism – whatever the circumstances and consequences. Significantly, Jewish *Halachah*, traditionally and notoriously pacifist, differentiates between two categories of war. One is called *milhemet-resut*, a war for which the king must obtain permission and approval from the High Court (Sanhedrin). The other, *milhemet-mizwah*, is mandatory. Two wars only belong to this latter category: the conquest of the Land of Canaan, including the deliverance of Jews from their enemies, and the war against Amalek.²⁷ This is the reason for Samuel's command that Saul should go to war against Amalek before even trying to liberate the people from the yoke of the Philistines which certainly was a more urgent political and military task. Max Weber would have called this an instance of *Gesinnungspolitik* vs. *Verantwortungspolitik*.²⁸

These deliberations have brought us nearer to comprehending the general purpose of the Book(s) of Samuel. The main topic is a dramatized discussion of the questions: What is the ideal course of action for an Israelite king? Is he a law unto himself? Are there two kinds of morality – one standard for him and another for ordinary mortals? Does expediency take precedence over moral ideals and God's precepts? Is God ever, as Frederick King of Prussia cynically declared, on the side of the bigger guns? The answer ultimately given by the Books of Samuel is fully presaged by the focal verses (I Sam. 2:4–9) of Hannah's Prayer,²⁹ „The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.”

II Samuel, as we have seen, deals in its central part with a man's behavior toward his fellow man, or, as the Hebrew idiom will have it, with *mizwot beyn adam lahabero*. I Samuel is complementary to II Samuel insofar as it stresses obedience to commandments not readily comprehensible in terms of regulating social behavior, but rather those

which are Divinely motivated, in Hebrew *mizwot beyn adam lamaqom*. It should be noted that this same division of obligations incumbent upon Israelites is evident in the Decalogue, where each tablet speaks separately of one of these two categories of *mizwot*.³⁰

It has been said that the Book of Samuel is the Jewish *Politeia*. While there is much truth in this saying, it may be better described as a Jewish *anti-Macchiavelli*. And just as Macchiavelli wrote in order to instruct a prince in matters politic, so may this book have been written *ad usum delphini*: for the education of an Israelite heir-apparent of Davidic descent. Its lofty ideals would give us reason to believe that its author was of the prophetic school. An actual example of a prophet educating a prince is II Sam. 12:35 where Nathan is charged by David with tutoring young Solomon. As the greater part of Samuel must have been written by a contemporary of David and Solomon and as this contemporary was probably a prophet, the result of our structure analysis may not only be a clear indication of the book's message, but also a possible pointer to the identity of its author.

TORAH That chiasm is a stylistic device utilized in particular biblical verses and short passages has been well known for many decades. The foregoing discussion has undertaken to demonstrate that it also occurs in entire books. This raises the further need to investigate the macrostructure of a collection such as the Torah to see whether it too might be chiastically arranged.

From the outset it is clear that the five books constituting the Pentateuch are not arranged chronologically. Genesis serves as an anticipatory prologue and Deuteronomy as a retrospective recapitulation. Exodus and Numbers, second from the beginning and the end, are more like each other than any other parts of the Torah. The central book, Leviticus, stands apart from the rest, being exclusively devoted to legal matters and ritual. All of these are signs of chiasm which call for a more thorough examination.

Genesis and Deuteronomy form a pair. The first is strictly narrative, constituting a preliminary exposition and dramatized demonstration of the main aims to be achieved in the Torah. Deuteronomy, on the other hand, assumes that the reader has passed the propaedeutic stage provided by Genesis and that he has accepted the juridical injunctions of the three central books. It supplies as a natural conclusion to the Pentateuch the paramount ideological guidelines that lie at the root of the pragmatic precepts contained in the previous books.

This technique of postponing the discussion of theory until after that of practice may be logically unsound and has been rejected by philosophers like RaMBaM (Maimonides, Spain-Egypt, 1135–1204), who opens his great code *Yad Hazaqah* with abstract principles and subsequently derives from them practical implications. But then, the Torah is neither a textbook of philosophy, logic or theology, written for an intellectual elite, nor, as in the case of RaMBaM's *magnum opus*, a reference book for those who have already graduated, as it were, from a course in Judaism. Rather, it is a popular guidebook towards the good life. Therefore, its method is pedagogical, and accordingly practice takes precedence over theory. This is in full accord with ancient Jewish educational thought and finds explicit expression in the celebrated declaration: „We will do [first] and understand [later]” (Ex. 24:7).

Exodus and Numbers are also paired. As in many other instances, modern commentators have misunderstood why various accounts given in Exodus are recounted in Numbers. They call them „doublets,” implying that the author of Numbers was unaware of the accounts in Exodus. The contrary is true: Numbers presupposes Exodus and can hardly be understood without it. Thus, for example, the manna is extensively discussed in Ex. 16, together with an *obiter dictum* about quails (v. 13). The same quails reappear at length in Num. 11:31–34, where the manna is referred to only briefly in 11:7–9, which assumes that it is known from Exodus. Moses was commanded to deposit a jar of manna before the Ark in Ex 16:33–34, which matches Aaron's rod being placed there in Num. 17:7. The so-

called Second Pesach in Num. 9 cannot be understood without Ex. 12; nor would we know who Joshua is when we read of him in Num. 11:28, unless the man had previously been introduced in Ex. 17:8, and with particularity in 33:11. The fact that Moses struck the rock with his rod contrary to the commandment given in Num. 20:11 cannot be comprehended unless it is remembered that he was expressly asked to do so in Ex 17:5–7. That Hobab took his leave in Num. 10:29–31 rounds out the lengthy account of the arrival of his kinsman in Ex. 18:1–27.³¹ Parenthetically, the seventy judges mentioned in Ex. 18 are not identical with the seventy elders in Num. 11:16, 24, but rather form their opposite number. Similarly, Moses' presentiment in Ex 17:4, „They are almost ready to stone me,” only materializes in Num. 14:10. Finally, Moses raises his hand to secure victory over Amalek in Ex. 17:8–13, and raises a bronze serpent in order to stop the plague of fiery serpents in Num. 21:9, a pairing recognized as early as TB, Rosh Hashanah 29a. All these paired incidents relate to each other: some later passages presuppose the earlier ones, other early accounts look to their later counterparts. As the sages would have it, „There is no earlier or later in the Torah” (TB, Pesachim 6b). In a word: the Torah does not exhaustively treat each of its subjects in one single place but disperses the elements of the narration over specific fields within the library.

The Torah leaves it to the reader to recognize this fact. To aid the reader in this effort, however, the written word points the way by repeating entire passages and numerous expressions at critical junctures. To mention only a few:

„The Lord, [a God merciful and gracious,] slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love [and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands], forgiving iniquity and transgression [and sin], but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generation” (Ex. 34:6–7; Num. 14:18).

„But of you I will make a great nation” (Ex. 32:10; Num. 14:12).

„If I have found favor in thy sight” (Ex. 33:13; Num. 11:15).

„The people quarelled with Moses” (Ex. 17:2; Num. 20:3).

„To kill this whole assembly” (Ex. 16:3); „you have killed the people” (Num. 17:6).

„Why should the Egyptians say” (Ex. 32:12); „the Egyptians will hear of it . . . and say” (Num. 14:13–14).

„Why did you bring us up out of Egypt” (Ex. 17:3); „It is a small thing that you did bring us up” (Num. 16:13).

„Then Moses and the people sang” (Ex. 15:1); „Then Israel sang” (Num. 21:17).

Not only do these two books, Exodus and Numbers, contain internal references to each other, but also they comprise a unified composition. We read, for example, in Num. 14:22: „They have put me to the proof these ten times.” These ten instances are nowhere enumerated, but they surely recall the ten plagues which „put Pharaoh to the proof.” Num. 14:22 can therefore not be a „round” number. It follows that the sages were right when they searched for the „ten times” referred to in this verse, and, moreover, when they searched for them in both Exodus and Numbers. Their answer, found in TB, Arachin 46a, and based on Ps. 106, is a resumé of both books:

A Lack of faith when facing the Egyptians (Ex. 14:11) B Lack of faith in the prophet (Ex. 14:31, cf. Ps. 106:7) C Craving for water at Marah (Ex. 15:24) D Craving for bread at Sin (Ex. 16:2) E Hoarding the Manna at Sin (Ex. 16:20) E' Collecting the Manna on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:27) C' Craving for water at

Rephidim (Ex. 17:1 ff.) B' The Golden Calf (Ex. 32) D' Craving for meat at 'The Graves' (Num. 11) A' Lack of faith when facing the Canaanites (Num. 14)

The unity of these ten events shows that Exodus and Numbers are closely related to each other, and that the two books are arranged symmetrically around Leviticus. This grouping becomes even more conspicuous when the gradation of the „ten test” is noticed: the „craving” increases from necessities to luxury (water – bread – meat), and only the last three attempts of „putting the Lord your God to the test” (Deut. 7:16) are punished by death: in B' and D' the individual transgressors pay with their lives, whereas for A' the whole generation is condemned to die in the desert. An analogous climactic gradation is present in the sequence of the ten plagues. Is it conceivable that these and many other similar interconnections between these books are due to chance, to a writer's negligence, lack of imagination, or such insufficient command of language that he is incapable of elegant variation? Is it not, much rather, the *hypothesis facillior* that this was done intentionally to relate Exodus and Numbers to each other in such a way that they embrace Leviticus, only to be embraced in turn by Genesis and Deuteronomy? Although additional evidence might be offered, these points should suffice to demonstrate the concentric placement of Exodus and Numbers in the Torah collection.

There remains Leviticus. It is the central book in the Pentateuch and contains the Priestly Code of law, cult and ritual purity to the exclusion of all narrative. It occupies the central position in the Torah where, whether or not the modern reader likes it, the commandments occupy the ultimate position of preeminence.

Having taken a synoptic view of the Pentateuch and found that the sequence of its five books manifests chiastic tendencies, we may now investigate each book separately.

DEUTERONOMY Determining what principle governs the arrangement of legal matter in Deuteronomy transcends the limits of this study, but it may at least be said that it does not seem to be entirely chiastic. Nevertheless, this principle could not have been altogether foreign to its author as the book is evidently divided into three parts: (a) chapters 1–11, a general expository and ideological opening oration; (b) chapters 12–25, the main body of laws terminating in 25:17–19 with the injunction to extirpate – be it even by war – evil wherever it may be found (see p. 219); and (c) chapters 26–34, a concluding peroration regarding commitment to the covenant, the appointment of Moses' successor, a song and a blessing. The introduction, the main part and the conclusion are each approximately of the same length. A second version of the Decalogue of Ex. 20 is found in the middle of the introduction, and a paraphrase of the fearsome „Admonition” (*tokhehah*) of Lev. 26 is similarly embedded in the middle of the conclusion. Knutson, whom we follow here in part, further posits that the legal material in the main division is also organized under an ABA' scheme.³² The structure of Deuteronomy may then graphically appear as follows:

**Some graphics could not be included in this structure; see hard copy*

A Introduction (1:1–5:5)	5 chs.	2,700 words	B Decalogue (5:6–18)
	6 chs.		approx. A' Introduction, cont. (5:19–11:32)
C Code (12:1–25:19)	14 chs.	2,500 words approx.	
D Conclusion (26:1–27:26)	2 chs.		E Admonition (28:1–69)
	2,300 words		D' Conclusion, cont. (29:1–34:12)
			6 chs. approx.

LEVITICUS While Deuteronomy contains a few passages which are narrative in parts. Leviticus has almost none, so that we would be justified in the present study in passing it over. For completeness' sake, though, a few examples of chiasm in the legal texts of this book will be given: all but the last, which appears most instructive, follow Lund.³³ Consider first Lev. 14:49–53:

A cleanse the house (14:49) B kill one of the birds (50) C cedar wood, hyssop, scarlet (51) D the slain bird (51) E running water (51) F sprinkle the house (51) G seven times (51) F' cleanse the house (52) E' running water (52) D' the living bird (52) C' cedar wood, hyssop, scarlet (52) B' the living bird (53) A' the house . . . be clean (53)

Another good example is Lev. 24:13–23:³⁴

A The Lord said to Moses (24:13) B „Bring out of the camp him who cursed” (14) C „stone him” (14) D „say to the people of Israel” (15) E „Whoever curses his God . . . blasphemes the Lord” (15–16) F „the sojourner and the native” (16) G „who kills a man” (17) H „who kills a beast” (18) I „causes a disfigurement” (19) J „fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (20) I' „he has been disfigured” (20) H' „who kills a beast” (21) G' „who kills a man” (21) F' „the sojourner and the native” (22) E' „I am the Lord your God” (22) D' Moses spoke to the people of Israel (23) B' they brought him who had cursed out of the camp (23) C' and stoned him (23) A' as the Lord commanded Moses (23).

Note here that the *lex talionis* is found in the exact middle, which is indicative of a perhaps unexpected level of literary achievement in the structure in the Priestly Code.³⁵ Lund has perceptively concluded:

„. . . when there has been little or no sequence in the arrangement of sections, scholars have turned to the hypothesis of dislocation or redaction. But why should logical considerations alone be permitted to determine the organization of the material in the book when we have such abundant evidence that its writers were influenced by a well-developed aesthetic interest? May it not be, after all, that blocks of material were arranged in accordance with chiasmic patterns . . . , and that in the mind of the writer and the informed reader similar sections, though far apart in these books, were connected with one another? May it not be also that the language is artistic, although at times it appears to be exceedingly prolix and discursive, the style of 'a jurist rather than a historian' in whose interest it is to be 'circumstantial, formal and precise'? No doubt legal writings are the least imaginative of all prose, but after a close study of some of these structures we are not ready to deny them certain aesthetic qualities. There is repetition, to be sure, but a measured and orderly repetition according to fixed literary patterns.”³⁶

In this regard, consider a final important example. Leviticus contains twenty-seven chapters. The Massoretes who counted the verses of the Torah noted that the middle verse of Leviticus is 15:7, although, from the viewpoint of religious subject matter its solemn climax was recognized as being 19:1–37. It is no longer surprising that this climax is chiasmically constructed. For comprehending this structure, two technical terms used in Jewish legal thought need be introduced. Since Saadiah Gaon (Egypt, 882–942), the first, *huqqim*, usually translated „statutes,” refers to those commandments that are not rationally explicable, while the second term, *mispatim*, the „ordinances,” denotes the rationally plausible Divine injunctions.³⁷ The theological and philosophical polarity between the two should be self-evident, and this provides the basis of much of the structure of Lev. 19:1–37.

A Opening (19:1–2) B Ordinances (3) C Statutes (4) D The „Left-over” and the „Abomination” (5–8)
 E Ordinances (9–18) D’ The „Two Kinds” and the „Betrothed Handmaiden” (19–22) C’ Statutes (23–32)
 B’ Ordinances (33–36) A’ Conclusion (37)

Furthermore, the postscript „I am the Lord” occurs here in the following frequencies:

A B C : three times D : not at all E : five times D’ : not at all C’ B’ A’ : seven times.

This pattern is extremely revealing. It proclaims first of all that the Torah itself responds to the question whether intelligible precepts take precedence over seemingly senseless injunctions or vice versa, by affirming that, just as they are interspersed with each other, they are interdependent and hence carry equal weight. The conclusion of the passage in fact expressly names both categories in the same verse (v.37). However, in harmony with later Jewish thought, which attributes to the Gentiles an awareness of „natural law,” *i.e.* of the ordinances, but sees the Jews’ distinctiveness in keeping God’s comprehensible statutes as well as His unfathomable ordinances, this chapter stresses the statutes by mentioning them alone in verse 19 and by naming them before the ordinances in verse 37.

The climax of the thirty-seven verses is in their exact middle (v.18): „ You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” With Leviticus as the central book, with chapter 19, the „Holiness Code,” at its culminating point and with this verse in the midst of the chapter, this commandment is, by means of symmetrical structure, declared the summit of the entire Torah. He may not have arrived at his opinion by the same means as we did here, but R. Akiba (Tannaite, Palestine, 2nd cent. C. E.) concurs with the present conclusion: „ It is transmitted: said R. Akiba, ‘You shall love etc.’ – this is the greatest rule in the Torah” (TJ, Nedarim 89,4). Accordingly, Saadia is quoted as having said, „The best and most important is always found in the middle.”³⁸

NUMBERS Whether there is chiasm in Numbers is not certain. Legislation and narration alternate there in a manner which almost precludes any formal structure. It rather seems that the material follows arrangement by association. However, in addition to what has been said of the book above (see p. 219–21), a tripartite division of the book suggests itself:

A Events which occurred and commandments which were given at Mount Sinai (1:1–10:11) B The thirty-eight years in the wilderness (10:12–21:36) A’ Events which occurred and commandments which were given in the Plains of Moab (22:1–36:13)

Hirsch’s opinion that the principle ideas of Numbers are embodied in chapter 19 may be borne out by the following arrangement:³⁹

A The census of the tribes (ch. 1) B The camp when stationary (ch. 2) C The tasks and census of the Levites (chs. 3–4) D The vows of a *nazir* (ch. 6) E Inauguration of the Tabernacle (ch. 7) F The spies in Canaan (ch. 13) G Korah’s death (ch. 16) H Aaron’s and Moses’ authority (ch. 17) I The Red Heifer (ch. 19) H’ Aaron’s and Moses’ transgression (ch. 20) G’ Aaron’s death (ch. 20) F’ Defeat in Canaan (ch. 21) E’ Offerings in the Tabernacle (chs. 28–29) D’ The vows of women (ch. 30) B’ The camp when moving (ch. 33) A’ Apportioning the land to the tribes (ch. 34) C’ The cities of the Levites (ch. 35)

$$(r = -0.950, r^* = -0.600, r_1^* = -0.783)$$

This is anything but satisfying, for the correspondences are tenuous and certain parts of the book are left unaccounted for. Chiasm, however, does exist in Numbers in several short pericopes, so it must have been known to its writer(s). Since our interest lies primarily in entire books or at least in lengthier pericopes, only a single example (again quoted from Lund)⁴⁰ will be given here (Num. 15:35–36):

A And the Lord said unto Moses: B „he shall surely be put to death the man, C ,they shall stone him with stones,” D „all the congregation without the camp.” E And they brought him, D’ all the congregation without the camp, C’ and stoned him with stones B’ to death A’ as the Lord commanded Moses.

This is very smooth, with four lines devoted to the commandment and four to its execution. It is therefore not unreasonable to entertain the expectation that further elements of this book will be found to be chiastically fashioned.

EXODUS Many similarities between Exodus and Numbers have already been discussed. Both contain legislative and narrative writing, which precludes their general structure from being chiastic. However, MacDonald is surely wrong when he calls Exodus „a chaotic heap of splendid historic narration.”⁴¹ The book is neatly divided into two equal parts: twenty chapters lead up to the theophany on Mount Sinai (20:1–17), followed by another twenty afterwards.⁴² The forty chapters culminate on a mountain top, as did the Book of Kings. The pattern of the two halves of Exodus is parallel:

A Preparations and instructions for the exodus	(284 verses) (1:1–11:10)
B The first commandments (12:1–13:16)	(67 verses) C The exodus
executed (13:7–18:27)	(164 verses) D The revelation on Mount Sinai and
the	(169 verses) Book of the Covenant (19:1–24:18) A’ Preparations and
instructions for the building of	(243 verses) the Tabernacle (25:1–31:18) B’ The
first transgression (23:1–34:35)	(93 verses) C’ The Tabernacle executed
(35:1–40:38)	(214 verses)

This parallelism seems to be deliberate, since the members of the respective pairs are also of roughly corresponding lengths: AA’ of eleven and seven, BB’ of two and three, CC’ of five and six chapters each. If the preparations for the exodus are seen to start not in chapter 1 but rather somewhere in chapters 3 or 4, which is quite reasonable, then even the disparity between A and A’ disappears (234 and 214 verses, respectively).

Was the material of Exodus too brittle for enforcing upon it a chiastic shape? Or did other factors play their role when direct parallelism was preferred in this book to inverted parallelism? We cannot know. But we do know that whoever was responsible for the final composition of the book was aware of the chiastic tradition, for he retained it in a number of cases.

Sections A’ and C’, the instructions for and the actual erection of the Tabernacle, both form a literary unit in itself and both are interdependent. They are usually attributed to P, *i.e.* the Priestly Writer, who is said to be pedantic, boring and lacking in literary skill. For this reason, and also because the two sections do not contain spectacular events or the slightest obvious moral lesson (unless interpreted by Fromm’s „forgotten language” of symbolism),⁴³ they are often treated perfunctorily in modern commentaries and valued, if at all, as a source of information about ancient artisanship only.

Such a negative appraisal is not entirely justified. Describing by means of words and in much detail a complex compound of buildings and furniture cannot be expected to be dramatic. In any case, the author himself must have considered this description sufficiently important to have repeated it twice, especially since the two accounts take up one third of the entire book. Furthermore, what may look like a flat and wearisome enumeration of technical specifications may have been of such high interest to the ancient author and reader that it deserved elaborate literary planning.

This planning, and the internal unity of each of these two sections, is manifest in a highly developed numerology. Three examples should suffice. In A' where the specifications are given for the construction of the Tabernacle, the word *we-asita* occurs fifty times, as indeed it should, since the measurements of the building to be erected are based on the numbers five and ten. But in C' where the directives are put into effect one after the other, the word *wa-ya'as* is repeated forty times, forty suggesting to the ancient Hebrew reader the idea of gradual ripening toward perfection (see above, p. 202). Finally, since the idea of „perfection achieved“ is understood by the number twelve, the phrase „as the Lord has commanded Moses“ serves as a postscript twenty-four times in C'.

Since the Torah chose to relate the matter of the Tabernacle twice, nothing could have been easier than describing the various parts, objects, utensils, etc., either time in the same order. But this is exactly what the Torah does not do. And why? Critics ascribe these differences to an oversight on the part of the redactor, by dischronism of the text, by later expansion said to have come to pass in one of the two pericopes, and the like. All this is tantamount to taking the easiest way out of a clash between two differing aspects of the same subject. When confronted with a painting by Picasso of a woman half of whose head is *en face* and whose other half shows her in profile, would anybody dare propose that the painter was forgetful, that he painted the two halves in different periods of his lifetime or that one half was painted by the artist himself and the other by a disciple? Only in biblical criticism does one encounter such theories and one wonders to whom they may make sense. At least one should credit the biblical redactor – assuming that he and not one original writer is responsible for the disparity observed – with a knowledge of what he was doing, and with moderate intelligence and reasonable care. Let us then try to detect what he had in mind when he drew up these two unequal lists.

In the first portion, the „holy vessels“ are enumerated in the following order:

ark, cover, table, lampstand, curtains, boards, veil, screen, brass altar, court, oil, ephod, breastplate, robe, diadem, tunics, mitre, girdles, breeches, golden altar, laver, oil of ointment, incense,

while their order in the second is

curtains, boards, veil, screen, ark, cover, table, lampstand, golden altar, oil of anointment, brass altar, laver, court, ephod, breastplate, robe, tunics, mitre, breeches, girdles, diadem.

At first blush, this looks as if in the second list the items were juggled at random. To be sure, it is not easy to fathom whether any method at all, or for that matter the chiasmic one, has guided the writer. We notice, however, that the second list omits the oil (for kindling the lights on the lampstand) and also the incense, which is quite understandable because these two had to be prepared anew from time to time, whereas everything else was made once forever. In both pericopes the lists can be simplified by combining several vessels under one heading. We thus obtain for the first list:

A Three (of the four) vessels located inside the Tent (ark, table, lampstand) B The four components of the Tent (curtains, boards, veil, screen) C The brass altar located in the court D The four components of

the court (curtains, pillars, pegs, screen) E The eight priestly vestments (four – mitre, tunic, girdle, breeches – for all priests, and four more – ephod, breastplate, robe, diadem – for the High Priest) F The golden altar (the fourth piece of furniture located inside the Tent) G The laver located in the court H The oil of anointment

The list now seems to be fairly orderly, starting from the „Holy of Holies” and proceeding from there outwards. The description of the golden altar under F instead of A is considered by many exegetes to be improper, since this altar belongs to items inside the Tent, which otherwise belong in A, and therefore it has been thought to be a late addition. This, though, is hardly probable, not only because of the prominent part this incense altar played in the daily, and especially the atonement cult, but also because the number four is dominant throughout this list. If the incense altar is left out, only a total of three vessels are placed inside the Tent. A multiple of four is also the number of materials collected from the people (35:10 ff): three metals, four kinds of colored wool, three kinds of skin, one of wood and of oil – twelve in all. It follows that F is an indispensable piece of furniture in the Tent and cannot be a late *addendum*. Note also the reference to the golden altar in I Chron. 28:18 and II Chron. 4:19. Excluding F from A must then have been done on purpose, as indeed shown by S. R. Hirsch.⁴⁴

In the second list, the eight categories appear in another order:

B, A, F, H, C, G, D, E

$$(r = +0.405, r^* = -0.643, r_1^* = -0.833)$$

This order of contents may be said to be more systematic. Whereas the sequence of the first list is governed by the importance and function of the vessels, the second list is compiled in the order of their construction. That considerations of chiasm also played their part is borne out by one small and easily overlooked detail. Moses, in 40:20, at the inauguration of the sanctuary, „took the testimony (i.e. the two tablets of the law) and put it into the ark . . . and set the cover above on the ark,” while 25:21 says „you shall put the cover on top of the ark and in the ark you shall put the testimony.” The latter procedure, the opposite of the former, is clearly impossible to execute: one cannot cover a box forever first and put something inside it later. Unwilling to assume that the writer was negligent, we must conclude that he wished to achieve reversed parallelism.

Similar tendencies, although occasionally hidden among and clashing with others, may be recognized elsewhere in the lists too. Consider the following groupings. The furniture (A) of the Tent and the Tent itself (B) belong together. They head the lists in both accounts, but their sequence is AB in the first and BA in the second. Likewise, the brass altar (C), placed in the court, and the court (D) are one entity. For unknown reasons, Scripture appears to view the vestments (E) as belonging to the same entity. G is a separate unit. Thus, two groups obtain, namely CDE and FH, with G belonging to neither, but with F always preceding H. The overall pattern, with G interpolated once in the midst of the first and once in the midst of the second group, looks as follows:

**Some graphics could not be included in this chart; see hard copy*

- (1) CDE brass altar, court, vestments (instructions given) (2) F(G)H golden altar, (laver,) oil of anointment
 (2) FH golden altar, oil of anointment (instructions carried out) (1) C(G)DE brass altar, (laver,) court, vestments

$$(r = -0.143, r = -0.829, r_1^* = -0.943)$$

We hasten to concede that these groupings are strange. Did the Torah not know when to tell of the laver, or that the vestments did not pertain to the court? There is no reply to these questions. While the arrangement of the lists

is surely not logical, it appears as if the book wished – to some extent at least – to reverse the order of the instructions in recounting the execution of those instructions.

Returning to the overall organization of Exodus, the ten plagues are placed vis-à-vis the construction of the Tabernacle, C and C', respectively, in the diagram of p. 226. The plagues begin with the lightest and culminate in the most severe. This is probably the reason why they are necessarily climactically patterned and why we search there in vain for any chiasm. On the other hand, we encounter three good examples of chiasm in chapters 2, 11–12, and 14.

Chapters 11:1–12:36 comprise instructions referring to the Passover night. The passage is seemingly confused but is actually chiastically composed. In order to understand its complexity, one has to keep in mind that the instructions for celebrating the Passover fall into two distinct categories: those applying to the first Passover night only or, as the Rabbis named it, the „Egyptian Passover” (*pesah mizrayim*), and those to be kept on all future Passover nights (*pesah dorot*). They are worked one into the other alternatingly. In the diagram, they are denoted by the sigla *PM* and *PD*:

A The command to despoil Egypt (11:1–3) B The tenth plague announced (11:4–9) C Moses leaving Pharaoh in anger (11:10) D *PD*: The Passover ritual described (12:1–6) E *PM*: Blood on the doorposts (12:7–8) F *PD*: The roasted lamb (12:9–10) G *PM*: Girded loins, etc. blood on the doorposts (12:11–13) F' *PD*: The unleavened bread (12:14–20) E' *PM*: Blood on the doorposts (12:21–23) D' *PD*: The Passover ritual questioned (12:24–28) B' The tenth plague occurring (12:29–30) C' Moses called back by Pharaoh (12:31–33) A' Egypt despoiled (12:34–36)

($r = -0.964$, $r^* = -0.714$, $r_1^* = -0.893$)

The correspondence between the members of the system is particularly stressed in EGE' by the word „blood” and in BB' by the passages „and all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sits upon his throne even to the first-born of the maidservant who is behind the mill, and all the first-born of the cattle” (11:5) and „all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of the Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon and all the first-born of cattle” (12:29). The dramatization of the exodus is located in the middle.

This predominately legal section is immediately followed by the account of the exodus itself (ch. 14). The departure from Egypt, „in defiance” (14:9) of all odds, is Israel's birthday as a nation (Deut. 27:9), the biblical miracle *par excellence* and therefore to be daily remembered by Jews by word of mouth (Deut. 16:3). Chapter 14, at least according to Holzinger, abounds in contradictions due to at least four different sources and is consequently labelled and libelled by him to be „amorphous.”⁴⁵ *Pace* Holzinger, it is a powerful piece of literature, passing slowly and imperceptibly from narrative to rhythmic prose and from there to superb poetry (ch. 15, which, incidentally, also contains chiastic features, if we accept Freedman's analysis).⁴⁶ The stirring event it describes is that the Israelites walked „through the sea on dry ground” and its message is that tyrants ought to „know the Lord.” Its structure follows the chiastic pattern, with the event itself in the center and the historical-theological principle it proclaims at the beginning, the middle and the end:

A the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord” (14:4) B with a high hand (8) C „the salvation of the Lord” (*yesu'ah*) (13) D „the Lord will fight for you” (14) E „stretch out your hand” (16) F „on dry ground through the sea” (16) A' „the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord” (18) F' „on dry ground through the

sea" (22) D' „the Lord fights for them" (25) E' „stretch out your hand" (26) C' the Lord saved Israel (*wa-yosa*) (30) B' the great hand (31) A "they believed in the Lord (31)

$(r = -0.943, r^* = -0.829, r_1^* = -0.943)$

The artistry of the account is in fact not diminished, as some critics claim, but rather enhanced by the very limited vocabulary used in this chapter, for its chiasmic balance is underscored by several words recurring again and again, each the same number of times on both sides of the middle: Egypt (11 times in each half), chariot (5 times in each), charioteers (3 times), sea, march (each twice), horse, split, draw near (each once). The Hebrew text even offers a few word plays, e.g. *wa-ye'sor* (he put the horse to the chariot) when Pharaoh set out to pursue the Israelites (v. 6) and *wa-yasar* (he loosened the wheels) when the chariots were bogged in the mud (v. 25).

When chiasm is used with conspicuous refinement, it becomes one of the few means by which an author of Biblical narrative is able to accentuate a certain tale and draw the reader's attention to its elements of special importance. A further case in point is Ex. 2:1–22. The principle figure in all but the first book of the Pentateuch is of course Moses, but details of his life and character are extremely scanty. Little wonder therefore that of all biblical personages he should have inspired the largest amount of further creative endeavor in exegesis, history, fiction, art, philosophy and theology. For example, Ahad Ha'am construed his image in the light of the recent Jewish renaissance,⁴⁷ Sigmund Freud interpreted the man Moses through anthropology and analytical psychology concluding that Moses was an Egyptian,⁴⁸ while Martin Buber tried to solve the riddle of Moses by rejecting the idea of „historized myth" and by asserting that Moses is „mythized history."⁴⁹ Our present task is to work out what Scripture has to say about the man in Exodus 2, the only chapter exclusively devoted to him. We shall try, contrary to the speculative interpretations mentioned, not to read into it what we may wish to find there, but let the text speak for itself.

Jewish tradition has it that Moses was forty years old when he fled from Egypt to find refuge with the Midianites, eighty at the time of the exodus (Ex. 7:7) and one hundred and twenty when he died (Deut. 31:2; 34:7). Of the first forty years the Torah chooses to tell the reader no more than a few incidents, chiasmically paired with the most decisive in the middle:

A Marriage of Moses' parents and his birth (2:1–4) B Moses taken by a king's daughter to her home (2:5–10) C Moses rescues his Israelite brother (2:11–12) D Moses betrayed by his brethren (2:13–14)
C' Moses rescues non-Israelite maidens (2:15–17) B' Moses taken by a priest's daughter to her home (2:18–20) A' Moses' marriage and birth of his son (2:21–22)

B takes place on the bank of the Nile and B' by a well, and in both instances a dialogue develops about Moses himself. Exodus 2 then is an elegant chiasm that could not escape the notice of any reader, and should give him the key for understanding the man.

In this chapter are found the salient traits of Moses' character: rash impetuosity – did he not later smash the tablets in wrath at the sight of the golden calf? –, indignation at the slightest injustice done to the weak and feeble, and abhorrence of violence – did he not call the aggressor a „villain" without any previous knowledge of the cause of their struggle (TB, Sanhedrin 58b)? The story (cf. CC') also makes the reader realize that Moses' sense of justice was as fervent in respect to his own people as regarding others, and equally towards men and women. Also, we learn of his softheartedness, perhaps because of the many women who influenced him in his youth: the chapter tells of his encounters with his mother and sister, the princess and her maidens, and the seven Midianite girls among whom was his future wife.

It is no accident that the Torah selects from among all that must have happened to Moses in the course of forty years just these five scenes. These, more than any other events, left their impression upon him and shaped his character. The image emerging is not one of a gifted hero, but of an outsider, an introvert, impractical and actually unfit for leadership. This is borne out later by his lack of organizing talent: even the obvious idea of appointing judges in order to relieve him from „sitting alone and all the people standing about . . . from morning till evening” and from „wearing himself out” (18:14–18) had to be suggested to him by his father-in-law. As a general, he had so little belief in himself that Joshua had to take his place in the war against Amalek (17:10). We also read of his being tired of life (32:32) and easily despairing (5:22; Num. 11:12). This picture is a far cry from that of an ingenious legislator, Egyptian-trained statesman and inspiring orator. Since he stammered (6:12, 30), he was not even good at talking (4:10). The implicit purpose of this chapter is to delineate his personality as completely unsuited for the task with which he was charged by God, which is precisely how later prophets such as Isaiah (Is. 6:5 ff.) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6) thought of themselves. That Moses himself was aware of his disabilities we know from his repeated reluctance to take upon himself the command of the exodus (3:11, 13; 4:1,14).

Moses’ tragedy, as it is extensively documented in the Torah, was to have been rejected by his own people who accused him of letting them die in the wilderness (Num. 17:6): They almost stoned him to death (17:4)! His own tribe of Levi rebelled against him (Num. 16:3 ff.) and his brother and sister envied him, although he was „very meek, more than all men that were on the face of the earth” (Num. 21:1–8). All this is anticipated and alluded to in chapter 2 and in D and placed at the apex of the chiasm because this, and not his failure to see his mission accomplished, was the most bitter experience of his life.

Any biographer emphasizes the days of greatness of his central figure. One would therefore expect to read in the Torah more about the second phase of Moses’ life, *i.e.* of his negotiations with Pharaoh, or even more about the third, namely of his personal share in leading Israel out of Egypt to the border of the Promised Land. But the opposite is the case. His youth only is described with any detail. The account dwells only on events before his mission had even started, which itself is a sign of a modest biography. But whose modesty? That of an unknown later anonymous biographer? Much rather, of Moses’ own modesty! This, together with the fact that the contents and structure of chapter 2 are so closely connected with the rest of the Pentateuch and Moses’ subsequent fate, provides circumstantial evidence that Moses himself wrote Exodus and Numbers, if not all Five Books.

GENESIS The Book of Genesis occupies in many respects the most distinguished place in the canon. It is the first of the Torah and of the entire biblical library, the most ancient according to Jewish tradition, the most dramatic, the most at variance with science, the least historically attested, theologically the most difficult and literarily the most beautiful. It was also the point of departure for Higher Criticism, which has developed in the course of the last century into an immensely diversified field of investigation and speculation. Yet of these many distinctions, its structure alone is our immediate concern.

To explain this structure, many hypotheses have been offered in the past. Thematically, the book is divided into the story of Creation and Eden; the stories of the Flood and of the Tower of Babel; the Abraham and Jacob Cycles, with Isaac playing a secondary role in both; and „Joseph and his Brothers” forming the finale. In Jewish worship, the fifty chapters of Genesis are divided into twelve „annual” and forty-three „triennial” pericopes. One modern school has found the book to be composed of ten (or eleven) genealogical scrolls („Stammesrollen”),⁵⁰ each opening with the word „These are the generations of . . .”. The flaw in this theory, however, is that, apart from their disparity in length, of all scrolls the „Generations of Abraham” are lacking. Finally, the presence of anachronisms, the problem of duplicate, variant, and even contradictory accounts of the same event, the alleged diversity of style and vocabulary and the use of two different Hebrew names for God, all serve as analytical criteria that have led

the proponents of the Higher critical school to postulate that Genesis is a composite work assembled from documents deriving from various periods. Discussing the merits or weaknesses of these theories is not the purpose of this inquiry, but rather to try to discover, first of all, whether the book itself may not offer indications of its own internal construction, perhaps more homogeneous than assumed.

Its main characters are Adam, Eve, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. The literary technique used for depicting each is not the same throughout the book. For the first four, treated in chapters 1–11, a two-dimensional typology suffices: Adam in the beginning (1:26) stands for „human being“ („Mensch“) and is later divided into male and female, *i.e.* Adam, the „man of earth, dust“ and Eve, the „lifegiver“. The preoccupation of the Torah with morals leads from chapter 4 on toward another division of mankind into two categories: the evildoers, whose prototype is Cain, and the righteous, personified by Noah. Not one of them receives more than general treatment. Their names, too, hint that their bearers should be seen as types: the name Adam is derived from red earth, Eve from the Hebrew word for life, Cain means „metal-smith,“ „weapon“ or „lance“ (cf. II Sam. 21:16),⁵¹ and Noah, approximately „content, comfort.“

From chapter 12 on, one perceives a gradual individualization of character. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not presented as stereotypes, but as genuine individuals becoming progressively more representative of human experience. From what Genesis tells of Abraham, and even more by what it omits, the reader receives the impression that Abraham was more than life-size, a constant and immutable granite monument. In contrast, Jacob is portrayed in his youth, in his middle and old age, changing from son, brother and lover to father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He matures with the years and turns, before his death, into a great patriarch. A telling example of how the Torah breathes life into these three figures is the way it describes their relationships with their wives. Virtually nothing is said about Abraham’s relationship toward Sarah: this would have detracted from the monolithic image in which Abraham is cast. All we are told is that „he went into mourn“ for her „and to weep for her“ (23:2). The verb „love“ occurs only in his relation toward his son (22:2). Of Isaac it is written that „he took Rebekah and she became his wife and he loved her“ (24:67) and also that he loved his son Esau (25:28). Jacob’s life, on the other hand, is a full love story: love for his mother (25:28), for his wives Rachel and Leah (29:18,30), for whom he labored twenty years, and love for his sons Joseph (37:3) and Benjamin (44:20). Isaac serves as the link between Abraham and Jacob. He is at once the loyal son of the one and the indulgent father of the other. This part of the book terminates, as is generally agreed, with chapter 36.

Joseph’s story concludes the book. It represents the peak of individualization. We know him personally. No other biblical figure except David receives so much detailed attention.

From this evolves a natural and internally dictated division of the book into a typological prologue (1:1–11:32), a progressively individuizing main part (12:1–36:43), and a highly individuized portrait in the epilogue (37:1–50:26). The middle part consists of twenty-five chapters, *i.e.* exactly half the book, with roughly one quarter (eleven chapters) preceding and one quarter (fourteen chapters) following it. Alongside this basic division are further significant pairings. A „descent“ into Egypt stands at the two *caesurae* (12:10–20, 37:36), an „ascent“ in the middle (ch. 22). Genesis begins and ends with poetry: chapters 1 and 49:1–27. A solemn change of name occurs once in the seventeenth chapter from the beginning (Abram-Abraham, 17:5) and again in the sixteenth from the end (Jacob-Israel, 35:10). Each such change is introduced by the same formula, „no longer shall your name be . . . but . . .“ Circumcision follows the first (17:23) and precedes the second (34:14 ff).

Of the numerous other instances in Genesis of pairs of rare words or expressions occurring at equidistance from the beginning and the end of the book, only a few striking examples can be mentioned here:

„which cannot be numbered for multitude” (in Gen, only in chs. 16 and 32) „the land could not support both of them dwelling together” (in Gen. only in chs. 13 and 36, and nowhere else in the Bible) „the Lord . . . grant me success” (in Gen. only in chs. 24 and 26, and nowhere else in the Bible) „be a witness” (in Gen. only in chs. 21 and 31) „last night” (once each in Kings and Job, and in Gen. only in chs. 19 and 31) „his daughter-in-law Sarah/Tamar” (the only two „daughters-in-law” mentioned in Gen., *i.e.* chs. 11 and 38) „the firstborn daughter” (once in Samuel and in Gen. only in chs. 19 and 29) „the Canaanite and the Pherizite” (mentioned as a pair nowhere in the Bible except Gen. 13 and 34) „seize by force” (in Gen. only in chs. 21 and 31).

All this indicates chiasmic structure. Moreover, we are readily able to make use of it for exegetical purposes. Chapter 1, being the counterpart of chapter 49, ought to be read as poetry, like the latter, and not as a technical report of how the world was created. That chapter 1 is a majestic and at the same time jubilant hymn proclaiming the glory of the Creator and the beauty, orderliness and purposefulness of His creation should be recognizable to any reader who does not approach Scripture with preconceived notions. How unobservant it is to characterize this poem as a series of stereotypical repetitions which must be the work of an official priest because officials are dry, pedantic and prone to repeat themselves; and how superficial it is to label this introduction to the Torah as an „Account of Creation”!⁵² It is welcome that the chiasmic structure of Genesis, the book itself, refutes this misconception and proves, as if such were still necessary, that chapter 1 is no „account” at all, but a sublime didactic hymn. From this we can see that the alleged clash between chapter 1 and modern knowledge, *i.e.* between fundamentalism and science, simply does not exist: the substance of poetry is spiritual, not factual, truth.

Let us begin with the prologue.

The first dramatic episode in Genesis is the story of man and woman in the Garden of Eden (2:4b–4:24). The enlightened reader of the late last and the early present centuries used to view it as „primitive” and delights in finding parallels in ancient Near Eastern myths. Whether such parallels contribute anything to a better understanding of the tale is at least debatable, but it is more than questionable whether any piece of literature or, for that matter, any product of creative art may be called primitive. That the contrary is true with regard to this pericope has been convincingly shown by Welsh, part of whose findings are reproduced in the following chart.^{52a}

A Narrative: God, man (2:4b – 17) from *adamah* to garden

B Narrative: God, man, woman, animals (2:18 – 25) relationships among creatures

C Dialogue: snake, woman

eating from the tree (3:1 – 5)

three statements

D Narrative: woman, man (3:6 – 8) *eating from the tree*

C' Dialogue: God, man, woman

eating from the tree (3:9 – 13)

three questions-and-answers

B' Monologue: God, man, woman, snake (3:14 –19) relationships among creatures

A' Narrative: God, man (3:20 – 24) from garden to *adamah*

The structure is self evident. Scriptural narration starts from its outset with a beautiful chiasm. Add to this that, in complete accordance with the chiasitic hypothesis, Scene D (vs. 6 and 7) itself is also chiasitically built. It opens and closes with a couplet positioned around one single line of seven words (four of which are verbs in contrast to the couplets where nouns outnumber verbs), leading rapidly to the lonely, fatal and final *wa-yokhal* – „and he ate!” The richness of this short line as well as the highly sophisticated structure of the entire passage can be appreciated only by consulting Welsh's thorough analysis in full. One may ask, however, whether parallels exist in those myths for this kind of writing, and, moreover, whether it is altogether thinkable that form and content may lie so far apart that such *finesse* of writing could be but the outward shell of no more than a mere childish fairy tale. The impression is inescapable that Jewish sages who from the very beginning took the Paradise story to be a reflection upon *la condition humaine* might have been nearer to the truth than the many mythologists, anthropologists etc. who have examined the story from their own points of view.

The second narrative is the story of the Flood (chs. 6–9:17). Scholars have claimed that it is composed of several patches of text combined by an editor, and pride themselves that disentangling the sources is „ein unanfechtbares Meisterstück.” Closer inspection shows that what seems a chain of repetitions and contradictions much rather forms a well-balanced „up and down” both of the Flood and of the tale. This is shown in the following diagram:

A A Divine monologue (6:3,7) B it grieved Him to His heart (8:6) C „I will establish My covenant” (6:18)
D Four stages of entering the ark „as commanded” (6:22, 7:5,9,16) E „Go into the Ark” (7:1) F the
fountains of the deep burst forth (7:11) G Seven verbs of „ascent”: increased, bore, rose (7:17), prevailed,
increased greatly (7:18), prevailed mightily, mountains were covered (7:19) H God remembered Noah
(8:1) G' Seven verbs of „descent”: subsided (8:1), were restrained (8:2), receded, abated (8:3), came to
rest (8:4), continued to abate, mountains were seen (8:5) F' the fountains of the deep were closed (8:2)
E' „Go forth from the ark” (8:11) D' Four stages of leaving the ark (once a raven, thrice a dove) (8:7, 8, 10,
12) B' the Lord said in His heart (8:20) C' „I established My covenant” (9:9) A' A Divine monologue (9:12–
16)

$$(r = -0.976, r^* = -0.643, r_1^* = -0.833)$$

The story is again divided into two equal parts of two chapters each, the first numbering forty-four verses (6:1–7:24), the second thirty-nine (8:1–9:17), with the Divine delivering intervention in the middle (8:1a). The symmetry is marked by a play on words derived from the root *nwh*. Two of them appear in the first half (*wa-yinnahem* 6:6, *nihanti* 6:7), two in the second (*manoah* 8:9, *nihoh* 8:21), and one at the turn of the tide (*wa-tanah* 8:4), all containing the two letters *n* and *h* which constitute, hardly be chance, the name of Noah himself (*nh* in Hebrew).

From this construction it transpires, above all, that the story does not concern itself with precipitation and similar natural phenomena. If this had been the case, God's wrath and not His mercy, the resulting destruction of mankind and not his deliverance would have occupied the central part of the text. In reality, a mere two or three verses tell of the catastrophe (7:21–23), while such a minor incident as sending forth the dove is described in loving detail in five (8:8–12). Stress is laid not on the sinful generation but on the one *zaddiq* (6:9), not on drowning but on survival, not on meteorology but on theology. The world, so the story proclaims, does not exist because of the great many evildoers (cf. 6:1–4), not even in spite of them, but for the sake of those like Noah, be there even but one in a generation, who follows his conscience and does „as commanded” (6:22; 7:5, 10). Thanks to him, God's mercy

prevails over His wrath and the world is saved (8:1): „The righteous will live by his trust” (Hab. 2:4). It is not the role of literary criticism to state whether this thesis of the Flood story is correct but only to discover it.

„The Tower of Babel” is commonly designated as the next unit in the book (11:1–9). In spite of its shortness, it is chiasmically built with almost every single word playing a part:

A the whole earth (11:1) B one language (1) C they settled there (2) D to one another (3) E „Let us make bricks” (3)

F „come let us . . .” (4) G „. . . build” (4) H „a city and a tower” (4) I „and make a name” (4) J „lest we be scattered” (4) K The Lord came down to see . . . (5) H’ the city and the tower (5) G’ which men had built . . . (5–6) F’ „come let us . . .” (7) E’ „let us confuse” (7) D’ „one another” (7) J’ the Lord scattered them (8) I’ its name was called (9) B’ the language (9) C’ from there he scattered them (9) A’ the whole earth (9)

$$(r = -0.672, r^* = -0.618, r_1^* = -0.818)$$

Emphasis is not laid, as is usually assumed, on the tower, which is forgotten after verse 5, but on the dispersion of mankind upon „the whole earth,” the key word opening and closing this short passage. The relation between E and E’ gets lost in translation. In Hebrew, it is a word play on *nilbenah* and *nabelah*. Two more word plays underline the symmetry, since each has its place on either side of verse 5: *hemar* and *homer* (v.3), and *babel* and *balal* (v.9).

The chiasm of the nine verses may also be presented in a less detailed way:

A Action (11:1–2)

by men B Speech (3–4) C Action (5) Divine intervention B’ Speech (6–7) by God A’ Action (8–9)

With the „face of the whole earth” settled, the prologue of Genesis ends and the stage is set for the appearance of Abraham, his son and his grandson, the three figures who dominate the central two quarters of the book.

This tripartition of Genesis into one short prologue, an equally short epilogue, and a long centerpiece is repeated within the centerpiece itself, though the proportions are reversed: approximately thirteen chapters are apportioned to Abraham, four to Isaac and nine to Jacob. Seeing in this disproportion a reason for considering the Isaac part as late and added in order to complete a „triad” of patriarchs and for calling Isaac a „pale” figure, a view frequently found in critical commentaries, shows lack of literary comprehension. The triad is original and essential. Isaac’s function is to be the link between his father and his son; he is the receptacle, repository and transmitter of the Divine promises. Another cause for the different literary treatment which Isaac receives is that the thrust of the book is to set him apart in order to juxtapose and yet connect Abraham and Jacob.

The book achieves this aim by various means. Isaac alone is born, lives and dies in Canaan without ever leaving the land; he alone lives in strict monogamy, and he alone is engaged in agriculture. Denoting the wandering „abroad” by A, those to the North (=Aram) by N, those to the South (=Egypt) by S, and those in Canaan by C, the lives of the fathers may be traced linearly

Abraham *Isaac* *Jacob*

which is again neatly chiasmic. Further, similarities between Abraham and Jacob, the two personages concentrically placed on either side of Isaac, are indeed numerous. The change of their names has already been pointed out – Isaac bears the only name of the three preordained by God. Both Abraham and Jacob left their parental homes, both suffered the threat of losing their beloved sons, both sojourned in Shechem, Bethel, Hebron and Beer-Sheba. Both, with the assent of their wives, fathered sons by their handmaidens. Both were given one commandment each for their descendants forever (17:1 ff, 32:33). Both buried their wives; both built altars. That Jacob's nightly encounter with the mysterious man (32:25–31) corresponds to Abraham's experience on Mount Moriah (22:1 ff.) was convincingly shown in Benno Jacob's commentary.⁵³

The purpose of this lengthy discussion is to demonstrate that chapters 12–36 are of an intricate texture and a rather homogeneous literary unit concentrically planned and symmetrically balanced. The parallels were clearly intended by the author but have frequently been misunderstood by scholars who search in Genesis for Plutarch-like biographies. The book is a highly sophisticated piece of art and therefore deserves to be treated as such and not as a historical chronicle. No wonder that Thomas Mann in *Joseph und seine Brüder* showed much greater insight than many specialists.⁵⁴ The Abraham and Jacob Cycles will receive detailed treatment below. As we are now concerned with the overall structure of Genesis, we turn to the epilogue.

The beauty and the inner unity of the story of Joseph (chs. 37–50) need not be extolled. Both are universally agreed upon, except in respect to chapter 38, the Judah-Tamar episode, which is said to be a „scattered block.“ It will not astonish us to find a measure of chiasmic repetition of main themes also in this section of Genesis:

A Jacob's family disrupted (ch. 37) B Judah separates from his brothers (ch. 38) C Joseph's „descent“ into Egypt (ch. 39–40) D Joseph introduced to Pharaoh (ch. 41) E Joseph organizes Egypt's economy (ch. 41) F The brothers' first „descent“ into Egypt (chs. 42–44)

G Joseph makes himself known to his brothers (ch. 45) F' The brothers' final „descent“ into Egypt (ch. 46) C' Jacob's „descent“ into Egypt (ch. 46) B' Judah reunites his brothers (ch. 46:28) D' Jacob introduced to Pharaoh (ch. 47) E' Joseph reforms Egypt's economy (ch. 47) A' Jacob's family reconciled (chs. 48, 49:28–50:26)

$$(r = -0.679, r^* = -0.714, r_1^* = -0.893)$$

How Coats could have seen in chapters 37–50 „structural parasites“ and decided that they show „no marked unity“ is beyond comprehension.⁵⁵ The least he could have recognized in them is equilibrium and the dénouement of the tragedy of errors in their middle. Equally unwarranted and even more arrogant are Redford's verdicts that parts of the story are „a sorry spectacle“ and that the supposed editor was „unimaginative“ and „confused“ and did „a shoddy job“.⁵⁶ The contrary is true. As an exegetical by-product of the analysis we see that even the Judah-Tamar episode is an integral and indispensable part of the story, which has not intruded into the book by error or oversight.

To return to the chiasmic climax in chapter 45, we find there the moral of the story: „So it was not you who sent me here but God“ (v. 8). In order to understand what this lesson signifies, and accordingly why this story was written, we must again take a panoramic view at the whole book. Genesis is an introduction into the world of ideas of the Torah. These ideas are embodied in its commandments. In preparation for these commandments and because they make no easy reading and are even less easily understood, a long narrative of fifty chapters precedes them, the only function of which is to attract the reader and make him read on. This opinion, *i.e.* that Genesis is actually superfluous in the Torah, is shared by R. Izhaq (Tannaite, 2nd cent. C.E.) as quoted by RaSHi in his very first comment (*ad* 1:1): „He [God? Moses?] need not have begun here but at the first commandment Ex. 12:1.“ In

Genesis, the introduction to the Torah, the prologue deals with human matters in general; in its central part, it deals with the 'prehistory' of the people of Israel. In both, as only fitting in a book of moral education, the main themes are the problem of good and evil and those related to such as free choice and retribution. These questions are raised immediately at the outset in the Garden of Eden, are taken up again in the stories of Cain and Abel and of the Flood, and are explicitly stated in 18:23–33, esp. 23 and 25: „Wilt thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? . . . Far be it from thee . . . ! Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" The message of Genesis is to reply, by means of dramatic examples, that the answer to Abraham's anguished question is „Yes, He will do right!" Shall the reader then deduce that no wrong will ever be done to or evil ever befall the righteous? In response to this question comes the story of Joseph, „the Righteous" as he is called by the Midrash, responding: No, the righteous are also exposed to setbacks, even catastrophes, yet ultimately they will triumph and be recompensed. Whatever wrong is done to them and irrespective of whether they deem it undeserved, Providence will turn it all to their best. What the Talmudic sages preached, that „Everything done by the Allmerciful is [done] for the best" (TB. Berakhot 60b), Genesis puts in Joseph's mouth – and in the center of his story –: „Not you [my brothers] sent me here, but God" (45:8). Comforted, encouraged and assured of God's justice, the reader is equipped to proceed to Exodus where the commandments begin. He is hopefully expected to keep them regardless of consequences, favorable or not.

The three major sections of Genesis have thus provided chiasmic structures from which certain conclusions of exegetical value have been drawn. Yet the middle section, the Abraham and Jacob Cycles in chapters 12–36, calls for further and more detailed examination. We shall take up the latter first.

The last chapter of this section (ch. 36) contains a genealogy of Esau's descendants and of Edomite kings; Jacob is not even mentioned by name. The story of Jacob may therefore be said to end with chapter 35 and to start with his departure from his father's house in chapter 28.

These eight chapters fall into two halves: four deal with Jacob's „descent" from Canaan to Aram, ending in 31:45–32:1 with his final separation from Laban the Aramean. The other four chapters (32:2–35:29) deal with his return from Aram and with his final reconciliation with Esau (35:29b). In the first half, his opponent is Laban, whose name means „white," in the second his opponent is Edom, which is the Hebrew for „red." Jacob's nocturnal struggle with the enigmatic messenger is found between the two (32:25–33), the crucial incident of his life which turned him from Jacob into Israel (32:29). He erects one heap of stones at Bethel when he sets out from Canaan (28:18), another at Gilead after leaving Aram and before reentering Canaan (31:46), and a third when again back at Bethel (35:14).

That the Jacob Cycle is not more chiasmically articulate does not invalidate our hypothesis, because the options before the writer were limited. He was fettered by at least two constraints. First, he had to achieve that high degree of individuization of his main character which has been mentioned before. This alone could have precluded more elaborate chiasm, which after all is an artificial framework better suited to stereotyped didactic subject matter. Second, Jacob's story was to be a replica of Abraham's, though less remote and more in ordinary human terms.

There is, however, an interesting detail concerning Jacob which we may call „distant chiasm." The account first states that when Joseph was sold he was seventeen years of age (37:2). In view of the undisputedly concise style of Genesis this is a surprising piece of specific information. Moreover, it is superfluous, because we are also told in the same verse that he was „a lad". As we are not informed of Isaac's age when he was to be sacrificed, why then need we know how old Joseph was when he was sold? Now we read that Jacob's age was one hundred and thirty

years when he came to Egypt (47:9) and that „he lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years” (47:28). The expression „lived” (*wa-yehi*) may sound natural enough in English, but is most unusual in Hebrew where one would expect „dwelt” (*wa-yeseb*, see e.g. 37:1). The word should therefore be understood in the light of 45:27 which says that when he heard that Joseph was still alive, „the spirit of . . . Jacob lived” (*wa-tehi*, [RSV; revived]). „To live” means here (as in 12:13 and also in II Kings 13:21, Job 42:16 and a number of other cases) to lead not an ordinary life but a full and joyous one. We now begin to see the significance of the twice repeated seventeen years (37:2, 47:28): Jacob „lived” only with Joseph at his side, which happened during the first seventeen years of Joseph’s and during the last seventeen years of his own lifetime. The two passages refer to each other and enclose Jacob’s old age within two periods of equal length – concentrically, symmetrically and, in a simple sense, chiasmically.

The last larger coherent piece of Torah narratives to be examined is the story of Abraham. He is mentioned for the first time in 11:26 as a son born to Terah. His early life is glossed over in three short verses (there and 11:29,31) and he appears on the stage when he is already seventy-five years old (12:1, where, significantly, a new weekly portion begins in Jewish liturgy). In chapters 23–25, he merely completes before his death that which is left for him to do: to bury his wife (ch. 23) and to marry off his son Isaac (ch. 24), while 25:1–18 no more than lists the genealogies of his offspring. To Abraham himself, only chapters 12–22 are devoted.

Of Abraham’s one hundred and seventy-five years (25:7), the first seventy-five are skipped, as we have seen, as if they were not worth telling: his „real” life began when he entered the Land of Canaan. He was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born and from this event on, like Jacob, he lived for another seventy-five years. His lifespan is thus 75 + 25 + 75 years, a numerical ABA panel. Furthermore, the number ten is predominant in the Abraham Cycle: he is the tenth generation after Noah (himself the tenth after Adam), 100 years of age at Isaac’s birth, and he has to pass ten tests (cf. M. Abot 5:3,4). Of them, nine occur within the middle twenty-five years, and the tenth, evidently set apart on purpose, occurs when he was one hundred and thirty-seven years old. These ten tests, plus two additional episodes, comprise the twelve details told of Abraham’s lifetime.

Many critics stamp several of these episodes as „doublets”, allegedly recorded at random by an editor unable to decide which of two partly overlapping and partly conflicting oral traditions to follow. Moreover, the only warlike event in his life (ch. 14) is said to be out of Abraham’s character and has therefore been considered either a very ancient, perhaps even mythological relic, or alternatively the very latest addition to his „saga”. Solving the difficulty found in a text segment by arguing that this segment must be eliminated is superficial exegesis. Such contradictory views are clearly unsatisfactory. Let us, therefore, probe the structure of what we have in hand. The grouping of the twelve episodes of Abraham’s life emerges as being architectonic and carefully ordered.

A Abram renounces his past (ch. 12:1–9) B Sarai in Pharaoh’s palace (ch. 12:10–20) C Abram parts from Lot (ch. 13) D Lot delivered from captivity (ch. 14) X The Covenant „between the pieces” (ch. 15) E Hagar’s flight (ch. 16) E’ Circumcision (ch. 17) X’ Annunciation of Isaac’s birth (ch. 18)

D’ Lot delivered from perdition (ch. 19) B’ Sarah in Abimelech’s palace (ch. 20) C’ Abraham parts from Ishmael (ch. 21)

A’ Abraham renounces his future (ch. 22)

$$(r = -0.943, r^* = -0.829, r_1^* = -0.943)$$

This symmetry is a good proof of the inner unity of the eleven chapters and refutes the assertions that B’ is a superfluous repetition of B and that D is a later addition. It is indeed difficult to deny that one single mastermind

produced this interwoven and aesthetically satisfying literary tapestry. That it is designed as a chiasmic matrix is furthermore forcefully impressed upon the reader by expressions recurring in A and A', creating an *inclusio*:

A (ch. 12:1)

„Go . . .”
„from (a) country and (b) from your kindred and (c)
from your father's house . . .” (gradation!)
„to the land that I will show you.”

A' (ch. 22:2)

„Go . . .”
„Take now (a) your son, (b) your only [son],
whom you love . . .” (gradation!)
„upon one of the mountains which I will tell

The relationships between B and B', C and C', D and D' require no specific comment. X and X' are the only two incidents in this narrative which do not constitute tests, while in E and again in E', Abraham receives the promise that his „seed shall be multiplied exceedingly,” once through Hagar, with the promise of the birth of her son Ishmael, and again through Sarah, with the promise of the miraculous birth of her son Isaac.

The whole Abraham Cycle is thus extensively symmetrical. Within it, two items, namely the covenant of circumcision (E') and Abraham's supreme test (A'), both of immense impact upon Judaism, are highlighted by displaying themselves with extra chiasmic features. The second of the two will be extensively treated below. The first (E') is marked by correspondences which bind the whole pericope of chapter 17 into an extremely complex figure. We first observe that the chapter is constructed of five speeches by God, each similarly introduced and of comparable length, the third (17:9–14) being the longest and most important.

A Abram's age (17:1a) B the Lord appears to him (1b) C God's first speech (1b–2) D Abram falls on his face (3) E God's second speech (*names, kings*) (4–8) F God's third speech (the covenant) (9–14)

E' God's fourth speech (*names, kings*) (15–16) D' Abraham falls on his face (17–18) C' God's fifth speech (19–21) B' God „goes up” from Abraham (22) A' Abraham's age (24–25)

This is a faultlessly regular alignment of the formal structure of this passage. Interlocked within it, a parallel content development is detectible, as has been shown by McEvenue:⁵⁷

A The Lord promises progeny (17:1–2) B Abraham father of nations (4) C Change of name, promise of kingship (5–6) D God will carry out His oath forever (7) E The sign of the oath (9–15) C' Change of name, promise of kingship (15–16) A' God promises progeny (16) B' Sarah mother of a son (19) D' God will carry out His oath forever (18–21) E' The sign of the oath (23–27)

The commandment of circumcision itself is placed in the middle. Critics censure the Priestly writer for having „conflated” it. The truth, however, is that it adheres to the palistropic figure. The specific law is found in verse 12; the positive opening „you shall keep my covenant” in verse 9 is rounded off in the negative by „he has broken my covenant” in verse 14. Within this distich, the keywords are repeated in a parallel order where verbal forms of the main key root „circumcise” (*mwl*) alternate with the rest:

A „Keep my covenant” (17:9) B „your offspring” (*zera'*) (10) C „circumcised” (*mwl*) (10) D „male” (*zakar*) (10) C' „circumcised” (*mwl*) (11) E „the flesh of your foreskins” (11) F „he that is eight days old . . . shall be circumcised (*mwl*) every male” (*zakar*) (12) B' „your offspring” (*zera'*) (12) C' „circumcised” (*mwl*) (13)

D' „male” (*zakar*) (14) C” circumcised” (*mwl*) (14) E’ „the flesh of his foreskin” (14) A’ „he has broken my covenant” (14)

$(r = -0.429, r^* = -0.714, r_1^* = -0.893)$

Such diction need not be to everybody’s taste. It may even bore critical adults. Yet by no means does the Priestly writer to whom chapter 17 is ascribed merit Holzinger’s censure that it smacks of „indescribable pedantry” and that „whenever [the writer] has once analyzed a *genus* into various *species*, we must agree to be treated with every single species over and over again.”⁵⁸ Similar dislike and lack of understanding of a literary technique not *modo Germanico* is reflected in von Rad’s remark: „[This is] unartistic . . . diction, . . . parting with all impressive ornament.”⁵⁹ Chapter 17 alone should be enough to prompt some scholar at least to write a minority report on the literary qualities of the legal texts of the Pentateuch.

Having treated the structure of the central item (E’) in the diagram of the Abraham Cycle, we may turn to its last (A’). As we have seen before, this „test” alone is placed outside the central twenty-five years of Abraham’s life. This was done in order to elevate this incident above all the rest and also in order that it could become the apex of the triadic structure of the central portion of Genesis. Chapter 22, the *aqedah*, which is wrongly named „the sacrifice of Isaac,” (better would be „the binding of Isaac”), is the center of the „acts of the fathers” (*ma’asey abot*), and since this comprises the centerpiece of Genesis, the nineteen verses of this chapter are the core of the whole book. If our hypothesis is correct, then we should again expect them to be chiasmatically constructed and to reveal to us the reason for which the book was written. Hence, these verses must be minutely inspected.

The chapter, especially its lesson, has proven to be rather evasive under traditional and modern analyses. Everyone agrees of course that it displays a modern narrative art of the Bible at its best. It is considered so exemplary of the biblical technique of story-telling that it was chosen as representative by Auerbach in his comparison of this technique with Homer’s.⁶⁰ Yet there is little consensus as to its meaning. In rabbinic homiletic literature, the *aqedah* is seen as the prototype of readiness for martyrdom (Yalqut, Deut. 26), while in the legal Rabbis it serves as a paradigm for the right of a prophet to the temporary suspension of a law (TB, Sanhedrin 89b). Philo gives an allegorical interpretation; Hassidism reads various subtleties of its own into the story; and moralists like R. Isaiah Horowitz (Prague-Tiberias, 1565?-1630) observe that the chapter teaches that God may demand any sacrifice (SHeLOH, *Wa-yera’*, end). Early Christian doctrine uses it as a forerunner of the sacrifice of Jesus (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 3:18). In modern times, the number of critical views is equally large. The *aqedah* is alleged to be a piece of ancient mythology, a Freudian expression of a father’s hatred for his son, or an anticipation of the future sacrificial cult in Jerusalem. Kierkegaard, in *Fear and Trembling*, sees Abraham as the „Knight of Faith” who, for the sake of God, renounces even the ethical ideal to which he subscribes and has constantly taught.⁶¹ Aetiologists believe that it is the intent of the tale to explain why child sacrifice was modified by the substitution of a ram or to serve as a protest against human sacrifice in general. Finally, one frequently finds the chapter quoted as a telling example that the deity of the Hebrew Bible is cruel and demands „blind obedience.”

Scholars are just as divided over the question of the authorship of the *aqedah*. It is generally attributed to the Elohist source, with glosses by R, the redactor, *vice versa*, to the Yahwist with R’s use of the name „Elohim.”

The general impression gained from this image of disagreement and mutually incompatible opinions is that preconceived ideas on the part of their proponents were projected onto this crucial chapter, in disregard of whether they are consonant with the general tenor of the Torah. The following discussion will, much rather, try to bring out the intention of the story by working from the text itself. Whatever may be the result, this procedure is at

any rate methodologically superior to *eisegesis*. Let us then first look at the structure of chapter 22:1–19, which is divided into two repetitive halves, forming in broad lines a chiastic pattern:

A „Here I am” (22:1) B „your son, your only one” (2) C „raise him as an offering” (2) D „one of the mountains” (2) E young men (3) F the wood (3) G he rose and went (3) H the place of which God had told him (3) I he lifted up his eyes and saw (4) J „we will return” (5) K he laid it (6) L the knife (6) M together (6) A’ „Here I am” (7) M’ together (8) H’ the place of which God had told him (9) F’ the wood (9) K’ he laid (10) L’ the knife (10) A’ „Here I am” (11) B’ „your son, your only one” (12) I’ he lifted up his eyes and saw (13) C’ he raised him as an offering (13) D’ the mountain (14) J’ he returned (19) E’ young men (19) G’ they rose and went (19) M’ together (19)

$$(r = -0.363, r^* = -0.566, r_1^* = -0.745)$$

One fact is indisputable here, namely that this literary unit starts and ends with the identical passage (22:1, 20): „And it came to pass after these things,” thus marking the limits of this story. Beyond this we can observe the following concerning its structure. The main deviations from a chiastic order occur in K, I’ and J’, yet they contain not operative keywords, but functional verbs such as *lay*, *see*, *return*, whose sequence is obviously prescribed by the very nature of any journey. The remaining lines may be combined in concentric clusters:

ABCDEG, HKL, H’K’L’, A’B’C’D’E’G’

In any case, there is hardly a single element in the first seven verses not echoed after verse 8.

Should the diagram not completely satisfy what one demands of a chiastic system, one may condense it perhaps more persuasively into another:

A A short opening (22:1) B Elohim speaks (2) C Actions performed in silence by Abraham (3–6) D A dialogue (7–8) C’ Actions performed in silence by Abraham (9–10) B’ YHWH speaks (11–12) A’ long and solemn conclusion (13–19)

From this, we can deduce certain conclusions regarding the meaning and internal unity or disunity, as the case may be, of the *aqedah*. First of all, the climax of the story lies not, as the simplicist would have it, where Abraham took the knife to slay his son, but in the journey which lasted according to biblical time-reckoning for one full day and for part of the days before and after it. That killing a son does not prove anything nor test anyone, since the killer may have lost his senses, has long been recognized by Jewish sages: „Why on the third and not on the first or second day? So that nobody should say: He [simply] confused him and so he went and slew his son” (Tanhuma, *Wa-yera*, 22). The silent walk in full consciousness that every single step brings the end nearer – this constituted the „proof”

The walk in silence from Beer-Sheba to Moriah is interrupted by a short dialogue between father and son, the climax within the climax. It consists of one simple, hesitant and rational question and one unsatisfactory, because evasive, reply. Both lie embedded between the twice repeated passage, „and so they went both together,” where the Hebrew uses the uncommon emphatic form *yahdaw*, as one would say in English „hand in hand.” The Midrash sensed this extraordinary usage and commented on it: „One to bind, the other to be bound; one to slay, the other to be slain” (Midrash Genesis Rabba 56). So the test was twofold and both father and son withstood it. Since Isaac’s part in the event is often forgotten, this is the second result of the analysis.

What, then, can be said of the reason for which the *aqedah* is located at the most prominent position in Genesis? In order to find the answer to this question the diagram (p. 242–3) has to be consulted again. Whereas most of the

lines in the chapter occur twice, once in its upper and again in its lower part, only two, the first and the last, are repeated thrice, namely „Here I am” (*hinneni*), AA'A, and „together” (*yahdaw*), MM'M". Perhaps for lack of typographical devices, the author turned to this surprising threefold repetition of these two words to draw attention to them. „Together” points to social relations; „Here I am,” to readiness. As mentioned above, (p. 223), Jewish tradition divides the six hundred thirteen Torah commandments into two categories: one comprises the rational precepts of socially regulative significance called *mispatim*; the other, the irrational „laws” called *huqqim*. However, the irrationality of the latter is an apparent one only. In fact, they are purposefully intended to strengthen self-discipline and self-control. It is the *huqqim* that are always mentioned before *mispatim* and therefore regarded by traditional Judaism as distinctive of Israel. Chapter 22, the center of the introductory first book of the Torah, anticipates both categories. Father and son went „together” and remained together, despite the elusive answer in verse 8, and returned, after what happened to them on the top of the mountain, „together” with the young men, representatives, so to say, of the Gentile world who are as aware of correct social behavior like the Jews, but are exempt from *huqqim*. Thus, the chapter prepares the reader for the ethical commandments (*mispatim*) which govern social relationships and are to be promulgated in Exodus from Sinai on. On the other hand, „Here I am” for God, „Here I am” for fellowmen, „Here I am” for an incomprehensibly exacting deity and for a merciful Lord, prepares the way for „taking upon oneself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven” as embodied in *huqqim*. Voluntary readiness to give up one’s greatest treasure in full confidence that it will, since it must, somehow make sense, ought never be confused with „blind obedience.” All this seems to be the third result of the present analysis of this chiasmic scheme.

That chapter 22 was written by one and the same hand now appears an indisputable conclusion. How otherwise to account for the aesthetically gratifying, coherent, consistent and symmetrical array of its narrative and linguistic elements? Even the alternate use of two different Divine names, Elohim, which occurs invariably until verse 10, and YHWH, used exclusively from verse 11 onward, becomes explicable: not by explaining this break in language behavior by assuming a *caesura* and ascribing one part to the Elohist and the other to the Yahwist, but rather in accordance with the explanation given by the Rabbis and sustained by Cassuto.⁶² They claim that the two names refer to the two complementary aspects of the Deity, as conceived by the Hebrew Bible. The one, Elohim, alludes to His stern, judge-like attributes (*cf.* the use of the word *elohim* for authority in Ex. 4:16, 7:1, 22:6 and many other places); the other, YHWH, refers to His personal, intimate and providential care for mankind in general and for Israel in particular. It is therefore only proper that „the God” (v. 1) – notice the use of the generic definite article in the Hebrew text which should be rendered in English by „a god” – who demands and expects submission should be named Elohim, while the name YHWH should be used when He accepts the willingness to fulfill His command and when He emphatically (v. 11–12) refuses to allow this willingness to be put into effect but recompenses it bountifully (v. 15–18). The inner unity of the chapter is again borne out by analyzing its structure in and of itself.

It would seem that the method employed here, and the results of this analysis, are quite opposed to those of many critics and mystics, anthropologists and psychologists. In addition to reiterating the fact that the foregoing conclusions are based solely upon the text, one more remark may be made to support these results. In reading these texts, we have had some recourse to rabbinical sources. These are almost totally neglected by modern scholars, as if those, whose lifelong occupation is to elicit what Scripture says, and who try assiduously to live according to its guidance, were the least understanding. Now these sages are responsible for the inclusion of the *aqedah* in the daily morning prayer service. Would they ever have done so if the message of the story had been to combat the abomination of child sacrifice, which had been extinct since the period of the First Commonwealth? Or to enforce „blind obedience without questioning the reasons” when the Torah itself repeatedly enjoins the reader to study and reason in order to better understand its concise writing? As it has been seen in the course of this discussion, Genesis was written in order to lead the reader, by means of narrative, toward a deeper

comprehension of the succeeding four books of the Pentateuch, whose essence is the two categories of commandments *huqqim* and *mispatim*. Could the sages have found a better way to inculcate the unlearned reader with this essence than by making him rehearse daily the *aqedah*? The word *torah* means „teaching,” and the teachings of the Torah are encompassed *in nuce* in chapter 22.

CONCLUDING REMARKS Three claims were made at the beginning of this essay: (a) that the sequence of elements in narrative passages of all lengths in the Hebrew Bible is governed by chiasmic principles; (b) that this characteristic wanes in post-exilic Hebrew narratives; and (c) that the chiasmic literary convention demanded that the main idea or at least the critical point of the tale be located at its center.

The foregoing discussions offer a wide range of examples supporting the first and the third of these claims, as well as limited evidence for the second. It is true that all of the displayed chiasmic structures are not of equal purity and that some may appear strained, but taken together the evidence should suffice to support the initial hypotheses, to convince the skeptic and to induce the biblicist to employ the phenomenon treated here as a useful tool in his occupation on three different levels.

First, it seems that drawing attention to inverted parallel structure is a welcome aid in teaching the Bible as literature. It focuses the student's advertence onto the principal lesson of the unit under study by turning his thought toward the central message and away from peripheral issues. This enhances the student's appreciation of the text and of the design underlying such compositions.

Second, insights which bring to light structural divisions are valuable to the translator. They provide guidance in the appropriate use of connectives and ensure that correct emphasis is maintained in translation.

Third, an awareness of the centrality of an episode or idea may well improve comprehension of a passage as a literary unit and thus lead to realistic conclusions about its original composition.

In spite of these beneficial uses of chiasmus – not to mention the accretion of knowledge for its own sake – the hypothesis advanced here can be expected to meet with a certain amount of resistance. Lund's important investigations have received much less notice than they deserve; Clark complains of encountering „limited hostility,”⁶³ while McEvenue anticipates it implicitly. This resistance seems to stand in direct proportion to the size of the literary sample in which chiasm is said to exist: no one will take exception to the claim that a single verse is chiasmically built, but many will dispute such an assertion when it concerns the composition of an entire book. The reasons for this reaction on the part of professional scholarship are apparent enough, but they are not well founded. Consider the most likely objections.

Some just deny that chiasm exists in larger units, but the tested evidence handily refutes this denial. Others venture that chiasmic structures „just happened,” but once again the statistical probabilities against accident are overwhelming. Nor can we simply assert that authors in distant antiquity could not have excelled in the artistic craft of storytelling, mastering a superior handling of material in both poetry, prose, and even in legal texts under an „aesthetic imperative”. The high literary levels attained in biblical literature are distinctly discernable, even if not entirely explicable.

The particular chiasms which we have displayed here may be subjected to unwarranted criticism from other angles. Some patterns relate to themes, phrases and keywords, while others build upon shifts in *dramatis personae*, situations, locations, numbers and even to unquestionably historical events, and this may be thought to be a sign of

arbitrariness in the foregoing analyses. Inconsistency of methodology, of course, must be avoided. But by the same token, this *caveat* must be observed: one should not, in the name of consistency, artificially limit the number of levels or media through which chiasmic tendencies may indeed have manifested themselves in ancient biblical thought.

Moreover, this essay has alleged that such tendencies were consciously observed in antiquity, but one may well question whether such patterning is deliberate or subconscious. This, like all questions of interpreting original intent, is difficult to answer with certainty. But observe that where we are dealing with chiasmus in small units, it is easy to speak of a rhetorical or stylistic device which the author consciously employed. Should it be any more difficult to account similarly for larger arrangements when the very same pattern recurs over and over again, on all levels of organization, within a volume whose vast composition spanned the course of a millenium and when almost one hundred writers had a share in its composition and collation?

One further point, related to the last one, is worthy of some discussion, namely the question of titles and captions used within any proposed chiasmic arrangement. Are the titles loaded, meaning that the concentric pattern perhaps extends no further than to the titles? To an extent, of course, they are, for one chooses them in order to emphasize those features of the first part of the chiasm which are perceived as being repeated in the second. Nevertheless, behind this perception stands an ascertainable, verifiable reference to the text itself, if the chiasm is indigenous and not fictitious. The fact that certain titles are theologically or interpretatively selective is therefore not critical, as long as such differences merely reflect different levels of perception justifiably arising out of the underlying texts.

None of the objections mentioned and, it is hoped, refuted, justify any rejection or disregard of the chiasmic hypotheses; yet it can be expected that more resistance will be encountered, and for understandable reasons. When the same structural principle is found throughout the Pentateuch, for example, this fact points toward internal unity, homogeneity, design and to a mastermind or masterhand, *i.e.*, to the opposite of multiple authorship and redactional recensions, with their wholesale additions, expansions, omissions, conflation, and interpolations, the pillars on which the „orthodox“ *Quellenscheidung* of the Wellhausen-Graf-deWette school rests. What is at stake regarding chiasm in the Hebrew Bible, therefore, is nothing less than an entire school of interpretative thought.

And indeed it has recently been suggested by Talmon that the academic divisions between author, editor and copyist may not be as clear as has been previously assumed. Talmon demonstrates that the same biblical author may have written, revised, edited and copied his own work,⁶⁴ as indeed the Hebrew noun *sofer* denotes both author and copyist or „writer.“ If there was, as Talmon puts it, a *unio personalis* of the two, then it is easy to see such a writer utilizing chiasmic principles at either or any stage of his writing process. All this opens up a great number of new perspectives on the texts of the Hebrew Bible, As long as these avenues are not explored, one will still be justified in postulating, without overworking the hypotheses, one single author as the composer of any smoothly symmetrical chiasm. And the more consummate the chiasm, the firmer the postulation.

Most of the issues touched upon here are matters for the scholar to ponder and evaluate. Yet this essay was not exclusively or ultimately written for scholars, but for ordinary readers. It is more often they who are struck by and appreciative of the Bible's beauty, and who read the book for instruction, guidance, and immediate pleasure, not obliterated by the interpretations of the literary critics. In the final analysis, it is hoped that the perspectives of chiasm in the Hebrew Bible will increase, first and foremost, the instructiveness and the appreciation of the beauty of this book in the hands of just such individuals, helping them to become aware of the source of some of

their intuitive sense of the Bible's grandeur. Hopefully, some will become fascinated with the techniques of chiasmic composition and will feel prompted to detect further instances where it occurs – and there must be many more – thus adding one kind of enjoyment to many others.

FOOTNOTES

1 R. Lowth, *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones Academicae* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1753) engl. transl. G. Gregory (London: Chadwick, 1847). On Lowth's treatment of parallelism, see W. Holladay, „Form and Wordplay in David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan,” *VT*, 20 (1970), 155–57. However, R. Gordis, claims in his review in *CBQ*, 35 (1942), 241–4, of G. B. Gray's *Forms of Hebrew Poetry* that Lowth was preceded by almost two centuries by Azariah de Rossi (Italy, c. 1511 – c. 1578), *Me'or Eynayim*, on *inyan* as the measure of Hebrew Poetry. For the latter's concept of the subject see W. Popper, „Notes on Parallelism,” *HUCA*, 2 (1925), 78 n. 8. It should be remembered that Jewish literati living among the Arabs must certainly have been aware of the sophisticated Arab analysis of poetry. Chiasm was one of the many forms which parallelism took in Arab poetry and prose, cf. A. J. Arberry, *Arabic Poetry* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), pp. 21–24. Chiasm in the New Testament was first examined by J. Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (1742). For these references, and for many of the following ones, I am indebted to my friend Robert F. Smith and his wide reading. I am taking this opportunity to express my gratitude to my friend John W. Welch who contributed greatly to making my English readable.

2 On the possible *unio personalis* of author and editor in Biblical times see Talmon's suggestion, note 64, below.

3 H. L. Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1948).

4 A. Lenglet, „La structure littéraire de Daniel 2–7,” *Biblica*, 53 (1972), 169–90.

5 Privately communicated to me by R.F. Smith and hereby gratefully acknowledged.

6 Y. Kaufmann, *Sefer Yehosua* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1959)

7 R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1941), p. 295.

8 First suggested by R. Pesch, „Zur konzentrischen Struktur von Jona 1” *Biblica*, 47 (1966), 577–81.

9 Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

10 B. Porten, „The Structure and Theme of the Solomon Narrative (I Kings 3–11),” *HUCA*, 38 (1967), 93–128.

11 Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 397, 403–4.

12 G. Fohrer, „Elijah” *Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testamentes*, 53 (1968).

13 Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

14 E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); see also G. Larsson, *The Secret System – A Study in the Chronology of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).

- 15 R. G. Boling, *Judges*, Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), p. 30.
- 16 M. Buber, *Königtum Gottes* (Berlin: Schocken, 1932), pp. 1–44.
- 17 The same geographical sequence may be seen in 1:1–36, as pointed out by Boling.
- 18 My thanks are due to J. W. Welch for having drawn my attention to the detailed chiasms within the four chapters of the book.
- 19 See E. F. Campbell, *Ruth*, Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), p. 109.
- 20 Cf. *ibid.*
- 21 Cf. *ibid.*
- 22 See also *ibid.*, p. 15, citing Bertman, *JBL* 84:165–8 on symmetry between chs. 2 and 3.
- 23 Cf. *ibid.*
- 24 Such interference has recently vehemently been denied by H. H. Witzernath, *Das Buch Ruth* (München: Kösel, 1975), who states (p. 401) that the book is „von eminent politischer Bedeutung“ and betrays no trace whatsoever of „religiöse Anschauungen“. One can only wonder.
- 24a See below, note 29.
- 25 N. W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1942), pp. 88–9.
- 26 *Ibid.*, pp. 90–2.
- 27 For details, see RaMBaM (R. Moshe ben Maimon, also Maimonides, Spain-Egypt, 1135–1204), *Yad Hasaqah*, XIV, Hilekhot Melakhim ch. 5:1–6.
- 28 M. Weber, „Politik als Beruf,“ *Politische Schriften* (München: Drei Masken, 1921), pp. 396–450.
- 29 The structure, message and function as an *overture* to Samuel of Hannah’s Prayer as well as the structures of the other poems in this book are dealt with in my paper, „Studies in the Poetical Sections of Samuel,“ *Sefer Zerkavod*, ed. B. Z. Luria (Jerusalem: Israel Bible Society, 1967), 355–66 (Hebrew).
- 30 For a similar distinction between the two categories, see below, p. 245.
- 31 See also W. F. Albright, *Yahwe and the God of Canaan* (London: Athlone, 1968), pp. 38–42.
- 32 F. B. Knutson, „Literary Parallels between the Text of La Palais Royal d’Ugarit IV and the Hebrew Bible,“ Diss. Claremont Graduate School 1970, pp. 136–9 on Deut. 5–28 and pp. 156–8 on Deut. 5–33; cf. D. Hofmann, *Das Buch Deuteronomium* (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1913), I, p. 1.
- 33 Lund, *op.cit.*, p. 52.

- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- 35 For further examples, see *ibid.*, pp. 51–8.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 58–9.
- 37 The two categories were first distinguished by Rav Saadiah in his *Emunot we-De'ot*, III, 1–3; cf. A. Altmann, *Saadya Gaon – The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs* (Oxford: University Press, 1946), introd. and p. 96, n. 4.
- 38 I found this quotation in H. Graetz, *The Structure of Jewish History*, transl. I. Schorsch (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1975), p. 109, but was unable to trace it in Saadiah's writings.
- 39 S. R. Hirsch, *Der Pentateuch* (Frankfurt a.M.: Kaufmann, 1911), IV, *ad loc.*
- 40 Lund, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
- 41 D.B. MacDonald, *The Hebrew Literary Genius* (Princeton: University Press, 1933), p. 81.
- 42 The Decalogue itself may be viewed as chiasmic if we follow J. Forbes, *Symmetrical Structure of Scripture* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1854), pp. 138–9, as perhaps also the *Bundesformular* at Ex. 19:3–8 according to Knutson, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–6, cited by J. W. Welch, „Chiasmus in Ugaritic,” *Ugarit-Forschungen*, 6 (1974), p. 429.
- 43 E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language* (New York: Rinehart, 1951); see also Hirsch, *op. cit.*, II, *ad loc.*
- 44 Hirsch, *op. cit.*, II, *ad loc.*
- 45 H. Holzinger, „Das zweite Buch Mose,” *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments*, ed. A. Bertholet (Tübingen: Mohr, 1922), I, p. 116.
- 46 D. N. Freedman, in *A Light to My Path – Studies in Honor of Jacob J. Myers*, ed. H.N. Breame (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1974), p. 192 ff.
- 47 Achad Ha'am, „Moshe,” *Al Parasat Derakhim* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1930), engl. transl. L. Simon, *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism* (New York: Arno Press, 1973).
- 48 S. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, transl. E. Jones (London: Hogarth, 1939).
- 49 M. Buber, *Moses* (Oxford: East and West Library, 1946).
- 50 S. E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1971), p. 106, n. 27.
- 51 But also primarily „tinker, craftsman;” cf. W. Albright, *op. cit.* (see note 31), pp. 32–7.
- 52 This is done by E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1946).
- 52a J. Welsh, „Genesis 2:4b–3:24: A Synchronic Approach,” *JBL* 96/2 (1977), pp. 161–77.
- 53 B. Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora* (Berlin: Schocken, 1933), *ad loc.*

- 54 Th. Mann, *Joseph and His Brothers*, transl. H. T. Lowe Porter (London: Secker and Warburg, 1970).
- 55 G. W. Coats, „Redactional Unity in Genesis,” *JBL*, 93 (1974), pp. 15–21.
- 56 D. B. Redford, „A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph,” *VT*, 20 (1970), esp. 71–2.
- 57 McEvenue, *op. cit.*, pp. 157–59.
- 58 H. Holzinger, *Einleitung in den Hexateuch* (Freiburg: Mohr, 1893). The quotations are random samples of his literary judgment.
- 59 G. v. Rad, „Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch,” *Beihefte zur Wissenschaft des Alten und Neuen Testaments*, 4. Folge, 13 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1934), 19.
- 60 E. Auerbach, *Mimesis*, transl. W. Trask (Garden City: Doubleday, 1957), ch. 1.
- 61 S. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, transl. W. Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), *passim*.
- 62 U. Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch*, transl. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961).
- 63 For D. J. Clark’s valuable studies in chiasm see the bibliography at the end of this volume. The present quotation is taken from a personal communication for which, as well as for many others, I wish to thank him here.
- 64 S. Talmon, „The Textual Study of the Bible – A New Outlook,” *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, ed. F. M. Cross and S. Talmon (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 321–400, esp. 336.

APPENDIX

Note on Statistical Procedure

Our first objective is to compare two series of N elements, x_1, x_2, \dots, x_N , and y_1, y_2, \dots, y_N , but occurring in the second series in another sequence, in order to discern whether there is a degree of agreement between them regarding the consecutive ranks of their elements. Spearman’s coefficient of rank correlation (r) measures the association between the two series and is computed by the formula

$$r = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{N^3 - N}$$

where d_i stands for the difference between the two elements carrying the same index.

Example (structure of the Book of Joshua, see p. 58):

According to the above formula,

$$r = 1 - \frac{6 \times 90}{7^3 - 7} = -0.607$$

The variable r can range between -1.00 and $+1.00$. When it equals zero, there is no association whatsoever between the two series. If it is greater than zero, the agreement between them is a direct, *i.e.* parallel one, and if it is less than zero, then the rankings of the two series are opposed to each other, *i.e.* the higher the one, the lower the other. Hence, when r approaches -1.00 , it may be taken as a sign of chiastic arrangement of the elements, and the closer r lies to -1.00 , the more perfect the chiasm. For calculation of Spearman's coefficient in chiastic structures, their elements marked in the diagrams of this study by letters A, B, C etc. are to be numbered 1, 2, 3 etc.

Secondly, we wish to know whether any given negative value of r pointing to chiasm may be attributed to chance or intention. Statistically speaking, we start from the so-called null hypothesis ($H_0 : r = 0$) that there is no association between the two series of rankings and wish to ascertain whether we should not reject it in favor of an alternative hypothesis (H_1) that there does exist a negative association between them ($H_1 : r < 0$). This is a „one-tailed” test, since we assume *a priori* the direction to be a negative one. For checking H_0 against H_1 , standard tables are at our disposal where the critical values (r^*) may be obtained. This means that when a certain r lies beyond the critical value, the null hypothesis should be rejected; otherwise it should not be rejected.

It is customary to be satisfied with $\alpha = 0.05$, that is, since the subject matter of statistics is probability, to risk to err in our judgment in five out of one hundred analogous cases. One may, though, insist on a still stricter yardstick and opt for $\alpha = 0.01$. Then, the probability of one's judgment being correct will be as high as 99 percent.

Example: In the Solomon Cycle (see p. 63), the number of members is eight, and $r = -0.762$. For $N = 8$, the standard table indicates the following two critical values: r^* (for $\alpha = 0.05$) = -0.643 and r^*_1 (for $\alpha = 0.01$) = -0.833 . So this is clearly a borderline case. Since r does not fall short of r^* , the result is „significant” and the null hypothesis to be rejected with a 95 percent probability of this judgment being correct: the chiastic arrangement is the intentional product of the author's mind. However, since r does not equal or surpass r^*_1 , the result is „not significant” and the null hypothesis may not be rejected: if a 99 percent probability of being right is demanded before passing verdict, then the pattern should be pronounced „to just have so happened.”

At the bottom of all diagrams except those where r obviously reaches the maximum of -1.00 , values of r , r^* and r^*_1 are given. They are not discussed in the text so that the reader will have to interpret them himself in the light of this note. For more details on the procedure used here and for tables, see Sidney Siegel, *Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1956).