

## Reviews of Books

*The Growth of the Pentateuch: A Literary, Sociological and Biographical Approach.* By IMMANUEL LEWY. (New York: Bookman Associates, 1955.)

THIS book is unusual in being both a serious work of scholarship and a thriller of the 'Whodunit?' variety. For all its resemblance to detective fiction, it would be a pity if the serious arguments it contains were overlooked.

The theory presented here of the growth of the Pentateuch represents a combination of the supplementary and documentary hypotheses. There is little trace of that emphasis on oral tradition which, thanks to the Scandinavian scholars, is so much in the air at present. We are asked to think in the main in terms of literary compositions by definite, indeed identifiable, authors. Dr. Lewy in the course of his book works backwards to a supposed document with which in his own thinking he started, *viz.* a great creative narrative work by an author whom he identifies with Nathan, the prophet-statesman at David's court, and whom he supposes to have written for the instruction of his pupil Solomon. This author 'was not a school of anonymous scribes, but a great artistic and spiritual genius like Homer, Mohammed, Dante, Shakespeare or Goethe. He was no compiling scholar, no mere collector of traditions, but a creative narrator, an observer and interpreter of life in its totality, who used traditions, as well as his personal experiences, reflexions, and insights, to create vivid and immortal pieces of art.' He was also, we are told, a humanist 'who believed in human brotherhood, and who, in a war-ridden era, envisaged a peaceful civilization with a bloodless cult and judicial system'. Nathan's book was, it is suggested, edited by Zadok and Abiathar in the priestly interest introducing, as it did, mythological and supernatural features and representing Yahweh as a God of wrath as well as a God of grace and as a God who specially favoured His people Israel. This revised edition is what we may call the J document.

Dr. Lewy believes that there was an Elohist revision of J in the ninth century, both in the north and in the south, by the prophet Elisha and the priest Jehoida respectively and that all this material was combined by editors in the reign of Hezekiah. Under Hezekiah, too, we are asked to date a Jerusalem edition of a Deuteronomy which was essentially of northern origin, this becoming the basis of Hezekiah's reform. As compared with the usual view, the impact of Deuteronomy on the religious life of Judah is thus antedated by a century. The way is now left clear for Dr. Lewy to credit Hilkiyah, the high priest of Josiah's time and the first to bear that title, with the promulgation, not of Deuteronomy, but of the Priest's Code which, we are told, was to replace the milder Deuteronomic Code which had been found in the temple but was felt to be inadequate. 'The times required a rich and colorful sacrificial

some doubt whether the pardon  
e civil pleas division, after being  
own pleas division, could properly  
eyre; on those grounds Thurkelby  
order for exaction and outlawry.  
t in describing events to Bigod in  
hat the precise way in which the  
ch division in 1253 was relevant  
is description provides the earliest  
ices sat in two divisions, though  
n the eyre rolls of the previous

ner investigation, for it poses a

Why, despite publication of the  
lawry ordered in 1253? Preston,  
when he heard that this had been  
e clerks had been strictly enjoined  
exigent roll. Preston, moreover,  
know about the affair, for not only  
orthamptonshire but for years he  
ost of the district's assizes. Why  
rently never given, or at least not  
g man involved in an unfortunate  
hbor turned to their advantage  
he something of a young ruffian,  
ghbours were determined to see  
o take advantage of the disturbed  
informal procedure of the plaint?  
ole, for the judgement in 1260 did  
and eyre, of 1263, we find Geoffrey  
against persons whom he alleged  
his outlawry.<sup>1</sup> In some of these  
his favour but in the majority the  
ries were called. An explanation  
own plea in which a Geoffrey de  
victed of robbery, only to escape  
y pleading his clergy.<sup>2</sup>

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