

Pentateuch. He did not deny a single authorship for the final composition but it could not have been anyone before the time of Solomon. About the same time J.S. Vater suggested about 40 fragments for the basic Pentateuchal materials. Some of these may have been a little earlier than Moses but the entire Pentateuch needed to fall under the critical eye. Both of these men were essentially rationalistic in their approach to Scripture and were so motivated against a Mosaic authorship by philosophical reasons as well as by their own text studies.

Of course the multiplication of fragments would prove the death knell to this general theory.

(4) De Wette (1780-1849)

One of the most important men of his time, De Wette worked in ethics and New Testament studies as well as in the field of Old Testament criticism. He authored very extensive commentaries and a new German translation of the Bible. His work in ethics is, it seems to me, his most meaningful contribution to the total field but it is not much remembered now.

De Wette continued the rationalizing tendency already in vogue. He was given to anti-supernaturalism and this meant that the Bible had to come from inventive and working men...not the Spirit of God. In particular he suggested that Deuteronomy was the book found in the temple in the time of Josiah, about 620 BC. With this contribution his name is firmly attached and for many years it was one of the accepted "facts" of the literary criticism.

De Wette objected to the many fragment idea from a probability point of view. He conceived of Genesis-Exodus as a theocratic epic to which had been appended Numbers as a supplement and for which Leviticus served as a collection of altar laws. His ideas regarding Deuteronomy grew from his study of Kings-Chronicles and the resultant observation that it seemed to him the Mosaic Code was not in evidence of force at that time. He seemingly reasoned that if it had been in force, many of the abuses described therein would not have occurred among the Hebrews. This idea has not been upheld by many recent Deuteronomic critics but it was a standard in the field for many years.