

RECOVERING THE VOICE OF MOSES: THE GENESIS OF DEUTERONOMY¹

DANIEL I. BLOCK*

Recently, as I have been reflecting on the significance of this, the last year in this millennium, it has struck me that the tradition that Moses wrote the Pentateuch is actually more than three thousand years old. Of course, Christian adherence to this tradition is based on three pillars: (1) the internal evidence of the book of Deuteronomy, which specifically speaks of Moses writing the Torah (31:9, 24); (2) the frequent references to “the book of the Torah of Moses” (Josh 8:31, 32; 23:6; 2 Kgs 14:6; Neh 8:1), “the book of Moses” (Neh 13:1; 2 Chr 25:4; 35:12), “the Torah of Moses,”² “the book of the Torah of Yahweh by the hand of Moses” (2 Chr 34:14, 15), and “the words of Yahweh by the hand of Moses” (2 Chr 35:6), in the OT; (3) and NT references to “the *Nomos* of Moses,”³ “Moses” used as a substitute for “*ho Nomos*,”⁴ “the book of Moses” (Mark 12:26), Moses’ “writings” (John 5:47), vaguer references to laws that Moses commanded,⁵ statements like “Moses wrote/writes,”⁶ “Moses says” (Rom 10:19), and “customs that Moses delivered to us” (Acts 6:14). In the Gospels Jesus himself frequently refers to Moses as a recognized authority in Jewish tradition and as an authority behind his own teachings.

Luke 16:19–31 and John 5:19–47 illustrate the enormous stature of Moses in the tradition of Judaism at the turn of the ages. In the Torah the Jews heard Moses’ prophetic voice, and in the Torah they read what he wrote, which raises the question I propose to address in this paper: How did the Torah, particularly the book of Deuteronomy, come to be viewed as the book of Moses? More specifically, how did the oral proclamation of Moses become the written book of Deuteronomy? In my search for the answers to

* Daniel Block is Associate Dean of Scripture and interpretation and John R. Sampey is Professor of Old Testament interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280.

¹ This is an abbreviated version of the Faculty Address delivered in Broadus Chapel of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on September 29, 1999. The author expresses appreciation to Craig Blaising and Robert Stein, who read earlier drafts of this paper and offered many helpful suggestions, and to my colleagues in the School of Theology who spent an evening at a Faculty Colloquium discussing the paper and its implications for our understanding of Scripture. Some of the modifications in style and substance in the present draft reflect that discussion.

² 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 23:25; 1 Chr 23:18; 30:16; Ezra 3:2; 7:6; Dan 9:11, 13; Mal 3:22.

³ Luke 2:22; 24:44; John 7:23; Acts 13:39; 15:5 (cf. “the manner of Moses” in v. 1); 28:23; 1 Cor 9:9; Heb 10:28.

⁴ Luke 16:29, 31; 24:27; John 5:45, 46; Acts 6:11; 21:21; 26:22; 2 Cor 3:15.

⁵ Matt 8:4; 19:7, 8; 22:24; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:3, 4; Luke 5:14; John 8:5; Acts 6:14.

⁶ Luke 20:28, referring to Deut 25:5; Rom 10:5.

these questions I shall begin by describing the problem and by briefly surveying the solutions that have been proposed. But the bulk of this paper will consist of an inductive consideration of the evidence for the genesis of the book of Deuteronomy within the book itself. I shall conclude with a few reflections on the implications my conclusions have for our understanding of Scripture and the process of its inspiration.

I. THE PROBLEM

Like the first four books of the OT, Deuteronomy poses a problem for scholarly investigation, because it has come to us as an anonymous composition. Nowhere does the author identify himself. But then, this is not that remarkable, especially if we consider that this problem applies to virtually all of the OT.⁷ Although few would doubt that the book of Amos contains the authentic words of this eighth-century prophet, the fact is we do not know who was responsible for transcribing, gathering, and arranging his oracles in their present form. The narrative preamble (1:1) at least appears to come from a different hand.

But there is a second reason why we should not be puzzled by the anonymity of Deuteronomy. This accords perfectly with what we know (or don't know!) of the composition of literary texts in the ancient Semitic world. Although ancient Mesopotamian documents tend to reflect great concern to identify scribes who copied traditional and economic texts, those that explicitly identify their authors are extremely rare. In 1957 W. G. Lambert could cite only two literary texts that mention the name of the author:⁸ the myth of "Erra and Ishum," which claims to be the divinely inspired composition of Kabti-ilani-Marduk,⁹ and "The Babylonian Theodicy," a complex autobiographical acrostic poem consisting of twenty-seven stanzas each made up of eleven lines beginning with the same syllable.¹⁰ Our understanding of the authorship of ancient Mesopotamian literature has not changed much since 1957,¹¹ and no additional compositions naming their

⁷ A point made also by B. K. Waltke, "Oral Tradition," in *A Tribute to Gleason Archer: Essays on the Old Testament* (ed. W. C. Kaiser, Jr. and R. F. Youngblood; Chicago: Moody, 1986) 30.

⁸ "Ancestors, Authors, and Canonicity," *JCS* 11 (1957) 1. For a discussion of an ancient text that lists the names of several authors see *idem*, "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors," *JCS* 16 (1962) 59-77.

⁹ For English translations see S. Dalley, in *Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, vol. 1 of *The Context of Scripture* (ed. W. W. Hallo and K. L. Younger; Leiden/New York: Brill, 1997) 404-16; B. R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 2 vols. (Bethesda: CDL, 1993) 2.771-805. Kabti-ilani-Marduk's name has also surfaced in the "Catalogue of Texts and Authors" from the library of Ashurbanipal published by Lambert in *JCS* 16 (1962) 65. Cf. his comments on pp. 73-74.

¹⁰ The author does not identify himself outrightly, but when the opening syllables of each stanza are pieced together they yield the sentence "I, Sagilkinamubbib, am adorant of god and king." See the translation by B. R. Foster in *Canonical Compositions* 492-95; *idem*, *Before the Muses* 2.709-98. For the Akkadian text, translation, and commentary, see W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960) 63-89.

¹¹ We have learned that the legendary Adapa was recognized as the author of written texts, presumably by dictation from a god, and that the Etana Epic is attributed to a certain Lunanna.

authors have been discovered.¹² The reticence of ancient authors of literary texts to identify themselves presumably derives from their placement of a higher value on the message of their compositions than on the identity of the composer. Whatever the reason, the same phenomenon is evident in the OT. Not a single book names its author. But this has not stopped readers from trying to answer what is ultimately unanswerable. Indeed, until the recent awakening of interest in literary approaches to Biblical texts, critical scholarship was preoccupied with trying to answer questions of authorship and provenance.

II. A BRIEF SURVEY OF SOLUTIONS PROPOSED

As already noted, in pre-critical Jewish and Christian traditions the predominant interpretation ascribed the authorship of the Pentateuch as a whole and of Deuteronomy in particular to Moses. In fact, many maintained that the entire Torah was dictated by God to Moses,¹³ and this remains the position held by many preachers in evangelical churches, not to mention the lay people in the pews—though some would concede that a later writer (perhaps Joshua) may have added Deuteronomy 34.

While many evangelical scholars today argue for at least a more nuanced understanding of the book's origins,¹⁴ virtually all critical scholars reject this interpretation. In the nineteenth century two Germans, W. M. L. De Wette and Julius Wellhausen, provided the impetus for more critical approaches. In his 1805 doctoral dissertation,¹⁵ the former proposed that Deuteronomy was the recently written law book used by Josiah as the basis of his religious reforms. This thesis was picked up and developed by Julius Wellhausen who argued that chaps. 12–26, the core of the book, were written by a prophet (some suggest Jeremiah) ca. 622 BC (cf. 2 Kings 22–23) to

See Lambert, "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors," VI:11, 16, *JCS* 16 (1962) 67. Cf. his discussion, pp. 72–76.

¹² For a discussion of the present awareness of ancient authors see Foster, *Before the Muses* 19–21.

¹³ Helpful surveys of the history of interpretation of the book of Deuteronomy are found in the introductions to most commentaries. See J. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996) xix–xxiv; E. H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994) 22–23; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 9–57; P. D. Miller, *Deuteronomy, Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox, 1990) 2–10; A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (New Century Bible; London: Oliphants, 1979) 81–108; P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 24–32; J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1974) 47–68; S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902) xxxiv–lxvi. See also the detailed discussion by R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 1–82, 495–542, 637–53.

¹⁴ Cf. the discussion by D. L. Christensen and M. Narucki, "The Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch," *JETS* 32 (1989) 465–71. But E. H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* 22, for example, fails to distinguish between Moses' transcription of his sermons on the Plains of Moab and the authorship of the book.

¹⁵ *Disertatio qua Deuteronomium a prioribus Pentateuchi libris diversum alius cuiusdam recentioris auctoris opus esse demonstratur* (Jena, 1805).

promote the reform of Israel's religious practices (2 Chronicles 34–35), specifically by centralizing the cult in Jerusalem and by removing the “high places” in the land (Deuteronomy 12). The prophet presumably wrote the book as a manual for reform and hid it in the temple in such a way that it would be found. Thus Hilkiah's discovery became the basis for the reforms. Eventually Deuteronomy was added to the Tetrateuchal corpus to create the Pentateuch.¹⁶

Today many of Wellhausen's specific points have been rejected, but his central thesis, that Deuteronomy is a late work associated with Josiah's reforms, continues to be assumed by most higher critical studies. But this does not mean that scholars are agreed in their explanations for the origin of the book. In 1943 Martin Noth turned a century of scholarship upside down by proposing that Joshua/2 Kings is a single work written by a Judean historian to explain the demise of Israel, and that Deuteronomy was added as a paradigmatic prologue.¹⁷ Recent scholarly efforts have worked hard to fix the origins of the book more precisely. Gerhard von Rad argued that Deuteronomy was written by country Levites shortly before 701 BC;¹⁸ E. W. Nicholson attributes the book to prophetic circles of northern Israel;¹⁹ Moshe Weinfeld maintains that the book derives from the Jerusalem court and is the work of wise men, sages, and scribes, such as were commonly employed in ancient Near Eastern courts.²⁰ Claiming the best of all worlds, Patrick Miller finds in the book the evidences of priestly interest cited by von Rad, the prophetic spirit recognized by Nicholson, and the humaneness and social morality of the teachers of wisdom identified by

¹⁶ J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1885; reprinted, Cleveland: World, 1957) 9 *passim*; *idem*, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs* (1889) 76, *et passim*.

¹⁷ *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, literally *Historical Studies in Tradition*, available in English as *The Deuteronomistic History* (trans. D. Orton; JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT, 1981) 43–52. This is a translation of the second edition published in German at Tübingen by Max Niemeyer, 1957. For a survey of recent variations of this theory see S. L. McKenzie, “Deuteronomistic History,” *ABD* 2.160–68.

¹⁸ The book supposedly reflects the rise of country priests who competed for influence with the official priestly establishment of Jerusalem and tried to reawaken the old spirit of Yahwism, displaying a martial spirit in their interpretation and application of the ancient law (cf. Deut 7:16–29; 9:1–6). G. Von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (SBT; Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953) 66–67; *idem*, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) 23–30. For a recent revival of this thesis, see J. W. Miller, *The Origins of the Bible: Rethinking Canon History* (New York: Paulist, 1994) 58–66.

¹⁹ After the fall of Samaria to Assyria in 722 BC, these northern prophets had fled to Judah where they formulated their old (northern) traditions and integrated them with those of the south into a program of reform intended for Judean authorities. See E. W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition: Literary and Historical Problems in the Book of Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967).

²⁰ Among the reasons Weinfeld arrives at this position are the facts that the book is dominated by what most consider typical “wisdom vocabulary” (e.g. “counsel,” “fear,” “Hear!” etc.) and develops many themes and motifs found in Israelite wisdom literature. See his detailed presentation of his theory on the origins of Deuteronomy in *Deuteronomy 1–11* 1–84. For a summary statement see *idem*, “Deuteronomy,” *ABD* 2.168–83. Many scholars who have investigated the OT from a canonical perspective do indeed recognize in the production of the book of Deuteronomy the first stage in the growth of the canon. See J. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977) 24–53.

Weinfeld.²¹ However, the denial of Moses as a literary figure is such an entrenched tenet of higher critical orthodoxy that Miller cannot consider the possibility that the only person in Israel's history who might have represented all three interests was Moses.²² Many scholars who have investigated the OT from a canonical perspective do indeed recognize in the production of the book of Deuteronomy the first stage in the growth of the canon,²³ and everyone recognizes the putative voice of Moses in the book. However, in the words of Michael Fishbane, "this voice—pseudepigraphic in the Book of Deuteronomy—is a composite of many teaching voices, deriving from the many teachers of the Deuteronomic tradition."²⁴

The wide range of results produced by the classical critical approaches raises fundamental questions concerning the methods employed, but scholars who operate by a more conservative hermeneutic and try to let ancient documents speak for themselves are regularly marginalized. Surveys of the history of interpretation rarely interact seriously with the work of those with a more positive disposition toward the authenticity, integrity, and reliability of the information communicated in the Biblical texts. In his 1992 introduction to the Pentateuch, Joseph Blenkinsopp dismisses evangelical scholarship with a single sweeping generalization: "For the fundamentalist churches in the English-speaking world and elsewhere, Mosaic authorship has, of course, remained a basic article of faith."²⁵ But thanks to the work of men like Gordon McConville,²⁶ the weaknesses of these various critical approaches are being exposed and the development of alternative methods are being placed on more secure foundations. My aim in the remainder of this paper is to take a fresh look at the internal evidence of the book to see if it yields any clues to its own genesis.²⁷

At the outset I acknowledge my indebtedness to a recent work by Jean-Pierre Sonnet.²⁸ Sonnet rightly recognizes that the book of Deuteronomy offers us more clues concerning its composition as a literary document than any other book in the OT. After analyzing in detail every piece of evidence in the book, Sonnet concludes, "Deuteronomy claims to represent not only history but foundational history—deeds and words which underlie Israel's existence for all generations to come."²⁹ But this history is the creation of

²¹ Miller, *Deuteronomy* 5–10.

²² Cf. the recent study by J. W. Watts, "The Legal Characterization of Moses and the Rhetoric of the Pentateuch," *JBL* 117 (1998) 415–26, in which he argues that the Pentateuch characterizes Moses as a king, a prophet, and a scribe.

²³ See J. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon* 24–53.

²⁴ M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 436.

²⁵ See J. Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 13.

²⁶ See *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993); *idem*, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984).

²⁷ S. Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (2d ed.; Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences; New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1991) 16–26, argues convincingly that Israel did indeed have canonical books and law corpora long before Josiah's time.

²⁸ *The Book Within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

²⁹ *Ibid.* 259.

an omniscient narrator who presents Moses first as a great orator and then as a scribe who puts his orations into writing. "The words" that Moses spoke have become the words that Moses wrote and, by extension, the authority of his speeches now extends to the present book. But after a masterful presentation of his case, in the last five pages Sonnet tips his hand, declaring that all this is staged. The speeches in the book capitalize on the tradition of Moses as a guardian and teacher of Torah but in reality retroject upon him the interests of later scribes. He writes, "Particularly salient in Deuteronomy is the use of Moses' valedictory speech to 'voice' the revising and updating of a previous legal tradition."³⁰

When I read Sonnet's work, I began to wonder if his conclusion was not predetermined by specific historical and hermeneutical presuppositions, and what would happen if, like students of ancient extra-Biblical literature, one would let the chips fall where they wanted, instead of rearranging them according to the prevailing historical reconstruction. It is to that task that I now turn.

III. AN ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION

1. *The voices in Deuteronomy.* We begin our search for the origins of the book of Deuteronomy by identifying the voices that we hear in the book. The preamble (1:1–5) introduces us to two of these, the voice of Moses and the voice of Yahweh: "Moses spoke . . . according to all that Yahweh had commanded him" (v. 3).³¹ And since it is the narrator who tells us that behind Moses' voice is the voice of God, and accompanying Moses are elders and Levites, the voice of God reaches the reader of the book through a four-staged process that may be represented like this: Yahweh → Moses → Narrator → Reader.³²

We shall examine each of these voices briefly in turn.³³

³⁰ Ibid. 265.

³¹ The preamble (1:1–5) presents a telling view of the book's perspective on itself. On the one hand, it answers the generic question. The book is presented as (1) "the words that Moses spoke" (v. 1); (2) a deliberate Mosaic undertaking (v. 5; the auxiliary verb *hō'il* expresses initiative and boldness; cf. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11* 128); (3) an "exposition" (v. 5; Hebrew *bē'ēr* means to incise, cut, bore, inscribe: 27:8, i.e. to inscribe clearly. Here it is used abstractly of declaring clearly, making clear, providing exposition); (4) this Torah (v. 5; the expression *tôrâ hazzō't*, "this Torah," will occur many times in the book). The LXX name for the book, δευτερο νόμος, "second law," suggests it is a revised version of the original law (cf. Mishnaic *mišneh tôrâ*, "repeated law," "second law"). Specifically, it seems to be based on 17:18 where we find the expression τὸ δευτερονόμιον τοῦτο, "this second law," for *mišneh hattôrâ hazzō't*, "a copy of this Torah." This misunderstanding has been determinative for contemporary misinterpretation of the book. On the other hand, the preamble declares the source and/or authority of the address to follow: "Moses spoke to the descendants of Israel according to all that Yahweh had commanded him." What follows is presented as the instruction of Yahweh through his mediator.

³² According to contemporary postmodern hermeneutical theory, the voice of the last is the most important determinant of meaning.

³³ For documentation of the voices of Yahweh, Moses, and the narrator, respectively, see Appendix A below.

a. *The voice of Yahweh.* In a composition devoted to the communication of divine truth it is remarkable that the voice of God is heard directly only in five short speeches found in 31:14b, 31:16b–21, 31:23b, 32:49–52, and 34:4b. Each of these speeches is formally introduced with something like, “And Yahweh said.”³⁴ Although Yahweh’s *scribal* work is read in 5:6–21, his voice is never heard directly before chap. 31, not even in chaps. 12–26, which as a piece is generally interpreted as a law code of divine origin. The Song preserved in 32:1–43 is presented as Yahweh’s song, apparently dictated to Moses inside the Tent of Meeting (cf. 31:14, 19), but the Israelites heard it from the lips of Moses. On the other hand, God is often identified as the voice behind Moses’ speech, contributing to the image of Moses as the greatest prophet of Yahweh in Israel’s history (cf. 18:14–22).

b. *The voice of Moses.* The bulk of Deuteronomy is taken up with Moses’ speeches. Specifically the book contains three major addresses and two poems. The addresses are preserved in 1:6–4:40; 5:1b–26:19, 28:1–69;³⁵ and 29:1–30:20. The poems consist respectively of “The Song of Moses” (32:1–43) and “The Blessing of Moses” (33:2–29).³⁶ In addition to these major blocks, we hear the voice of Moses in chap. 27 in two short speeches that Moses issues jointly with others (the elders of Israel: 27:1;³⁷ Levitical priests: 27:9),³⁸ and a third in which he dictates the curses that are to be recited and responded to in Israel’s covenant renewal ceremony (27:12–26). Finally, in 32:46b–47 we hear the voice of Moses in an exhortation embedded in the narrative conclusion to the Song of Moses.

³⁴ For discussion of divine speech markers in the OT, see S. A. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (VTSup 46; Leiden: Brill, 1992).

³⁵ That chap. 28 originally followed immediately after 26:19 seems likely on several grounds: (1) Whereas the transition from chap. 27 to chap. 28 is extremely abrupt, the opening *wēhāyā* is natural after 26:19; (2) on form-critical grounds the blessings and curses of chap. 28 are awkward if not redundant after the ceremonial curses in chap. 27, but they follow logically if read after 26:19; (3) specifically, the reference to Yahweh putting Israel high above the nations in 28:1 links directly with 26:19; (4) 28:58–61 link “the words of this Torah written in this book,” whose aim is to teach fear of the awesome name of God, and “every sickness and plague not written in the book of this Torah” seem to refer to 5:1b–26:19 and 28:1–68. Chap. 27 appears to be a secondary interpolation of narrative and declarative material whose covenantal content links more logically with Moses’ third speech (29:2b [Heb. 1b]–30:20). Whether it should have come before or after is unclear, though the specific instructions for renewing the covenant within the land of Canaan seems to belong more logically after Moses’ challenge. On possible reasons for the insertion of chap. 27 at this point, see below.

³⁶ Most scholars treat 4:44–28:69 as a single address, but chap. 27 seems to have been secondarily inserted between chaps. 26 and 28, thus disrupting an otherwise coherent transition. As we shall see, 27:1–10 consists of two speeches issued conjointly by Moses and the elders (27:1–8) and Moses and the Levitical priests (27:9–10). The curses in 27:12–26 are formulaic and seem to be linked to the ceremony prescribed in 27:1–8. While the covenant curses in chap. 28 were probably originally presented as the conclusion to the second address, the present arrangement of the book presents them as a sequel to (exposition of?) the ceremony of curses in 27:11–26.

³⁷ Now Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, “Keep all the commandment which I command you this day . . .”

³⁸ And Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, “Keep silence and hear, O Israel: this day you have become the people of the LORD your God. ¹⁰You shall therefore obey the voice of the LORD your God, keeping his commandments and his statutes, which I command you this day.”

c. *The voice of the narrator.* That Moses is portrayed as the voice behind the speeches is clear. However, in the book that has come down to us, that is in the selection, arrangement, and shaping of the materials, we hear the voice of the final author/editor/narrator.³⁹ Although the book contains an exceptionally high proportion of direct speech, it is in fact a narrative composition. But the book is distinguished from most Biblical narrative by the fact that the narrator's voice is heard directly in only 64 verses.⁴⁰ This voice may be recognized through several clues.

Most obviously, in contrast to the addresses, where Moses always refers to himself in the first person, whenever he is identified by name or with the third person pronoun we may detect the hand of the narrator.⁴¹ This is not unexpected in the preamble (1:1–5) and the epilogue (34:1–4a; 5–12), which frame the book as a whole and fix the context of the addresses. But his voice is also heard in narrative frame texts on both sides of “this Torah” (4:41–43; 32:44–46a), a separate preamble to “this Torah” (4:44–5:1a), notes coordinating speeches in preparation for the ceremony of transcription of the Torah and the covenant curses (27:1a, 9a, 11), a preamble to Moses' third address (29:1–2a [Heb. 28:69–29:1a]), notes coordinating the speeches of Moses and Yahweh in chap. 31 (vv. 1–2a, 7a, 9–10a, 14a, 14c–16a, 22–23a, 24–25, 30), and notes embedding the poems, the Song of Moses/Yahweh (32:1–43), and the Blessing of Moses (33:2b–29) in their literary environment.

Second, while not quite as distinct, the narrator's voice may be recognized in a series of historical notes in the first address, updating what might have been misunderstood by his immediate readers (2:10–12, 20–23; 3:9, 11, 13b–14), and a parenthetical comment in the second address on the nature of Levitical authority as custodians of the covenant document placed inside the Ark (10:6–9).

But the narrator's voice is also heard indirectly in the material he chooses to include in or exclude from the book, as well as in his arrangement of the materials. In the end, it is the narrator's point of view that determines the permanent canonical meaning of the text.

2. *From spoken word to canonical text: the evidence.* Deuteronomy presents itself largely as a record of oral address. But the question arises, “How did Moses' purported addresses on the plains of Moab become the present book of Deuteronomy?” As I have already noted, scholars have answered this question in radically different ways: from Moses wrote every word, to the book is a pseudepigraph, ascribed to one of the most revered figures of

³⁹ Nowhere does the book of Deuteronomy explicitly credit the selection, arrangement, and shaping of the contents to Moses; but then, nor does it exclude his role in these literary activities either.

⁴⁰ 1:1–5; 2:10–12, 20–23; 3:9, 11, 13b–14; 4:41–5:1a; 10:6–9; 27:1a, 9a, 11; 28:69–29:1a [Eng 29:1–2a]; 31:1–2a, 7a, 9–10a, 14a, 14c–16a, 22–23a, 24–25, 30; 32:44–46a, 48; 33:1–2a; 34:1–4a, 5–12. R. Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: Seabury, 1980) 29, mistakenly counts 56.

⁴¹ Of course one's reference to oneself does not *a priori* preclude one's being the author of the text. The use of the third person is common in early histories. See Xenophon's *Anabasis* and Julius Caesar's *The Gallic Wars*. But the shift to third person at least invites the reader to look at Moses from another perspective.

Israelite legend/fiction. But what evidence of its growth as a literary text does the book of Deuteronomy itself present?⁴²

a. *Israel's earliest canon.* The internal evidence of the book of Deuteronomy suggests that the “Torah” contained in this book was not the first canonical text possessed by the Israelites.⁴³ Four texts (4:12–14; 5:22; 9:9–17; 10:1–5) point unequivocally to the Decalogue as a pre-existent canonical Scripture.⁴⁴ An examination of these four passages together yields a series of interesting observations:

- The contents of the Decalogue represented the only revelation the Israelites received directly from God (4:10–14; 5:1–5, 22; cf. Exod 20:18–21).
- Although Israel received the Decalogue as an oral communication, it was transcribed and preserved as a written text from the beginning.
- The Decalogue was not written by human hands, but by the finger of God (9:10; 10:1–5; cf. Exod 31:18).
- The contents of the Decalogue were strictly defined: There were ten words at the beginning, and there would never be more than ten words on this document (4:13; 10:4; cf. Exod 34:28).⁴⁵
- The form of the Decalogue was fixed: it has always consisted of a preamble followed by the ten principles governing the relationship between Yahweh and his people.
- The Decalogue was written by God but placed into human custody (5:22; 9:10; 10:4) for the people’s instruction and use (cf. 30:11–20).
- The Decalogue was considered “the covenant document” from the beginning (4:13; 9:9, 11).⁴⁶

⁴² For documentation of the evidence discussed in the following, see Appendix B below.

⁴³ We follow Leiman’s definition of canon (*Canonization of Hebrew Scripture* 14): “A canonical book is a book accepted . . . as authoritative for religious practice and/or doctrine, and whose authority is binding . . . for all generations. Furthermore, such books are to be studied in private and in public.”

⁴⁴ The canonical status of the Decalogue is clearly implied in the covenant ratification ceremony at Sinai described in Exod 24:1–11. After recounting to the people all the words of Yahweh and all the laws, and hearing the people’s unreserved declaration of obedience, Moses wrote down all the words (vv. 3–4). Later he took the covenant document (*sēper habbērit*) and read it to the people, followed by their third declaration of unreserved obedience (cf. 19:8). By the “words of Yahweh” (*dibrē yhwē*) the narrator undoubtedly means the ten principles of covenant relationship outlined in the Decalogue (cf. Exod 20:1), and by “the laws” (*mišpātim*) he means the specific application of these principles as declared in 21:1–23:33 (cf. 21:1). Although the text used in this covenant ceremony appears to have been produced by Moses, the narrator of Exodus (Exod 32:16; 34:28) agrees with Moses in Deut 10:1–5 that the copy of the Decalogue that was later placed inside the Ark of the covenant was written by God himself.

⁴⁵ Note especially 5:22, where Moses declares, “He (God) added no more,” suggesting it was not subject to comment, or commentary, and could not be revised. When the first copy was destroyed, a second was produced exactly like the first (10:1–5). The fixed form of the Decalogue probably explains Exod 32:15, which notes that tablets were inscribed on both sides, leaving no room for addition.

⁴⁶ Note the description *lūḥōt habbērit ’āšer kārat yhwē ’immākem*, “tablets of the covenant which Yahweh cut with you.” Like previous Biblical covenants, this covenant is Yahweh’s covenant (not Israel’s nor “ours”) and contains his decreed will for his covenant partners. This is a suzerainty (not parity) covenant. Yahweh is the divine Lord, who by an act of sheer grace elects Israel as the covenant partner and by his sovereign will declares its terms.

- The Decalogue was written on two tablets of stone, in accordance with the ancient custom of providing a written copy for all parties to a treaty.⁴⁷
- The Decalogue was treated as a canonical text from the beginning, containing the will of God for the generation that received it, the generation that stood before Moses (5:1–15), and all generations to come. A special container, the Ark, was constructed to house the Decalogue,⁴⁸ and a tribe, the Levites, were designated its custodians.
- The Decalogue is referred to by various expressions (the Ten words, the stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant), but Deuteronomy never refers to it as “the Torah,” or “this Torah,” or “the book of the covenant,” or “the book of the Torah,” or by the term *sēper*, “written document.”⁴⁹ Based on these observations and the absence of any contrary evidence for written traditions prior to the Exodus in the OT, we may conclude that the Decalogue represented Israel’s first Scripture.⁵⁰

b. *The Torah of Moses—first edition.* We begin our search for the Mosaic roots of the book of Deuteronomy by observing that the word “Torah” occurs twenty-two times in the book.⁵¹ But what is “this Torah”? In response to this question we offer the following observations. Negatively, we note, first, that whatever it is, it is never referred to as the Torah of Yahweh. Yah-

⁴⁷ Cf. M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992 [reprint of the 1972 edition]) 63–64.

⁴⁸ Note that according to 10:1–9 the highlighted function of the Ark is not a place of atonement, nor palladium for holy war, as elsewhere. Although its deposit in the Ark does not mean that the document was never to be read by humans, it appears that Moses recites the Decalogue from memory in 5:6–21.

⁴⁹ Exod 24:7 has Moses reading the text of *sēper habbērit*, “the covenant document,” as part of the original covenant ratification ceremony at Sinai. Cf. note 48 above. Exod 24:12 refers to the Decalogue as “the tablets of stone and the Torah and the commandment which I have written for your instruction” (*luḥōt hā’eben wēhattōrā wēhammišwā ’āšer katabtī lēhōrōtām*). Incidentally, this document is never called “The Ten Commandments” in Deuteronomy or in Exodus (cf. 34:28).

⁵⁰ Deuteronomy says nothing about *sēper habbērit*, “the covenant document” (usually rendered anachronistically as “the Book of the Covenant”) mentioned in Exod 24:7. Within the book of Deuteronomy the Decalogue functions as a “written document” within a written document, “a book within a book.” It was important for Israel to have a written record of the covenant Yahweh made with them at Sinai for several reasons. First, a written record highlights and provides permanent testimony to the moment of divine revelation and the entrance of Israel into covenant relationship with Yahweh. Second, a written record fixes the boundaries of belief and practice. It provides a standard against which human theology, thinking, and conduct may be judged, thereby guarding against an esoteric, abstract, and subjectively defined religion. Third, a written document provides a public record of the divine will. In this regard the Israelite experience represents a drastic contrast to that of the surrounding nations, a fact not lost on Moses in Deut 4:5–8. Of all the nations, only Israel has a deity who has revealed his will to his people, which contrasts with the secret “Tablet of Destinies” written by Marduk of Babylon. For a helpful discussion of the effect of writing on religious belief and practice, see J. Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 1–44. In a later chapter, Goody examines the effect of writing on the practice of law (pp. 127–70).

⁵¹ 1:5; 4:8, 44; 17:11, 18, 19; 27:3, 8, 26; 28:58, 61; 29:20[21], 28[29]; 30:10; 31:9, 11, 12, 24, 26; 32:46; 33:4, 10.

weh's Torah is indeed referred to in 33:10, but this occurs in the appended blessing of Moses (33:4, 10), which, as we shall see, is not included in the first or second edition of the Torah.

Second, we recognize that the book speaks of an oral Torah and a written Torah. The *oral Torah* is referred to by the narrator in 1:5⁵² and by Moses as speaker in 4:8.⁵³ This Torah that Moses sets before the people by declaring it to them includes minimally the historical summary of Yahweh's past actions on behalf of Israel (chaps. 1–3) and the paraenetic sequel (4:1–40). The narrative preamble to Moses' second address in 4:44–45 appears to function as a formal heading for the *written Torah*: "This is the Torah that Moses set before the descendants of Israel; these are the stipulations, the decrees, and the laws, which Moses spoke to the descendants of Israel when they came out of Egypt." While the term *Torah*, "instruction, teaching," applies generally to the entire address from 5:1b to 26:19, vv. 44–45 appear to offer a broad outline for the address. Accordingly, the "Torah" of v. 44 may be seen to consist of Moses' hortatory instruction in chaps. 5–11, and the triad of expressions, "covenant stipulations" (*'ēdôt*), "decrees" (*ḥuqqôt*), and "laws" (*mišpāṭim*), may refer to chaps. 12–26, the so-called Deuteronomic Code.

Third, the second address contains several specific indications that it is indeed written Torah.⁵⁴ We shall discuss each of these briefly in turn.

6:6–9 and 11:18–21. These two texts refer specifically to writing "these words" on the doorposts of houses and city gates. In isolation the written text referred to in 6:6–9 seems to refer to the Shema, but the broader context may suggest the entire Torah or an abbreviation thereof. Binding them on the hands and foreheads as signs also assumes a written copy.⁵⁵ Moses obviously expects that, when he is through speaking, a written form of his words will be available.

17:18–20. According to this Mosaic *mišpat hammēlūkâ*, "Charter for Kingship," in the future the reigning king is to write for himself a copy of "this Torah" on a *sēper*, a written document. This statement not only presupposes royal literacy, but the expression, "copy of this Torah" (*mišnēh hattôrâ hazzō't*), also assumes a *Vorlage* from which the king is to copy. Presumably "this Torah" refers to the words that Moses is currently speaking, that is, the second address. The Levitical priests, who in 10:6–9 were assigned the role of custodians of the Decalogue, are now presented as custodians of the Torah from whom the king receives the copy and in whose

⁵² "Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to explain this Torah, saying."

⁵³ "And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this Torah which I set before you this day?"

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the meaning of the word *tôrâ*, "instruction, teaching," see J. A. Sanders, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) 1–5; on its use in Deuteronomy see Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon* 35–39.

⁵⁵ Putting them on the hearts represents a figurative expression for indelibly imprinting the Torah on the hearts of the Israelites. Cf. Ps 37:31; 40:7–8; 119:11; Isa 51:7; Jer 31:33; 2 Cor 3:3.

presence he copies it. The king is to read this Torah throughout his life and treat it as his own personal guide of appropriate religious disposition (fear Yahweh) and conduct (he is to keep all the words of this Torah). Indeed, by governing his life according to “this Torah” the king is to embody all that is spiritual and right within the covenant community and thereby secure his own future.⁵⁶

28:58–61. The next reference to a written Torah to be considered occurs in chap. 28, which is generally recognized as the deuteronomic version of the covenant blessings and curses found in Leviticus 26.⁵⁷ Whether the people experience the blessing of Yahweh or the curses cited in the present chapter will depend entirely upon their scrupulous observance (by doing) of all the words of “this Torah written in this book.”⁵⁸ Obviously this edition of the written Torah includes the covenant curses.

27:1–8. Inserted between chaps. 26 and 28, chap. 27 seems intrusive. As noted earlier, Moses’ second address is apparently interrupted by speeches issued jointly with the elders (27:1–8) and the Levitical priests (27:9–10), followed by a series of formulaic curses to be recited antiphonally in a ceremony in the valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim (27:11–26). The speech issued by Moses and the elders prescribes that as part of a sacred ritual the “the words of this Torah” be transcribed on to large stones covered with lime (vv. 2–3, 8) at Mount Ebal.⁵⁹ The purpose of this act is not stated, but one may surmise these inscribed stones’ function is to testify publicly to the terms of Israel’s occupation of the promised land and their

⁵⁶ The Israelite king may be chosen by God and distinguished from the people, but one of the functions of the written Torah is to keep him from separating himself from them. He is one brother in this community of brothers (cf. 15:1–18). In this regard Moses’ Torah differs radically from Hammurabi’s Law code, whose concern was to govern the conduct of his subjects, not himself. The closest extra-Biblical analogue to Deut 17:14–20 is found in the early first millennium BC Babylonian document named by W. G. Lambert “Advice to a Prince” (Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* 110–15). This document does indeed contain instructions for a prospective king. However, neither here nor in any other ancient Near Eastern document do we find a king enjoined to write “for himself” a copy of the laws given to the entire nation to rein in his own exercise of power.

⁵⁷ Apparently these blessings and curses represent the conclusion to Moses’ second address, but they have been cut off from 26:19 by the editorial insertion of chap. 27. In their present location, coming after the curses of 27:11–26, the curses of chap. 28 function as an exposition of what is meant by the word “curse.”

⁵⁸ As in 17:18–20, Moses recognizes a direct correlation between reading the Torah, the fear of Yahweh, obedience to the divine will, and long life in the land. The people are to know that if they should hold the covenant Lord in contempt and refuse to live according to this Torah, Yahweh would be absolved of all patronly obligations to them and Israel would find itself in the same category as the Canaanites—the objects of divine wrath.

⁵⁹ Transcribing this Torah is presented as a sacred act, accompanied by the construction of an altar after the instructions of Exod 20:5, offering whole burnt offerings, sacrificing and eating peace offerings, and rejoicing before Yahweh. Like ancient treaties (cf. Sefire) and law stelae (Hammurabi) the words of this Torah are to be inscribed, in this instance clearly on stones covered with lime. The call for stones covered with lime is presumably based on the need to do it quickly (that very day). Thus Sonnet, *Book within the Book* 91.

covenantal pledge of devotion to Yahweh.⁶⁰ In any case, the instructions presuppose minimally that the Israelites will carry a copy of Moses' second address across the Jordan.

29:14–29 [*Heb.* 13–28]. Chaps. 29–30 represent a record of Moses' third address, proclaimed as the first phase of a covenant renewal ceremony initiated by Moses but to be completed under Joshua's leadership in the Promised Land.⁶¹ In vv. 20 and 27 [*Heb.* 19 and 26] the written record is called a *sēper*, "written document"; in v. 21 [*Heb.* 20] it is "this document of the Torah" (*sēper hattôrâ hazzeh*, v. 20 [21]). As in 28:58–61, here the focus is on "all the curses of the covenant written in this document of the Torah" (*kol 'ālôt habbērit hakkētûbâ bēsēper hattôrâ hazzō't*), confirming that chap. 28 was considered part of the Torah document from the beginning. The written record of these imprecations declares to foreigners, future generations, and the witnesses appealed to by Moses in 30:19 the consequences of Israel's covenantal performance.

30:8–11. These verses promise the obverse to the preceding, namely, if Israel will adhere with heart and soul to the written demands of her covenant Lord she will surely enjoy the blessings of covenant relationship with Yahweh as spelled out in the Torah document. In this instance the contents of "this written record of the Torah" are said to include Yahweh's commandments (*mišwôt*), his decrees (*huqqôt*), and his "laws" (*mišpāṭim*, cf. v. 16), which apparently refer specifically to chaps. 12–26, and generally to 5–11 as well (cf. 4:45 and 5:1). According to v. 20 it was the voice of God that was mediated to this generation through the voice of Moses, but it will be mediated to future generations through the written text. In order for all this to transpire, the speech of Moses had to be transcribed immediately upon its utterance.⁶² To this point the text gives no indication regarding who might have done the actual transcription.

c. *The Torah of Moses—second edition.* Critical approaches to Deuteronomy have tended to dismiss chap. 31 as a confused collection of text fragments that contribute little to the story line.⁶³ However, Sonnet's more

⁶⁰ The present act finds an analogue in Exod 24:4, where Moses transcribes all the words of Yahweh on a *sēper*, which is then used in the covenant ratification ceremony. Whereas the covenant ceremony at Sinai had tied people and Torah together, this one links deity, people, Torah, and land. And whereas Moses had supervised the entire procedure at Sinai, this covenant renewal ceremony must necessarily transpire in two phases: Moses' own call for commitment in Moab (chaps. 29–30), and the reading of the Torah in the land. In effect, the written Torah functions as a replacement for Moses himself (cf. 31:14–22).

⁶¹ Note the narrator's preamble in 29:1–2a [*Heb.* 28:69–29:1a]. The covenant in question includes both "this covenant" (*habbērit hazzō't*) and "this curse" (*hā'ālâ hazzō't*, v. 14 [*Heb.* 13]).

⁶² While the process of recording the speech would have involved considerable effort and taken some time, the immediate transcription of a prophetic word is well documented in ancient Near Eastern records. Cf. A. R. Millard, "La prophétie et l'écriture—Israël, Aram, Assyrie," *RHR* 202 (1985) 125–44.

⁶³ According to G. von Rad (*Deuteronomy* 190) the chapter contains the "debris of traditions," but offers little real advance in the narrative. In 1962 N. Lohfink ("Der Bundesschluss im Land

holistic and respectful interpretation recognizes a deliberate patterning in the sequence of speeches,⁶⁴ designed to establish the emergence of Joshua as authorized leader in Moses' place (cf. the similarity between vv. 7–9 and 23–25). But here we are concerned with what happens to the written Torah.

Although there have been several earlier references to a written Torah (29:19, 20, 26; 30:10), in 31:9 we encounter the first notice of Moses actually writing.⁶⁵ After noting that Moses encouraged the people (vv. 2–6) and Joshua (vv. 7–8) to be strong and courageous, the narrator observes that Moses wrote (*wayyiktōb*) and handed (*wayyittēnāh*) the transcribed Torah to the Levitical priests and elders.⁶⁶ He then charged the Levites and elders to read this Torah in front of all the people every seven years in connection with the remission of debts during the Feast of Booths at the place that Yahweh would choose. The purpose of the reading of the Torah is clearly spelled out. As in 17:18–20:

Reading → Hearing → Learning → Fear → Obedience → Life.⁶⁷

In v. 14 the narrative takes a surprising turn. Yahweh calls Moses and Joshua into the Tent of Meeting, where he apparently dictates to them what is commonly called “the Song of Moses,” but is more accurately read as

Moab: Redaktionsgeschichtliches zu Dt 28,69–32,47,” *BZ* 6 [1962] 32–56) characterized the chapter as “confused, disjointed, and unreal,” a montage of speeches organized according to systematic/aesthetic principles. Thirty years later Lohfink attempts to reconstruct the order of events reflected in the text, rather than the order of narration (“Zur Fabel in Dtn 31–32,” in *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte: Festschrift für Klaus Baltzer zum 65. Geburtstag* [ed. R. Bartelmus, T. Krüger, and H. Utschneider; OBO 126; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993] 255–79), but this is accomplished only by reconstructing and rearranging the material on the basis of his own definitions.

⁶⁴ Sonnet (*The Book Within the Book* 125–82) recognizes a chiasmic pattern in the arrangement of the speeches:

A	To the people (vv. 2–6)	By Moses
B	To Joshua (vv. 7–8)	By Moses
C	To the Levites and elders (vv. 10–13)	By Moses
D	To Moses (v. 14)	By Yahweh
D'	To Moses (vv. 16–21)	By Yahweh
C'	To Joshua (v. 23)	By Yahweh
B'	To the Levites (vv. 26–28)	By Moses
A'	To the people (32:1–43)	By Moses

⁶⁵ The similarities extend to the use of the converted imperfect. With Sonnet (p. 138), the converted imperfect should probably be interpreted as a pluperfect: Moses had written this Torah. For a discussion of Moses' scribal role see J. W. Watts, “The Legal Characterization of Moses in the Rhetoric of the Pentateuch,” *JBL* 117 (1998) 422–26.

⁶⁶ In the light of 17:18–20 the reference to the former as custodians of the Torah is not unexpected. But the reference to elders is, though this links their involvement with 5:23, where they had asked Moses to mediate between God's voice and themselves. The lethal face-to-face oral encounter of the former context is past; now they receive the life-giving written communication from God (cf. 30:15).

⁶⁷ This statement clearly assumes canonical status for this Torah: (1) It was given to the Levites who carry the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh, hence associated with the Decalogue. (2) It was given to the elders who are charged to read the Torah before the people. (3) It was to be read at one of the annual festivals every seven years. (4) It was to be read at the place God would choose. (5) It was deemed applicable to all: men, women, children, and aliens. (6) It was to be read as long as they would dwell in the land; if they would be obedient, this meant forever.

“the Song of Yahweh.” In anticipation of the people’s apparently inevitable apostasy after the death of Moses, Yahweh commanded Moses and Joshua to write this song for themselves,⁶⁸ and then he instructed Moses (note the singular) to teach the song to the people by putting it on their lips, combining written transcription with oral recitation. The declared function of the song is to serve as a witness against Israel when they prosper in the land, feel smug, and apostatize, breaking Yahweh’s covenant and provoking him to impose his curse on them. Thus the song will join heaven and earth (30:19) as an objectified third party, testifying to God’s covenant grace and Israel’s failed response. The narrator notes that as a faithful covenant mediator Moses wrote down the words of the song that very day and taught it to the people, and v. 30 reiterates that Moses recited all the words of this song before the people until it was complete.

From the very beginning this song is ascribed canonical status. (1) It was dictated by Yahweh, Israel’s God. (2) It was immediately transcribed as a permanent written record. (3) It was intended to serve as a witness in the future, after the land has been conquered, the people have prospered, they have apostatized, and experienced the curses of the covenant. (4) The parenthetical comment in v. 21 specifically demands that it not be forgotten by the descendants of the present generation standing before Moses. Conclusion: This song is presented as Israel’s national anthem. It is to stand in for Moses after his death, as a permanent witness to the grace of God and a perpetual challenge to Israel’s covenantal fidelity.

Critical scholars tend to look at vv. 24–29 as an editorial interpolation, but with Sonnet it is preferable to treat it as a description of another phase of the original event.⁶⁹ Yahweh’s aim here is to supplement the previously proclaimed and transcribed Torah, that is, Moses’ second address. The fact that Yahweh called Moses and Joshua into the Tent of Meeting to hear the words of this supplement and then to write them down highlights its importance. When they have completed the task, the song preserved in chap. 32 is attached to the original Torah (5:1b–26:19; 28:1–69) to produce the second edition of the Torah.⁷⁰ The supplementation accounts for the emphatic construction of v. 24, which has Moses writing down the [new] Torah until it was complete.⁷¹

According to v. 26, Moses commanded the Levites to receive “this Torah document” (*sēper hattôrâ hazzeh*) and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant. This statement reaffirms its canonical status and its divine authority/origin, but it distinguishes this Torah from the Decalogue, which was

⁶⁸ V. 19, *kitēbû lakem*. Compare 17:18, though here the plural has all Israel in view. The pattern of theophany followed by verbal revelation recalls Israel’s experience at Horeb. But this time Yahweh’s knowledge of the people’s imminent rebellion precipitates the divine disclosure. This is the first time in the book anyone is commanded by God to write down anything.

⁶⁹ See the detailed discussion by Sonnet, *The Book within the Book* 158–67.

⁷⁰ The emphatic construction compares with 5:22, where Moses notes that when Yahweh declared the Decalogue, he added no more.

⁷¹ Moses finished writing the words of this Torah on a document until they (the words) were perfect (*kēkallô mōseh liktōb ’et dibrê hattôrâ hazzō’t ’al sēper ’ad tummām*).

placed inside the Ark (10:5). By extension, the song's function as a permanent witness for Yahweh and against Israel now applies to the entire Torah. After embedding the poem, the narrator announces that Moses taught the people all the words of this song and then challenged them to heed carefully all the words of this [supplemented] Torah, for in the Torah there is life.

3. *From spoken word to canonical text: the reconstruction.* Having examined all the internal factual evidence for the transcription of Moses' orations on the plains of Moab, we may now propose a reconstruction of the stages involved in the genesis of the book of Deuteronomy, paying particular attention to what the book actually tells us about its committal to writing.

a. According to the data provided by Deuteronomy, from their beginnings as the covenant people, the Israelites were "a people of the book." The evidence available suggests that the Decalogue was Israel's first "Bible," the nation's original canonical text.⁷²

b. Following Moses' second address, which incorporated the Decalogue and consisted of 5:1b–26:19 and 28:1–68, this speech was transcribed in written form in its entirety in a *sēper*. This document was known from the beginning as "the Torah," or "this Torah." This was the document that future kings were to copy in the presence of the Levitical priests and read to restrain their pride (17:14–20).

c. After another theophanic visitation and the divine dictation of the Song of Yahweh (32:1–43), this document was transcribed and added to the Torah. The revised document became the new Torah, and was deposited beside the Ark in the custody of the Levitical priests. This was probably the Torah that Moses commanded Joshua to follow (Josh 1:7), "this book of the Torah" (*sēper hattôrâ hazzeh*) on which Yahweh admonished Joshua to med-

⁷² Deuteronomy is silent on how the rest of the constitutional revelation at Sinai was received and/or transcribed. Exod 24:1–11 highlights the role of a written "covenant document" (presumably Exod 20:22–23:33) in the covenant ratification ceremony at Sinai, but this is the only explicit clue. Exodus-Numbers leave few hints concerning how and under what circumstances the design of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25–31), the sacrificial rituals and the laws regarding ceremonial cleanness (Leviticus 1–15), the "Holiness Code" (Leviticus 16–27), the miscellaneous regulations preserved in Numbers (4–11:10), and other ordinances scattered throughout the book, were committed to writing. However, it seems reasonable to suppose that when the Israelites left Sinai, they carried with them a series of written documents, all of which were deemed normative and canonical, and which were eventually combined with additional narrative materials and the speeches of Deuteronomy to produce the present Pentateuch. This interpretation of the transcription of the Sinai revelation is bolstered by occasional explicit references to Moses' scribal/writing activity in other contexts: Exod 17:14 (recording the victory over Amalek); Num 33:2 (keeping a journal of Israel's travels and camping places in the desert). The combination of transcription and recitation in the former recalls what Moses does with the Song of Moses/Yahweh in Deut 31:14–22. For analogous ancient Mesopotamian examples of the accompaniment of written texts with oral recitation see Waltke, "Oral Tradition" 22–23. Leiman (*Canonization of Hebrew Scripture* 22) rightly notes that at times Deuteronomy presupposes the existence of the Sinai legislation (cf. 24:8 and Lev 13:1–14:57), but the book speaks explicitly only of the document that was recognized from the beginning to have been written by God himself (cf. Exod 34:1). All the remaining comments regarding the Torah and its transcription relate to Moses' addresses on the plains of Moab.

itate day and night and to do according to everything written therein (1:8), the textual base of his sermon in Joshua 23 (cf. v. 6), and the base for his covenant renewal ceremony at Shechem in Joshua 24 (cf. vv. 26–27).

d. Although the book of Deuteronomy nowhere alludes to the transcription of Moses' first (1:6–4:40) and third (29:1 [Heb. 28:68]–30:20) speeches, it is reasonable to suppose that they underwent a similar transcriptional/compositional history as the second speech for which hard data regarding the process are provided. Written versions of these addresses probably also existed separately for a time, and as a record of the speeches of Moses were probably stored beside the Ark of the Covenant as well.

e. As was the custom in the ancient world,⁷³ Moses issued his eloquent benediction for each of the tribes immediately prior to his death (33:2–29). This document was initially recorded on a separate scroll and stored separate from the rest of the book. When the compositional unit presently consisting of Exodus-Numbers was produced, the narrator of this material composed the narrative framework around the Benediction of the Tribes (32:48–52; 34:1–12) and added this unit to the large composition to complete the story of Moses, the principal figure and making this the ending to the book of Numbers.⁷⁴

f. The narrative preambles and conclusions were added to Moses' addresses, probably separately, that is before they were brought together in a single volume. 1:1–5 and 4:41–43 were composed as a narrative frame for the first address. 4:44–5:1a was added to the second address. 31:1–30 and 32:44–47 were composed as a narrative frame for the Song of Moses and inserted in the second address. 29:1–2a [Heb. 28:69–29:1a] was added to the third address. 27:1–26 was composed to clarify the context of the covenantal

⁷³ Cf. Jacob's final benediction of his sons in Genesis 49. It is reasonable to suppose that a written version of this blessing was produced prior to the time of Moses, but firm conclusions regarding this and other text units from Genesis are precluded by the absence of specific evidence of literary activity in the book.

⁷⁴ Several considerations may be marshaled in support of this interpretation. (1) The form of the divine speech marker opening the literary unit in Deut 32:48 (*wayēdabbēr YHWH 'el mōšeh bē. . . lē'mōr*) is identical to Num 35:1 (and 34:1), but contrasts with the form of the divine speech marker elsewhere in Deuteronomy (*wayyō'mer YHWH 'el mōšeh*, 31:14, 16). (2) The content of Deut 32:48–34:12 provides a natural sequel to Num 36:13. (3) This conclusion to the block of material encompassing Exodus through Numbers (which is essentially a biography of Moses), consisting of an announcement of Moses' impending death (32:48–52), his blessing of the tribes (33:1–29), and the narrative of his death (34:1–12) creates a remarkable parallel with the ending of the patriarchal narratives in Genesis, which consists of an announcement of Jacob's impending death (Gen 47:27–31), his blessing of his sons (49:1–28), and the narrative of his death (49:29–33). With its focus on Joseph, Genesis 50 functions anticlimactically.

Although we reject Mark S. Smith's late dating of the book of Deuteronomy in particular and the Pentateuch as a whole, this interpretation compares with his hypothesis that by the priestly redaction of the Pentateuch the insertion of Deuteronomy at this point moved "the old story of Moses' death from the end of the old material in Numbers . . . to the end of Deuteronomy." *Matters of Space and Time in Exodus and Numbers*, *Theological Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (ed. C. Seitz and K. Greene-McKnight; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 203. Cf. Weinfeld's proposal (*Deuteronomy 1–11* 10) that Deut 32:48–52 represents a priestly passage that recaptures the priestly tradition of Moses' death in Num 27:12–14.

renewal ceremony on Mount Ebal prepared for by Moses' third address. Later this chapter was inserted between chaps. 26 and 28. This completed the process whereby Moses' final speeches on the plains of Moab (1:1–32:47) were transcribed, assembled, and united through narratorial stitching to produce the present form.

g. As the final stage in the genesis of Deuteronomy, this document (1:1–32:47) was inserted between Num 36:13 and Deut 32:48 to finalize the shape of the Pentateuch.

This reconstruction is complex and admittedly speculative. As an alternative, one may argue that a single editor/narrator collated the three independent speeches, added the narrative preambles to each speech, as well as the interpolations, including chaps. 27 and 31. By this reconstruction 1:1–5 serves as a preamble not just for the first address but also for the entire book. This same editor could have been responsible for the parenthetical historical notes in the first speech, the notice of Moses' setting aside the cities of refuge in 4:41–43,⁷⁵ the note regarding the Levites and the Ark (10:6–9), and the account of Moses' death (32:48–52; 34:1–12).

Whatever the genesis of the book of Deuteronomy, contrary to Martin Noth and those who follow in his train, as those who have investigated issues of canon have recognized, the book does not function primarily as a preamble to the Deuteronomistic history. Rather, this book represents the final chapter in the story of God's call and deliverance of Israel, and the ending to the biography of Moses. Indeed, Deuteronomy ends the narrative begun in Genesis 1:1.⁷⁶ This integration with the Pentateuch is evident not only in its logical and chronological placement after Numbers, but in the numerous intra-Pentateuchal textual connections.⁷⁷ In my view, the final narrator of Deuteronomy was probably the final narrator of the entire Pentateuch. This would account for the "deuteronomic" tone of much of Genesis-Numbers that critical scholars are finally beginning to recognize.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Since Moses could not cross the Jordan, he appears to have taken special measures to ensure that the regulations previously revealed on the plains of Moab (Numbers 35) were fulfilled. But he had to leave it to Joshua to fulfill this command in Canaan.

⁷⁶ Cf. Mark S. Smith, "Matters of Space and Time in Exodus and Numbers" 182–207. J. W. Watts ("Moses in the Rhetoric of the Pentateuch" 420) concludes, "the rhetorical structuring of the whole Pentateuch casts Deuteronomy as the concluding sanctions to the preceding stories (Genesis-Exodus 19) and lists (Exodus 20-Numbers)." This position is argued more fully by Watts in "Rhetorical Strategy in the Composition of the Pentateuch," *JSOT* 68 (1995) 3–22.

⁷⁷ Limitations of space prevent us from developing this theme more fully, but for a beginning Sonnet cites Deut 34:9, which refers back to Num 27:18, and 34:11, which echoes expressions from Exodus (Sonnet, *The Book within the Book* 21–24).

⁷⁸ Whereas in the past the separation of J and E strata and the early dating of these sources relative to Deuteronomy (usually 10th–9th century for J; 8th century for E) were key tenets of critical orthodoxy, recent Pentateuchal scholarship recognizes significant links between Deuteronomy and JE. Indeed, some go so far as to deny the existence of J and E altogether. According to E. Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990) 77–88, Deut 31:14–15, 23 and 34:10(–12) belong to a larger constellation including Exodus 33–34 and Numbers 11–12. These texts derive from the so-called *D-Komposition*, a post-Deuteronomistic composition of the Pentateuch in the tradition of Deuteronomism. Blum's work has been influential for R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (OTL; trans.

And if later historiographic works in the canon sound like Deuteronomy, this is not because they were written by the same author, or that Deuteronomy was composed as a theological prologue to the Deuteronomistic History. Rather it is because their authors had been schooled in the “book of the Torah of Moses.” As prophets after the order of Moses (Deut 18:14–22), later historians evaluated Israel’s performance based upon the Mosaic Torah, and adopting the style and vocabulary of Deuteronomy.⁷⁹

IV. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Limitations of time and space prevent us from exploring the time and circumstances in which the book of Deuteronomy as we know it might have been produced. Scholars divide on the question of the role that Moses might have had in the final production of the book. But I would like to conclude this paper by asking what effects a study like this might have for our understanding of the inspiration and authority of Scripture that 2 Tim 3:16 and our confessional statements claim for the entire OT. I would suggest several implications.

(1) We affirm the truthfulness of all that the Scriptures declare. When we interpret the Scriptures as they are intended to be understood, we will find them to be completely reliable preservers of truth. But this high view of the Scriptures means that we must let them say what they want to say, refusing on the one hand to diminish their affirmations, and on the other to exaggerate their claims. Moses’ warning in Deut 4:2 to those who would be tempted to modify his own oral declarations extends to the entire written record: “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it; that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your God which I command you.”⁸⁰ Deuteronomy purports to preserve the *speeches* of Moses, and there is no reason to question this. But the truth is the author of the *book* did not leave his name. Expressions like “Book of Moses,” and “Torah of Moses,” do not demand that Moses’ own hand produced the book. We do not doubt the historicity of Moses, the authenticity of his speeches, nor the fundamentally Mosaic authority behind the entire Pentateuch, any more than we question the authenticity of the speeches of Jesus in the Gospels. Nor

J. Bowden; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994) 466–80, who recognizes only two traditional sources behind Genesis-Deuteronomy, and views the present Pentateuch as a compromise text between non-priestly and priestly traditional materials. The former (K^D) consisted of the book of Deuteronomy and major portions of what the previous generation of scholars attributed to J and E. On the Deuteronomic character of much of JE see also J. Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch* 186–94.

⁷⁹ For an analysis of the distinctly Deuteronomic school of style and message and its persistence through the centuries evaluated against comparable stylistic traditions in Assyrian royal literary traditions, see J. J. Niehaus, “The Deuteronomic Style: An Examination of the Deuteronomic Style in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Literature” (unpublished dissertation, University of Liverpool, 1985).

⁸⁰ The NT book of Revelation ends with a similar prohibition (Rev 22:18–19).

do we doubt the fundamental Mosaic authority behind the entire book of Deuteronomy as we have it.

(2) We affirm that if Peter's characterization of prophecy as divine utterances by "men moved by the Holy Spirit" who "spoke from God" (2 Pet 1:21) applied to OT prophets in general, this was particularly true of Moses, the prophet *par excellence*.⁸¹ And we affirm with 2 Tim 3:16 that the orations Moses delivered to the Israelites on the plains of Moab were inspired by God. At Sinai Moses himself recognized that he spoke for God (5:1–5), and the narrator of Deuteronomy explicitly extends that same divine inspiration to the context of his final addresses (29:1 [Heb. 29:2]). Moses explicitly expressed his awareness of his own prophetic status (18:14–22); he declared to the people that he communicated with Yahweh on a regular basis (3:23–29; 10:1); and the manner in which he spoke demonstrated that he viewed his own voice to be the voice of God (30:1–20).

(3) Whether we are considering the oral event or the written record, we must abandon tight mechanical theories about the process of inspiration. The truth is that inspiration covers a broad range of communicative activities. Most obviously, the notion of inspiration covers oral messages that Yahweh himself declared to the people and texts that he himself delivered in written form. The Decalogue came to the people as written text, written by the finger of God.⁸² But the notion of inspiration clearly also applies to texts that were dictated by God. Deuteronomy 32, mislabeled "Song of Moses," is really the "Song of Yahweh," which God delivered orally to Moses and Joshua inside the tent of meeting, and then commanded Moses to record its words and to teach them to the people (31:19). The narrator notes that Moses complied perfectly in both respects. Indeed, it appears that when he emerged from the tent, he came out with the written text of the Song in his hands (31:24), and then taught it verbatim to the people (31:30; cf. 32:44). Furthermore, the notion of inspiration applies to texts that purport to be spoken on God's behalf, even in the absence of explicit prophetic formulae. Formulae like "Thus has Adonai Yahweh declared" (the citation formula), "The word of Yahweh came to me saying" (the word-event formula), and "the declaration of Adonai Yahweh" (the signatory formula) are ubiquitous in the prophets, but they are never found in Deuteronomy. Nor do we ever find the formula, "Then Yahweh spoke to Moses saying," so common in the narrative line of Exodus 25–Numbers 19. But inspired messages [and texts] are not limited to utterances and writings that contain these "inspirational" formulae.⁸³ Finally, the notion of inspiration extends to the written record of inspired oral events. This includes the transcripts of the oral messages (Moses' three speeches and the poems in Deuteronomy) and the interpretive narrative framework around those transcripts. The book of Deuteronomy

⁸¹ For a brief discussion of and bibliography on Moses' prophetic role, see Watts, "Moses in the Rhetoric of the Pentateuch" 418–22.

⁸² Deut 4:13; 10:2; cf. Exod 31:18; 32:15–16; 34:1, 28.

⁸³ This has implications for our understanding of Paul's words in 1 Cor 7:6, 25 and 2 Cor 8:8.

never claims for itself the inspiration claimed by the author of the poem of Erra and Ishum at the end of the composition:

The one who put together the composition about him (Erra) was Kabti-ilani-Marduk son of Dabibi. He (some god) revealed it to him in the middle of the night, and when he recited it upon waking, he did not miss anything out, nor add a single word to it. Erra heard it and approved it, and it was pleasing to Ishum who marches in front of him. All the other gods gave praise with him.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, Moses himself recognized that he was not the last of the inspired prophets (18:14–22). Surely the narrator of the book, on whom we are ultimately dependent for our own assessment of Moses, was a “prophet like Moses.”⁸⁵ Moses’ biographer has provided the inspired narrative filter through which to understand the man and his message. If one of the tests of a true prophet was conformity to the Mosaic revelation, this test certainly applied to the canonical author/editor of the book. In view of these considerations, we affirm that the process of inspiration encompasses Yahweh’s original guidance of the thoughts of Moses, Moses’ oral communication of the message to the people, Moses’ transcription of the message to text, and finally the collation and editing of those texts.⁸⁶

(4) We do well to distinguish between inspiration and canonicity. With Paul we affirm that all canonical scripture is inspired (literally “God-breathed”), but this does not mean that all inspired messages were deemed canonical, to be preserved in writing as normative for the community of faith for all time. According to 1 Chr 28:11–19 Yahweh revealed to David in detail the plan of the Temple and he made him understand it in writing by his hand upon him (v. 19). This plan was obviously inspired, but it has not been preserved either as a separate document or as an embedded text. It is possible, if not probable, that in his last days with the people Moses delivered more than three addresses on the Plains of Moab, and that the three speeches preserved in Deuteronomy are actually condensations of longer addresses. The narrator makes no claim to have preserved every word that Moses spoke on the plains of Moab. But under the inspiration of God he has preserved the essence of Moses’ preaching.

(5) The notion of “autographs,” an expression that theologians apply to “the first or original copies of the biblical documents,”⁸⁷ is not as tidy as many claim. On the one hand, the Masoretic Text that provides the base for our Biblical study is the product of a millennium of copying after the OT canon was closed, and, if our dating of the composition of Deuteronomy is correct, more than two millennia of copying since the book was produced.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ As translated by Dalley, *Canonical Compositions* 415.

⁸⁵ Cf. Polzin’s extension of the “prophet like Moses” to the narrator of the Deuteronomic History (*Moses and the Deuteronomist* 61).

⁸⁶ Compare the NT declaration in John 20:30–31.

⁸⁷ Cf. W. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester: InterVarsity and Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 96.

⁸⁸ This contrasts with many of the documents the archaeologists’ spades have unearthed.

This raises an important question: Is the task of textual criticism to establish the text as it stood at the time the canon was closed, or as it stood when the book of Deuteronomy as a unitary literary work was composed and accepted as normative for Israel's faith, cult, and conduct? On the other hand, even if autographs are defined as "the first or original copies of the Biblical documents," what do we mean by "Biblical documents"? Does the expression refer to the individual speeches of Moses transcribed on separate parchment scrolls by Moses' own hand and recognized immediately to be canonical? Or the collection of the three speeches on one scroll? Or the edited version of the book of Deuteronomy, complete with its narratorial stitching? Or the grammatically updated version of the book? Or the Pentateuch as we have it, with Deuteronomy as the last book? The complexity of the process whereby Biblical books were produced complicates the issue.

(6) In the revelation of Yahweh at Sinai and the scribal activity of Moses we witness an oft-overlooked but extraordinary providential moment. Historians have often observed that among the reasons the Gospel was able to spread so rapidly in the first century were the establishment of Greek as the language of international intercourse and the Roman construction of a system of roads throughout the empire. Similarly, students of the Reformation have noted that Luther's radical ideas would never have taken root in Europe had the printing press with movable type not just been invented to make the rapid and wide dissemination of his ideas possible. When we look back on the history of civilization we must recognize in the timing of God's self-revelation at Sinai and in his call of Moses as the agent through whom his grace would be mediated a moment of equal providential significance.

A previous generation of scholars objected to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch on the grounds that it required a level of literacy inaccessible to him. It is true that the complexity of hieroglyphics in Egypt and cuneiform in Mesopotamia, both of which took a lifetime to learn, guaranteed literacy for only a privileged few. But what is often overlooked by students of culture is that "in the fullness of time," in the middle of the second millennium BC, at precisely the right time, the Canaanites were developing a system of writing whereby all the sounds of their language could be represented in writing by two dozen symbols. To quote the judgment of W. F. Albright, this meant that "The 22 letter alphabet could be learned in a day or two by a bright student and in a week or two by the dullest; hence it could spread with great rapidity. I do not doubt for a moment that there were many urchins . . . who could read and write as early as the time of the Judges."⁸⁹ Albright went on to express doubt that the script was used for formal literature until later. But Alan Millard has effectively dispelled such doubts. After examining the extra-Biblical evidence from the Late Bronze Age, Millard

⁸⁹ W. F. Albright, in *City Invincible: A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East* (ed. C. H. Kraeling and R. M. Adams; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960) 122-23. For a superb discussion of the date and circumstances of the invention of the alphabet see G. J. Hamilton, "Alphabet," an unpublished and undated paper based on his unpublished doctoral dissertation, "Development of the Early Alphabet" (Harvard University, 1985). I am grateful to my colleague Peter Gentry for drawing this study to my attention.

concludes, "There was literary activity in the Levant covering a wide range of texts and the scribes were clearly capable of producing books."⁹⁰ Is this not remarkable? God was using the Canaanites to prepare the way for his appearance at Sinai and for Moses' scribal work. By an act of uncommon grace Yahweh, Israel's "uniquely communicative Deity,"⁹¹ chose the very people the Israelites were to destroy to be the agents that would make possible the transcription and mass communication of his revelation and Moses' interpretation thereof. In the providence of God, the same people who provided Israel with the linguistic vehicle of communication, "the lip of Canaan" (Isa 19:18), also provided them with the graphic vehicle for the dissemination of his truth.

Debate concerning the provenance and authorship of all of the books of the OT will continue until we discover the names of the persons whose hands actually produced the Biblical books. Given the Israelites' apparent disinclination to erect permanent memorials to any of their achievements and the more general hesitation of ancient Near Eastern poets and authors to identify themselves, this prospect is highly unlikely. In the meantime we are left at the mercy of the internal witness of the texts themselves. The book of Deuteronomy is unequivocal in declaring that Moses' voice is to be heard in the speeches of the book. It is equally clear in its assertion of Mosaic involvement in the transcription of at least one of those speeches.

If one can accept these basic facts and acknowledge that the person responsible for producing the book of Deuteronomy was a prophet "like unto Moses," then later Israelites who spoke of the "Book of the Torah of Moses," accurately recalled the source and authority of the book of Deuteronomy. No one in the history of the nation, save our Lord Jesus Christ himself, ever spoke with such authority. No one in the history of the nation, save our Lord Jesus Christ, had such access to the mind of God. No one in the history of the nation, save our Lord Jesus Christ, left a more authoritative legacy of truth for the world. No one in the history of the nation, save our Lord Jesus Christ, had a more profound influence in shaping the vocabulary of spiritual speech for the people of God. With the Israelites of old and the Jewish Rabbis of our own time we give praise to God for the man Moses, and the written record of his valedictory addresses on the Plains of Moab.

The book of Deuteronomy is the heart of the Torah, which the priests were to teach and model,⁹² which psalmists praised,⁹³ to which the prophets appealed,⁹⁴ by which faithful kings ruled⁹⁵ and righteous citizens lived (Psalm 1). In short, this book provides the theological base for virtually the

⁹⁰ "Books in the Late Bronze Age in the Levant," *Past Links: Studies in the Languages and Cultures of the Ancient Near East. Fs. Anson Rainey* (ed. S. Izre'el et al.; Israel Oriental Studies 18; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998) 179.

⁹¹ An epithet employed by A. R. Millard in "Mass Communication and Scriptural Proclamation: The First Step," *EQ* 2 (1978) 70. Cf. Deut 4:5-8, 11-14; *et passim*.

⁹² Deut 33:10; 2 Chr 15:3; 19:8; Mal 2:6, 9; cf. Jer 18:18; Ezek 7:26; Ezra 7:10.

⁹³ Pss 19:7-14; 119; etc.

⁹⁴ Isa 1:10; 5:24; 8:20; 30:9; 51:7.

⁹⁵ 1 Kgs 2:2-4; 2 Kgs 14:6; 22:11; 23:25.

entire Old (and New) Testament and the paradigm for much of its literary style.⁹⁶ May we in our day discover anew in the book of Deuteronomy the divinely breathed, hence living and transforming, Scripture of which the NT Moses, the apostle Paul, spoke in 2 Tim 3:16. And may we, like Paul, find in the “Book of the Torah of Moses” a sure and effective instrument of teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness, and equipping for every good work to the glory of God.

⁹⁶ Lest some miss the point, our interpretation of the genesis of Deuteronomy differs sharply from the higher critical conclusions proposed by Wellhausen, von Rad, et al., on several significant counts: (1) We date the book as a whole at least four centuries earlier than prevailing scholarship ascribes to the earliest part of the book, the so-called Deuteronomistic Code (12:1–26:19). (2) We accept that Moses was a historical figure as described in the Pentateuch, and that the book of Deuteronomy actually preserves his speeches. (3) We take the internal evidence of the book seriously and reject a pseudepigraphic interpretation. In trying to let the text say what it wants about its own genesis, our interpretation is in complete accordance with Paragraph 4 of “A Short Statement” that precedes the “Articles of Affirmation and Denial” in “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”: “Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault . . . in what it states . . . about its own literary origins under God.” See “Appendix,” in *Inerrancy* (ed. N. L. Geisler; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979) 494.