



3704349854

**THE NARRATIVE FUNCTION OF THE SONG OF
MOSES IN THE CONTEXTS OF DEUTERONOMY
AND GENESIS-KINGS**

Lee, Boon-Hui Andrew

A thesis submitted to
The University of Gloucestershire
in accordance with the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Media, Arts and Technology

December 2010

**NOT TO BE
TAKEN AWAY**

ABSTRACT

The Song of Moses is acknowledged to be one of the most difficult texts to interpret within the book of Deuteronomy. Substantial effort has been put in to determine the Song's origin in terms of its dating and reason for composition. But more scholars are now seeing the need to relate the Song to its immediate context. However, the recent contributions to this topic show the need for a closer examination of the Song's narrative function, not only in Deuteronomy but also in its larger context in Genesis-Kings. Understanding the Song's function in this large corpus necessitates the way in which it relates to Deuteronomic themes such as the YHWH-Israel relationship, Torah, worship, and kingship. This thesis examines the theological and hermeneutical function of the Song in Deuteronomy and Genesis-Kings in their final forms. As a prophetic criticism of Israel, it focuses its audiences' attention on the central command of the Torah, the moral issue of covenant-keeping, and Israel's vocation as witness to the nations, resulting in a theology of history for all nations. With reference to Deuteronomy, the Song expresses the heart of the book. With reference to Genesis-Kings, it gives us a sense of beginning and closure to the history of the people of YHWH in terms of Israel's primeval past and future hope respectively.

FRANCIS CLOSE HALL
LEARNING CENTRE
UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE
Swindon Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ
Tel: 01242 714600

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed *Andrew Lee*

Date *01/12/2010*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to many people who have made it possible for me to work on this thesis. I am thankful to the BRASH Trust for their generous financial support, and also Bessie and Clive for their timely financial aids. I am deeply thankful to my mom, who undertakes two jobs, to support me financially for my study. Without the above big-hearted sponsors it would be almost unfeasible for me to do my research in England.

This thesis will not come to fruition without the patience, insight, friendship, and encouragement of my first supervisor, Prof. Gordon McConville. He has shared generously of his time, ideas, and vast knowledge of the Old Testament to help me clarify my topic, thoughts, and writings. I also appreciate the hospitality of both Gordon and Helen for having me at dinners at their home. My appreciation also goes to my second supervisor, Dr. Philip Satterthwaite of Biblical Graduate School of Theology (BGST), for his encouragement and incisive comments which helps improve my work. I am also thankful that Philip and Eileen have taken time to visit me at the University of Gloucestershire during my first year in Cheltenham.

I am also encouraged by the research community at the University of Gloucestershire. It is comforting to know that there are people whom I can chat and have meals with informally, as well as giving mutual support to one another. So I want to thank Tim Davy, Christine Hahn, Brian Howell, Jason Lecureux, Andrea Zesis, Heath Thomas, Leigh Trevaskis, David Manohar, Carl Sweatman, Robert Thang, Luke Devine, and Michael Johnstone. My 'hangouts' with Jason, Robert, Luke, and Michael over meals and drinks were particularly memorable. Thank you, guys. I also want to thank the Founding Principle Emeritus of BGST, Rev Dr. Quek Swee Hwa, and BGST faculty members, Peh Cheng, Tze Ming, Edwin, and Pak Wah, for their friendship and encouragement, as well as friends in Tyndale House (Cambridge) for helping me with research materials.

I am very thankful to three couples for their friendship and ministry to me. The first couple, whom I have known for more than a decade now, is Rev Dr. Geoffrey Stonier and Joy. Their love for the Lord, advice, kindness, and hospitality has been a great source of blessings to me. Another couple is Rev Dr. Mike Workman and Barbara. Mike was one of the first people I contracted before coming to Cheltenham and has kindly helped me settle down in this town. And for the last four years, Mike has been my regular 'breakfast buddy'! Both he and Barbara have also kindly extended their hospitality to me at several occasions for meals at their home. The third couple is Nigel and Sheila Bowden, who have kindly invited me for dinners several times at their home, as well as having Bible study there during my first year in Cheltenham. Sheila has even taken the trouble to cook for me meals that are closer to Asian taste! I really appreciate her thoughtfulness.

Leaving my family in Singapore to do my research alone in England is never an easy decision, especially when my children are still at their tender age. I am very thankful to relatives and church friends back in Singapore for looking out for my family during my absence. I am very grateful to my wife, Janice, for her love and support, and taking care of our son, Raynen (age 8), and daughter, Charis (age 4), despite her hectic work schedule. In the course of my research, my heart often aches whenever I thought of how I cannot be with them regularly. I thank the Lord for technologies such as Skype, through which I can at least converse with them face to face through computer screen.

This thesis is dedicated to my dad, who has gone to the Lord six years ago.

Above all, my praise and thanks to the Lord. It is He who has brought all these people I mentioned above to grace my life. All credits to Him.

אל אמונה

“A God of faithfulness” (Deut. 32:4)

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>ASTI</i>	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BDB</i>	Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> [ninth edition]
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BOS</i>	<i>Biblical and Oriental Studies</i>
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>BS</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theological Bulletin</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>ConBOT</i>	Coniectanea biblica, Old Testament
<i>Diss.</i>	Dissertation
<i>eds.</i>	Editors, Edited by
<i>ET</i>	English translation
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IB</i>	<i>Interpreter's Bible</i>

<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>ISJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>MT</i>	Masoretic Text
<i>NASB</i>	New American Standard Bible
<i>NIDB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> . Edited by William A. VanGemeren.
<i>NIV</i>	New International Version
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>SamP</i>	Samaritan Pentateuch
<i>SBLDS</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>StudBT</i>	Studia Biblica et Theologica
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
trans.	Translated
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>

<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	Vetus Testamentum, Supplements
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie</i>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABBREVIATIONS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. The Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32.....	1
1.1 <i>The Relation between Israel and YHWH</i>	1
1.2 <i>The Failure of Israel</i>	4
2. Aim of Thesis and Methodology.....	6
3. Outline of Thesis.....	9
CHAPTER ONE THE SONG IN DEUTERONOMY: A REVIEW.....	11
1. Introduction.....	11
2. History of Interpretation of the Song.....	12
2.1 <i>Historical Allusion of the Song</i>	12
2.2 <i>Language of the Song</i>	15
2.3 <i>Literary Form of the Song</i>	19
2.4 <i>Theology of the Song</i>	26
2.5 <i>Summary</i>	32
3. The Narrative Role of the Song in Deuteronomy.....	32
3.1 <i>Preliminary</i>	32
3.2 <i>A Witness in Memorable Summary Form</i>	33

3.3	<i>Moses' Final Teaching and Witness</i>	38
3.4	<i>Part of a Textual Memorial</i>	42
3.5	<i>A Propagandistic Appeal</i>	46
4.	Conclusion: The Song in Perspective.....	50
CHAPTER TWO THE SONG: PROPHETIC CRITICISM OF ISRAEL.....		54
1.	Introduction.....	54
2.	General Comment of the Song.....	55
2.1	<i>Characteristics, Structure, and Essential Themes</i>	55
2.2	<i>An Overview of the Song</i>	57
3.	Exegetical Comment of the Song.....	59
4.	Summary.....	118
CHAPTER THREE THE SONG'S RELATION TO DEUTERONOMY.....		120
1.	Introduction.....	120
2.	Deuteronomic Issues Revisited.....	121
2.1	<i>Preliminary</i>	121
2.2	<i>Divine Presence, Demythologisation, Name Theology</i>	123
2.2.1	<i>A Demythologised Deuteronomy?</i>	125
2.2.2	<i>A Matter of Context and Emphasis</i>	130
2.2.3	<i>The Meaning of the Deuteronomic Idiom</i>	134
2.3	<i>The Chosen Place, Centralisation, Kingship</i>	137
2.3.1	<i>The Chosen Place and Centralisation</i>	138
2.3.2	<i>The Judicial Authority and Centralisation</i>	142
3.	The Deuteronomic Concern: A Distinctive Israel.....	146
3.1	<i>Purity of Worship</i>	147
3.1.1	<i>YHWH's Election</i>	148
3.1.2	<i>YHWH's Holiness</i>	150
3.2	<i>Centrality of Torah</i>	152

4. The Song and Deuteronomy.....	156
4.1 <i>The Song's Thematic Affinities with Deuteronomy</i>	156
4.1.1 <i>Israel as YHWH's inheritance</i>	156
4.1.2 <i>Israel as YHWH's children / YHWH as Israel's 'father'</i>	156
4.1.3 <i>Guidance in the Wilderness</i>	157
4.1.4 <i>Entry into fertile land</i>	158
4.1.5 <i>Israel's rebellion and foreign worship</i>	158
4.1.6 <i>YHWH's jealous anger / YHWH as 'warrior'</i>	159
4.1.7 <i>YHWH's presence</i>	160
4.1.8 <i>YHWH's defence of his integrity and reputation</i>	161
4.1.9 <i>YHWH's control of history</i>	162
4.1.10 <i>Salvation after judgement</i>	163
4.2 <i>The Song's Ostensible Differences from Deuteronomy</i>	164
4.2.1 <i>Exodus from Egypt</i>	164
4.2.2 <i>Land not an inheritance and no conquest of it</i>	167
4.2.3 <i>Sinai, Moab, and the Torah</i>	169
4.2.4 <i>A place of worship</i>	173
4.2.5 <i>A theory of leadership</i>	175
5. Conclusion: The Song and the Deuteronomic Concern.....	181
 CHAPTER FOUR THE SONG'S RELATION TO GENESIS-KINGS.....	184
1. Introduction.....	184
2. The Song and the Pentateuch.....	185
2.1 <i>Preliminary</i>	185
2.2 <i>Concerning the Sabbath</i>	186
2.3 <i>Concerning slaves, the violated virgin and the needy</i>	188
2.4 <i>Concerning worship</i>	193
3. The Song and Joshua-Kings.....	203
3.1 <i>Preliminary</i>	203
3.2 <i>Worship YHWH, not Baal</i>	211
3.3 <i>YHWH or Jerusalem?</i>	215

4. Israel and the other nations.....	216
4.1 <i>Israel's primeval history</i>	220
4.2 <i>Other nations as witnesses and the divine deliberation</i>	220
4.3 <i>YHWH's vengeance and Israel's future hope</i>	222
5. Conclusion.....	224
CONCLUSION.....	227
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	234

INTRODUCTION

1. The Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32

The Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 (henceforth the Song) is possibly the only song in the Old Testament that can be called the Song of YHWH (Deut. 31:19). Despite its complexity, it has been characterised as a “gemstone that occurs in rough matrix,”¹ which draws attention to its literary characteristics such as its language and the way in which it arrests the audience with provocative expressions and graphic images. It is not surprising that the Song has attracted wide scholarly attention for decades. As an integral part of Deuteronomy, the Song plays a significant role in our reading of the book as it now stands. Its echoes of YHWH’s attributes, Israel’s election and apostasy, divine judgement, and the YHWH-Israel relationship with respect to the world point its audience back to core concerns underlying Deuteronomy: YHWH’s and Israel’s distinctiveness.² We must, therefore, begin by asking the question: in what way is Israel distinctive in the thinking of Deuteronomy?

1.1 *The Relation Between Israel And YHWH*

Israel’s distinctiveness stems from the fact that YHWH is himself distinctive. In the Song, YHWH’s distinctiveness is expressed in terms of his supremacy and righteous character in the way he relates to Israel and the other nations. With regard to his supremacy, the self-proclamation, “there is no god besides/like/with me” (v.39) accentuates his destructive power over his enemies, comprising both the rebellious Israelites and the unnamed enemy. With regard to his character, the Song proclaims him as “perfect” (תָּמִים, v.4), “a God of faithfulness” (אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֻנָה, v.4), “righteous” (צַדִּיק, v.4), and “upright” (יָשָׁר, v.4). Through his saving acts, YHWH’s

¹ David Peterson and Kent Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), p.67.

² In this thesis, both Israel and Judah are referred to as “Israel” unless otherwise specified.

incomparability and faithfulness distinguish him from the gods of other nations and testify to his “just and righteous” way of accomplishing his “perfect work” in Israel (v.4a). In Deuteronomy the new generation of Israelites is commanded to remember YHWH’s deeds and reflect his sovereign rule and distinctive nature in all aspects of their nation’s life (cf. Deut. 6; 12-26).

The call for Israel’s distinctiveness is particularly urgent in the context of the threat from the political and religious cultures of the ancient Near East. Deuteronomy aims to counter this threat by asserting a “Yahwistic view of God, the world and humanity in opposition to Mesopotamian concepts.”³ According to McConville, central to this view is the belief in the “oneness of Yahweh”⁴ that speaks of YHWH’s supremacy as the God who has the prerogative over Israel’s obedience.⁵ Holding on to this belief is a polemical response to counter the danger of the Assyrian “monopolistic imperialism.”⁶ If YHWH alone is God who deserves Israel’s total allegiance, then she must pledge loyalty to no one else in the political and religious spheres. McConville also argues that the emphasis of Israel’s “YHWH alone” should be seen as central to a “redrawing of the religious and ideological map of the ancient world”:⁷

The oneness of Yahweh is more than an assertion of the rights of this god over against that god, more even than the means whereby a vulnerable people preserved its identity, but part of *an alternative view of power and order in the world*.⁸

Walter Brueggemann states it slightly differently. He points out that the idea ‘YHWH alone’ expresses a “theological intentionality,” one that “powerfully insists upon YHWH to the exclusion of any theological alternative or compromise.”⁹ By this theological intentionality Israel distinguishes herself from an “indigenous Canaanite alternative,” and hence, resists the “temptation to submit to Assyrian cultural

³ J. Gordon McConville, *God and Earthly Power - An Old Testament Political Theology: Genesis to Kings* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), p.23.

⁴ McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, p.20.

⁵ See J. Gordon McConville, *Deuteronomy* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), pp.140-141.

⁶ McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, p.20.

⁷ McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, p.20.

⁸ McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, p.20 (italics mine).

⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), p.90.

hegemony.”¹⁰ Certainly Israel’s call to distinctiveness remains crucial not only in the Assyrian setting but also in her engagement with other world powers such as Babylon, Persia, and so forth.¹¹ As an alternative power and order, Israel’s path to greatness lies in her insistence on Yahwistic worship and obedience to the Torah as the way to convey her loyalty to YHWH regardless of the political and cultural ideologies she contends with.

Christopher Wright has rightly pointed out that the foundation of Israel’s national greatness is based on YHWH’s nearness to her and the righteousness of the Torah.¹² By keeping the way of YHWH and the Torah, Israel might become a “wise and understanding” nation, and fulfil her vocation as a witness to other nations (Deut. 4:6-8). In view of her missional role, Israel is called to emulate YHWH’s justice and righteousness so that both YHWH and Israel might be honoured, praised, and glorified by other nations (Deut. 26:18-19).¹³ The mandate for Israel to be a just and righteous nation is implied in Genesis 18:17-21. Wright points out that in this passage, just as YHWH is concerned for the oppressed, typified by “outcry” of Sodom and Gomorrah (וַעֲקָת סְדֹם וְעִמֹרָה, v.20), Israel as Abraham’s descendents must keep “the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice” (v.19a) for the oppressed and against the oppressor.¹⁴ The missiological significance of Israel’s election cannot be overemphasised.¹⁵ Deuteronomy is clear that Israel’s knowledge of YHWH and her obedience to his laws have profound implications for her calling as a witness to the world (Deut. 4:35; 10:12-19).¹⁶ Significantly, these emphases are best expressed when Deuteronomy is understood as containing in some sense a

¹⁰ Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p.90. See also Mark Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy?” in *VT* 57 (2007): pp.302-304.

¹¹ See also McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, pp.28-29.

¹² Christopher J.H. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), pp.47-48. Commenting on Deut. 4, Wright states, “In both respects, the effect of the rhetorical questions [in vv.7-8] is to claim that Israel is incomparable – in the same way that the rhetorical questions of vv.32-34 are designed to claim that YHWH is incomparable. Israel would have an intimacy with God and a quality of social justice that no other nation could match. These would be the factors that would lie behind the external reputation. As far as the nations could see, it was simply a matter of wisdom and understanding. The inner reality was the presence of God and the justice of God’s Torah.”

¹³ Cf. Jer. 13:1-11; 33:1-9. See Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Nottingham: IVP, 2006), p.258. Wright argues, “The reputations of Israel and of YHWH are bound up together. Such is the inescapable nature of the covenant.”

¹⁴ See Wright, *The Mission of God*, p.367.

¹⁵ Wright, *The Mission of God*, p.371. Wright states, “Israel’s calling to be holy is not set over against the nations and the whole earth but in the context of living among them for God.”

¹⁶ Wright, *The Mission of God*, pp.261-262.

political constitution, or a polity¹⁷ that enables Israel to live distinctively in her inherited land (Deut. 2:1-25),¹⁸ the land upon which YHWH's name is placed and Israel's acts of justice and righteousness are expected (cf. Deut 6:1; 16:18-21). Deuteronomy's polity insists on YHWH's rights over Israel's whole life, and his qualities of justice and righteousness (Deut. 10:12). These are expressed in Israel's exclusive worship, and its commitment to prevent political tyranny and protect the weak. To this end, Deuteronomy insists on a distinctive judicial system that empowers not one individual such as the king but the whole society (Deut. 16:18-18:5)¹⁹ and lays stress on the brotherhood of all Israelites.²⁰ Therefore, the central message of Deuteronomy concerns how Israel is to be distinctive religiously, politically, and ethically from the other nations as part of YHWH's universal dealing with all the families of the earth (Deut. 26:19; 32:43a).²¹

1.2 *The Failure of Israel*

Israel, however, did not always remain faithful to her calling, according to much of the Old Testament record. In 1 Samuel 8, for example, her calling to be a distinctive Yahwistic nation was undermined by her escalating religious degradation, epitomised by Samuel's two sons, Joel and Abijah. Her rejection of YHWH's kingship and surrender to the pressure of becoming "like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5, 7, 19-20) hastened her downward spiral into further moral corruption. YHWH's sovereignty over Israel had been challenged. Even when compromise was reached and Israel had her political king (1 Sam. 12:13-15), this arrangement of ensuring continuous loyalty to YHWH did not stand the tests of history. This was exemplified in Solomon's infringement of the Deuteronomic prohibitions (1 Kgs 10:26-11:3)²² and the First Commandment and fundamental Deuteronomic law (1 Kgs 11:4-8, cf. Deut. 6:4-5) which initiated a whole history of religious compromise in the

¹⁷ S. Dean McBride, "Polity of the Covenant People: The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Int* Vol. 41 (1987). See also McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, pp.85-96.

¹⁸ Cf. Deut. 4:21, 38; 9:29; 12:9; 15:4; 19:10; 20:16; 24:4; 26:1; 32:9.

¹⁹ McBride, "Polity of the Covenant People," p.240. See also Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of the Old Testament Law* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), pp.234-235; Robert R. Wilson, "Deuteronomy, Ethnicity, and Reform: Reflections on the Social Setting of the Book of Deuteronomy," in John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell (eds.), *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), p.121. Wilson argues that the administration of justice in Deuteronomy is such that "the governance of the state rests on the local elders and ultimately on the Israelite community itself."

²⁰ McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, pp.92-93.

²¹ Cf. Gen. 12:2-3.

²² Cf. Deut. 17:14-17.

monarchical period, and eventually jeopardised Israel's covenantal relationship with YHWH (cf. 2 Kgs 17:1-20; 23:26-27). Israel's failure is expressed vividly in the Song in which she is said to have "sacrificed to demons" (Deut. 32:15-18), hence is heavily denounced and referred to as "defective, perverse, and crooked" (Deut. 32:5). The Deuteronomic prose is aware of Israel's tendency to foreign worship as well. Its insistence on the need for Israel to "remember" (זָכַר)²³ YHWH's deeds is striking for it indicates that Deuteronomy argues persuasively against what seems to be Israel's propensity towards disloyalty²⁴ (cf. Deut. 1:22-46).

Recently Adriane Leveen has highlighted the crucial role of memory in the Pentateuchal story.²⁵ Particularly in Numbers, she argues that memory is used as a rhetorical device to shape a collective memory that connects the Israelites who died in the wilderness with those who were living so that the narrative can be read as an authoritative tradition. In a similar vein, memory plays a pivotal role in the overall rhetorical strategy in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy's relentless appeals to remember YHWH, or more precisely, "not to forget him," bring to mind YHWH's past deeds in order to instil the need for conscious vigilance in keeping faith with YHWH (Deut. 4:3).²⁶ Furthermore, the idea of memory is also used to shape and control the collective memory of the Israelites at Moab as they prepare themselves for the challenges in Canaan. Memory is evoked to inspire courage and hope in this situation by connecting them with the past that testifies to YHWH's power and faithfulness (Deut. 6-7). Hence, vivid memories of YHWH were intended to stir up Israel's resolve to serve him in the land, and there are some suggestions of partial success in this (cf. Deut. 34:9; Josh 1:13-18). Certainly the call to remembrance is not just about

²³ See Deut. 5:15; 7:18; 8:2, 18; 9:7, 27; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:9, 18, 22; 25:17; 32:7.

²⁴ Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), p.210. He notes that the primary sin in Deuteronomy is "disloyalty."

²⁵ Adriane Leveen, *Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

²⁶ See also Deut. 4: 9-10, 20, 23, 32-40; 6:12, 20-22; 7:7-11; 8:2-6, 11, 14-16, 19; 9:7. Scholars are beginning to be more aware of the pivotal role of memory in Deuteronomy. E.g. MacDonald reckons that the rhetoric in Deuteronomy assumes that Israel is "characterized by forgetfulness." See MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'*, p.124. Weitzman also notes that Deuteronomy's repeated exhortations to remember, mnemonic devices and assurances are used to ensure that Israel does not forget her relationship with YHWH. See Steven Weitzman, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), p.55. Likewise Brian Britt, who argues that Deut. 31-32, like "a stone monument," has ascribed itself "didactic and memorial purposes for a community and its generation to come." See Brian M. Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32 as a Textual Memorial," in *BI* Vol 8, 3 (2000): p.358.

a mental exercise. The *Shema*, for example, expresses emphatically how Israel must show loyalty with her whole being (Deut. 6:5).²⁷ Its singular message is unmistakable: remembering YHWH's commands gives life and prosperity while forgetting him brings death and adversity (Deut. 6:12, 24).²⁸ So to ensure Israel remembers and 'takes to heart' her obligation²⁹ Deuteronomy works the idea of memory into its rhetoric³⁰ to articulate its polemical mandate for total allegiance.

The concept of memory resonates in the Song in a significant way as well. Memory is used to conjure up a mental image to unsettle its hearers. For instance, the rhetorical question "Is not he your father?" (הֲלוֹא־הוּא אָבִיךָ, v.6) stirs up a positive memories of the parental relationship between YHWH and Israel. Yet by recalling that relationship, it immediately testifies against Israel precisely because within that rhetorical question lies the presupposition that Israel has in fact 'forgotten' YHWH as her creator and provider. The reprimand is then intensified when Israel is commanded to "remember" and "discern" (בִּינֵנוּ and זָכַר) YHWH's deeds (Deut. 32:7-9). Again, by recalling YHWH's purpose for her, Israel is forced to realise the abjectness of her ingratitude. The rhetoric finally reaches its maximum intensity with an ultimate charge: "And you have forgotten" (וְהִשְׁכַּחְתָּ, v.18). The divine wrath is now inevitable (Deut. 32:19-25). As unbelief precedes disobedience, Israel's forgetting of YHWH results in her forsaking of YHWH. Memory is used as a rhetorical device to shed light on the devastating effect of Israel's 'forgetfulness' and to justify punishment for her disloyalty. In this light, the Song's echo of memory becomes one important reason, if not the most important reason, why it is inserted into Deuteronomy.

2. Aim of Thesis, and Methodology

This thesis is a synchronic examination of the way in which the Song relates theologically and hermeneutically with Deuteronomy and Genesis-Kings in its final form. It argues that the Song functions as a prophetic criticism of Israel to focus its

²⁷ The use of לֵבָב ("inner man/mind/heart/will") can be a reference to both heart and mind in Deuteronomy.

²⁸ Cf. Deut. 30:15, 19.

²⁹ See Deut. 7:1-11. See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.44; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.10; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy = [Devarim]: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation/ Commentary* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1996), p.xiii; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.4.

³⁰ See also Weitzman, *Song and Story*, pp.53, 55.

audience on the central command of the Torah, the moral issue of 'remembering YHWH', and sheds light on Israel's vocation as witness to the nations, resulting in a theology of history for all nations. The Song also enhances our reading of Genesis-Kings as a whole. For example, its emphasis on the central command provides the readers a way of understanding the variety of the Pentateuchal laws in their final form and underscores the core issue in Joshua-Kings by showing the significance of true obedience and worship. Furthermore the Song gives added perspective to YHWH's election of Israel which lays stress on her centrality in YHWH's missional endeavour to the world. The Song's assertions of YHWH's supremacy over other gods and sovereignty over the nations serve to reinforce the belief in YHWH's faithfulness to Israel despite the demise of their kings and monarchy. Very significantly, these assertions give the readers, especially towards the end of Kings, a sense of victory and closure in terms of YHWH's vindication against Israel's enemies and restoration of her fortunes. Hence, the placement of the Song at the strategic juncture in Genesis-Kings serves to highlight its hermeneutical role for our interpretation of the large narrative.

When examining the Song's function in Deuteronomy and Genesis-Kings, I am aware of the compositional issues in Pentateuchal studies and the so-called Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy-Kings)³¹ highlighted by source-criticism, form-criticism, and redaction-criticism. There is no doubt that historical hypotheses have alerted us to the apparent compositeness of these books. But my endeavour stems from a belief that such enquiries have not necessarily illuminated the books' relation to the Song. Furthermore, although these books may have been composed separately in different eras, they now reside in the context of other books of the Old Testament. This very fact warrants an investigation of how they relate to one another in the given context of the Old Testament. This is certainly true of the Song whose theological message and hermeneutical role within its broader canonical context

³¹ The classic description of the Deuteronomistic History is that of Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I, Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1943) [ET *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981)]. According to Noth, the author of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, has included *Urdeuteronomium* (Deut. 4:44-30:20) into the beginning of his work. The *Urdeuteronomium* is in turn framed by Moses' speech (pp.27-33, 45-60). See also Sandra L. Richter, "Deuteronomistic History," in Bill T. Arnold and Hugh G.M. Williamson (eds.), *TDOT: Historical Books* (Leicester: IVP, 2005): pp.219-230.

remain insufficiently explored.³² In his examination of how poetic texts function in their narrative contexts James Watts highlights this state of affairs:

Very little research has focused on the nature of narratively inset psalms per se, in marked contrast to the vast bibliography available on some of these texts individually.³³

Likewise Steven Weitzman notes the similar phenomenon five years later,

The songs [Exod. 15, Deut. 32, Judg. 5] embedded within these passages are among the most carefully analyzed passages in the Hebrew Bible. Their contents, their structure, even their orthography have been subjected to the most painstaking analysis. Their roles within their present narrative settings have received little attention, however. In a field which has accumulated an arsenal of methods to analyze the forms and functions of prose and poetry, there is scarcely even a vocabulary to describe the forms and functions of their interaction. The reason for this neglect, I suspect, is that from the vantage point of scholars trained to think of prose and poetry as distinct, even opposing modes of discourse, the Bible's fusion of song and story represents an act of miscegenation, a bizarre mixing of different species of discourse kept separate in more civilized literary cultures.³⁴

There have been studies which are directed to establishing the Song's linguistic and thematic affinities with the prophetic literature.³⁵ However, I reckon that while these intertextual studies underscore important textual correlations between texts, it remains fundamental to explore how the Song connects to its immediate and larger contexts. Whether or not Weitzman's reference to "this neglect" is a fair description of the current scholarship, the call for interaction between poetry and prose certainly deserves more attention. The recent work by Terry Giles and William Doan reinforces this call by arguing for the centrality of songs in biblical texts.³⁶ Riding on J.L. Austin's speech-act theory,³⁷ Giles and Doan argue that when songs are inserted into narrative texts, their words and how they were performed in the past are now

³² In a recent Ph.D Diss., David M. Allen affirms the importance of the Song's canonical function even in the Book of Hebrew. See David M. Allen, 'Deuteronomistic Re-presentation in a Word of Exhortation: An Assessment of the Paraenetic Function of Deuteronomy in the Letter to the Hebrews' (Ph.D Diss. University of Edinburgh, 2007), see pp.29-46.

³³ James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), p.12

³⁴ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.2.

³⁵ Ronald Bergey, "The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-43) and Isaian Prophecies: A Case of Early Intertextuality?" in *JSOT* 28.1 (2003): pp.33-54; Thomas A. Keiser, "The Song of Moses a Basis for Isaiah's Prophecy," in *VT* LV, 4 (2005), pp.486-500.

³⁶ Terry Giles and William J. Doan, *Twice Used Songs: Performance Criticism of the Songs of Ancient Israel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009).

³⁷ See J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976). See also Giles and Doan, *Twice Used Songs*, pp.11-12.

appropriated by the narrator to bring the past into the present to “create a shared experience of the here and now.”³⁸ In doing so, songs form a “symbiotic relationship” with the narrative purposes “in order to make a tradition (the story being told) part of the living reality for the reading and listening audience.”³⁹ This aptly describes the interdependent relationship between the Song and Deuteronomy in its final form.

This synchronic study takes seriously the relation of the texts in their final form as part of a canonical whole. The method of examination is primarily a post-critical reading since such reading does not repudiate the fruit of historical studies but seeks to appreciate the force of our texts as they now stand. It is well known that diachronic and synchronic approaches are not mutually exclusive, as synchronic and diachronic findings should bear upon each other. Hence I shall draw insights from both approaches and reflect their interdependence for an obvious reason: to relate the Song theologically and hermeneutically to its contexts in a meaningful way.⁴⁰

3. Outline of Thesis

Chapter One surveys the scholarly opinions concerning the Song itself. However, given the need for more discussion of its narrative role, attention is also directed to identifying important facets of the Song’s narrative function which further elucidates our understanding of its role in Deuteronomy. The study of the Song’s relation to Deuteronomy and Genesis-Kings cannot succeed without a closer analysis of the Song itself. Hence Chapter Two explores the theological themes of the Song in more detail. Chapter Three undertakes a brief survey of the critical issues which revolve around the study of Deuteronomy in order to help us identify the Song’s thematic affinities and differences with Deuteronomy. In this chapter I argue that the Song’s thematic affinities with and differences from Deuteronomy point us to a

³⁸ Giles and Doan, *Twice Used Songs*, pp. 6, 8. They further state, “In addition, our premise, that there exist remnants of performance in both the biblical texts and in the likely recitation of these texts [songs] by the narrative authors, allows us to see how the performative quality of these songs played a central role in the recall of the past as a realizable present. The recitation, or public performance, of these texts presents us with a shared performer/spectator relationship. People came together to hear and to participate in moments of performance.”

³⁹ Giles and Doan, *Twice Used Songs*, p.135.

⁴⁰ Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp.163-164. Ska criticises the synchronic approach for its inadequacy in distinguishing ‘form’ and ‘content’ and tendency to “ignore textual problems.” However it should also be pointed out that diachronic study has not been equipped to shed light on literary relationships, as in this case, the relationship between the Song and Deuteronomy as a whole.

reading that takes better account of the book. Reading the Song back into Deuteronomy, in my view, does help clarify the main concern of Deuteronomy. The fourth chapter considers the Song's relation to its larger context in Genesis-Kings. This cannot be exhaustive but aims to highlight the Song's unique hermeneutical role in relation to the rhetorical impact of Genesis-Kings. The thesis concludes the study by bringing the results from the investigation to bear on the question: what difference does the Song make in our reading of Deuteronomy and Genesis-Kings in their final form? As a necessary prelude to my investigation, therefore, consideration must now be given to the current scholarly opinions regarding the Song.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SONG IN DEUTERONOMY: A REVIEW

1. Introduction

Many scholars believe that the Song of Moses was an independent unit redacted into Deuteronomy to serve specific literary or theological purposes.¹ As a result, numerous studies examined the Song's origin and reason for its composition. It is now widely accepted that the Song is post-Mosaic as it seems to hark back to Israel's settlement in Canaan and refers to her apostasy as a past event after a period of prosperity.² Paul Sanders believes that the Song was composed after a number of catastrophes.³ One of the foci of this chapter is to review the scholarly opinions concerning the Song apart from its context in Deuteronomy. The review is structured around four often discussed topics, namely, the Song's historical allusions, language, literary form, and theology.⁴ The review must be representative. As some interpretive issues will be discussed at various points of my examination, a brief look at them here must suffice. In recent times, however, scholars have highlighted the importance of relating the Song to the context of Deuteronomy. With respect to this,

¹ Noth, *Deuteronomistic History* [ET], p.35. Noth argues that the Song was "inserted clumsily" into Deuteronomy with no relation to the framework of the Deuteronomic law. See also Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p.220. Concerning the Song in Deuteronomy 32 Childs comments, "It has long been evident that chapter 32 has undergone a lengthy period of independent existence and only secondarily has been given its present context in relation to chapter 31." Also Ronald E. Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *NIDB* Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), p.526; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy = [Devarim]: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation/ Commentary* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1996), p.510; Giles and Doan, *Twice Used Songs*, pp.5-6.

² See Samuel R. Driver, *Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), p.346; Andrew D.H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), p.382; Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," p.527.

³ Paul Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p.37.

⁴ Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.6-96. See also J. Gordon McConville, *Deuteronomy* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), p.451; MacDonald, 'Monotheism', pp.140-141. Sanders, in particular, structures his investigation of the Song mainly according to these topics.

the contributions of James Watts,⁵ Steven Weitzman,⁶ Brian Britt,⁷ and Mark Leuchter⁸ are noteworthy. Hence a review of their works is the second focus of this chapter.

2. History of Interpretation of the Song

2.1 *Historical Allusions of the Song*

Enquiry into the Song's historical situation generally aims to find out whether the Song reflects any particular event as the circumstance under which it was composed. Basically there are two ways that scholars try to do this: by examining textual data and by making inferences. The most significant datum is the expression לְאֶ־עַם ("no-people," v.21). Scholars have thought that if the identity of לְאֶ־עַם could be established it would clarify the date and the historical occasion of the Song. So far, the hypotheses on the basis of this term have suggested dates that range from the Judges (12th century) to the Persian Empire (4th century).⁹ Interestingly, as early as in the 1900s Samuel Driver had already cautioned about the futility of identifying the expression לְאֶ־עַם because he thought that the term does not describe any specific group of people but is merely a figure of speech to indicate the insignificance of Israel's enemies.¹⁰ Despite this, scholarly hypotheses regarding this expression abound. The scholars included in the following survey are selected because their views about the identity of לְאֶ־עַם, as well as the Song's dating, should indicate to us sufficiently how לְאֶ־עַם can be and has been understood as a reference to different people groups.

⁵ James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992).

⁶ Steven Weitzman, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997).

⁷ Brian M. Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32 as a Textual Memorial," in *BibInt* Vol. 8, 3 (2000): pp.358-374.

⁸ Mark Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy?" in *VT* 57 (2007): pp.295-317.

⁹ See MacDonald, 'Monotheism', p.140.

¹⁰ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.365. Driver refers to לְאֶ־עַם as "a savage, undisciplined horde, a nation so inhuman and barbarous in its habits."

Otto Eissfeldt, William Albright, and Yehezkel Kaufmann thought that the expression לְאֵ־עַם referred to the Philistines,¹¹ Israel,¹² and the Syrians¹³ respectively. R. Meyer, however, insisted that the expression referred to the Persians because he thought that verse 8 which speaks of YHWH dividing the nations among the members of the heavenly court was a reflection of the Persian Empire around 400 B.C.¹⁴ Ernest Wright expressed doubt that the Song could be dated on the basis of its historical allusions.¹⁵ But some years later he preferred to see it as a composition of the 8th century, hence postulated a reference to the Assyrians.¹⁶ Four years later Gerhard von Rad, in his German commentary on Deuteronomy, maintained that לְאֵ־עַם were the Babylonians of the exilic period.¹⁷ In 1966, James Boston thought that they were the heterogeneous group of people residing in the northern kingdom after the fall of Samaria.¹⁸ But Carillo Alday argued that the designation לְאֵ־עַם was a reference to people who were not elected by YHWH.¹⁹ Casper Labuschagne, however, rejected the foregoing opinions and revived Driver's view that the term does not refer to any one particular people,²⁰ hence it is pointless to try to identify the unnamed enemy based on this term.²¹ But his view was not widely accepted, so the debate continued

¹¹ Otto Eissfeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1-43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958), pp.22-23.

¹² William F. Albright, "Some Remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy XXXII," in *VT* 9 (1959): pp.339-346.

¹³ Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel from its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p.280.

¹⁴ R. Meyer, "Die Bedeutung von Deuteronomium 32, 8f. 43 (4Q) für die Auslegung des Moseliedes," in A. Kuschke (ed.), *Verbannung und Heimkehr: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie Israels im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr., Fs. W. Rudolph* (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1961), pp.197-209; cited in Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.24-25.

¹⁵ G. Ernest Wright, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *IB Vol II* (New York & Nashville, 1953), p.517. Wright says, "We have no definite means of assigning a date [to the Song]."

¹⁶ G. Ernest Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32", in Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (eds.), *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honour of James Muilenburg* (London: SCM, 1962), p.67. He says, "A date within the three-hundred-year period (900-600 B.C.) seems clear, but a closer determination is difficult."

¹⁷ Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy [ET]* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1966), p.198.

¹⁸ James R. Boston, *The Song of Moses: Deuteronomy 32:1-43* (Unpublished Ph.D. Diss. Union Theological Seminary (USA) 1966), pp.207-211; cited in Sanders, *Provenance*, p.27.

¹⁹ S. Carillo Alday, *El Cántico de Moisés (Dt 32)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto "Francisco Suárez," 1970), pp.89-91.

²⁰ Casper J. Labuschagne, "The Song of Moses: Its Framework and Structure," in I.H. Eybers et al. (eds.), *De Fructu Oris Sui: Essays in Honour of A. van Selms* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p.95. He argued that לְאֵ־עַם and also גוֹי נִבְלָל ("foolish nation") are ambiguous terms used with the analogy of "god of no account" and "false gods." He also pointed out that the announcement of judgement is only serving the purpose of a threat rather than speaking of a particular historic occasion. He was of the opinion that the poet was not concerned with historical details but "rather with instruction." See also Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p.383.

²¹ Labuschagne, "The Song of Moses," p.95.

with Umberto Cassuto insisting that לֹא־עַם should be understood as referring to the Canaanites.²² This was later refuted by Sten Hidal who argued that גֹּיֵי נִבָּל (“foolish nation”) was a designation for the Samaritans. Like Boston, he refers to לֹא־עַם as the same group of people.²³ A decade later Johannes de Moor claimed that לֹא־עַם were actually the Sea Peoples of the Transjordan.²⁴ His view was seconded by Sanders six years later.²⁵ However Jeffrey Tigay believes that the Song describes an event in the period of the Judges, thus arguing that the expression might better suit nomadic raiders such as the Midianites, Amalekites, and the Kedemites.²⁶

Despite this extensive scholarly effort, the expression לֹא־עַם remains elusive and no firm conclusion can be drawn because the Song simply does not offer historical details in exact terms, as Driver and Labuschagne had noted.²⁷ The expression is likely a rhetorical term to describe the nature of Israel’s enemies, hence a description any group of people whom YHWH might raise in the course of history to deal with Israel’s disloyalty. However, לֹא־עַם is not the only ambiguous expression. Scholars are also divided on the meaning of the phrase “Surely they [are] a nation lacking in counsel” (כִּי־גֹיֵי אֲבֵר עֲצוּת הֵמָּה; NASB, v.28). Suffice it here to say that although verse 28 is commonly seen as speaking of either Israel *or* the unknown enemy, it may be understood as a reference to both Israel *and* the enemy.²⁸

²² Umberto Cassuto, “The Prophet Hosea and the Books of the Pentateuch,” in Umberto Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies Vol I* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), p.99. Cassuto sees Judg. 5:8 and Deut. 32:17 as speaking of the time of the Judges during which new gods were venerated. He claims that לֹא־עַם designates Deborah’s Canaanite opponents in the time of the Judges (p.43).

²³ Sten Hidal, “Some Reflections on Deuteronomy 32,” *ASTI* 11 (1977/78): p.19.

²⁴ Johannes C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), pp.122, 154. De Moor supports his argument with two considerations: the phrase יֵאֱבִינֵנוּ פְּלִילִים in v.31, which he reads as “and judge Yam is our enemy,” points to a god of the Sea Peoples called Yam. He claims that Yam as the god of the Sea Peoples is also found in Hab. 3:8, 15 and Ps. 68:23. The second consideration is the term פְּרֵעוּת (‘hairiness’) in v.42, which he believes it agrees with the description found in Ps. 68:22, probably refers to the Sea Peoples.

²⁵ See Sanders, *The Provenance*, pp.435-436.

²⁶ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.512. First, Tigay holds that Deut. 32:17, as does Judg. 5:8, attributes the calamity to the worship of ‘new’ gods. Second, God’s mocking challenge in Deut. 32:37-39 is paralleled by his challenge in Judg. 10:14. Third, עֲצוּר וְעֹזֵב in Deut. 32:36 seems to be equivalent to *shofet* and *moshia*, which were descriptions of the leaders during the period of the Chieftains.

²⁷ See also McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, pp.6-8. He points out that our knowledge of the origin of Old Testament texts is “approximate and provisional” because many of them are “impossible to date with certainty.”

²⁸ See more discussion of this expression in Chapter Three.

When textual data cannot determine the Song's historicity, scholars resort to making inferences based on the absence of references to features of Israel's history such as the exile and monarchy. A few examples must suffice. The Song's silence about the exile led George Smith to think that it was composed in the sixth century.²⁹ J. Linder, on the other hand, argued that because the Song has no mention of the kings, it must antedate the period of the monarchy.³⁰ For him, the Song recalls the conquest of Canaan and the expression *יְמֵי עוֹלָם* ("the days of antiquity") is a reference to the Patriarchal period.³¹ Cassuto and Eissfeldt believed that the Song reflects the times of the Judges because it does not contain any allusions to exile, monarchy, or the fall of Jerusalem.³² The silence regarding the monarchy has led George Mendenhall to date the Song to the 11th century.³³ Hence, as can be seen, the Song is subject to various interpretations based on arguments from silence. Conjectures made on such a basis fail to take into account the idea that the Song does not describe the history of Israel in detail but highlights "certain essential realities"³⁴ to its hearers. The review shows that scholarly conjectures regarding the Song's historical allusions have not broken new ground.

2.2 *Language of the Song*

The Song contains at least fourteen *hapax legomena* and twenty other uncommon words.³⁵ This poses further difficulties in determining the Song's date by means of linguistic criteria.³⁶ In fact Eissfeldt already argued that it is almost impossible to date the Song on the basis of its linguistic features because of the lack

²⁹ George A. Smith, *Deuteronomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), p.343. Smith insisted that the Song has some correspondences with the sixth-century prophets and thought that it was composed by an exilic writer who wrote it "with reference to a generation far earlier than his own."

³⁰ J. Linder, "Das Lied des Moses Dt 32," in *ZKT* 48 (1924): p.391, cited in Sanders, *Provenance*, p.18.

³¹ Linder, "Das Lied des Moses Dt 32," p.395, see Sanders, *Provenance*, p.18.

³² Cassuto, "The Prophet Hosea and the Books of the Pentateuch," p.99; Eissfeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1-43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes*; pp.22-23.

³³ George E. Mendenhall, "Samuel's 'Broken rib': Deuteronomy 32," in Duane L. Christensen (ed.), *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), p.173. He reckoned the Song to be very old because it "knows nothing of Abraham and Isaac, nothing of 'Israel in Egypt,' and nothing of Exodus or even the so-called 'Conquest,' and nothing even of any concept of 'national state,' much less the monarchy."

³⁴ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.462.

³⁵ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.346. According to Driver, the thought and phraseology in the Song signify a much later age than that of Moses and the theological ideas, the argument, and the viewpoint resemble the writing of the canonical prophets from the 8th century onwards.

³⁶ See the diverse opinions in Sanders, *The Provenance*, pp.40-57.

of ancient Hebrew evidence.³⁷ In spite of this, debates over the linguistic peculiarities continue and the identified vocabularies have often been interpreted differently due to their alleged Aramaisms and archaisms.³⁸ The former tends to indicate the Song's lateness while the latter could suggest an early dating as far back as into the second-millennium.³⁹ Deuteronomistic phraseology has also been used as a criterion to determine the Song's dating,⁴⁰ although opinions differ as to which words or expressions are Deuteronomistic.⁴¹ For our purpose here, linguistic arguments made by Albright, David Robertson, and Sanders are noteworthy. Albright and Robertson have been firm advocates of the Song's early dating based on its language, while Sanders, whose work has made a more substantial contribution to this topic, has been critical of their hypotheses. But a brief look at them must suffice.

Concerning the orthography of the Song, Albright reckons that defective spellings such as those without the *matres lectionis*⁴² would indicate the Song's early dating.⁴³ But Sanders thinks otherwise.⁴⁴ Echoing James Barr, Sanders claims that

³⁷ Essfeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32 1-43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes*, p.17.

³⁸ For the list of words see Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.40-57.

³⁹ Albright, "Some Remarks," p.345. Commenting on the term צוֹר ("mountain"), e.g. Albright notes that it is a very archaic expression of 'god' and that in second millennium Syria and Anatolia all important mountains were regarded as deities. Those who prefer a late dating would regard the archaic vocabulary as a result of deliberate archaizing at the late period while those in favour of an early one would reckon that the Aramaic forms are equivalent to the original Semitic ones and thus they may be archaic. See Ian Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1993), p.30.

⁴⁰ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.200. Also Horst D. Preuss, *Deuteronomium* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982), p.167; Andreas Reichert, "The Song of Moses (Dt. 32) and the Quest for Early Deuteronomistic Psalmody," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), p.54.

⁴¹ See Preuss, *Deuteronomium*; p.168. He points out that Deut. 32:7-14 is not Deuteronomistic. In any case, if 'Deuteronomistic' and 'Deuteronomistic' could be distinguished as expressions that derive from *Urdu* and those from exilic revision respectively, then Moshe Weinfeld's list of Deuteronomistic phrases might indicate that some of these phrases in the Song may belong to pre-exilic times. See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1972), pp.320-365, esp. pp.340, 352, 361.

⁴² Meaning literally "mothers of reading." The term refers to the use of the Hebrew consonants א, ה, ו, and ך to indicate vowels, in order to facilitate the reading of unpointed texts.

⁴³ Albright, "Some Remarks," p.346. He comments, "Cases of archaic morphology and vocabulary are common in the Song ... it is hard not to see a number of instances of archaic consonantal spelling without the *matres lectionis* at the end of the words, which suggest a written original not later than the tenth century B.C." But see Frank M. Cross and David N. Freedman, *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of the Epigraphic Evidence* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1952), pp.45-60. Cross and Freedman argue that in the writing system of ancient Hebrew, the use of *matres lectionis* increased gradually as time went by.

⁴⁴ Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.48, 323-332. Sanders assumes that Albright probably refers to words such as שָׁחַט ("acted corruptly," v.5), שָׁחַט ("made haste," v.35), and יָהִי ("become," v.38) as the alleged

while some words have the full spelling in the Hebrew Bible; other words are defective in virtually all cases.⁴⁵ Furthermore, many of these defective spellings may appear old but still could be used in the early part of the Exile.⁴⁶ Sanders believes that Albright and others erroneously adduced defective spellings to support their pre-monarchic dating.⁴⁷ Similarly, Ernest Wright also argued for the Song's archaic orthography but his view was contested by Boston.⁴⁸ Following on from the Song's orthography is its syntactic and morphological peculiarity as noted by David Robertson. Syntactical peculiarity refers, for example, to the phenomenon in which the prefix-conjugation *yiqtol* is used side by side with the suffix-conjugation *qatal*, without syntactical difference between them, to narrate past events. Robertson identifies nineteen such peculiarities and argues that they represent early poetic Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry.⁴⁹ He also argues that the Song's morphological peculiarity, which is seen in the preservation of the *yod* or *waw* of a verbal root when they open a syllable, signifies early poetic Hebrew, as in Ugaritic.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Sanders remains unconvinced by Robertson's analysis. He points out that while

archaic consonantal spellings without the *matres lectionis* at the end of the words. For further details of these forms, see Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.146, 230, and 237.

⁴⁵ Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.48, 323-324. See also James Barr, *The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.14, 20-21, 25-32, 36-38, 170, 199. Albright's analysis is further undermined when Barr also asserts that the exact spellings in the texts may not have been maintained by the Hebrew scribes.

⁴⁶ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.332. E.g. יְשָׁן ("wilderness," v.10), מַחֲלֵמִישׁ ("flint," v.13), יְשׁוּעָה ("salvation," v.15), שְׁאוֹל ("Sheol," v.22), וְיִבְלֶה ("produce of soil," v.22), כְּבֹס ("stored up," v.34), and חָתָם ("sealed up," v.34).

⁴⁷ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.332. See also Mendenhall, "Samuel's 'Broken rib'," p.170. He also criticises Albright's stylistic analysis as "the most unconvincing since it presupposes exactly the same kind of 'unlinear evolution' that he [Albright] had resisted throughout his entire scholarly career, and relies entirely upon stylistic phenomena that could easily be nothing more than individual or local poetic preferences or habits."

⁴⁸ Wright, "Lawsuit," p.41, n.29. Wright points out that although the Song, unlike the Hebrew compositions of the pre-ninth century Israel, lacks images and phrases borrowed from Canaanite poetry (with the exception of verse 13a), some verses such as vv. 13, 18, 36, and 39 "clearly show archaic orthography, and the repeated use of *mō* as the third pronominal suffix is an old element." In Wright's *The Old Testament Against Its Environment* (London: SCM, 1957), p.43, n.1, he also reckons, "It is impossible to date this poem with any certainty, except to assert that in its present form it probably belongs to the period between the ninth and sixth centuries B.C." See Boston's contention in Sanders, *Provenance*, p.48.

⁴⁹ David A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972), pp.9-55. For a list of these peculiarities, see pp.36-38.

⁵⁰ Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*, pp.57-62. One example is חָסְרוּ ("they sought refuge," v.37). But Sanders thinks that the form חָסְרוּ is deliberately archaised because there are other forms in the Song which supposedly reflect the early poetic Hebrew that do not preserve the third consonant, such as הָבוּ ("Give," v.3), יִשְׁרוּ ("they drink," v.38), רְאוּ ("See," v.39). Notwithstanding this, Sanders agrees that the predominance of these forms in poetry, and their correspondences with the Ugaritic morphology, does point to their archaism. See Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.50, 316.

syntactical peculiarities may signify the Song's early dating, they cannot justify the Song's pre-monarchic dating because the prefix conjugation, for example, in Psalms 18 and 78, shows that the *yiqtol* forms could still express the narrative tense in the monarchic period.⁵¹ Furthermore, he thinks that the argument concerning the morphological peculiarities is unwarranted because there are several forms with the *yod* which are still found in Deutero-Isaiah.⁵² Hence the archaic forms in the Song could have been due to stylistic reasons.⁵³ Recently Robertson has again been criticised for his view on how the short prefix-conjugation forms without the conjunction *waw* could signify early composition.⁵⁴ Yigal Bloch argues that, although the Song's short prefix-conjugation without the conjunction *waw* is used frequently to narrate past events, the use of this form with the conjunction *waw*

⁵¹ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.302. To be sure Sanders, after analysing the Psalms which are commonly dated from the exilic or the post-exilic period (Ps. 44, 60, 66, 74, 79, 85, 96, 98, 104, 105, 106, 107, 116, 124, 126, 137) and the older passages such as Exod. 15, Judg. 5, and Ps. 18 (he points that these passages contain twenty-six *yiqtol* forms with the narrative value), comes to an almost similar conclusion as Robertson that the frequency of the use of the prefix conjugation in expressing the narrative tense is predominantly found in older Biblical poetry. See Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.313-315.

⁵² Sanders, *Provenance*, p.316.

⁵³ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.316. To be sure Robertson cites two other examples to support the Song's early dating. First, the use of the pronominal suffix *-mo* affixed to nouns and verbs. This can be seen in examples such as *עָלֵימֹו* ("upon them," v.23), *צָרֵימֹו* ("their adversaries," v.27), *עֲנַבֵּימֹו* ("their grapes," v.32), *לָמֹו* ("to them," vv.32, 35), *אֱלֹהֵימֹו* ("their gods," v.37), and *זִבְחֵימֹו* ("their sacrifices," v.38). Robertson asserts that the affixation of *-mo* to nouns and verbs is not in line with "standard poetic Hebrew," which is a description of the Hebrew poetry of the prophetic literature written from the mid 8th century B.C. onwards. Hence the presence of *-mo* signifies the early dating of the Song. See Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*, pp.65-69. See also p.22, n.52 above. But Sanders dismisses the validity of this in proving the Song's dating because the suffix *-mo* can be sometimes "modernised, especially when affixed to nouns and verbs." He reckons that such affixation can be found in Exod. 15, Job 27:23 and Ps. Ps 2, 5, 11, 17, 21, 22, 35, 45, 49, 58, 59, 73, 80, 83, 89, and 140. Hence he sees the affixation in Deut. 32 as for stylistic purposes. See Sanders, *The Provenance*, pp.317-318. The second example is the ending of *-h* in 3rd person singular feminine form of the *qatal* conjugation such as *אֲזַלָּה* ("is exhausted," v.36) which Robertson claims is attested in Ugaritic poetry. See Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*, p.111. But Sanders rightly questions the validity of using *אֲזַלָּה* to determine the Song's origin because Robertson seems to have contradicted his own argument. What is enigmatic about Robertson's argument is that while on one hand he claims that *אֲזַלָּה* ("is exhausted," v.36) is attested in Ugaritic poetry, which would then suggest its early date, on the other hand, he considers the same form in *וְשָׁבָה* ("she will return," Ezek. 46:17) as an Aramaism. He reckons, "The forms *וְשָׁבָה* [will be forgotten] in Isa. 23:15 and *וְשָׁבָה* [she will return] in Ezek. 46:17 are best explained as Aramaism." Furthermore, Robertson points out that, while many of the songs in the Biblical narrative exhibit archaic forms, there remains only one song which is consistently archaic in its language: the Song of the Sea in Exodus 15. By this assertion Robertson implies that the language in the Song could have been archaized. Such an implication has led Sanders to question his methodology. See further critique of Robertson's approach in Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.297-319. See also Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*, pp.124, 127.

⁵⁴ Yigal Bloch, "The Prefixed Perfective and the Dating of Early Hebrew Poetry—A Re-Evaluation," in *VT* 59 (2009):pp.34-70.

(*wayyiqtol*) is attested in it as well.⁵⁵ He also rejects Robertson's use of the prefix-conjugation without the conjunction *waw* as a criterion to determine the early dating of the Song because, according to Bloch, this form also appears in Isaiah 41:1-4 and Psalm 44.⁵⁶ These poetic texts are often dated to the sixth century.⁵⁷

Therefore, it appears that linguistic analysis has not been effective for dating purposes. While the discovery of ancient Semitic texts has certainly aided the discussion of the language's antiquity, and has at least cast doubt on the assumption that certain words and expressions in the Song must be late, a comparative study of the Hebrew and Ugaritic texts does not necessarily provide firm evidence, simply because we do not have enough data to determine the language that was used in early Israel. The difficulty is further compounded by the fact that the Song's language demonstrates "freedom and individuality" while at the same time showing "strong similarities to other parts of the Old Testament."⁵⁸ However, what we should probably gather from the above survey is that the Song's language is a matter of style and intent. The presence of Aramaisms and archaisms could be due to the need to style the poetic language deliberately over time. So, language in itself cannot prove the antiquity and historicity of the Song. Discussions over the Song's language remain a stalemate.

2.3 *Literary Form of the Song*

The inquiry into the purpose of the Song has led scholars to look at its literary form. Several scholars have discerned in the Song a mixture of forms such as prophecy, hymn, liturgy, instruction, lawsuit, and wisdom.⁵⁹ The form which has

⁵⁵ Bloch, "The Prefixed Perfective," pp.37-47.

⁵⁶ Bloch, "The Prefixed Perfective," pp.57-67.

⁵⁷ See also Sanders' view of Ps. 44 in Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.303-304.

⁵⁸ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.451.

⁵⁹ Aage Bentzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament Vol II* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Gads, 1948), pp.208-209; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.200. Von Rad, arguing that the Song displays different forms, concluded that the Song must belong to a late date, "It [the Song] originated in a period in which it was already known how to combine poetically, with great freedom and effect, extreme heterogeneous formal elements originally alien to each other ... the didactic opening summons reminiscent of Wisdom literature in vv1ff, the prophetic style of the announcements in vv36ff, 39ff, hymn-like matter in vv3f, 43f. The nearness to Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel ... suggest possibly the period of the exile." See also Wright, "Lawsuit," p.41; Labuschagne, "The Song of Moses," p.93. However, Mendenhall believes that the prophetic and sapiential texts may have appeared in the early period. He states, "Far too many scholars are suffering from the delusion that pre-monarchic Israel was 'too primitive' to have

attracted wide scholarly acceptance is that of lawsuit. According to Wheeler Robinson, underlying the lawsuit form is a belief shared between Israel and Canaan of a heavenly assembly of divine beings serving as a court of law. In this belief the prophet not only hears the court proceedings but also conveys and expounds the verdict.⁶⁰ The picture of the court proceedings was later expressed in an outline form by Herbert Huffmon.⁶¹ In this outline Huffmon argued that the "heavens" and "earth" played the role as 'judges' in the divine lawsuit, which he called a "covenant lawsuit." Building on these discussions, Wright in 1962 popularised the idea of lawsuit by reckoning that the Song's lawsuit form is "a distinguishable form which the psalmist [the author of the Song] has elaborated."⁶² He adopted Huffmon's term and referred to it as "the divine lawsuit or *rib*."⁶³ Such a lawsuit pattern, Wright argued, constitutes the central form of the Song as evinced by the summons to witnesses (v.1), the indictment (vv.15-18), and the verdict (vv.19-29).⁶⁴ But he rejected the idea of the "heavens" and "earth" as judges. He looked to other poetic examples to show that the "heavens" and "earth" do not act as judges, but witnesses.⁶⁵ He also cited passages from Deuteronomy in which Moses calls heavens and earth to serve as witnesses to the covenant.⁶⁶

In fact Wright's idea of the *rib* is deeply influenced by George Mendenhall, whose monograph in 1955 marked a turning point in the study of the Mosaic covenant.⁶⁷ Mendenhall argues for formal correspondences between the Hittite vassal treaties and the Israelite covenant-making.⁶⁸ In the ancient Near East lawsuit

any highly developed theology, or that we have no sources for describing that theology." See Mendenhall, "Samuel's 'Broken *rib*,'" p.170.

⁶⁰ H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Council of Yahweh," in *JTS* XLV (1944): pp.151ff.

⁶¹ See Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," in *JBL* 78 (1959): pp.285-295.

⁶² Wright, "Lawsuit," p.42.

⁶³ Wright, "Lawsuit," p.42.

⁶⁴ Wright, "Lawsuit," p.43. He explains, "In the delivery of the sentence God as the Judge is quoted directly by the psalmist. Otherwise in vs. 1 and during the indictment the psalmist [the author of the Song] speaks as the officer of the court, convening the witnesses and reciting the formal charges as they have been made in the heavenly court."

⁶⁵ Passages such as Isa. 1:2; Jer. 2:4-13; Mic. 6:2 (which calls to 'mountains' and 'the foundation of the earth'); and Ps. 50. See Wright, "Lawsuit," p.44.

⁶⁶ Deut. 4:26; 30:19; 31:28. See Wright, "Lawsuit," p.44.

⁶⁷ George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955).

⁶⁸ Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant*, pp.26-46. According to Mendenhall the Hittite treaty comprises the following elements: 1. Preamble; 2. Historical Prologue; 3. Stipulations regarding the vassal's conduct; 4. Document Clause; 5. Invocation of the gods as witnesses; 6. Curses and Blessings. See also a

document, the suzerain would appeal to the gods to condemn the vassal for the breach of covenant. Prior to declaring war on the vassal, the document recounts the suzerain's past benefactions, the vassal's ingratitude, and betrayal. Appeal would then be made to the gods and other entities who had witnessed the covenant to punish the vassal. However, when Israel adapted the treaty form for her own use to express her relationship to YHWH, the element of appealing to the gods as witnesses had to be reinterpreted. Wright applies Mendenhall's hypothesis of the Israelite treaty form to the Song.⁶⁹ He divides the Song into seven sections.⁷⁰ Wright's argument has been largely influential and many scholars have come to see the Song as a modified or expanded version of the lawsuit document.⁷¹ However some remain doubtful. For example, Craigie is inclined to see the Song as a song to be recited in Israel's covenant renewal ceremony to bear witness to her acceptance of the terms and implications of the covenant.⁷² Richard Nelson regards the Song as a "theodicy,"⁷³ Dennis Olson thinks of it as a catechetical song,⁷⁴ while Matthew Thiessen prefers to

treatment of the Hittite vassal treaties in Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981), pp.51-85.

⁶⁹ Wright, "Lawsuit," p.47. He comments, "The heavenly lawsuit implies a Suzerain, one who claims authority over all powers on earth, and who is presiding over the highest tribunal in the universe. Furthermore, it implies a covenant which the Suzerain has granted a vassal, a covenant which the vassal has broken ... Here the Suzerain is himself the real Judge, Plaintiff, and Jury; he is the one who has been violated, and since there is no power above him he wields power himself, both accusing and sentencing. The heavenly assembly is in this case only witness and counsel (cf. 1 Kgs 22:20-22)."

⁷⁰ Wright, "Lawsuit," pp.34-36: 1. Introduction (Deut 32:1-6); 2. Kerygma: Appeal to mighty acts of God (vv.7-14); 3. Indictment (vv.15-18); 4. Sentence or penalty (vv.19-29); 5. Poet's assurance of salvation (vv.30-39); 6. The Word of YHWH confirming poet's hope (vv.39-42); 7. Poet's final exhortation to praise (v.43). See also Matthew Thiessen, "The Form and Function of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-43)," in *JBL* 123/3 (2004): p.402.

⁷¹ John A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (Leicester: IVP, 1974), p.297; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, pp.380-381; Jos Luyten, "Primeval and eschatological overtones in the Song of Moses (Dt 32, 1-43)," in Norbert Lohfink (ed.) *Das Deuteronomium* (Leuven: University Press, 1985), pp. 341-347; Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy, Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), p.226; Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.298; Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," pp.526-527; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.451.

⁷² Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.373. Craigie notes that while the Song has some similarities with the wisdom literature, it is due to the fact that the Song contains "very practical advice" to "educate the people in the way they should take." He notes that the similarities of literary forms could mean that there was a source for those literary forms but they do not necessarily mean that the Song is to be classified as 'prophecy' or 'wisdom' in form. See also Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," 1998, p.527. Clements holds that its didactic elements are influenced by a combination of both prophetic and wisdom literature. Also von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.200.

⁷³ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.369. Nelson reckons that the Song is a "theodicy that explains national catastrophe" and "give confidence and build trust in Yahweh."

⁷⁴ Dennis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), p.139. Olson cautions that Deuteronomy's self-designation of the form of the Song needs serious consideration. He states that the Song is "a song that functions as an ongoing witness transmitted through teaching."

call it "a hymn or liturgy;"⁷⁵ Watts, a "unique invention" with an important didactic role;⁷⁶ and recently Allen, "a Song of Witness."⁷⁷ There were also scholars who were more critical of Wright's view on this subject. Solomon Nigosian thought that Wright was wrong in his analysis of the Song's content. Instead, he maintained that the Song actually appears to have a unique form with a "covenantal lawsuit inverted to forge a salvation oracle and the whole presented in a didactic mode."⁷⁸ Boston, whose basic disagreement with Wright's analysis was one of methodology, argued that Wright had not examined every invocation of the "heavens" and "earth" in the Old Testament. For instance, Isaiah 44:23 and 1 Chronicles 16:31 in which "heavens" and "earth" are used, can hardly be considered as lawsuits.⁷⁹ For Boston, the Song as a whole is best described as a didactic poem influenced by the wisdom literature.⁸⁰ A similar view is held by Labuschagne, who did not see the Song as corresponding entirely to a lawsuit pattern but as a poem of instruction. He revived the notion that the Song has "a mixture of forms such as the lawsuit, the hymn, wisdom, the retrospect of history, the prophetic announcement of judgement and proclamation of war."⁸¹ Like Boston, Labuschagne rejected Wright's view on the function of the "heavens" and "earth" as witnesses in the Song. A comparison with other passages, he argued, reveals that the idea of invoking the "heavens" and "earth" does not necessarily mean that they are witnesses in a *rib*.⁸² Rather, the summons should be taken as "a universal summons to listen and learn."⁸³ He was unconvinced that verses 15-18 should be read as an indictment and verses 19-29 as a sentence or verdict in terms of a lawsuit. He considered verses 15-18 as a retrospect on Israel's history and verses 19-29 a prophetic announcement of judgement.⁸⁴ Labuschagne's "mixture of genres" is also echoed by Tigay.⁸⁵ Even Mendenhall, whose view has heavily influenced Wright, is

⁷⁵ Thiessen, "The Form and Function," pp.401-424. Thiessen who argues that the lawsuit pattern only describes partially the form and function of the Song sees that the Song fits broadly the category of a hymn.

⁷⁶ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp.76, 80.

⁷⁷ Allen, *Deuteronomistic Re-presentation*, p.25.

⁷⁸ Solomon A. Nigosian, "The Song of Moses (Dt 32): A Structural Analysis," in *ETL* 72 (1996): p.8.

⁷⁹ Cited in Thiessen's review of Boston and Wright, "The Form and Function," pp.403-407.

⁸⁰ James R. Boston, "The Wisdom Influence upon the Song of Moses," in *JBL* 87 (1968): pp.178-187, 198-202, 231-240. See also Sanders, *Provenance of Deuteronomy* 32, pp.91-93.

⁸¹ Labuschagne, "The Song of Moses," p.93.

⁸² Passages such as Ps. 69:34; 96:11; Isa. 44:23; 49:13, and Jer. 4:28.

⁸³ Labuschagne, "The Song of Moses," p.93. Cf. Ps. 49:2; 78:1; Isa. 28:23; and Judg. 5:3.

⁸⁴ Labuschagne, "The Song of Moses," p.94.

⁸⁵ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.509. Tigay argues that the introductory summons is comparable to didactic psalms, prophecies, and proverbs in which summons to heaven and earth and other elements of nature also appear in prophetic indictment speeches (cf. Ps. 49:2, 78:1; Isa. 1-2, 28:23; Prov. 4:1; Mic. 6:1-2).

himself critical of the use of *rib* as a designation for the Song.⁸⁶ His main dispute with Wright has been that the idea of lawsuit does not fit in the Song.⁸⁷ Mendenhall compares the Song to an actual village court procedure in early Palestine⁸⁸ and believes that the form of these legal procedures is now “transferred into the realm of religious and historical thought.”⁸⁹ He thus regards the Song as a “prophetic theodicy long before that literary form [*rib*] existed.”⁹⁰

As can be seen, the scholarly views are diverse and this makes classifying the Song as one specific form difficult, if not impossible. The Song is, as von Rad reckoned, a poem with “literary pretensions” in which its words not only show “strong individuality” but also “hark back to ancient and unfamiliar conceptions” (Deut. 32:8-10).⁹¹ Nonetheless, it is clear that the Song exhibits a mixture of elements which may not be satisfactorily categorised under the lawsuit model. In fact even

Furthermore, the Song’s didactic retrospective on Israel’s history has counterparts in hymnic historical psalms and in prophecies (cf. Ps. 78, 105, 106; Ezek. 16, 20, 23). Besides the similarity of the Song’s depiction of YHWH’s exclusive divinity against the false gods to prophetic speeches, the descriptions of the enemy’s destruction correspond to the prophecies of calamity against Israel’s enemies as well (cf. Judg. 10:14; Isa. 34:5-6, 49:26, 63:1-6; Jer. 2:28, 12:12, 25:30-33, 46:10, 50:25-32). Moreover, the Song’s invitation to praise at the end has parallels in hymns (cf. Exod. 15:21; Ps. 96:1, 98:1). In addition, the Song also displays features of Wisdom literature such as its characterisation as a ‘teaching’ in v.2, its attribution of sin to foolishness in vv.6, 28 and 29, its appeal to elders in v.7, and the use of the terminology of the Wisdom literature like תַּהֲפֹכָה (“perversity”) in v.20.

⁸⁶ Mendenhall, “Samuel’s ‘Broken *rib*’,” p.176. He comments, “The term Wright uses, following H.B. Huffmon (and for which I may myself be at least indirectly responsible) “covenant lawsuit” now seems peculiarly inappropriate, at least in application to this poem.”

⁸⁷ Mendenhall, “Samuel’s ‘Broken *rib*’,” pp.176-177. He argues, “Yahweh is not suing anyone for breach of covenant; instead the breach had taken place, the consequences had been suffered, and the issue is whether or not Yahweh would be a reliable refuge for the future.” Hence Mendenhall does not think that the assurances delineated in vv.36-43 are “generalized expressions of hope,” as Wright believes them to be. Rather, they are meant to dissuade Israel from abandoning YHWH and thus serve to inspire continuous trust in him. See also Juha Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry in the Deuteronomistic History* (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 1999), pp.110-111. Pakkala in his recent work comes to a similar conclusion as Mendenhall. He thinks that the Song would “function well as an interpretation of a past catastrophe. It would be an answer to the question why Israel faced the calamities.”

⁸⁸ Mendenhall, “Samuel’s ‘Broken *rib*’,” p.177.

⁸⁹ Mendenhall, “Samuel’s ‘Broken *rib*’,” p.177. Because of this, Mendenhall is not in favour of seeing the appeal to the “heavens” and “earth” as having anything to do with the “divine assembly.” Rather, just as in the ancient village law courts in which witnesses were relied upon when remedy was needed, the appeal to the “heavens” and “earth” are elements of the natural world act simply as witnesses in a court of law, in which Mendenhall believes YHWH is the “original defendant.”

⁹⁰ Mendenhall, “Samuel’s ‘Broken *rib*’,” pp.176, 178-179. He asserts, “Deuteronomy 32 is not a “lawsuit” at all. It is a prophetic oracle essentially concerned with the interpretation of history past, and appealing for public opinion that would make the future more palatable. It is not a “broken” *rib*, for under the circumstances following the Philistine victory, the only possible and the only necessary course of action was a rejection of the pagan ideologies that disrupted the unity upon which the independence of the tribal villages was absolutely dependent, and a reaffirmation of the Yahwist theology.”

⁹¹ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.200.

Wright himself conceded that the lawsuit effectively ends at verse 29.⁹² This, however, leads Thiessen to allege that Wright had advocated Huffmon's view of seeing verses 26-43 as an appendix to explain why YHWH remits the sentence. Thus, he argues that Wright had relegated verses 30-43 to "a position of subordinate status."⁹³ So he goes on to propose a re-examination of the Song's literary form and reckons it to be a hymn with an embedded *rib*, which he thinks does more justice to the content and structure of the Song.⁹⁴ Although Thiessen's criticism of Wright, in my opinion, is not wholly convincing,⁹⁵ the contention against seeing the Song as a *rib* has been the controversial roles of the "heavens" and "earth." Both Boston and Labuschagne criticised Wright on methodological grounds as they did not think that Wright had evaluated adequately the use of the "heavens" and "earth" formula, since there are also passages which do not use it with legal overtone. Furthermore, both of them saw the Song as having different forms, with a didactic nature and prophetic function respectively. Mendenhall, on the other hand, who also refers to the Song as having a prophetic character, agrees with the claims that the "heavens" and "earth" function as witnesses but contends against the idea of "divine assembly." He agrees with Boston that the Song is a review of what has already happened to Israel. The Song is not a lawsuit but a poem about how Israel should respond to YHWH her refuge.⁹⁶

In view of the criticisms of Wright's lawsuit model, it is important to note that the use of "heavens" and "earth" formula in other parts of the Old Testament does not necessarily militate against its legal use in the Song, since how the formula functions is dependent on its contexts. Furthermore, the notion of the "divine assembly," which Mendenhall argued against is really not a foreign idea in the Old Testament. This is seen, for example, in 1 Kings 22:19-23 (cf. 2 Chron. 18:18-22); Zechariah 3:1-8; Job

⁹² Wright, "Lawsuit," p.56. Wright argues that the tension created by the *rib* is "relieved by an expression of hope and trust in God's salvation" in vv.30-43.

⁹³ Thiessen, "The Form and Function," p.407.

⁹⁴ Thiessen, "The Form and Function," pp.407-424.

⁹⁵ See Wright, "Lawsuit," p.56. For Wright, just as the lawsuit form was used as "a public confession" in the time of trouble, vv. 30-43 function as "a confession" as well, not in calamity however, but in faith and trust in God for salvation. Hence, contrary to Thiessen's protest, it remains unclear how Wright has reduced vv. 30-43 into a "subordinate status."

⁹⁶ See p.23, n.87 above.

1-2, and Psalm 82.⁹⁷ These passages appear to have expressed the idea of a divine gathering before YHWH. Hence, while classifying the Song under the lawsuit model remains debatable, it is fair to say that the lawsuit element does broadly clarify at least the first part of the Song concerning Israel's predicament of the covenantal violation. The Song may be seen as having a modified lawsuit form to reprimand Israel for her apostasy and, as Clement points out, it also serves to make a case for the assurance of vindication.⁹⁸ But in the light of Deuteronomy 31:19-22, which suggests that the Song is to serve as a perpetual witness against Israel, it seems more reasonable to see the Song as a warning against the inclination to apostasies whenever it is rehearsed (cf. Deut. 31:19). This fits best with its inclusion into larger literary blocks.

The various opinions about the Song's literary form have highlighted: first, the Song is a distinct composition in which the author did not see the need to be bound by ancient literary conventions when composing it but was able to utilise writing conventions freely to serve his religious purpose. Second, the Song in itself does not disclose a particular historical setting. We could imagine various settings in which the Song could have been effective but the fact is, as in our case, we only have its literary contexts in Deuteronomy and Genesis-Kings. The Song's mixture of genres, particularly its prophetic and didactic features have presumably played a part in its inclusion in its literary contexts. Hence, we intend to examine the Song's theological and rhetorical impact on these contexts. In this light, there are important questions to consider, namely, what difference the Song makes to a reading of Deuteronomy. What is its narrative function in the book? Does its inclusion merely rest on its "suitability as a further warning to Israel"⁹⁹ or on its ability to "summarise the Deuteronomic themes in a memorable form?"¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, what light does the Song shed on our reading of the large block of materials from Genesis-Kings, in particular, the unsettling note towards the end of Kings in which the idea of Israel's

⁹⁷ See arguments for the notion of the "divine assembly" in the Old Testament in E. Theodore Mullen, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (Chicago: Scholars Press, 1980), Conrad E. L'Heureux, *Rank among the Canaanite gods: El, Baal, and the Rephaim* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), Lowell K. Handy, *Among the host of Heaven: the Syro-Palestinian pantheon as bureaucracy* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), Michael S. Heiser, "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God," in *BS 158* (2001): pp.52-74.

⁹⁸ Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," pp.526-527.

⁹⁹ Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," p.526. Also MacDonald, *'Monotheism'*, p.145.

¹⁰⁰ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp.78-79.

future hope seems to be absent? These are questions to explore. For now, however, the focus is directed to the Song's theology.

2.4 *Theology of the Song*

When dealing with the Song's theology, scholars usually focus their attention on two of its characteristics. The first is its prophetic character. The idea that the Song exhibits a character reminiscent of the prophetic literature is noted by some older scholars. Carl Cornill, for example, regarded the Song as a "Compendium der prophetischen Theologie"¹⁰¹ and argued that the correspondences of Deuteronomy 32:12 and 39 with Deutero-Isaiah prove that the Song belongs to the exilic period.¹⁰² Endorsing Cornill's view, Driver thought that the Song is "a presentation of prophetic thoughts in a poetic dress."¹⁰³ Unlike Cornill, however, he argued that the Song belongs to the late pre-exilic time due to its stronger similarities with the later prophets "of the Chaldean age" such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel.¹⁰⁴ Other scholars, namely, Anthony Philips,¹⁰⁵ von Rad,¹⁰⁶ Alday,¹⁰⁷ Mayes,¹⁰⁸ and Preuss,¹⁰⁹ also dated the Song to the exilic or post-exilic period based on the Song's apparent theological relations with Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah. However, not all follow Cornill's lead although they agree on the Song's prophetic character.¹¹⁰ The second characteristic which scholars who argue for the Song's late dating points to is its traces of Wisdom teaching.¹¹¹ Again, there are some scholars who think otherwise. Johannes de Moor points out that whilst the Song has many connections with late writings such as prophetic books, wisdom, and the Deuteronomic literature, this does not mean that it is of a late date because it is extremely difficult to ascertain the direction of

¹⁰¹ Carl H. Cornill, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1891), p.71.

¹⁰² Cornill, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p.71.

¹⁰³ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.345.

¹⁰⁴ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.347.

¹⁰⁵ Anthony Philips, *Deuteronomy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), pp.209-210, 216-219.

¹⁰⁶ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.200.

¹⁰⁷ Alday, *El Cántico de Moisés (Dt 32)*, pp.155-158.

¹⁰⁸ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, pp.381-382.

¹⁰⁹ Preuss, *Deuteronomium*, p.167.

¹¹⁰ Cassuto, who argues for the Song's early date, notes that Hosea's prophecy has great similarity with the Song. But due to the Song's originality, he believes that it is the Song which has exerted its influence on Hosea's prophecy, not vice versa. See Cassuto, "The Prophet Hosea," pp.99-100. Also Eissfeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1-43*, pp.18-19. Eissfeldt dates the Song early, arguing that the concept of divine retribution is not a young idea.

¹¹¹ Amongst them are, for example, Bentzen, Boston, von Rad, Alday, Hidal, and Mayes.

influence.¹¹² Furthermore, some Wisdom elements appear in pre-exilic literature and Levitical teaching.¹¹³ Likewise Sanders, who notes that sapiential thinking is especially assumed in some verses,¹¹⁴ holds that these verses imply "a condemnation of stupidity and a glorification of wisdom" which can be found from a very early period in the ancient Near East in such places as Ugarit, Emar, and Egypt.¹¹⁵ Arguing slightly differently, Mendenhall criticises the scholarly bias against early dating. Although his argument is levelled at Cornill's view concerning the Song as a product of the prophetic movement of the seventh century, it is also generally used against scholars who tend to think that traces of sapiential thinking only belonged to a later stage of Israel's religion.¹¹⁶

The examination of the Song's prophetic and wisdom characteristics have thus far not yielded concrete evidence about when or why the Song was composed. But from the foregoing brief survey what is apparent is that scholars affirm the presence of prophetic and wisdom elements in the Song. While these elements may not help in determining the Song's provenance, they nonetheless suggest how the Song could have functioned in Deuteronomy, particularly, with respect to its prophetic character. Apart from these issues, another important matter which scholars debate is whether the Song advocates monotheism. Monotheism in a strict sense refers to the worship of one God and a denial of the existence of other gods.¹¹⁷ Cornill and Driver insisted that the Song teaches monotheism in view of its correspondence with the 'monotheistic' Deutero-Isaiah.¹¹⁸ Albright also argued for the Song's "virile monotheism" but unlike Cornill and Driver, he thought that the Song is reminiscent of Samuel's day during which "Yahwism was fighting for its life against both external and internal foes."¹¹⁹ Eissfeldt who situated the Song in the pre-exilic period, recognised that although monotheism in a strict sense did not find expression until

¹¹² Johannes C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), p.155, n.245.

¹¹³ Wright, "Lawsuit," pp.54-55. Wright reckons that both the teaching and rain motifs in v.2 are examples that appeared in pre-Exilic royal-theology literature and Levitical teaching respectively.

¹¹⁴ Such as vv.2, 5-7, 20-21, 28-29.

¹¹⁵ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.83.

¹¹⁶ Mendenhall, "Samuel's 'Broken rib'," pp.170-171. Mendenhall points out, "Far too many scholars are suffering from the delusion that pre-monarchic Israel was 'too primitive' to have any highly developed theology, or that we have no sources for describing that theology."

¹¹⁷ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.433.

¹¹⁸ See Cornill, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p.71; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.91.

¹¹⁹ Albright, "Some Remarks," p.346.

Deutero-Isaiah, the expressions of YHWH's uniqueness and superiority already existed in the united monarchical period.¹²⁰

One often debated issue when discussing the Song's theology is whether the expression בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ("sons of Israel") in the MT constitutes the original reading of verse 8. The LXX has the variant reading ἀγγέλων θεοῦ ("angels of God"). This reference to celestial or divine beings is also extended to verse 43 as πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ ("all [you] sons of God"). In an influential article, Patrick Skehan contended that the original Hebrew text had בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים ("sons of God") and that this was modified to בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל for theological and apologetic reasons by pious Jews who lived in a predominantly polytheistic world.¹²¹ Many scholars have followed Skehan in viewing בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים as a more accurate reading.¹²² His view was strengthened by the discovery of two Qumran fragments, 4QDt^g and 4QDt^l, which read בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים and בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים respectively.¹²³ Some scholars point out that בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים resembles the expression *bn 'il (m)* "sons of Ilu" in Ugaritic, which also designates deities.¹²⁴ However in a recent article, Jan Joosten suggests that the readings of the Qumran and MT could go back to an older text that read verse 8b as יָצַב וְנָבְלַח עַמִּים לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי שַׂר אֱלֹהִים ("He fixed the boundaries of peoples according to the number of the sons of Bull El").¹²⁵ Joosten believes that the MT reading is a result of miscopying of שַׂר אֱלֹהִים ("Bull El") due to a

¹²⁰ Eissfeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1-43*, pp.19-20.

¹²¹ Patrick W. Skehan, "The Structure of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy (Deut 32:1-43)," in *CBQ* 13.02 (1951): pp.153-163, especially p.154. In the light of Deuteronomy 4:19-20, Skehan argues that the "sons of God" in the Song are "associated with the heavenly bodies as in some sense the 'gods' of the nations foreign to Israel." This interpretation, he believes, would "achieve consistency" if the heavenly bodies were meant "as types of real spiritual being" who guard the individual nations and who in turn are subject to YHWH."

¹²² See Albright, "Some Remarks," p.341; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.379; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.384; John W. Wevers, *LXX: Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (Atlanta: Scholarly Press, 1995), pp.512-513; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.514; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.155-158; Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), p.797; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.444; MacDonald, 'Monotheism', pp.89-92. To be sure בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים is also a description for divine beings in Gen. 6:2, 4; Ps 29:1, 89:7; Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7.

¹²³ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.156. Other confirmation is also found in the ancient Greek papyrus Fouad 266 which seems to represent the original translation of the LXX, ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ. See also Wevers, *LXX: Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy*, p.513.

¹²⁴ See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.157; MacDonald, 'Monotheism', p.91 and McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.454. However McConville cautions that the term "sons of God" does not imply a genealogical relationship between the gods. He reckons that the biblical notion of the divine council is "closer to the Syro-Phoenician cult of Baalsamem than to that of the Ugaritic."

¹²⁵ Jan Joosten, "A Note on the Text of Deuteronomy xxxii 8," in *VT* 57 (2007), pp.548-555.

dittography of the *yod*¹²⁶ while the Qumran reading is a result of an intentional omission of the word שר (“bull”) for theological reasons.¹²⁷ Essentially, the reason for the expression לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי שַׂר אֵל (“according to the number of the sons of Bull El”) was that the author of the Song had wanted to use the polytheistic worldview of his times to develop a revolutionary theology that disassociates YHWH from Elyon and Bull El.¹²⁸ The Song’s alleged polytheistic background, if the LXX or Qumran reading of verse 8b is adopted, could have been problematical to readers who insist on the Song’s monotheistic stance: does YHWH sanction the veneration of other deities and if so, how does such a view fit with Deuteronomy 32:39, an apparently monotheistic affirmation? Readers therefore have to decide if the Song advocates a strict monotheistic view. Both Sanders and Macdonald hold that the Song does not deny the existence of other gods.¹²⁹ Their view is supported by Juha Pakkala, who examines passages which exhibit monotheistic traits in the Deuteronomistic History¹³⁰ and concludes that these passages do not “add up to real monotheism.”¹³¹ Rather, they advocate “intolerant monolatry” which demands the exclusive worship of YHWH without denying the existence of other gods.¹³² Pakkala claims that there is no evidence in Israel’s pre-exilic religion to show that other gods were prohibited in Israel.¹³³ Due to a plurality of religious influences,¹³⁴ Israel engaged in the worship of

¹²⁶ Joosten, “A Note on the Text,” p.551.

¹²⁷ Joosten, “A Note on the Text,” p.551. One reason for the omission, Joosten argues, is that the word שר is too theologically embarrassing to be retained after אֵל (“El”) had been identified with the God of Israel.

¹²⁸ Joosten, “A Note on the Text,” p.554

¹²⁹ Sanders, *Provenance*, pp. 75, 420, 426-429; MacDonald, *‘Monotheism’*, pp.85-95, 210. While Sanders points out that the Song is only monotheistic in the sense that it forbids the veneration of these gods, MacDonald argues that Deuteronomy as a whole does not present a doctrine of monotheism.

¹³⁰ Deut. 13; 17:2-7; the First Commandment; Shema Israel; Deut. 4:15-31; 7:1-6; 29:21-27; Jos. 23:7, 16; 24: 2-28; Judg. 2:1-3; 2:11-23; 3:5-8; 6:10, 25-32; 8:33-34; 10:6-16; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; 8:8; 12:10, 21; 26:19; 1 Kgs 3:2-3; 8:60; 9:4-9; 11:2-10; 11:33; 12:28-33; 14:9b; 14:15; 14:22-24; 15:12-13; 16:13, 26; 31-33; 1 Kgs 18; 21:26; 22:54; 2 Kgs 1:1-8; 3:2b; 5:15, 17; 10:18-29; 11:18; 16:3-4; 17:7-20, 24-41; 18:4; 19:15-19; 21:3-9, 21; 22:1-23:30.

¹³¹ Juha Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry in the Deuteronomistic History* (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 1999), p.1.

¹³² Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, pp.1, 224-225, 227. According to Pakkala, unlike the other nations in the ancient Near East in which the divine “was construed in many gods who form the symbolic system of the divine,” Israel’s pre-exilic religion functions with one divinity, YHWH. See also Frank E. Eakin, “Yahwism and Baalism before the Exile,” in *JBL* 84 (1965): pp.407-414.

¹³³ See also Robert K. Gnuse, *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Bob Becking, Meindert Dijkstra, Marjo C.A. Korpel, and Karel J.H. Vriezen (eds.), *Only One God?: Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).

ancestors, the host of heaven and members of the divine council, and sacred trees.¹³⁵ But the only embargo was that no other god was allowed to share the same level as YHWH.¹³⁶ This suggests that Israel's pre-exilic religion was monolatrous but was certainly tolerant.¹³⁷ Pakkala believes that intolerant monolatry only arose in the exilic situation, during which radical severance of ties with the other gods was demanded and exclusive devotion to YHWH was the only legitimate choice.¹³⁸ Because of this, a clear shift in attitude towards the other gods can be seen in the Deuteronomistic History as the late exilic editors asserted the prohibition of foreign worship.¹³⁹ For Pakkala, the Song contains a large 'intolerant' section in verses 12-39.¹⁴⁰

Even if the Song assumed the existence of other gods,¹⁴¹ this is hardly surprising given the fact that it was composed in the milieu of the polytheistic ancient Near East under which the Israelites could have been led to worship other gods. In this context, as de Moor explains, the Song is able to demand undivided devotion to YHWH while at the same time "freely [speaking] of other gods in a way that became totally unacceptable to later generations of monotheistic purists."¹⁴² The fact that verse 8 could be easily misunderstood to imply that YHWH was subordinated to עֲלֵיָן has led de Moor to think that the poet "reveals a lack of concern typical of a faith in transition from polytheism to the recognition of one deity above all others."¹⁴³ Concerning this, however, it should be noted that if there was an alleged "lack of concern" on the poet's part it was precisely because there could have been no misunderstanding on the part of the hearers to whom the Song was originally composed. De Moor rightly points out that the other gods are subordinated to YHWH

¹³⁴ Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, pp.1, 224-225. Pakkala notes the various religious influences: Canaanite, southern nomadic, Aramean nomadic, religion of refugees and other Semitic groups from Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Egypt.

¹³⁵ Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, pp. 230, 181-187.

¹³⁶ Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, p.227.

¹³⁷ Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, p.227.

¹³⁸ Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, p.239.

¹³⁹ Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, p.239.

¹⁴⁰ Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry*, p.110.

¹⁴¹ But see David E. Stevens, "Does Deuteronomy 32:8 refer to 'Sons of God' or 'Sons of Israel'," in *BS* 154 (1997): pp.131-41. See vv.8, 12, 16, 17, 21, 37, 38, and also 43, if the Qumran or LXX reading is adopted.

¹⁴² De Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, p.156.

¹⁴³ De Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, pp.156-157.

and are made instruments of his wrath.¹⁴⁴ He believes that they “take the form of theriomorphic demons, just like the poison-squirting deities in the Middle-Assyrian incantation” and identifies them as רַעַב (“Ra’ab), רִשְׁפָּי (“Resheph”), and קִטֵּב (“Qeteb”) in verse 24, as in Habakkuk 3:4ff.¹⁴⁵ Although Sanders, MacDonald, and Pakkala may have insisted that the Song does not imply a strict form of monotheism since the existence of other gods is not denied, it does not follow that the veneration of these divine beings would not be vehemently criticised. This is clear from the Song itself and Deuteronomy 31.¹⁴⁶ In fact the criticism levelled at Israel’s foreign worship is so intense that it suggests a grave situation as though “Yahwism was fighting for its life,” as Albright aptly describes it.¹⁴⁷ Of course this does not necessarily mean that one needs to date the Song with Eissfeldt and Albright to the time of Samuel¹⁴⁸ or to the exilic period, which Pakkala’s intolerant monolatry of the Song would suggest, simply because the Song is silent about its provenance. Although the debate over the issue of monotheism cannot provide definite evidence regarding the Song’s origin, Pakkala’s analysis has furnished some possible reasons why Israel may have had a strong tendency towards apostasy and syncretism in her Yahwistic worship. In its zeal to disparage foreign gods the Song’s call for continuous allegiance presupposes that not only is YHWH the only powerful and reliable rock there is, he is also the God of antiquity since the beginning of Israel’s history. Hence it follows that forsaking YHWH for other gods is utterly foolhardy, ungrateful, and disloyal. In this light, Mendenhall’s criticism of Wright’s view of verses 36-43 as “generalized expressions of hope” may be justified.¹⁴⁹ For Mendenhall, the Song’s assurances are actually polemical assertions which aim to evoke Israel’s loyalty by contrasting YHWH’s potency with the impotence of the other gods.¹⁵⁰ In this sense it is rather like Deutero-Isaiah, in which the power of YHWH to save comes along with strong polemic against the futility of worshipping other gods. Monotheism – or the belief in YHWH’s supremacy – is essential to the Song’s message. This also becomes a factor in making it suitable for inclusion and presentation in a larger block of materials.

¹⁴⁴ De Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, p.157.

¹⁴⁵ De Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, p.157. Also Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.193-200.

¹⁴⁶ Deut. 32:19-25; 31:16-21.

¹⁴⁷ Albright, “Some Remarks,” p.346.

¹⁴⁸ Albright, “Some Remarks,” p.346.

¹⁴⁹ See p.23, n.87 above.

¹⁵⁰ Mendenhall, “Samuel’s ‘Broken rib’,” p.177.

2.5 *Summary*

The above review of the Song's historical allusions, language, literary form, and theology should suffice for our purpose of examining its contents. Despite the diversity of opinions, the dating of the Song remains uncertain.¹⁵¹ Neither is there a conclusive reason for its composition. Its modified lawsuit pattern mixed with wisdom, didactic, prophetic, and hymnic elements compounds the difficulty of specifying a setting or period to explain its existence. Studying the Song itself, hence, leaves open important questions about its origin and purpose. Nevertheless, the fruit of this enquiry may be brought to bear on the Song's narrative function in Deuteronomy. We have observed a number of features from this enquiry which indicate the Song's potency as a message to Israel, and may explain why it was included in the larger blocks of material intended to help Israel understand its origin and destiny. Most significantly, the Song's mixed genre, especially its prophetic and didactic elements, and its monotheistic or intolerant monolatrous theology, readily account for YHWH's past judgement and also his power to restore and sustain Israel's life in the future. Therefore, the need for more synchronic study of the Song remains.¹⁵² Hence, a review of the works done by Watts, Weitzman, Britt, and Leuchter follows.

3. The Narrative Role of the Song in Deuteronomy

3.1 *Preliminary*

Ronald Clements has pointed out that the reason for the Song's inclusion in Deuteronomy is due to "its suitability as a further warning to Israel against her continued disobedience and apostasy."¹⁵³ But Clements believes that the Song's primary purpose lies in its message of Israel's vindication over her enemies.¹⁵⁴ His idea of future warning is echoed by Macdonald. He highlights the continuity of the Song as a witness and regular reminder to Israel and argues that the Song is composed in such a way that it can be used to "engage each new generation" for the purpose of

¹⁵¹ See also MacDonal, '*Monotheism*', p.140.

¹⁵² As Allen affirms, "The starting point for interpreting Deut 32 is its narrative context within Deuteronomy itself." He points out that the Song functions as part of the "testamentary discourse of Deut. 31-34 and its content and purpose are described in Deut.31:14-30 and 32:44-47." See Allen, *Deuteronomic Re-presentation*, pp.24-25.

¹⁵³ Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," p.526.

¹⁵⁴ Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," p.527.

“provoking a deep heart-searching in her whenever it is recited.”¹⁵⁵ But the Song’s narrative function is by no means restricted to being an assurance and a future warning, as the following survey shows.

3.2 *A Witness in Memorable Summary Form*

James Watts argues that the Song’s compositional goal in Deuteronomy is to capture the essential Deuteronomic themes in a memorable way.¹⁵⁶ Hence the Song’s placement and emphasis are important ingredients to this end. The Song is strategically placed towards the end of Deuteronomy to conclude the narrative in a climactic finale¹⁵⁷ while its theocentric emphasis helps in appropriating the narrative “as authoritative guide for the readers’ beliefs and lives.”¹⁵⁸ Watts argues that the Song shares the same function as the law in that they are both witnesses against Israel.¹⁵⁹ Their close relationship is expressed by the fact that they were both written by Moses but while the law is transmitted to the Levites and elders, the Song is taught to the whole people.¹⁶⁰ The difference in transmission, he reckons, suggests that the Song is a better medium to “transmit Deuteronomic notions to a larger audience than the law itself.”¹⁶¹ Watts notes some linguistic and thematic connections between the Song and Deuteronomy. Linguistically, the Song shares a number of ideas with Deuteronomy expressed in similar vocabulary. Example are Israel’s “end” (אַחֲרֵיתָּהּ, Deut. 32:20, 29; cf. Deut. 4:30; 8:16; 11:12; 30:19), the appeal to “the heavens” and “the earth” (הַשָּׁמַיִם and הָאָרֶץ, Deut. 32:1; cf. Deut. 4:26; 30:19; 31:28), Israel’s “corruption” (שָׁחָתָהּ, Deut. 32:5; cf. Deut. 31:29), Israel’s “provoking” YHWH (כָּעַסָּהּ, Deut. 32:16, 19, 21; cf. Deut. 4:25; 9:18; 31:29), “foreign gods” (נֹכְרִים, Deut. 32:12; cf. Deut. 31:16), YHWH “hiding” his “face” (סָתַר and פָּנָיו, Deut. 32:20; cf. Deut. 31:17-18), YHWH’s “anger” that “devours” (אָכַל and אָפִי, Deut. 32:22; cf. Deut. 31:17) and the idea that the “elders” are the processors of tradition (זִקְנֵי, Deut. 32:7; cf. Deut.

¹⁵⁵ MacDonald, *'Monotheism'*, pp. 144-145.

¹⁵⁶ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp. 67, 80, 186-187, 193.

¹⁵⁷ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp. 186-187.

¹⁵⁸ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp. 186-190.

¹⁵⁹ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p. 66. Watts argues that the attempt to understand the plot relations between the Song and the prose must begin with a consideration of its nature and relationship to the law depicted in the context of Deuteronomy 31.

¹⁶⁰ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp. 66-67. Cf. Deut. 31:9, 25, 28.

¹⁶¹ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p. 67. Watts suggests that the Song is a “popular synopsis of the law.”

31:9, 28).¹⁶² Thematically, the Song reinforces Deuteronomy's predictions of Israel's apostasy (Deut. 31:16-21, 26-29) and even intensifies the idea of Israel's disobedience and punishment by depicting her apostasy as having already happened.¹⁶³ Arguing further for the Song's narrative function, Watts also identifies a thematic connection between the Song and the Blessing of Moses (Deut. 33). Contrasting them in terms of tone and theme, Watts points out that the Song's statement of hope has been deliberately scaled down or "obscured" to an extent that it is impossible to find much hope for Israel in it¹⁶⁴ while the Blessing is "unusually positive."¹⁶⁵ He is then led to conclude that the Song is "dark and ominous, predicting apostasy and punishment" whereas the Blessing is "light and optimistic, foreseeing fidelity and prosperity."¹⁶⁶ Hence for Watts, both poems are put together into Deuteronomy to express "a forceful picture of the bad and good in Israel's history."¹⁶⁷ Another way in which the Song works in Deuteronomy, Watts argues, is through its characterisation of YHWH and Moses in that the Song utilises emotive metaphors and images to portray YHWH's range of responses and characteristics¹⁶⁸ while at the same time reinforcing through its wisdom elements the image of Moses as the "prophet and sage *par excellence*."¹⁶⁹ With Moses' characterisation, the Song as a result creates a sense of tension to illustrate the consequences of angering YHWH by saying that even Israel's great mediator was not spared when he disobeyed YHWH.¹⁷⁰

In sum, Watts is convinced that the Song shares with the law the function of witness against Israel, with each having a different mode of transmission: the Song by

¹⁶² See Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp.67-68. Besides the linguistic affinities with the prose, the Song also shares rare vocabulary with the Blessing of Moses in Deuteronomy 33: "Jeshurun" (יְשׁוּרֻן), Deut. 32:15; cf. 33:5, 26), "falling rain" (עֶרֶף, and קֶטֶר, Deut. 32:2; cf. 33:28), and Israel riding on "high places" (בְּמִזֵּר, Deut. 32:13; cf. 33:13, 29). See also MacDonald, 'Monotheism', pp.145-146.

¹⁶³ Cf. Deut. 4:1-40; 29:16-30:20. See Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.69.

¹⁶⁴ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.70.

¹⁶⁵ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.70.

¹⁶⁶ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.70.

¹⁶⁷ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp.71-72.

¹⁶⁸ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp.72-73. Metaphors and images such as YHWH's care, anger, and ferocity as a warrior. YHWH is also depicted as Israel's father and maker (v.6), an eagle caring for its young (v.11), and a mother giving birth (v.18).

¹⁶⁹ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.72.

¹⁷⁰ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp.72-73. Watts comments, "The poignant contrast created by the placement of these hymns [both the Song of Moses in Exodus and Deuteronomy] at opposite ends of Moses' career highlights the ambivalence in the Pentateuch's characterization of Moses: the mediator between God and Israel always represents one to the other but is himself neither." See also Olson, *Death of Moses*, pp.20-21, 133-140, 157-158.

“oral transmission and recital,” and the law by “written transmission and promulgation.”¹⁷¹ The Song’s linguistic and thematic links with Deuteronomy lead him to conclude that it serves as “a summary of the Deuteronomic themes in a memorable form.”¹⁷² As Deuteronomy 31:16-22 presupposes the Song’s popularity and acceptance, its insertion into Deuteronomy is hence intended to “gain the Song’s influence for the book as a whole.”¹⁷³ The Song’s narrative position at the near-end of Deuteronomy and its emotive language bring the narrative to a climactic effect for the purpose of delivering the Deuteronomic message forcefully to its readers.¹⁷⁴ Finally, as an introduction to the Deuteronomistic History, the Song invites the readers into the subsequent history of Israel as it works with the Blessing to serve as “previews to the following history.”¹⁷⁵

Watts has brought out the importance of seeing the Song not as a secondary piece of poetry but a strategic device inserted in the narrative to crystallise the Deuteronomic message. Watts has shown the linguistic and thematic connection between the Song and Deuteronomy. But, while Watts is right about the Song intensifying the sense of Israel’s disobedience, I would also argue that the Song’s particular perspective – with what might be called a missiological aspect - might have further clarified its function in Deuteronomy. The Song expresses an understanding of Israel’s centrality in YHWH’s purpose for the world through the theme of divine vindication and vengeance conveyed in the raising up of an unnamed enemy against Israel (Deut. 32:21c-25), the punishing of that enemy in return for invading Israel (Deut. 32:28-36), and eventually the calling of the nations to rejoice in his future deeds (Deut. 32:43). All these highlight YHWH’s sovereignty over international affairs, particularly, in his choice of Israel as his “consecrated people” (cf. Deut. 26:16-19). That other nations are invited to bear witness to YHWH’s vindication and vengeance suggests that Israel’s failure has not frustrated YHWH’s universal dealing with the families of the earth (Deut. 26:19; 32:43a; cf. Gen. 12:2-3). Rather, his acts

¹⁷¹ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.79.

¹⁷² Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp.67, 80, 193. Echoing R.A. Carlson that the Song is a “compendium of Deuteronomic ideology,” Watts asserts, “The Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 is a poetic compendium of Deuteronomic theology.” See R.A. Carlson, *David, the Chosen King: A Tradition-Historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), pp.235-237. See also MacDonald, ‘*Monotheism*’, pp.145-147.

¹⁷³ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.193.

¹⁷⁴ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.80.

¹⁷⁵ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.80.

of restoration and punishment are in themselves a demonstration of his justice and righteousness to all creation. While the Song intensifies a sense of Israel's failure, it also expresses the idea that YHWH has not abandoned his people despite their failure and exile (cf. Deut. 30:1-10; 32:36, 43), thus serving as an added impetus for Israel to insist on Yahwistic worship and obedience (cf. 1 Sam. 12:20-22).¹⁷⁶

Therefore, contrary to Watts, the Song is not entirely dark, ominous, and without hope even when read in its narrative context.¹⁷⁷ Rather, it brings Deuteronomy to a climax by showing that at the end it is YHWH who would testify to his own glory as the supreme deity, and uphold his sovereign reign over Israel and all the nations. It is only by doing so that he is able to ensure future hope for Israel and set her over the nations as a blessing to them (Deut. 26:18-19; cf. Gen. 12:2-3). This raises a further question about Watts' view that the Song and the Blessing create "a harsh juxtaposition" to project a picture of "the bad and good in Israel's history."¹⁷⁸ In terms of content, Deuteronomy 33:2-25 focus on Israel's future settlement in the land while the Song focuses on Israel's life in the land and what remains striking is that both poetic texts end with praise and worship (Deut. 32:43, 33:26-29). It may be possible to read the doxology in Deuteronomy 33:26-29 as reinforcing the Song's call to worship (32:43) with more exuberant praises, underscoring YHWH's greatness in terms of his power and faithfulness for Israel. Therefore, Deuteronomy 33 could be read as a continuation from the Song's call to proclaim the greatness of YHWH (cf. 32:3). Both the Song and Blessing can be seen as having a unified aim of inspiring faith in Israel, whether in times of conquest and prosperity in the land or in times of suffering and exile from it.¹⁷⁹ Watts' description of the Song as "a summary of Deuteronomic themes" is also picked up by Dennis Olson and MacDonald. Identifying the Song and "the book of the law" as "a witness" (Deut. 31:21, 26), Olson argues that they are "reliable summaries and stable witnesses to how things

¹⁷⁶ See also Jean-Pierre Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p.178. Sonnet argues that the final comments of the Song have "positive accents" in that Moses "regains hopeful perspectives on Israel's 'long life' in the land."

¹⁷⁷ See also Olson, *Death of Moses*, p.138; Allen, *Deuteronomic Re-presentation*, p.31.

¹⁷⁸ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.71.

¹⁷⁹ See Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, pp.220-221 [Also quoted in Watts, *Psalm and Story*, p.71, n.4]: "The canonical function of ch. 33 serves to place the law fully within the perspective of divine sovereignty, shifting the focus from Israel's behavior to God's ultimate purpose. The Mosaic legislation is thus subordinated to the *overriding purpose of God for his people and the final eschatological realization of his will is attested to in spite of the nation's failure* (Italics mine)."

really are in the relationships of God, humans, and the world.”¹⁸⁰ As for MacDonald, he argues that the Song summarises the theology of Deuteronomy, repeats Moses’ words to the subsequent generations, and fulfils the promise as stated in Deuteronomy 30:14 in which “the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (cf. Deut. 31:19; NASB).¹⁸¹ McDonald points out that there are shared expressions between the Song and Deuteronomy such as heaven–earth, faithful, corrupt, allotted inheritance, and unknown gods, to name but a few.¹⁸² McDonald has rightly noted the Song’s connection with Deuteronomy via an important theme, that is, YHWH’s claim to Israel’s devotion and his uniqueness among gods (Deut. 32:39).¹⁸³ However, the idea that the Song is a summary of Deuteronomic themes may be problematical because it does not take into account important themes that are absent in the Song.¹⁸⁴ But having said this, we can also look at Watts’ argument from a different angle and agree that the Song does in fact summarise some themes of Deuteronomy. The reason why the Song seems to pick up certain Deuteronomic themes and bypass others is perhaps because it is concerned to crystallise the essence of the Deuteronomic message. This essential message may in turn serve as a compass for a better understanding of what the book is about in its final form.

The Song has a special place in Deuteronomy because of its exceptional power in chiding, teaching, warning, foretelling, and reassuring its audience about YHWH and his sovereign acts. The aforesaid reservations notwithstanding, we can concur with Watts that the Song has a “climactic effect” in Deuteronomy by picking up significant Deuteronomic ideas.¹⁸⁵ Watts has certainly highlighted the need for further examination of the narrative role of poetry, and demonstrated how an important poem such as the Song can be read as an integral part of Deuteronomy. In fact, in Chapter Four I will also argue for the Song’s significant role in our reading of Genesis-Kings.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ Olson, *Death of Moses*, p.138.

¹⁸¹ MacDonald, ‘*Monotheism*’, p.147.

¹⁸² MacDonald, ‘*Monotheism*’, pp.145-146.

¹⁸³ MacDonald, ‘*Monotheism*’, p.148.

¹⁸⁴ See more discussion of the Song’s difference with Deuteronomy in Chapter Three.

¹⁸⁵ Watts, *Psalm and Story*, pp.78-79.

¹⁸⁶ See Chapter Four for the Song’s function in Genesis-Kings.

3.3 *Moses' Final Teaching and Witness*

Like Watts, Steven Weitzman examines the centrality of songs in biblical narratives. But unlike him, Weitzman believes that the Song's narrative role in Deuteronomy is shaped by the literary convention called the "last-words literary topos."¹⁸⁷ The "last-words" literary convention is based on the ancient Near Eastern belief that the dying person somehow possessed the ability to prophesy the future.¹⁸⁸ In the last-words literature, the parting words of the dying were usually introduced by prologues that described the speaker anticipating his death.¹⁸⁹ Weitzman argues that Deuteronomy 31:14-30 as a prologue to the Song in fact shares similar features with these ancient Near Eastern literary forms because the narrative links the Song with the impending death of Moses.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, Moses was also believed to have been granted a vision of the future before his death.¹⁹¹ However, despite Moses' vision of the future, Weitzman thinks the Song is best described as an instruction, not a prophecy, because its fusion of didactic and legal elements, as well as the fact that the prologue, actually correspond to the literary logic of the last-words literature in which the parting words of the dying "are explicitly represented as instructions or teachings."¹⁹² Citing examples from *The Instruction of Ptah-hotep* (Egyptian) and the Greek historian Xenophon, Weitzman points out that the words of the dying were not merely seen as having some prophetic power but also pedagogical intention.¹⁹³ This is especially significant, he notes, because the dying Moses was himself a teacher of YHWH's commandments.¹⁹⁴

For Weitzman, not only is the Song Moses' final teaching, it is also a "witness against Israel" on the basis of Deuteronomy 31.¹⁹⁵ This dual function of Moses' last

¹⁸⁷ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.37. See Weitzman's critique of scholars' comparative method, especially that of Watts in pp.6-11.

¹⁸⁸ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.41.

¹⁸⁹ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.38.

¹⁹⁰ See more explanation on the redactor's re-interpretation of the Song in Weitzman, *Song and Story*, pp.38-41.

¹⁹¹ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.41. Weitzman points out that in the Testament of Moses, Moses prophesies "the history of Israel from the conquest to the end of the Second Temple Period." Some rabbis believe that Moses was given a vision of the eschatological Jerusalem.

¹⁹² Weitzman, *Song and Story*, pp.41-42.

¹⁹³ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.43.

¹⁹⁴ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, pp.43-44. Contra Watts, Weitzman therefore sees the "torah" and the "song" in Deuteronomy 31:24-26 as one document. He prefers to translate the word "torah" as "instruction or teaching" as this rendering is consistent with how the word is used in Deuteronomy and other didactic texts, such as the Proverbs.

¹⁹⁵ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.44.

words as teaching and witness has a striking resemblance to the sayings of an Assyrian sage, Ahiqar, whose teachings to his heir Nadan were preserved in a work known as the *Words of Ahiqar*.¹⁹⁶ Weitzman tries to strengthen his argument by tracing four motifs in the narrative section of the *Words of Ahiqar* which he thinks bear a remarkable similarity to Deuteronomy 31. The first motif is the idea of a successor, since Ahiqar, realising his impending death, appoints his nephew Nadan to be his heir. In Deuteronomy 31 Moses plays a more passive role but essentially a successor is also appointed, in this case by YHWH, to replace him (Deut. 31:14, 23).¹⁹⁷ The second motif is Nadan's betrayal of Ahiqar. Despite the many benefactions from Ahiqar, Nadan becomes ungrateful and plots against him. Similarly in Deuteronomy 31, the children of Israel are said to become ungrateful and rebellious against YHWH after benefitting from his gifts (Deut 31:16, 20).¹⁹⁸ The third motif is Ahiqar's disowning of Nadan, which parallels to Deuteronomy 31, where YHWH, foreseeing that Israel will become corrupt, declares that he will "forsake them and hide his face from them" (Deut. 31:17-18).¹⁹⁹ The final motif is the mode of transmission of the teaching in both written and oral form.²⁰⁰ Ahiqar is said to have issued his final teaching in oral form to his contemporary audience and in written form to an audience "at a spatial or temporal distance."²⁰¹ According to Deuteronomy 31, Moses first writes the Song down to recite it to the assembly of Israel and subsequently preserves the written Song beside the ark for future generations (Deut. 31:22-26).²⁰² But while the two narratives share similar themes, they also have significant differences.²⁰³ For instance, Ahiqar's final teaching is issued after the betrayal of Nadan but Moses' final teaching is issued to Israel in anticipation of her betrayal. In the Ahiqar narrative, the ungrateful character is assumed by Ahiqar's adopted son and successor Nadan, whereas in Deuteronomy 31 the erring character is not Joshua, who is to assume leadership, but the children of Israel. Furthermore, the instructor Ahiqar is also seen as the one who is betrayed, but

¹⁹⁶ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.45. According to Weitzman, the oldest version of the *Words of Ahiqar* was discovered on the island of Elephantine in southern Egypt.

¹⁹⁷ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.45.

¹⁹⁸ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.46.

¹⁹⁹ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.46.

²⁰⁰ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, pp.47-49.

²⁰¹ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.47.

²⁰² Weitzman, *Song and Story*, pp.47-48.

²⁰³ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.50.

in Deuteronomy 31, instead of the instructor Moses, the betrayed is YHWH.²⁰⁴ Yet the differences between the narratives, Weitzman argues, can be regarded as “theologizing adaptations” in that the story of the dying Ahiqar being betrayed by his adopted son is transformed into a story of a dying Moses foretelling the betrayal of YHWH by his adopted son, Israel.²⁰⁵ The contrast between these narratives reveals a common yet important trait, that is, the “intermingling of pedagogical language with legally tinged language of denunciation.”²⁰⁶

In Weitzman’s scheme, however, the last verse of the Song remains problematic. For him the Song’s “hopeful conclusion” does not cohere with the narrative’s description of its function as a punitive witness against Israel.²⁰⁷ In particular, he points out that Deuteronomy 31 does not anticipate the “hopeful conclusion” of the Song but only its “accusatory strain” (Deut. 31:17, 28). Seeing this, Weitzman tries to provide a rationale for the seeming discrepancy by eventually concluding with von Rad that “Deuteronomy 31 represents a misinterpretation of the Song.”²⁰⁸ Notwithstanding this, Weitzman believes that the redactor had nonetheless used the Song for his literary purpose because he saw that it reflects a pedagogical relationship between YHWH and Israel similar to that of Ahiqar and Nadan.²⁰⁹ More precisely, the redactor saw the same pedagogical problem which Ahiqar was trying to rectify, that is, the students’ resistance to learning.²¹⁰ This resulted in the Song’s inclusion in Deuteronomy for a simple reason: just as the *Words of Ahiqar* seek to overcome the “pupils’ resistance to their patron’s lessons,” the Song is a corrective of

²⁰⁴ This in fact can be read as a similarity if one were to take YHWH as the instructing patron, since he is the one instructing Moses to teach the Song to Israel (cf. Deut. 31:19).

²⁰⁵ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.51.

²⁰⁶ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, pp.50-51. Weitzman admits that the similarities between the two narratives can easily lead one to think that the author of Deuteronomy 31 may have borrowed elements from the story of Ahiqar. However he recognises the extreme difficulty to determine the direction of influence. He rather thinks that there is a “lost” literary convention from which these texts “inherited their common structure” (pp.49-50).

²⁰⁷ See Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.164.

²⁰⁸ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.164, n.46. He says, “Whatever this verse [v.43] says about the Song’s original message or compositional history, it does not appear to have played any role in the interpretation of the Song reflected in the preceding narrative. Deut. 31 echoes the Song at several points: e.g. 31:17, 20, 32:1. Note that these echoes refer only to the accusatory strain within the Song and that nowhere does Deut. 31 anticipate the Song’s hopeful conclusion. I thus find myself in agreement with von Rad, who concluded that the narrative of Deut. 31 represents a misinterpretation of the Song.”

²⁰⁹ See more details in Weitzman’s, *Song and Story*, pp.51-52.

²¹⁰ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.53.

the “forgetful, spoiled pupil,” Israel.²¹¹ In Weitzman’s view, then, the redactor of Deuteronomy saw Israel’s resistance and unteachability as serious threats to her relationship with YHWH. This explains the reason for Deuteronomy’s repeated exhortations to remember YHWH’s commandment.²¹² In this light, the Song is assigned a strategic role in Deuteronomy as Moses’ final prophetic teaching and witness to “dramatise the failure of the pedagogical relationship” between YHWH and Israel and simultaneously warn of “the consequences of that failure” so that Israel “will never forget the dangers of forgetting.”²¹³

The idea that the redactor used the ancient Near Eastern last-words literary convention to contextualise the Song seems an attractive way to understand the Song’s narrative function in Deuteronomy. Weitzman justifies this idea forcefully by showing how the narrative of the *Words of Ahiqar* has striking resemblances with that of the Song. In the light of the Song’s mixture of didactic and legal elements, Weitzman has rightly pointed out that the Song as Moses’ last words comes in as a form of final teaching and witness against Israel. In fact it may be added that the Song’s unique blending of didactic, legal, and also wisdom elements, not only coheres well with Deuteronomy’s general didactic emphasis, it also makes the Song a fitting reflection of Moses’ role as the great prophet, leader, and teacher of Israel (cf. Deut. 31: 14-30; 34:9-12). Furthermore, the Song’s aim of emphasising the peril of forgetting has highlighted the role of memory as a rhetorical device in the Song and Deuteronomy.²¹⁴ Despite this, Weitzman’s postulation that the hopeful elements in verse 43 do not fit the Song’s function remains puzzling.²¹⁵ Weitzman has failed to see that the theme of divine vindication and vengeance as expressed in verse 43 actually contributes to the overall missiological outlook of Deuteronomy.²¹⁶ Suffice it here to say that verse 43 in fact concludes the Song forcefully and appropriately by inviting the nations to bear witness to YHWH’s just and righteous acts of restoration and judgement. It is not unreasonable then to believe that the redactor was aware of the impact of this verse when he inserted the Song into Deuteronomy. If, as Weitzman himself argues, the redactor reckoned the Song to be Moses’ final teaching

²¹¹ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.54.

²¹² Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.55.

²¹³ Weitzman, *Song and Story*, p.55.

²¹⁴ See Introduction, pp.5-6 above.

²¹⁵ See Weitzman, *Song and Story*, pp.53, 164, n.46.

²¹⁶ See pp.35-36 above.

and witness against Israel, then the reason why he focused on the Song's accusatory strains was not because he had misunderstood the hopeful elements in verse 43. Quite the contrary, he did it precisely because he wanted to 'dramatise' his criticism of Israel's broken covenantal relationship and the consequences of that failure for two reasons: first, to lay stress on Israel's inability to fulfil her vocation as a witness to the world and second, to emphasise the fact that YHWH will himself bear witness to the nations concerning his righteousness and power, and affirm his faithfulness to his people at the end in spite of their failings.

3.4 *Part of a Textual Memorial*

Brian Britt offers a rather complex argument that sees the Song functions as part of a textual memorial in Deuteronomy. For him, if Deuteronomy were to be a "farewell speech of Moses," then the final chapters of Deuteronomy (Deut. 31-34) can be read as a peroration that recapitulates the themes of Moses' death, the Torah, and the commissioning of Joshua.²¹⁷ In this sense, he thinks that the designation of Deuteronomy 31-32 as a "witness" (עֵד) would reflect its function as a textual memorial in Deuteronomy 31-34.²¹⁸ Britt argues that within this textual memorial, the redactor had tried to harmonise two narrative strands: Moses' death (and Joshua's commission) and the writing and reciting of the Torah and song, in order to emphasise the importance of the Torah.²¹⁹ Because of the deliberate alternation between these two strands, the text within Deuteronomy 31-32 appears to be disjointed.²²⁰

So, if what Britt calls "the asynchronic narration in Deuteronomy 31-32" was to emphasise the importance of the Torah, how does it actually work out? According to Britt, this disjointed account creates two effects. First it ambiguates the chronology to focus the readers on the subject of textual transmission and leadership, and second, it gives the impression that the narrative in Deuteronomy 31-32 is not being

²¹⁷ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.358.

²¹⁸ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," pp. 358, 369-371. According to Britt, a philological survey of עֵד suggests that the word can be variously understood as repeat, surround, restore, or witness which carries a concrete physical quality like a stone monument and the two tablets of covenant text written by YHWH. He reckons that the Song can be described in these terms.

²¹⁹ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," pp.358-359.

²²⁰ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.360. Britt says that the reason for this "asynchrony" within the text, as he calls it, was because the redactor had chosen "a principle of inclusiveness (of a certain kind) over unity or precision" due to the importance of the text.

interrupted but is suspended in time.²²¹ When the narrative suspends time, the focus of Moses' death is shifted thrice to that of the Torah, which then follows by a harmonisation of the two narrative strands in Deuteronomy 32:44-47.²²² After this harmonisation, Deuteronomy 32:48-52 then resumes the focus of Moses' death and this focus remains throughout Deuteronomy 33-34.²²³ Britt observes that there is a close relationship between the two narrative strands:²²⁴ while both Joshua and the Torah are substitutes for Moses' authority,²²⁵ they are also "competing forms of authority."²²⁶ This antithesis is only resolved when the Torah is elevated over Joshua in Deuteronomy 32:46-47, as well as in Joshua 1:5-9.²²⁷ For Britt, hence, the storyline of Deuteronomy 31-32 "gives precedence to תּוֹרָה."²²⁸ Furthermore, Deuteronomy 33-34 also "echoes the priority of תּוֹרָה" although its focus is Moses' last words and death.²²⁹ Britt believes that by understanding Deuteronomy 31-32 this way and reading it as a textual memorial would take better account of its "details of narration, chronology, and focus" within Deuteronomy 31-34.²³⁰

Britt's hypothesis is interesting but not without its problems. If, as Britt suggests, the self-designation of Deuteronomy 31-32 as עָרַךְ carries a range of semantic nuances that reflect its didactic and memorial function, then it is possible to read Deuteronomy 31-32 as a textual memorial. It is also possible to reckon Deuteronomy 31-32 to be a textual memorial if, by virtue of the term 'memorial', the text is to be referred to as a perpetual testimony for the later generations of the

²²¹ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.364. Britt thinks that this disjointed account functions in a similar way as the Song (Deut. 32:1-43) and Blessing (Deut. 33:2b-29), although he, quite ironically, thinks that the Song and Blessing actually interrupt the narrative. E.g. compare Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.359 and p.364. In the former Britt says, "The narrative sections of Deuteronomy 31-32 frame the poetic texts Moses recites (the Song of 32:1-43 and the blessing in 33:2b-29), just as they form part of the overall frame of Deuteronomy. The poetic texts interrupt the narrative, deferring the presentation of what happens next." In the latter, he points out, "Instead of creating a sense that the flow of narration has been interrupted, the sustained asynchrony in Deuteronomy 31-32 instills a general sense of atemporality, as if time is suspended rather than interrupted. Like the song itself, which poetically summarizes the covenantal relationship, Deuteronomy 31-32 seems to suspend the flow of time."

²²² Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.364.

²²³ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.364.

²²⁴ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.364.

²²⁵ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.364.

²²⁶ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.364.

²²⁷ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," pp.364-365.

²²⁸ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.365.

²²⁹ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," pp.365-366. Britt argues that Deut. 33-34 forms "a kind of double appendix beyond the scope of Deut. 31-32." He also notes that the temporal term "since" in Deut. 34 has the effect of putting the narrative temporarily "outside the time frame."

²³⁰ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," pp.371, 374.

community it addresses. Britt rightly identifies the interaction between Moses' death (and Joshua's commission) and the Torah, and is helpful to suggest how these narrative strands could have been synthesised in Deuteronomy 32:44-47.²³¹ His analysis of the harmonisation of the narrative strands has its merit in that it gives a possible solution to the seemingly unclear chronology and structure of Deuteronomy 31-32. Despite this, two issues may be raised. The first has to do with the function of Deuteronomy 31-32. It still remains puzzling, to use Britt's own question: "Why did the redactor(s) assemble so composite a text?"²³² Britt suggests that the answers fall broadly into two groups: the text is either a "confused puzzle" or an "elusive but deliberate composition."²³³ Britt clearly prefers the second answer. But the question remains unexplored and the reason why the text has been deliberately composed to "ambiguate the chronology" remains unclear. In the process of ambiguating the chronology, an antithesis had to be created between Joshua and the Torah, with two of them becoming "competing forms of authority."²³⁴ But, is the antithesis necessary?²³⁵ Furthermore, what is the rhetorical effect of ambiguating the text and making the narrative suspended in time?

Britt's analysis of Deuteronomy 31-32 does not seem to have answered these questions. Admittedly, it may not be his aim to explain why Deuteronomy 31-32 have been structured this way but, rather, how the text can be understood since it was composed as such.²³⁶ His analysis presupposes that the text has a number of ambiguities, which he attributes to "several layers of redaction."²³⁷ These ambiguities arise because ancient redaction, apart from using "resumptive repetition" to link texts,

²³¹ Also Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, p.179.

²³² Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.360.

²³³ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.360.

²³⁴ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.364.

²³⁵ Interestingly, see also Olson, *Death of Moses*, pp.130-135. Unlike Britt, Olson does not see Joshua and תֹּרָה as competing forms of authority. Rather Joshua, תֹּרָה, and the Song are substitutions of Moses when he dies. Olson argues that the appointment of Joshua is crucial because the next generation needs a new human leader to interpret, proclaim, and act upon God's word in new situations. Moses' death also calls for the transference of his oral words to written text (31:9-13, 24-29). It follows that the *torah* is to be read to all Israelite adults and children every seven years during the Feast of Booths. Hence the periodic reading of the *torah* is to "transcend and overcome the limits of human time and mortality so the torah can be made new for each generation." Finally Moses' imminent death results in the composition of a song to function as "a witness for me [Yahweh] against the Israelites" (31:19).

²³⁶ See Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.358.

²³⁷ Britt, "Deuteronomy 31-32," p.366.

was not so much concerned with “seamlessness and continuity” as modern editing.²³⁸ But this conjecture remains contentious because it presupposes the redactor’s inability to modify ancient literary convention to achieve his compositional goal. The next issue concerns the implication of Britt’s extended reference of עֵד. Contrary to the description of Deuteronomy 31:19, Britt believes the designation עֵד is not only a reference to the Song but also to Deuteronomy 31-32 as a whole.²³⁹ But it remains unclear how the Song actually contributes to the purpose of Deuteronomy 31-32. In fact, it appears as if the significance of the Song has been decisively diminished in that, without it, the two narrative strands in Deuteronomy 31 would still be harmonised in Deuteronomy 32:44-47. But as it is, the Song is inserted between the alternation of the two strands and their harmonisation. Certainly Britt is aware that the Song does actually do something in Deuteronomy when he says that it “poetically summarises the covenantal relationship” and “suspends the flow of time” in the narrative.²⁴⁰ But Britt does not elaborate how the Song as a summary sheds light on its role in the textual memorial. If Deuteronomy 31-32 as a whole was a textual memorial meant to “suspend the flow of time” within Deuteronomy 31-34, how the Song which also “suspends the flow of time” fits in remains unanswered.

The Song is certainly emphatic about the Torah, as the subsequent chapters of this thesis will show. Therefore, if the idea of a textual memorial were to be a tenable option to reading Deuteronomy 31-32, it must consider how the Song fits into the chronological structure in Deuteronomy 31-32 and contributes to the emphasis of the Torah in Deuteronomy 32:44-47. But, even if the Song were to be understood as Moses’ last attempt to emphasise the importance of obeying the Torah, the question remains as to what specifically the Song is emphasising with regards to the Torah. Exploring this would also require taking into account that the Song does not contain direct reference to the Torah, as well as how such an emphasis might relate to important concerns of Deuteronomy such as the idea of worship.

²³⁸ Britt, “Deuteronomy 31-32,” p.367.

²³⁹ Britt, “Deuteronomy 31-32,” pp.369-370. Britt concurs with Tigay that the term ‘witness’ is originally a reference to the Song alone in the JE source (Deut. 31:19) but is extended to the תוֹרָה in the D source (Deut. 31:26).

²⁴⁰ Britt, “Deuteronomy 31-32,” p.364.

3.5 *A Propagandistic Appeal*

The final review concerns Mark Leuchter's hypothesis. Although Leuchter is primarily concerned with the Song's provenance, his view on its function in Deuteronomy is nonetheless useful to our purpose here. Essentially, Leuchter believes that the Song belongs to the period of the tenth to ninth centuries B.C. in which it emerged as part of a polemic of the northern Levites against monarchical kings particularly Solomon and Jeroboam.²⁴¹ The Song was redacted into the Deuteronomic corpus during Josiah's reign to serve the northern Levitical interests of publicising Josiah's ambitions in the north. In order to situate the Song in the pre-exilic period and show its association with Josiah's reign, Leuchter establishes the following line of thought from several scholarly contributions: the pre-exilic Deuteronomic corpus received a 'frame' during the exilic period to facilitate the redaction of Deuteronomy into the Deuteronomistic History (Jon Levenson and Richard Friedman);²⁴² the Song was the very document that was found in the temple during Josiah's time (Jack Lundbom).²⁴³ Besides inputs from Levenson, Friedman, and Lundbom, Leuchter argues that, because the Song is referred to as part of the Deuteronomic torah (Deut. 31:26),²⁴⁴ it could form part of the same book which was discovered in the temple during Josiah's time (2 Kgs 22:8).²⁴⁵ Furthermore, Deuteronomy 4:1-40, a text which is generally believed to be exilic in origin, contains clear references to the Song. This, Leuchter thinks, may suggest that the author of Deuteronomy 4:1-40 must have worked with a corpus that contained the Song.²⁴⁶ Still further, Leuchter points out that the style of the Blessing of Moses is similar to that of the Blessing of Jacob at the end of Genesis (Gen. 49). In this way, the link between Moses and Jacob "creates continuity between the Patriarchal narratives of Genesis and Exodus/Wilderness narratives involving Moses."²⁴⁷ The Blessing of Moses then provides "a rhetorical balance between the final strophes of Genesis and

²⁴¹ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.317. Leuchter comments, "The Deuteronomists' manipulation of the Song matches their manipulation of 10th century historiographic traditions relating to Solomon and Jeroboam." See also Nigosian, "Linguistic patterns," pp.223-224.

²⁴² Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" pp.297-298.

²⁴³ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.297. Moreover Lundbom also argues that the Song is connected with the pre-exilic Deuteronomic corpus because of its description as "a form of torah" and its introduction in Deuteronomy 31 is constructed in line with the methods found in the pre-exilic edition of Deuteronomy. See more details in Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" pp.298-299.

²⁴⁴ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.299.

²⁴⁵ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.299.

²⁴⁶ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.299.

²⁴⁷ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.300.

Deuteronomy, demarcating the basic parameters of the Pentateuch.”²⁴⁸ This link between the Blessing of Jacob and Moses is important for Leuchter in order for him to attribute this Pentateuchal feature to an exilic “Zadokite redaction” which, he claims, would support the Song’s association with a “Josianic-era redaction.”²⁴⁹

Leuchter also identifies four characteristics of the Song which he believes support a Josianic-era redaction. First, the Song is “overtly categorised” as Moses’ teaching. Leuchter sees this feature as an indication that the Song is deliberately categorised as part of the counter-Solomonic tradition, a tradition that has more commonality with the Josianic-era texts.²⁵⁰ Next, he cites the Song’s form and function as a prophetic *rib* of Moses, which further links the Song to the Josianic period because it was that period that saw the emergence of “the legislation concerning legitimate prophecy” and the transformation of Moses into “the prophet *par excellence* (Deut. 18:15-22).”²⁵¹ The third characteristic is the direct parallel of Deuteronomy 32:47 to cuneiform law. Leuchter points out that the lawcode and the Song share similar function to “the Akkadian political literature that confronted Israel and Judah as vassal states of Assyria,” specifically, Esarhaddon’s vassal treaties.²⁵² But instead of referring to this Mesopotamian influence as an indication of Israel’s immersion in that culture, Leuchter argues for the opposite in that the political climate at that time actually saw the emergence of the Josianic-era redaction of Deuteronomy which used “external Akkadian themes and tropes” to compete with the weakening yet threatening Assyria.²⁵³ Finally, that the Song is a part of the pre-exilic Deuteronomy is indicated through its echoes in Jeremiah’s message against the north during the Josianic period, and this further raises the likelihood of the Song’s association with the Josianic edition of Deuteronomy.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” p.300.

²⁴⁹ Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” p.300.

²⁵⁰ Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” p.301.

²⁵¹ Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” p.301. Leuchter also argues that it was during this time that many inter-textual connections were made between the DH and earlier prophetic traditions “to construct a single, consistent prophetic tradition.”

²⁵² Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” pp.302-303. Leuchter argues, “Given the influence of Esarhaddon’s vassal treaties on the form of the Deuteronomic corpus, it is reasonable to view The Song’s position as informed by similar influences.”

²⁵³ Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” pp.302-304.

²⁵⁴ More details in Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” pp.304-306.

Having associated the Song with the Josianic-era redaction, Leuchter argues that the Song's redaction into Deuteronomy was probably carried out in the context of the Assyrian crisis to teach Judah the importance of the prophets' words.²⁵⁵ The reason for such a deduction, he believes, lies in the Song's placement as the "coda of the pre-exilic Deuteronomic Torah."²⁵⁶ He points out that such a literary construction was part of an "extensive hermeneutical use of literary sequences and structures in the Deuteronomistic History during the Neo-Assyrian period."²⁵⁷ Leuchter relies heavily on the view of Bernard Levinson that during that period there was some form of textual manipulations to reinterpret the older lawcode to justify the agenda of the Deuteronomists.²⁵⁸ Leuchter argues that one of these manipulations was to place the Song as a conclusion to the pre-exilic Deuteronomic law and in doing so, clarify the structural relationship between the Song and the Decalogue (the pre-exilic beginning of the law).²⁵⁹ Leuchter states, "The paralleling of Deut. v and xxxii – and thus the paralleling of the Decalogue with the Song – must have served some specific ideological and even propagandistic purpose."²⁶⁰ Hence, like Levinson who thinks that Deuteronomy represents the Deuteronomists' innovative use of recognised and ancient tradition, Leuchter argues that Deuteronomy's strategic link with Moses, Sinai/Horeb, the legal tradition (Exod. 20:18-24; 21-23), the Decalogue, and the Song

²⁵⁵ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" pp.306-309. Leuchter also cites other examples to argue for the Song's Assyrian context. For instance, he notes that Deut. 31:16 which charges the people for worshipping אֱלֹהֵי נְכַר־הָאָרֶץ ("strange/foreign gods of the land") is drawn "from terminology common to pre-exilic Deuteronomy texts (Josh. 24:20, 23; Judg. 10:16; 1 Sam. 7:3)." Furthermore, בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא ("on that day") in Deut. 31:17 recalls the same language in other contexts concerning the Assyrian attack of the north and סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה ("this torah scroll") in Deut. 31:26 which anticipates 2 Kgs 22:8, is also a pre-exilic text.

²⁵⁶ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.308.

²⁵⁷ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" pp.308-309. Leuchter argues that the hermeneutical sequences and structures are evident, for instance, in 1 Sam. 8:11-18 and 1 Kgs 6:11-13. Samuel's speech in the former was carefully constructed and inserted before the Saulide material in 1 Sam. 9-11 to suggest that Saul and the northern kings resemble "a king like all the nations." Similarly, his speech at the end of 1 Sam. 12 serves to argue for Josiah's reign and his adherence to the Deuteronomic covenant. As for 1 Kgs 6:11-13, it was inserted into the account of the temple's construction to serve as a "literary foundation inscription for the chapter." To Leuchter, this stems from a pre-exilic redaction because Josiah's scribes had wanted to "legitimise Solomon's temple" but "criticise his transgression of the Deuteronomic law."

²⁵⁸ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.310. However, whereas Levinson believes that Deuteronomy through its textual sequencing puts a limit on the judicial power of all kings, Leuchter believes that the placing of the law of the king at the centre of Deuteronomy 17:8-18:2 shows that while the king, arguably Josiah, does not exercise supreme judicial authority he nonetheless has the power to safeguard and enforce the law.

²⁵⁹ Leuchter argues that the narrative frameworks of the Song and the Decalogue have similar terminologies. See the list of shared terminology in Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy?" pp.310-311.

²⁶⁰ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.311.

works together to serve “propagandistic purposes similar to the Levitical focus of the redactional accretions in the Deuteronomistic History.”²⁶¹ The Song’s placement in the Josianic edition of Deuteronomy continues the Deuteronomistic critique of Saul, Solomon, and Jeroboam while at the same time it elevates the image of Josiah over and against that of the early monarchs to emphasise the difference between his regime and that of his abusive predecessors. Leuchter believes that the Deuteronomic manipulation of the Song resembles the Deuteronomists’ manipulation of “10th century historiographic traditions relating to Solomon and Jeroboam.”²⁶² As the Song was originally a part of a polemic against these kings, it is now re-worked to “reconcile the institution of the monarchy with the old northern Levitical priesthood.”²⁶³ In this way, the Song’s presence in Deuteronomy bears witness not only to Israel’s covenant-breaking, but also to how the Josianic scribes had sought to change past injustice into “a tenable ideology for their own time.”²⁶⁴

Leuchter’s view that the Song serves as a witness against Israel’s covenant-breaking in context of the Assyrian crisis and exile is a strong possibility. In the light of this political backdrop, it is reasonable to believe that Israel’s literary use of “Akkadian themes and tropes” did not stem from her assimilation of the Mesopotamian culture but her “overt resistance” to that culture, as Leuchter also reckons. However, one methodological problem arises when Leuchter tries to show how the Song is echoed in Jeremiah’s message. It is quite evident that his view concerning the Song’s echo in Jeremiah stems from his assumption of a particular direction of influence, an intertextual issue which remains inconclusive. The intertextual study between the Song and Jeremiah, thus, does not necessarily prove that the former was part of the Josianic edition of Deuteronomy. However, the most glaring methodological flaw occurs when Leuchter tries to show how the Song’s function has been hermeneutically conditioned to serve as a propagandistic tool for

²⁶¹ Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” pp.311-314. Leuchter draws heavily from Jeffrey C. Geoghegan’s view that the DH serves the interest of the northern Levites. In Leuchter’s own words, “Given Josiah’s interests in reclaiming the north (2 Kgs 23:15-20), it is likely that Deuteronomy’s strategies for Levitical agency in Judah would also be extended to Levites of northern heritage with an eye to restoring them to their northern posts...The DH was therefore redacted to present Josiah as a king who venerated the interests and heritage of northern Levites.”

²⁶² Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” p.317.

²⁶³ Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” p.317.

²⁶⁴ Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses?” p.317.

Josiah and chiding his predecessors is his lack of reference to the Song's content to support his view. Leuchter claims,

Even a cursory glance of the Song's contents reveals significant continuity with the Deuteronomistic critique of Saul, Solomon, and Jeroboam. The Song speaks from the vantage point of a priest who has been oppressed or discharged from his rightful place, and calls for vengeance against an Israelite abuser who has 'grown fat' with his own power and who has constructed an illegitimate cult (vv.15-18), a charge that could be levied against any one of the early kings from the Shilonite perspective.²⁶⁵

It must be pointed out that Leuchter's interpretation of the Song, in this case, appears forced and over-imaginative. In fact it runs the danger of counteracting his own argument because it is a reading which can hardly be substantiated from the Song. Contrary to what he has claimed, it remains unclear how the Song has revealed "continuity" with critique of Saul, Solomon, and Jeroboam. It is equally puzzling how it could have represented the perspective of the Shilonite priest when it has no specific reference to priesthood. Even Leuchter's parallel reading of the Song and the Decalogue has not shown convincingly that the Song is concerned about promoting Josiah because it fails to answer why the redactor would re-interpret the Song and insert it into Deuteronomy as a tool to support Josiah's reign when it apparently displays no interest in human kingship and monarchy. This perhaps suggests why Leuchter has not been able to prove his argument convincingly from the Song itself. However, Leuchter has rightly pointed out that the Song serves as a criticism of some sort in Deuteronomy although it remains unclear why the Song has to be levelling its criticism only at Saul, Solomon, or Jeroboam. Therefore, the view that the Song functions with a propagandistic purpose of promoting Josiah and his regime remains problematic – a view which arises not from the explicit context of the Song but his historical hypothesis. In fact, Leuchter's argument highlights the need to consider afresh the question why the Song is incorporated into Deuteronomy.

4. Conclusion: The Song in Perspective

The foregoing review has looked selectively at how scholars have understood the Song independently from and in relation to Deuteronomy. What can be gathered from the former is that the Song has a unique way of delivering its message with

²⁶⁵ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" p.316.

language that is not easily classified as Aramaising or archaising. As is pointed out, the Song's language displays "freedom and individuality"²⁶⁶ and it is with such linguistic style that the Song retains its far-reaching rhetorical effect on its hearers. Furthermore, compositional creativity is also seen in the mixture of the Song's lawsuit pattern with prophetic, wisdom, didactic, and hymnic elements. The mixture of elements heightens the sense of its comprehensiveness and potency in its indictment against its hearers and may help give it an enduring appeal. Its theocentric focus drives home to the hearers their fundamental obligation to venerate YHWH as their supreme deity, as well as reinforce a belief in his power to sustain Israel against adversity. Bringing together the above characteristics of the Song to bear on its narrative relation with Deuteronomy is no easy task. Nevertheless, the Song's prophetic and didactic nature certainly play an important role in the way it criticises its hearers for their 'forgetfulness' and broken covenantal relationship which has rendered them incapable of fulfilling their vocation as a witness to other nations. In this sense the Song speaks in unison with Deuteronomy which is "thoroughly prophetic," bearing witness to Israel's history "either for or against the people."²⁶⁷ Yet at the same time the Song also enables Israel to come to grips with her dire situation by focusing not on the regime of any human kings even such as Josiah but on YHWH's righteous character, sovereignty over international affairs, and promise of vindication in the light of his singular vision of restoring Israel as a Torah-righteous nation, as an effective way to counter the prevalent "religious and political tyranny"²⁶⁸ of her day.

It is also apparent that all these beg a closer examination of the Song's narrative function in Deuteronomy. The contributions of Watts, Weitzman, Britt, and Leuchter may have opened up more discussions of how the Song might relate to Deuteronomy as a whole. However, the dynamic by which the Song reinforces and enhances the Deuteronomic message in its final form remains insufficiently explored. As was briefly mentioned in the Introduction, the dynamic relationship between the Song and Deuteronomy has been affirmed in the recent work by Terry Giles and

²⁶⁶ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.451.

²⁶⁷ Thomas W. Mann, *Deuteronomy* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), p.165.

²⁶⁸ McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, p.98.

William Doan.²⁶⁹ Giles and Doan argue that when songs are inserted into narrative texts, their words and how they were performed in the past are now appropriated by the narrator. What songs do in the narrative, hence, is to allow the present audience to recall a "belief or memory" in order to help them bind the past to their present moments for the purpose of creating "a new sense of identity and belonging."²⁷⁰ So in other words, songs "bridge" the narratives to the audience by making them active participants of the stories through their reading or listening, and they also "provide a window" into the narrators' purposes, thus giving clues to its audience concerning what the narrators wanted to achieve through the stories.²⁷¹ This means that songs do not contradict their narratives. Rather, they forge an interdependent relationship, or what Giles and Doan call, a "symbiotic relationship" so that they "make a tradition (the story being told) part of the living reality for the audience."²⁷²

The contribution of Giles and Doan is significant for our understanding of the Song's function in Deuteronomy. The idea that the Song and Deuteronomy work symbiotically to deepen Israel's loyalty to YHWH reiterates the need to consider the Song's perspective in our reading of Deuteronomy, even of Genesis-Kings. In this light, a discussion of the Song's function would be then inadequate without considering how it draws its audience into the Deuteronomic prose, what it reveals about the purpose of Deuteronomy, what past it conjures up, and what belief it instills, - in short, how it connects its audience with the message of Deuteronomy. Therefore, we must pay attention to the Song's thematic and hermeneutical relationship with Deuteronomy. As pointed out earlier, James Watts reckons the Song to be a summary of the Deuteronomic themes. While Watts is right about the Song's thematic link with Deuteronomy, the idea of *summary* does not quite adequately take into account important Deuteronomic themes that are absent in the Song such as exodus, divine presence, place of worship, Torah, and kingship. The absence of these themes in the Song is conspicuous and seems to suggest the possibility of thematic differences between the Song and Deuteronomy. Or does it? If the Song were to relate in a coherent way to Deuteronomy, thus serving its literary purposes, how do we make sense of these differences? A more detailed look at these differences is provided by

²⁶⁹ Cf. Chapter One, pp.8-9.

²⁷⁰ Giles and Doan, *Twice Used Songs*, p.5.

²⁷¹ Giles and Doan, *Twice Used Songs*, p.135.

²⁷² Giles and Doan, *Twice Used Songs*, p.135.

Chapter Three but at this juncture I would suggest that these differences do not have to mean that the Song is antithetical to Deuteronomy, or in the words of Noth “inserted clumsily” into Deuteronomy.²⁷³ The redaction of the Song into Deuteronomy by itself suggests that the final redactor did not see disparity between them. More importantly, these so-called differences may well point us to a different reading of the data that would even call into question the current understanding of Deuteronomy. Before delving into greater depth concerning how the Song alerts us to the way in which Deuteronomy can be understood, we must explore the Song exegetically. This is the task of the following chapter.

²⁷³ Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.35. Noth argues that the Song was “inserted clumsily” into Deuteronomy with no relation to the framework of the Deuteronomic law. Rather, see Nathan MacDonald, “The Literary Criticism and Rhetorical Logic of Deuteronomy I – IV,” in *VTLV*, 2 (2006): pp.203-242. MacDonald argues that the Song is incorporated into Deuteronomy because it shares similar concerns with it. It is combined through a pattern of transformation in order to become “a rhetorical and literary whole” with Deuteronomy.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SONG: PROPHETIC CRITICISM OF ISRAEL

1. Introduction

The exegesis of the Song presented in this chapter seeks to provide a literary and theological reading. While the structure of the Song has been variously understood by scholars such as Skehan,¹ Wright,² Labuschagne,³ Nigosian,⁴ and Christensen,⁵ this study adopts a simpler approach of entering the text by analysing the verses based on the speakers who speak them. In this way the ambiguity at different parts of the Song is allowed to stand as it is. It must be said that this approach merely serves as a means for discussion and the intention here is to allow the Song to disclose its argument as the discourse unfolds. Some clarifications at this juncture are needed. As will be evident, the Septuagint (LXX) will be most regularly referred to and readings from the Qumran texts will also be taken into consideration, where appropriate, especially in our analysis of verses 8 and 43, as the texts of these verses are widely known to be disputed. It is generally agreed that LXX is an important witness to the text.⁶ However, according to Ernst Würthwein, it tends to eliminate “theological misunderstanding by avoiding literal translations.” For example, the image of YHWH as “the rock” (הַצִּיּוֹר) in verse 4 has been substituted with “God” (θεός) because Hellenistic religions regarded rocks and stones as symbols

¹ Skehan, “Structure,” pp.153-163.

² Wright, “Lawsuit,” p.33.

³ Casper J. Labuschagne, *The Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 - Logotechnical Analysis*; in www.labuschagne.nl/2b.deut32.pdf.

⁴ Samuel A. Nigosian, *The Song of Moses (Dt 32): A Structural Analysis*; in https://secure.peeters-leuven.be/POJ/downloadpdf.php?ticket_id=47e06e72cd14c.

⁵ Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.787.

⁶ Wevers, *LXX*, pp.x-xvi; Melvin Peters, *Deuteronomion*, in <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/05-deut-nets.pdf>; Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, p.67.

of divinity. So, in order to avoid misunderstanding that a rock was worshipped as the God of the Old Testament, LXX sacrificed the image to the meaning.⁷ Furthermore, LXX also tends to speak abstractly about God, hence avoiding anthropomorphic expressions.⁸ Therefore, the exegesis here proceeds with a close reading of the Masoretic Text (MT) and where a decision is made to adopt the variant readings, it is only made with great caution and on the merits of the variant readings themselves.⁹ If the internal considerations are indecisive, the reading of the MT will be preferred. The general rules of textual criticism apply, especially *lectio brevior* (a shorter text is to be preferred) and *lectio difficilior* (a more difficult text is to be preferred). However there can be exceptions to these, especially when the text of MT is doubtful¹⁰ or a longer reading is a more difficult reading.¹¹ A general note is in order before the exegetical comments.

2. General Comment on the Song

2.1 Characteristics, Structure, and Essential Themes

According to Deuteronomy 31:19, the Song was to be taught to the children of Israel so that it would be remembered as a witness against them. The tone in which the Song directs its message is didactic, sorrowful, reprimanding, and at some points ironic but towards the end of the Song it is one of jubilation as the message closes with a hint of hope and a sense of awe. The Song traces in its basic structure an essential history of Israel from her primeval past to her future through an oscillation between two speakers,¹² namely, Moses and YHWH. The Song mainly consists of speeches made by them, as the following shows:

	<i>YHWH's Greatness and Goodness Disregarded</i>	<i>(vv.1-19)</i>
Moses	1. Invocation of witnesses	(vv.1-3)
	2. YHWH and Israel contrasted	(vv.4-6)
	3. YHWH's election of Israel	(vv.7-9)

⁷ Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, p.66.

⁸ Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, p.66.

⁹ See Ernst Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament* [trans. Erroll F. Rhodes] (Grand Rapids: Eerdmens, 1979), esp. p.112. Würthwein proposes an order of importance regarding various witnesses to the text.

¹⁰ Such as verse 8d.

¹¹ Deut. 32:43 is a case in point. Readers will find that I generally follow MT's reading of v.43 although I have also acknowledged the value of the reading of 4QDeut⁹ and LXX of this verse.

¹² Or three speakers, if one were to take v.8 and v.9 as speeches made by the elders.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 4. YHWH's providence for Israel | (vv.10-14) |
| 5. Israel abandoned YHWH for other gods | (vv.15-19) |

YHWH's Response to Israel's Unfaithfulness (vv.20-27)

- | | | |
|------|--|------------|
| YHWH | 1. YHWH withdraws his protection of Israel | (vv.20-21) |
| | 2. YHWH wages war against Israel | (vv.22-25) |
| | 3. YHWH withholds his wrath upon Israel | (vv.26-27) |

Israel Likened to the "No-People" (vv.28-33)

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|------------|
| Moses | 1. With regards to her foolishness | (vv.28-31) |
| | 2. With regards to her perversity | (vv.32-33) |

YHWH's Pronouncement on His People and Enemies (vv.34-43)

- | | | |
|-------|---|------------|
| YHWH | 1. The Certainty of Judgement and Vindication | (vv.34-35) |
| Moses | 2. Vindication for His People | (vv.36-38) |
| YHWH | 3. YHWH Asserts His Supremacy | (v.39) |
| YHWH | 4. Judgement on His Enemies | (vv.40-42) |
| Moses | 5. Invitation to Worship | (v.43) |

Moses' speeches, with the use of rhetorical questions and metaphors, are mainly reproachful but towards the end of the Song they become more assuring when speaking of YHWH's vindicating acts. But YHWH's speeches, with warlike language and graphic images, are sharp, reprimanding and threatening throughout. The Song's rhetorical effect is heightened by dismissive expressions such as לֹא בְנֵי (his no-children), לֹא־אֱמֵן (no faithfulness), לֹא חָכָם (not wise), לֹא־אֵל (no-god), and לֹא־עַם (no-people). The rhetorical effect is also strengthened by what MacDonald calls "word-play" such as אָבִיךָ קָנֶךָ ("your father [who] created you," v.6), אָבִיךָ זְקֵנֶיךָ ("your father/your elders," v.7), as well as rhyme with the suffix ך־ (v.6, v.7) and ם־ (v.10).¹³ As a witness against Israel's disloyalty, the Song hinges on two significant themes: first, YHWH is a faithful God towards Israel, expressed through the image of father, mother, creator, provider, and eagle. Second, YHWH is the supreme God amongst other gods. This is expressed not only through images such as the rock and divine warrior but also through irony, אֵי אֱלֹהֵימוֹ צוּר חֲסִיוֹ בּוֹ

¹³ See MacDonald, 'Monotheism', p.148.

("Where [are] their gods? [The] rock in which they sought refuge?" v.37), which derides the worthlessness of the foreign gods.

2.2 *An Overview of the Song*

The Song begins with Moses' invocation of witnesses (v.1) and progresses to an expression of hope that his teaching will be effective (v.2) before announcing YHWH's greatness as the main theme of his proclamation (v.3). The Song moves on to evoke Israel's guilt by juxtaposing YHWH's attributes with those of Israel (vv.4-5): while YHWH is a God of faithfulness, Israel is a crooked and perverse generation. This leads to the rhetorical questions (v.6) which set the stage for the contrasts between YHWH's faithfulness and Israel's ingratitude (vv.7-19). The recapitulation of YHWH's primeval election (vv.7-9) and redemptive acts (vv.10-12), which lead to the settlement in the land (vv.13-14), underscores YHWH's faithful acts of protection and providence. Despite YHWH's benevolence Israel abandons YHWH for other gods with cultic practices repugnant to YHWH (vv.15-18). Utilising the image of the divine warrior, YHWH's response to Israel's apostasy is devastating. YHWH's wrath would have ensured Israel's annihilation if it was not prevented by the taunt of the enemy (vv.26-27). That Israel forsakes YHWH (v.15), provokes him to jealousy (v.16), sacrifices to demons (v.17), and forgets YHWH's kindness (v.18) are punished by YHWH forsaking her (v.20), provoking her to jealousy and anger with a 'no-people' (v.21) and allowing her to be devastated by calamities brought about apparently by demonic forces (v.24) as well as threatening to remove her from the memory of humankind (v.26).

Amidst the dramatic expression of YHWH's wrath, the focus momentarily and deliberately shifts to reveal "the soliloquy within the depths of the divine heart"¹⁴ (v.27). This is followed by Moses' analysis of the divine deliberation in which the expression, *כִּי־גוֹי אֲבָר עֲצוּתָהּ הַמָּוָה* ("Surely they [are] a nation lacking in counsel") is arguably a description of both Israel and the unnamed enemy (vv.28-33). YHWH's speech resumes with a resolution to take vengeance on his enemies (v.35) which is followed by Moses' assurance of YHWH's mercy (v.36). YHWH speaks again but this time disparages the impotency of the other gods and Israel's folly for entrusting

¹⁴ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.198.

herself to them (vv.37-38). At this juncture, YHWH's incomparability is emphatically expressed in his self-proclamation (v.39), and this summarises in a succinct way his covenantal relationship with Israel (cf. v.12; Deut. 5:7; 6:4-5; Exod. 20:3). The devastating image of the divine warrior reappears to pronounce his final judgement on the enemies (vv.40-42) expressed by the enigmatic phrase לְמִשְׁנְאֵי ("to those who hate me"), which could be a reference to both the rebellious Israelites and her enemies. As the Song begins with an invocation to witness, it now concludes with an invitation to worship, calling all angelic beings and humans to rejoice in YHWH's impending deeds (v.43).

In this analysis, there are two striking features of the Song which are important to the argument of this thesis. The first feature is the Song's ambiguity at some points regarding whether it is Israel or Israel's enemy who is being referred to. I will argue that the rhetorical ambiguity at those points leaves open the possibility that the Song could be addressing both Israel and her enemy. The second feature is the Song's anthropomorphic language and images which suggest divine immanence in relation to YHWH. The Song's anthropomorphism and its view of YHWH's corporeality will become important considerations when we revisit the question if Deuteronomy in its final form really spoke abstractly about YHWH's presence. This, however, is the task of Chapter Three. For now, we must proceed with an exegesis of the Song.

3. Exegetical Comment on the Song

3.1 YHWH's Greatness and Goodness Ignored (vv.1-18)

3.1.1 Invocation of witnesses (vv.1-3)

1 הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֲדַבְּרָה
וּתְשַׁמַּע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־פִי:

2 יַעֲרַף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי
תִּזְלַל כַּטֹּל¹⁵ אִמְרֶתְךָ
כַּשְּׁעִירִים עַל־דְּשָׁא
וּכְרִבִיבִים עַל־עֵשֶׂב:

3 כִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה אֲקַרָּא
הֲבו גִדְל לֵאלֹהֵינוּ:

*Listen, O heavens, and let me speak;
Let the earth hear the words of my mouth.*

*Let my teaching fall like rain;
My words flow down like dew,
Like downpour upon [the] grass,
Like abundant showers upon [the] herbage.*

*For I shall proclaim the name of YHWH;
Give greatness to our God!*

The “heavens” (הַשָּׁמַיִם) and “earth” (הָאָרֶץ) are summoned to listen and witness to the impending charge,¹⁶ as elsewhere in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 4:26; 30:19; 31:28). But Nelson, for example, regards the “heavens” and “earth” as playing the role of audience rather than of witnesses. For him, they function as an “impartial and objective audience” before a theological case made by the Song, serving as a “*merismus* for the whole of creation, a universal forum for an argument from history.”¹⁷ Tigay also points out that both the “heavens” and “earth” may have been

¹⁵ SamP and LXX have it as וְהִזְלַל and καὶ καταβήτω (“and come down”) respectively. As the variant readings do not convey any change in meaning, the added conjunction is unnecessary.

¹⁶ Wright, “Lawsuit,” p.44; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.376; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.299; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.349; Miller, “Deuteronomy;” p.226; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.452. But see Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.382. Mayes claims that the heavens and earth are invoked not as witnesses of the impending punishment but as witnesses to the earlier covenant between YHWH and Israel which Israel has broken.

¹⁷ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.370.

used as a “literary device, functioning as objective onlookers” of the charge.¹⁸ In spite of this, the function of “heavens” and “earth” remains debatable. If one understood the Song to be a reflection of a lawsuit form in which witness is an important part, then it may be better contextually to regard the “heavens” and “earth” as playing the role of witnesses. Here the whole created order as represented by “heavens” and “earth” is summoned by Moses, who plays an important role in the Song. In fact the relationship between the Song and the Torah is affirmed through his role. The Song stands parallel to the Torah (cf. Deut. 31) with its focus on the First Commandment, loyalty to YHWH alone. In this sense, Moses’ giving the Song parallels his giving of the Torah to Israel (Deut. 4:14). In the Song, Moses’ invocation has echoes of both prophecy and wisdom (cf. Ps. 49:1-4; 78:1-3; Job 43:2; Isa. 1:2).¹⁹ The prophetic element stems from the fact that Moses is the archetypal prophet (Deut. 18:15-18) whose role is implied not only through his summoning of “heavens” and “earth” to witness the judgement on Israel’s disobedience, but also through his proclamation (v.3). The wisdom aspect, on the other hand, as seen from the way “my teaching” has been described with four similes,²⁰ is derivative of Moses’ role as a wisdom teacher through whom the use of “my teaching” (לִקְחֵי, v.2) is reminiscent of the Book of Proverbs (Prov. 1:5; 4:2; 7:2).²¹ The imperative “Listen” (הִאֲזִינוּ) in summoning the “heavens” and “earth” parallels the imperative “Shout for joy” (הִרְנִינוּ, v.43) in which the heavens, celestial beings, and other nations are called to celebrate YHWH’s work. Both imperatives at the beginning and the end may function as *inclusio* for the Song.

The expression “words of my mouth” (אִמְרֵי־פִי) anticipates “my teaching” in verse 2.²² What follows in verse 2 are interesting images of “fructivous water and

¹⁸ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.299.

¹⁹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.452.

²⁰ “Rain,” “dew,” “downpour,” and “abundant showers.”

²¹ See also Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.382; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.452; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.370; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.196. Von Rad notes that the noun לִקְחֵי belongs preponderantly to the language of the Wisdom sayings. However, Braulik does not see Moses as a wisdom teacher since the Torah is not identified with wisdom. See more discussion in Georg Braulik, O.S.B., *The Theology of Deuteronomy* (Dallas: BIBAL, 1994), pp.23, 213, n.180. Also Mendenhall, “Samuel’s ‘Broken rib’,” p.178.

²² SamP has פִּי for the MT’s פִּי (“my mouth”). See also Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.791, n.1.

fertility” associated with “my teaching.”²³ Scholars have variously translated עֶרֶף as trickle,²⁴ drop or drip,²⁵ soak in,²⁶ fall,²⁷ and come down.²⁸ It is also possible that the expression “it flows” (תִּזְלוּ) seems to suggest the effects of “my teaching” as divinely wrought as its root “flow” (נָזַל) is used elsewhere of rain that is divinely controlled.²⁹ Furthermore, David Peterson and Kent Richards also point out that the rain is a powerful driving force, as suggested by the preposition “upon” (עָלַי) in both lines of the simile, thus stressing the fact that “the rain will land on or against something, not simply that it will make something green.”³⁰ Hence verse 2, Nelson notes, “anticipates the effectiveness of what is to be spoken [by] using life-giving water as a metaphor.”³¹ The gentleness and possibly forcefulness of “my teaching” constitute the Song’s life-giving effect.³² This idea of life-giving message is in keeping with the purpose of ‘waking Israel up from slumber’ (Deut. 31:19-22). The form שְׁעִירָם (“rain”) is a *hapax legomenon*. Scholars have pointed out that the root form שְׁעִיר (“s^e’îr”) is likely to be šr’ in the Ugaritic texts due to metathesis;³³ hence its translation as a kind of rain.³⁴ Consequently, various suggestions are given concerning the kind of rain that is meant here such as “fine, small, or gentle rain,”³⁵ “downpour,”³⁶ raindrop,³⁷ and “rainfall.”³⁸ The common idea in the four similes is

²³ Petersen and Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, p.71.

²⁴ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.138.

²⁵ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.376; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.348; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.789; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.362.

²⁶ Skehan, “Structure,” p.157.

²⁷ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.444.

²⁸ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.299; Rashbam, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy: An Annotated Translation*; ed. and trans. by Martin I. Lockshin (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2004).

²⁹ See Ps. 147:18, “He will send his words and melts them; he will cause the wind to blow and rain to flow” (יִשְׁלַח דְּבָרָו וַיִּמְסֵם יֵשֶׁב רוּחוֹ וַיִּזְרְקֵם).

³⁰ Petersen and Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, p.71.

³¹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.370.

³² McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.452.

³³ See Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.376; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.139.

³⁴ William L. Moran, “Some remarks on the Song of Moses,” in *Bib* 43 (1962), pp.116-117. Moran suggests that the word שְׁעִיר should be identified with the Ugaritic šr’ found in a context that includes reference to dew and rain, e.g., “no rain, no dew, no welling up (šr’) of the deep ...” See also Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.376, n.9; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.138. Sanders thinks that Moran’s proposal of שְׁעִיר as ‘welling’ is unconvincing in view of the parallelism with words designating water coming from above.

³⁵ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.349; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.383; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.444; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.362; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.789.

³⁶ Skehan, “Structure,” p.157.

³⁷ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.376.

³⁸ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.139.

clearly the beneficial accomplishment of such rain.³⁹ With the invocation (v.1) and the metaphoric expressions (v.2), the nature of YHWH is now declared (v.3).

The assertion of YHWH's greatness and reliability provides the rationale for what is about to be spoken.⁴⁰ The noun "greatness" (גִּדְלוֹ) is also used in Deuteronomy (Deut. 3:24; 9:26; 11:2; 26:8) and the Psalms (Ps. 57:11; 79:11; 150:2) but here it is used as an object for the imperative "give" (הִבֵּנוּ). By the assertion "give greatness" (הִבֵּנוּ גִּדְלוֹ), Moses does not merely summon his hearers to keep their covenant with YHWH⁴¹ and acknowledge his kindness and justice, he also announces principally YHWH's unparalleled capability to fulfil what he has decreed to accomplish in Israel, including his power to act justly in his dealing with Israel's apostasy.⁴² The Song thus grounds its criticism of Israel on the trustworthiness of YHWH's character, as the following verses further clarify (Exod. 33:19; 34:5-7; Ps 105:1-2).⁴³ The assertion of his greatness corresponds to Deuteronomy's central command of absolute loyalty to YHWH.

³⁹ See also Petersen and Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, p.71. They reckon, "Clearly the Biblical writer is focusing here not on the sorts of greenery engendered but on the life-giving character of the moisture. This distinctive feature of the simile, with its focus on rain as both life-engendering and powerful, is underlined by the rhythmic pattern that undergirds it."

⁴⁰ See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.370. Nelson notes that v.3 "completes the direct address to the universal audience, revealing that the song will be a doxology ..."

⁴¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.452.

⁴² Contra Tigay who reckons that although God's 'greatness' usually refers to his great power, here it seems to point to his great kindness and justice in dealing with Israel. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.300.

⁴³ The expression "call the name [of YHWH]" (קָרָא שֵׁם) is also used in Deuteronomy itself and elsewhere in the Old Testament. See Deut. 28:10, "For you will be called by the name of YHWH" (כִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה יִקְרָא); Ruth 4:14, "And his name will be called in Israel" (וְשֵׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יִקְרָא); Lam. 3:55, "I called your name, O LORD" (קָרָאתִי שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה).

3.1.2 YHWH and Israel contrasted (vv.4-6)

4 הַצֹּר תָּמִים פֶּעֶלּוּ

כִּי כָל־דְּרָכָיו מִשְׁפָּט

אֵל אֱמוּנָה וְאֵין עוֹל

צַדִּיק וְיֵשֶׁר⁴⁵ הוּא:

5 שָׁחַת לוֹ לֹא בְנָיו מוֹמָם

דֹּר עָקֵשׁ וּפְתִילֵתַל:

6 הֲלִיְהוּהַ תִּגְמְלוּ־זֹאת

עִם נָבָל וְלֹא חָכָם

הֲלוֹא־הוּא אָבִיךָ קָנָךְ

הוּא עָשָׂךְ וַיְכַנְנֶךָ:

*The rock, his work [is] complete;
For all his ways are just.
A God of faithfulness, and without injustice;
Righteous and upright [is] he.*

*[They acted] corruptly toward him; [they were] not his children [due to] blemish;
A perverse and crooked generation.*

*Is this how you recompense YHWH,
foolish and unwise people?
Is he not your father [who] created you,
he [who] made you and established you?*

Verse 4 begins with *casus pendens*⁴⁶ through which the emphasis is laid upon the opening word. The phrase “the rock” (הַצֹּר) is a significant epithet for YHWH,⁴⁷ which occurs seven times in the Song (vv.4, 15, 18, 30, 31[x2], and 37). Scholars have argued that the expression “rock” corresponds to the Ugaritic *gr* (“mountain”).⁴⁸ Mayes, for example, argues that since “mountain” designates Baal at Ugarit, “rock” is

⁴⁴ Deut. 32:4a in LXX, “God, his work is dependable” (θεός ἀληθινὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ). See Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.378. Craigie points out that YHWH is described as “the rock” (הַצֹּר) which signifies his stability and permanence as a stark contrast to the fickle Israelites.

⁴⁵ LXX has it as “[the] Lord” ([ὁ] κύριος).

⁴⁶ Similar case of *casus pendens* is also found in, e.g., 2 Sam. 22:31, הָאֵל תָּמִים דְּרָכּוֹ (“God, perfect is his way”).

⁴⁷ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.453.

⁴⁸ Albright, “Some Remarks,” p.345; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.383; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.351. Driver points out that צֹר is a common title for deity like Assur and Bel in Assyrian.

employed as a divine appellation.⁴⁹ Tigay thinks that the expression is used here as a reference to foreign gods for the purpose of pointing out their inferiority and inability as protectors, for example in verses 31 and 37. LXX renders “the rock” by “god” (θεός) throughout the Song (except for v.37), perhaps to avoid misunderstanding that could have arisen from the use of this expression since it has been used of foreign gods. Some scholars suggest that “rock” is used in the Song as a metaphor for refuge, protection, stronghold, and high place⁵⁰ but Michael Knowles thinks that “rock” is a reference to YHWH’s “moral righteousness.”⁵¹ Following the predication of YHWH as “rock”, the Song is careful to underscore that YHWH is “just” (מִשְׁפָּט) in “all his ways” (כָּל-דִּרְכָיו). This justice no doubt includes his judgement on Israel, in order to avert any allegation that may be levelled against YHWH’s integrity, especially when the crisis Israel faces (or will be facing) is entirely of her own doing, not YHWH’s. In his judgement on Israel, as well as in his restoration of Israel,⁵² YHWH might prove himself righteous (צַדִּיק).⁵³ And Craigie rightly highlights the “stability” and the “unchanging nature” of YHWH, the Rock:

The epithet or name, Rock, emphasizes the stability and permanence of the God of Israel. It is one of the principal themes in the song (see also vv15, 18, 31, and compare v37), stressing the unchanging nature of the God of covenant and contrasting with the fickle nature of the covenant people.⁵⁴

Therefore, the emphatic position of “rock” in verse 4 communicates what Nelson calls “the theological axiom that governs the poem”:⁵⁵ YHWH is not “a rock” (צֶרֶף) who is

⁴⁹ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.383; Dennis Olson, *Death of Moses*, p.140. Olson notes that the association of rock or mountain with the deity is common in the ancient Near East religion.

⁵⁰ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.350; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.370; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.300; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.453. McConville notes, “Rock is a natural metaphor in a hot and dangerous land, offering both shade and hiding.” Also Olson, *Death of Moses*, p.140. Olson points out that the image “affirms the strength, refuge, and stability” but the Song expands it “to include YHWH’s perfection, justice, faithfulness, and uprightness.”

⁵¹ Michael P. Knowles, “The Rock, His Work is Perfect”: Unusual Imagery for God in Deuteronomy XXXII,” in *VT* 39 (1989), pp.307-322.

⁵² See my discussion of vv.36-43 in pp.107-117 below.

⁵³ David Reimer states, “It [צַדִּיק] becomes a sort of verbal shorthand for something true about God, and as such is difficult to define or describe.” He points out that “צַדִּיק terms regularly deal with behavior that, usually by implication, accord with some standard.” For further detail how צַדִּיק is used throughout the Old Testament, see David J. Reimer’s article on צַדִּיק in Willem A. VanGemeren (ed.) *NIDOTTE* Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), pp.744-769.

⁵⁴ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.378.

⁵⁵ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.370.

impaired but “The Rock” (הַצֹּרֶר) who demonstrates his power through his faithfulness, trustworthiness, justice, and perfect work even in the context of Israel’s catastrophe. In connection with this, the use of the rock metaphor provides an ironic twist. Olson rightly points out that YHWH the rock is usually portrayed as a fortress for Israel (cf. Ps. 31:3; 62:7) but in the Song, he is no longer the shelter for Israel but an inevitable threat as part of the covenantal curses when Israel turns to other ‘rocks’ other than the true rock, YHWH (cf. Deut. 28:7).⁵⁶

Verse 5a of the MT, שָׁחַת לוֹ לֹא בְנָיו מוֹמָם, poses a difficulty in translation because the stringing of the five words in this verse seems awkward. Their syntactic connection, as Tigay points out, is unclear. Hence, Tigay thinks that this text suffered from scribal error.⁵⁷ Sanders suggests that the pronominal suffix ׀- can be interpreted as an adverbial ׀-, hence reading the verse as “His not-children acted corruptly towards him with blemish” in which “blemish” (מוֹמָם) indicates the sinfulness of the people’s behaviour.⁵⁸ A further syntactical problem can be seen in the presence of the accentuation mark under לֹא (“not”) which indicates that לֹא should be taken with שָׁחַת. In this way, we may read this phrase as a rhetorical question, “Did they not sin?”⁵⁹ LXX renders verse 5a by ἡμάρτοσαν οὐκ αὐτῷ τέκνα μωμητά which Wevers translates it as “disgraceful children who are not his have sinned.”⁶⁰ But despite the syntactical difficulty, it seems best to maintain the MT’s reading because of *lectio difficilior lectio potior*. Assuming that “to him, not” (לֹא לוֹ) is not the case of scribal error, the phrase “his not-children” (לֹא בְנָיו) provides an important interpretive clue to this verse. The Song is characterised by this type of dismissive phrase or as Nelson calls it, “poetic locution” such as “not-wise” (לֹא חָכָם, v.6), “not-god” (לֹא אֱלֹהִים, vv.17, 21), “no faithfulness” (לֹא אֱמֶן, v.20), and “not-people” (לֹא עַם, v.21).⁶¹ Furthermore, there may be a word-play between “blemish” (מוֹמָם) and “complete”

⁵⁶ Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses*, p.140.

⁵⁷ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.301.

⁵⁸ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.148.

⁵⁹ See also Sanders, *Provenance*, p.145. He thinks that the accentuation mark under לֹא turns the first part of v.5a to be read as a question.

⁶⁰ Wevers, *LXX*, p.511.

⁶¹ See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.367; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.301.

(תָּמִים, v.4a).⁶² Israel is also described as “perverse” (עֲקָשׁ), which is used in Proverbs to portray the character of the person who “pursues devious and questionable courses for the purpose of compassing his ends.”⁶³ The descriptions of YHWH and Israel draw a sharp contrast between the perfect work of the father, who is “righteous and upright” (צַדִּיק וְיֵשֶׁר) and the idolatrous work of the children, who are “perverse and crooked” (עֲקָשׁ וּפְתָלְתָל).⁶⁴ Hence verses 4-5 polarise the main characters of the Song: faithful YHWH but faithless Israel. Israel’s predicament is the result of YHWH doing right and Israel doing wrong. Israel’s ingratitude, thus, becomes the focus of verse 6.

Verse 6 has to be read with the preceding verse for two reasons. First, the question points back to Israel’s apostasy in verse 5. As indicated in the textual apparatus of the BHS, the interrogative pronoun הֲ is written in large script,⁶⁵ which Tigay thinks that this has the effect of expressing shock.⁶⁶ With the emphatic position of the divine name in this question (הֲ-לִיְהוָה) and the frequent use of the second person pronominal suffixes, the rhetoric seems to focus its attention on the absurdity of Israel’s ingratitude to evoke in its hearers a sense of remorse over their betrayal. Second, the close connection between verse 6 and 5 is seen in the use of “your father” (אָבִיךָ) and “his not-children” (לֹא בְנָיו). One of the expressions used to depict the YHWH-Israel relationship in the Old Testament is the father and son metaphor.⁶⁷ In Deuteronomy, this metaphor is first introduced when Moses recounted how YHWH carried Israel in the wilderness, “just as a man carries his son” (Deut. 1:31).⁶⁸ The Song uses this metaphor for the first time in this verse. The metaphor, as in Deuteronomy 1:31, encompasses the idea of protection and

⁶² מְרִמָּם is used along with שָׁחָח in Lev. 22:25 as a reference to defective sacrificial animals. But in Lev. 22:19 and 21, sacrificial animals without defect are referred to as תָּמִים, which also describes the nature of YHWH’S work in verse 4a. See more discussion in Sanders, *Provenance*, p.147.

⁶³ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.353. See also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.371. Nelson comments, “עֲקָשׁ [is] a favourite designation of culpability in the sharply oppositional ethics of wisdom.”

⁶⁴ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp.351-352; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.371. Nelson points out that verses 5 and 6 “abruptly introduce Israel’s apostasy as a negative counter theme to Yahweh’s greatness;” Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.301. Likewise Tigay notes that מְרִמָּם is “an antonym to perfect.”

⁶⁵ BHS textual apparatus for this verse reads: mlt Mss הֲ maj.

⁶⁶ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.302.

⁶⁷ Also Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.352. Driver notes that the sonship of Israel is a spiritualised one in view of YHWH’S spiritual and ethical character. Hence moral demands are based upon it and Israel’s sonship becomes the expression of privileges and duties.

⁶⁸ Deut. 1:31, NASB.

providence expressed in a wide range of activities which are described further in verses 10-13, such as “surrounds him” (יִסְבְּבֵנָהוּ, v.10), “considers him” or “cares for him” (יְבוֹנְנֵהוּ, v.10), “guards him” (יִצְרְנֵהוּ, v.10), “hovers over its young” (יִרְחֵף, v.11), “spreads His wings and caught them” (יִפְרֵשׁ כַּנְפָיו יִקְחֵהוּ, v.11), “carries them” (יִשְׂאֵהוּ, v.11), “guides him” (יְנַחֵנוּ, v.12), “made him ride” (יִרְכַּבֵהוּ, v.13), “he [Israel] consumes” (יֹאכַל, v.13), and “he nurses him [Israel]” (יִנְקֵהוּ, v.13).⁶⁹ In this verse the metaphorical language of father and son is enriched by the verb קָנָה which carries the idea of “acquire” and “create.”⁷⁰ The “acquire” idea is alluded to in its use in Exodus 15:16 which speaks of Israel’s celebration of YHWH’s victory over the Egyptian army.⁷¹ Israel has become the people of YHWH because she has been bought from and brought out of slavery in Egypt.⁷² Psalm 74:2 is another example that implies the redemptive aspect of קָנָה.⁷³ The “creation” idea is brought out when used along with “make” (עָשָׂה), as well as “establish” (כִּוֵּן), in the present verse. McConville argues that “establish” (כִּוֵּן) may also imply “creation of the world (Ps 8:3[4], 24:2)” and the “establishment of Zion as Yahweh’s chosen city (Ps. 48:8[9]).”⁷⁴ Hence he thinks that the idea of the election and establishing of Israel is in view here, with “creation language brought to bear.”⁷⁵

Deuteronomy’s use of this metaphor and the Song’s allusions to it strongly suggest its significance in arguing against Israel’s apostasy.⁷⁶ The metaphor equates Israel’s betrayal of YHWH with the idea of a child disowning his father, thus

⁶⁹ See also David R. Tasker, *Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the Hebrew Scriptures about the Fatherhood of God* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), pp.81-87.

⁷⁰ See also Tasker, *Ancient Near Eastern*, pp.82-83.

⁷¹ חַפַּל עֲלֵיהֶם אִימָתָה וְפַחַד ... עַד-יַעֲבֹר עִמָּו קְנִיָּה (“Terror and dread shall fall on them ... Until the people pass over whom you have purchased;” NASB).

⁷² See also Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.379; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.384; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.453. Cf. Exod. 4:22. For a discussion of the parallelism of the metaphorical language of v.6 and Ugaritic literature, see Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.361-362.

⁷³ זְכֹר עֲרַתְךָ קְנִיָּה קָדָם (“Remember your congregation which you have purchased of old;” NASB).

⁷⁴ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.453.

⁷⁵ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.453. The creation language of קָנָה can also be seen in its use in Gen. 4:1 and Ps. 139:13. McConville also notes that YHWH’s ‘creation’ of Israel echoes the epithet in Gen. 14:19 and 22 where God is ‘creator of heaven and earth’. See also Prov. 8:22, where קָנָה is translated as “brought forth” in NIV.

⁷⁶ Tasker, *Ancient Near Eastern*, pp.81-87. Tasker argues that the whole Song unfolds its argument using metaphorical expressions of YHWH’s fatherhood.

highlighting Israel's ingratitude and depravity. The unfilial act is especially unnatural in Israel in which the parent-children relationship is of paramount importance (cf. Deut. 6:1-7). Israel's ungratefulness to YHWH renders her "foolish and unwise" (נָבָל וְלֹא חָכָם). Again, the Song's wisdom element is evident here as seen in the notion of "foolishness," an idea which in the 'wisdom' realm describes the depravity of both the moral and intellectual faculty.⁷⁷ Here, echoes of the importance of the Torah and Moses' teaching are in view: Israel's embracing the Torah and Moses' teaching makes her a wise and understanding nation (Deut. 4:6) while abandoning them makes her foolish (Deut. 32:6). The description of Israel as "foolish people" (עַם נָבָל) anticipates verse 21 in which YHWH refers to the unnamed enemy as "not-people" (לֹא-עַם) and "foolish nation" (גּוֹי נָבָל).⁷⁸ Verse 6 bemoans the irony that Israel, who, as a Torah-nation is supposed to be 'wiser,' would fail to perceive YHWH's supremacy but choose to become his enemy. Israel who is called YHWH's "son" (בְּנִי, Exod. 4:22) and "firstborn" (בְּכֹרִי, Exod. 4:22) is now dismissed as "his no-children" (לֹא בְנָיו, v.5). The shift from third to second person address intensifies the admonition. By contrast, the unnamed enemy seems more ready to do YHWH's bidding (cf. v.21). The ludicrousness of this situation drives home a poignant question: who really is YHWH's servant?⁷⁹ The rhetorical questions force Israel to face up to her betrayal of YHWH: "Do you thus repay YHWH?" and "Is he not your father?" to which the answers would be "No" and "Yes" respectively. The questions employ the concept of memory to conjure a mental image to unsettle its hearers. While each question brings to mind a positive memory of YHWH's parental love for Israel, it also inches forward to testify against Israel how she has bitten the hand that feeds her. This section draws heavily on an important Deuteronomistic theme, and develops it in a powerful rhetorical way.

⁷⁷ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.453.

⁷⁸ עַם נָבָל is also used in Ps. 74 to describe an enemy of Israel.

⁷⁹ See also Keiser, "The Song of Moses a Basis for Isaiah's Prophecy," p.487.

3.1.3 YHWH's election of Israel (vv. 7-9)

7 זְכַר יְמוֹת עוֹלָם
 בֵּינוּ שְׁנוֹת דּוֹר-דָּדוֹר
 שְׁאַל אָבִיךָ וַיִּגְדֶּךָ
 זְקֵנֶיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָךְ:

8 בְּהִנָּחַל עֲלֵיוֹן גּוֹיִם
 בְּהַפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם
 יֵצֵב גְּבֻלַת עַמִּים
 לְמִסְפַּר ⁸⁰ בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים:

9 כִּי חֶלֶק יְהוָה עַמּוֹ
 יַעֲקֹב חֶבֶל נַחֲלָתוֹ:

*Remember the days of antiquity;
 Consider the years of generation upon generation;
 Ask your father and he will tell you;
 Your elders and they will say to you.*

*When the Most High gave the nations as inheritance;⁸¹
 When he divided the sons of Adam;
 He established the borders of the peoples
 according to the number of the sons of gods.*

*But YHWH's portion [is] his people,
 Jacob [is] his allotted inheritance.*

Here three imperatives are employed to direct the hearers' attention to past events: "Remember" (זָכַר), "Consider" (בִּינּוּ), and "Ask" (שְׁאַל). The imperatives "remember" and "consider" are in line with Deuteronomic exhortations to remember YHWH's deeds,⁸² and acknowledge his nearness and goodness to his people. Such acknowledgement rightly lays the foundation for wholehearted submission to YHWH (cf. Deut. 6:5). It becomes a strong motivation toward teaching YHWH's

⁸⁰ Originally it probably reads as "sons of gods" (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים), as the Qumran fragment renders it.

⁸¹ According to Sanders, v.8a may be taken to imply that the peoples of the earth inherited the lands (גּוֹיִם as an *accusativus personae*, that is, the inheriting person) or it may be taken to imply that the peoples were given as an inheritance to the heavenly beings (גּוֹיִם as an *accusativus rei*, that is, the object inherited by the person). Sanders points out that since v.9 speaks of Jacob being presented as an inheritance of YHWH, it is probable that גּוֹיִם in v.8a be understood as an *accusativus rei*. For further discussion, see Sanders, *Provenance*, p.154.

⁸² See Deut. 5:15; 7:18; 8:2, 18; 9:7, 27; 11:2; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:9, 18, 22; 25:17.

commandments to the children in order that they may in turn remember what YHWH has done for them (cf. Deut. 6:7-8). The reference to “asking” the elders further reflects Deuteronomy’s exhortations to teaching the younger generations about YHWH (cf. Deut. 6:20-21).⁸³ It is interesting that while Deuteronomy 6 emphasises the teaching of children, here the children are instructed to consult with their parents. Tigay points out that the challenge to confer with the elders was “a traditional element in ancient rhetoric” because they were the “custodians of historical tradition in oral culture.”⁸⁴ Within such a culture, therefore, the teaching role of Moses (and that of the elders) is central to the wellbeing of the Israelite community. However, the Song testifies to the fact that Israel has ignored Moses’ call to ‘remember’ YHWH and his deeds. The idea of asking the fathers and elders may ironically hint at the neglect of passing on the traditions to the younger generations. The elders could have been the first culprits themselves who, instead of ‘remembering’, ‘forgot’ and turned their back on YHWH, hence paving the way for the nationwide apostasy (cf. v.18). Therefore, if verse 6 implied Israel’s contemptibility, verse 7 could be an indication that such a state of affairs has been due to the suppression of what truly matters, that is, loyalty to YHWH and imparting of the knowledge of YHWH to future generations. Both the responsibility of Israel’s leaders and their failure are in view here (cf. Deut. 6:1-9) though the present generation is not spared either. The use of the imperative in verse 7 may also have intended to expose their indifference towards covenantal faith and heritage, thus holding them accountable.

While other Old Testament texts may have “days of antiquity” (יְמֵי עוֹלָם) as a reference to the period of formation under Moses (Isa. 63:9, 11; Amos 9:11; Mic. 7:14),⁸⁵ here “days of antiquity” could be a reference to the patriarchal age or earlier.⁸⁶ Israel received her privileged status by way of YHWH’s election of her, which goes back to the dawn of time (cf. Deut. 4:32) in which other nations were given their allotted boundaries. McConville points out that the election of Israel is

⁸³ See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.453.

⁸⁴ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.302.

⁸⁵ The only other use of “days” (יְמֵי) is in Ps. 90:15. See Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.355; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.796.

⁸⁶ Sanders also points out that עוֹלָם and דוֹר־דוֹר may be speaking of a remote past. See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.152.

“part of a bigger picture” of the divine plan.⁸⁷ In this respect, as in the early chapter of Deuteronomy, Israel is not the only nation to enjoy YHWH’s providence of land (cf. Deut. 2:5, 9, 19). However, Israel is nonetheless a unique nation in terms of her special relationship with YHWH in view of his purpose for the whole world.⁸⁸ Verses 8-9 are therefore critically important to the argument against Israel. While it echoes the Deuteronomic stress on Israel’s election, it is unique in locating it in the primeval past, as part of a divine plan for all nations.

As is widely known, verse 8 has been a subject of scholarly debate due to a significant textual divergence. The textual witnesses read the verse as “sons of God” (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים or בְּנֵי אֵל) rather than the MT’s “sons of Israel” (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל).⁸⁹ Many scholars suspect that the expression “sons of God” represents the original text.⁹⁰ The suspicion is strengthened by the reference to divine beings in verse 43a in LXX and fragment 4QDt^a.⁹¹ The idea that “sons of God” denotes divine beings is also found in other parts of the Old Testament (Gen. 6:2, 4; Ps 29:1, 89:7; Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7), as well as having a counterpart with the Ugaritic expression *bn ‘il (m)* “sons of Ilu,” which is understood to be a designation for deities.⁹² Hence, if “sons of God” were to be the original reading, it may follow that, as alluded to in this verse, the number of areas of the nations is equivalent to the numbers of the divine beings.⁹³ The nations were given to these gods as their personal properties while Jacob belonged solely to YHWH (v.9). The implication of this is that the people of other nations were given the divine beings to venerate. These “sons of God” may be “the holy ones” (cf. רַבְבֹּת קָרָשׁ, Deut. 33:2) who form the divine council of YHWH (Ps. 29:1; 82:1, 6), and LXX renders here as “angels” (ἄγγελοι).⁹⁴ MacDonald also notes that

⁸⁷ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.453.

⁸⁸ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.454.

⁸⁹ The Qumran text, the Symmachus Greek translation of the Old Testament. The LXX renders v.8d by ἄγγελων θεου, “angels of God”.

⁹⁰ Skehan, “Structure,” p.154; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.197; Albright, “Some Remarks,” p.343; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.379; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.385; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, pp.454-455; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.371; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp.303, 504; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.796; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.156-158, 363-374; MacDonald, ‘*Monotheism*’, pp.89-92.

⁹¹ See Sanders’ discussion on v.43 in Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.248-256, 422-424.

⁹² Sanders, *Provenance*, p.157. See also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.371; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.454; MacDonald, ‘*Monotheism*’, p.91.

⁹³ See Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.379; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.157.

⁹⁴ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.379; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.363-364. Sanders argues that the reference to “the hosts of heaven” (צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם, Deut. 4:19-20) is a clear indication that “gods beside YHWH are

the idea of “sons of God” is a popular one in Ugaritic and believes that they “made up the pantheon with El as the head.”⁹⁵ But McConville cautions that the expression need not be taken to imply “a genealogical relationship between the gods.”⁹⁶ Rather, the idea of the Canaanite divine council from which “sons of God” is associated, is adopted with the notion that the “sons of God,” as members of the council, were simply heavenly beings subordinated to YHWH.⁹⁷ Notwithstanding this, the implication of verse 8 may still have been offensive to the later Israelite community. Thus Skehan argues that the reading which implies the existence of other gods was deliberately modified in the MT by pious Jews for theological and apologetic reasons. Hence, the change from “sons of God” to “sons of Israel” in the MT.⁹⁸ The MT’s emendation may not have been done to safeguard against polytheism. Rather, the change may have reflected the idea that Jacob’s seventy descendants (Gen. 46:27) corresponded the seventy nations that were catalogued in Genesis 10, as well as that every nation had its own guardian angel as implied in Daniel 10:13, 20, and 21.⁹⁹ According to Geza Vermes, the textual difference between the MT’s “sons of Israel” and LXX’s/Qumran’s “angels of God/sons of God” is due to a matter of different tradition and focus. LXX and Qumran apparently do not share MT’s view of Jacob’s seventy descendants because in their version of Exodus 1:5 (also Gen. 46:27 in LXX) the retinue of Jacob amounts to seventy-five, not seventy.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Vermes argues, “Whereas the Masoretic explanation of this figure [seventy] is Israel-centred, that of the Qumran is not.”¹⁰¹ So he thinks that the line of reasoning for the text in LXX/Qumran goes like this: “the guardian angels of the various peoples were created before man, so when God divided the human race into nations, he ensured that each

meant by this heavenly host.” He also compares the use of “the hosts of heaven” (1 Kgs 22:19) and “sons of God” (בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים, Job 1:6) which “suggests that these designations can relate to the same divine beings.” He further notes that the parallelism between the expressions “morning stars” (בְּקֶרֶת) and “sons of God” (Job 38:7), which he claims have comparable word-pair in Ugaritic.

⁹⁵ MacDonald, *‘Monotheism’*, p.91. See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.448.

⁹⁶ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.454.

⁹⁷ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.454. He comments, “The term ‘son of God’ did not necessarily imply a genealogical relationship between the gods. The Biblical form of the divine-council idea is probably closer to the Syro-Phoenician cult of Baalsamem than to that of Ugaritic El, the former merely having pre-eminence over the gods rather than a biological relationship with them ... when such Canannite divine council idea was mediated into the mono-Yahwistic environment of pre-exilic Israel, the gods were de-divinized, and became simply heavenly beings attending Yahweh.”

⁹⁸ Skehan, “Structure,” p.154.

⁹⁹ See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.454.

¹⁰⁰ Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (London: SCM, 1982), p.205.

¹⁰¹ Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p.205.

of the seventy pre-existent angels should have his own special client.”¹⁰² For our purpose there, I am inclined to concur with those who favour the reading of “sons of God” because first, it is *lectio difficilior lectio potior*. Second, as many scholars have noted, the textual witnesses explain the origin of MT’s reading.¹⁰³ Third, it is harder to explain why the reading of “sons of Israel” should be changed to “sons of God.”¹⁰⁴ In this light, the Song may be understood as espousing the notion of monolatry. This is not necessarily out of line with Deuteronomy as a whole, because the concept of the allotment of gods to the other nations is not foreign to Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 4:15-20; 29:26-27 [ET 29:25-26]).

According to the reading adopted here, therefore, in verses 8-9, YHWH’s uniqueness does not refer to him as the only existing God. Rather, the verses draw attention to his superior power over the divine beings, nations, and men. This idea of absolute authority is reinforced by the honorific title “Elyon” (עֲלִיּוֹן) which is a poetic expression of YHWH’s high status as “the God of gods.”¹⁰⁵ “Elyon,” therefore, is a title that “suits the context of God’s organising the human race as a whole.”¹⁰⁶ The emphasis on YHWH’s superiority over other gods and Israel’s uniqueness may be strengthened by how one reads the conjunction וְ in verse 9. The frequent translation of וְ as causal “for” does not emphasise enough the YHWH-Israel relationship; in particular, YHWH’s unconditional election of Israel which I believe is in view here. It has been pointed out that וְ here can be asseverative¹⁰⁷ or adversative.¹⁰⁸ If it is

¹⁰² Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p.205.

¹⁰³ See pp.71-72 above.

¹⁰⁴ The MT’s “sons of Israel” which correlates with Genesis 10-11, seems to pose a logical problem. This is pointed by Tigay, “Why would God base the number of nations on the number of Israelites? According to Genesis, Israel did not exist at the time. And why would He have based the division on their number at the time they went to Egypt, an event not mentioned in the poem? In addition, verse 9, which states that God’s portion was Israel, implies a contrast: Israel was God’s share while the other peoples were somebody else’s share, but verse 8 fails to indicate whose share they were.” See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.302. Tigay may be right to insist that the reading of “sons of God” is easier to account for than that of “sons of Israel.” See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.448, n.8; Heiser, *Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God*, p.23.

¹⁰⁵ In view of the context and poetic parallelism, I reckon that עֲלִיּוֹן and יְהוָה in v.9 are identical. For a more detailed discussion, see especially McConville, *Deuteronomy*, pp.454-455. See also Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.384; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.78-80; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.371; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.303; De Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*.

¹⁰⁶ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.303.

¹⁰⁷ Wevers, *LXX*, pp.513-514.

¹⁰⁸ Matitiah Tsevat, “God and the Gods in Assembly,” in *HUCA* 40, 1969, p.132; James Muilenburg, “The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle וְ in the Old Testament,” in *HUCA* 32, 1961, p.140.

read as an asserverative it would imply understanding the verse as laying stress on “the magnitude of what God did for Israel.”¹⁰⁹ In this case וְיָדָע would be rendered as “indeed,”¹¹⁰ and “lo.”¹¹¹ If וְיָדָע is taken as an adversative the verse would suggest the idea of opposition or antithesis. Hence, the translation “while,”¹¹² “however,”¹¹³ or “but.”¹¹⁴ In either case, we can see that the significance of verse 8 cannot be underestimated.¹¹⁵ However, it is verses 8-9 together that are critically important in advancing the Song’s argument. They aim to emphasise YHWH’s omnipotence and explains the reason for Israel’s special place in his purposes, which provides the rationale for the divine acts of providence in the subsequent verses. Verse 9 brings to the fore Israel’s high position as YHWH’s allotted inheritance.¹¹⁶ Israel’s perversity (cf. v.5), however, does not reflect her privileged status and verses 8-9 have indirectly reinforced this.

¹⁰⁹ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.303.

¹¹⁰ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.363.

¹¹¹ Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.796.

¹¹² Skehan, “Structure,” p.157.

¹¹³ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.159.

¹¹⁴ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.379;

¹¹⁵ This verse is the only verse in the Old Testament that explicitly informs us of YHWH’S divine administration of parcelling the nations to the divine beings, who seem to be given huge responsibilities to govern the world. Their administrative power can be inferred from passages like Ps. 82 and 1 Kgs 22:19-22.

¹¹⁶ See von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.197.

3.1.4 YHWH's providence for Israel (vv.10-14)

יִמְצָאֵהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר¹¹⁷ 10
 וּבְתֵהוּ יִלֵּל¹¹⁸ יִשְׁמֹן
 יִסְבְּכֵנָהוּ יְבוֹנְנָהוּ
 יִצְרְנָהוּ כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינוֹ:

כְּנֶשֶׁר יַעִיר קִנּוֹ¹²⁰ 11
 עַל-גּוֹזְלָיו יִרְחֹף¹²¹
 יִפְרֹשׁ כַּנְפָיו יִקְחָהוּ
 יִשָּׂאֵהוּ עַל-אֲבָרְתָיו:

*He found him in a desert land;
 In formless, howling desert;
 He surrounded him, cared for him,
 He guarded him like the pupil of his eye.*

*Like an eagle [which] roused its nest
 [And] hovered over its young;
 He stretched his wings, laid hold of him,
 He carried him upon his pinions.*

YHWH's election of Israel forms the basis of his providence for her. Readers may find it strange why the MT expresses Israel's election with the idea of her being found in the desert. Not only is the use of מִצָּא ("he found") an unusual expression of Israel's election, it also follows oddly from verses 8-9. However, in Psalm 89:21 מִצָּא may have connoted the idea of election, מִצָּאתִי דָוִד עַבְדִּי בְּשֶׁמֶן קֹדֶשׁי מִשְׁחָתִיו ("I have found David my servant, with my holy oil I anointed him;" NASB). As noted in Chapter One, Jan Joosten has recently challenged the reading of verses 8-10.¹²² According to him, if "he found" in verse 10 were to carry the idea of election, it would contradict verse 8. For him, Israel was "found" in the wilderness by YHWH

¹¹⁷ יִמְצָאֵהוּ is used once in Gen. to Kgs. The other use is in Job 37:13.

¹¹⁸ יִלֵּל is a *hapax legomenon*.

¹¹⁹ כְּאִישׁוֹן is used once in Gen. to Kgs. The other uses are in Ps. 17:8 and Prov. 7:2.

¹²⁰ LXX renders it by σκεπάσαι, "Like an eagle which sheltered."

¹²¹ According to Wevers, the LXX renders יִרְחֹף in v.11 ("he hovers") by ἐπιπόθησεν ("desires, longs for") because the translators of the LXX thought it was overly explicit when יִרְחֹף was applied to deity. See Wevers, *LXX*, p.515. However, the LXX translation of יִרְחֹף has failed to take into account the poetic and graphic expressions of the Song as can be seen in v.19ff.

¹²² See p.28 above.

according to verse 10 and therefore not elected in primeval times.¹²³ He postulates a reconstruction of MT's בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ("sons of Israel") with the Qumran's בְּנֵי אֵל ("sons of God") to read as יָצַב גְּבֻלַת עַמִּים לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי שָׂר אֵל ("He fixed the boundaries of peoples according to the number of the sons of Bull El"), which he thinks represents a more accurate reading of verse 8.¹²⁴ But Joosten's proposed reading of verse 10 appears problematic. According to the prevalent view in Ugaritic, "Ilu" (עֲלִיּוֹן) is known as the potent creator-god who bears the epithet "Bull" (*tr*).¹²⁵ Hence the phrase "Bull El" would have projected "Elyon" and "Bull El" as two different gods, thus, reduced "Bull El" to a subordinate status. This contradicts the understanding of "Elyon/Bull El" as the head of the Ugaritic pantheon. Furthermore, the expression "He found Israel in the desert" may be understood as speaking of Israel's inception history as a people of YHWH.¹²⁶ This does not have to mean that Israel was non-existent prior to the wilderness events. LXX renders MT's "he found him" (יָמְצְאֵהוּ) by "he supplies him" (αὐτάρακῆσεν αὐτὸν) which comes from αὐτάρακῆω meaning "to supply with necessities."¹²⁷ LXX reading apparently clarifies what appears obscure in the MT's reading in that YHWH enabled Israel to survive in the wilderness. Furthermore, the notion that YHWH found Israel in the desert is also expressed in Hosea 9:10 and Ezekiel 16:3-6.¹²⁸ In the former Hosea likens YHWH's joy at having found Israel to one's delight at having found grapes in the desolate wilderness, while Ezekiel equates the idea of YHWH's finding Israel with him providing for her when she was deprived in the open field. In the case of Ezekiel 16:6, Daniel Block points out that when the expression "in your blood, live!" (בְּדַמֶּיךָ) is

¹²³ Jan Joosten, "A Note on the Text," pp.548-555.

¹²⁴ Joosten, "A Note on the Text," pp.551-552. Joosten argues that the phrase בְּנֵי שָׂר אֵל could have been miscopied by the scribe as בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל due to a *dittography* of the *yod*. Even if there was no known scribal error here, the word שָׂר ("bull") could still have been omitted for theological reasons which resulted in a text close to the Qumran reading. He also supports his case by pointing out that the expression בְּנֵי שָׂר אֵל is frequently attested in Ugaritic texts in which the title שָׂר אֵל is used to designate other gods as sons and daughters of El. Moreover שָׂר אֵל is reminiscent of the word מִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל in Hos. 8:6 which, Joosten claims, is a possible reference to Bull El, מִי שָׂר אֵל ("who is 'Bull El'"). He argues that Hosea was here taking issue with the Israelites concerning their worship of Bull El, a mere statue made by craftsman.

¹²⁵ De Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, p.69.

¹²⁶ Cf. De Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, p.156. See also Casper Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* (Leiden: BRILL, 1966), p.111. Commenting on the quality of Yahweh as Creator, Labuschagne says, "He 'created' Israel by His redeeming activity in history."

¹²⁷ According to Sanders, the SamP renders the MT's יָמְצְאֵהוּ ("he found him") by יָמְצְאֵהוּ ("he strengthened him"). See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.161.

¹²⁸ The expression is also used in Jer. 31:2.

יָרָא) is interpreted in the light of ancient Near Eastern custom, it carries the idea of a “formal declaration of adoption.”¹²⁹ Hence, the expression “he found” conveys the idea of “joy and ownership.”¹³⁰ It is probable that the picture of election here, as in Hosea and Ezekiel, complements the election images of creation and allotment.¹³¹ Certainly the expression also makes sense if one relates the allusion to the period of the wilderness-wandering, as some scholars reckon.¹³²

Essentially, the main point here is the strange sequence from a primeval view of election (vv.8-9) to a historical one (v.10). LXX shows an awareness of the difficulty. But it is the combination of creational and historical aspect of election that makes the Song distinctive. We may say that the Song goes beyond Deuteronomy in this regard. With ideas of creation, election, and adoption associated with “he found,” the Song emphasises the intimate relationship between YHWH and Israel, and anticipates a series of images to describe how YHWH cares for Israel. The extent of YHWH’s love for Israel is made more evident when the chaotic and harsh conditions of the wilderness are taken into consideration.

The desolateness of the desert is typified by the expression “howling” (יָלַל)¹³³ and is further brought out by the expression “formless” (תְּהוֹהוּ) which is also found in Genesis 1:2 to depict the formlessness of the earth. The idea of Israel’s desert wandering in verse 11 is also thematically linked with that of Exodus 19:4 through words such as “eagle” (נִשְׂפָר), “wing” (כַּנְפֵי), and “carry” (נִשָּׂא). YHWH’s threefold

¹²⁹ Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), p.481. Block further states, “In calling Jerusalem to live in her blood Yahweh assumes the role of the ‘lifesaver,’ calling this newborn threatened by certain death to live, which means theologically to enjoy life in all its fullness, good fortune, and the joy of God’s presence. But the declaration also represents Yahweh’s legal adoption of this foundling as his own child.”

¹³⁰ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455.

¹³¹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.372.

¹³² Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.385; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.304; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.797. However Craigie, who takes מִדְבָּר allegorically, thinks that the point of reference here is Egypt, not the wilderness since Egypt “was a ‘desert’ in the experience of the people of God.” See Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.380. Sanders seems to concur with Craigie. See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.381.

¹³³ Sanders points out that the expression יָלַל (“howling”) can be regarded as יָלָה, a reference to the cry of shepherds or the cry of distress in other parts of the Old Testament such as in Isa. 15:8, Jer. 25:36, Zeph. 1:10, and Zech. 11:3. However, Sanders thinks that יָלָה refers to the howling of jackals and other animals in the desert, as in Mic. 1:8, in which ‘howling’ is the characteristic of jackals and the desert was among the places these animals lived. See Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.161-162.

actions of surrounding, considering/caring, and guarding depict his continuous protection of his people.¹³⁴ Scholars have deliberated whether יָעִיר should be translated as “stirs up or rouses” with the idea of the eagle training its young how to fly or as “watches over or protects,” which predominantly carries the idea of the eagle safeguarding its young.¹³⁵ But in view of the new situation Israel was in, YHWH has protected his people from the roughness of the desert and trained them while they sojourned in the wilderness in order to prepare them for entry to Canaan. Whichever translation is adopted it is likely that YHWH’s actions here have both the sense of training and protection because training is often given under the trainer’s caring, watchful eye. As Driver notes,

The figure of Ex. 19:4 (cf. Dt. 1:31) is here developed, so as to illustrate Jehovah’s paternal affection shown in training Israel to independence: as the bird stirs up its nest, with the object of encouraging its young ones to flight, but at the same time hovers over them so as to be at hand to support them on its wings, in case their strength fails and they are danger of falling, so Jehovah (the figure of the bird being still retained) spread out His wings, and bare Israel upon them, until its powers were matured, and the nation was able to support itself alone (cf. Hos. 11:3).¹³⁶

Therefore, McConville states, “Creation and sustaining are bound together in these intimate images of the birth of a people.”¹³⁷ The concept of an eagle carrying its young may not necessarily have what Sanders calls “mythological overtones” underlying it.¹³⁸ Rather, the eagle metaphor expresses a sequence of actions such as

¹³⁴ See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.449. McConville notes that the נָהוּ- endings in the verbs, which is a case of *nun energicum*, is to emphasise the verbs. Due to the concentration of such verbal forms in which ה- was not assimilated by the *nun energicum*, Robertson reckons that their presence in one verse “makes poetic style as cogent an explanation as an early date.” See Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*, p.65. See also Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.797.

¹³⁵ The latter is favoured by the LXX, which presents a different picture from that of the MT, to make the figure fit the notion of divine providence. See Wevers, *LXX*, p.515. Also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.372. Nelson who notes that it is unclear what the eagle is doing with its young, prefers the translation “protects” because he infers its meaning from Ps. 91:4 in which it refers to YHWH’S כַּנְף (“wing”) as a place that offers protection. He also bases his choice of “protects” for יָעִיר on “its parallelism with ‘hovers’,” הָרַחַף, as in Gen. 1:2. However, Sanders argues that the translation of יָעִיר as “he protects” could have stemmed from the qal form of יָעִיר which has its counterpart in the Ugaritic and Akkadian letters. He further reckons that LXX translation may indicate that the translators derived the word from יָעִיר. See Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.163-164.

¹³⁶ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp.357-358. Also Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.381; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.385; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455; Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*, p.797; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.164-165.

¹³⁷ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455.

¹³⁸ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.166.

spreading its wings and bearing its young up on his pinions to conjure up the image of “a powerful raptor acting in the interest of its young.”¹³⁹ It is more reasonable then to regard the imagery as a poetic expression to emphasise YHWH’s singular and powerful action on Israel.¹⁴⁰ YHWH’s protective acts reflects his parental love for Israel, expressed succinctly by *יִשְׂאֵהוּ עַל-אַבְרָתוֹ* (“He carried him on his pinions,” v.11). The expression “carry” (*נָשָׂא*) here echoes the similar paternal idea in Deuteronomy 1:31 in which YHWH is said to carry Israel as “a father carries his son.” Deuteronomy’s depiction of YHWH’s intimate involvement in close proximity cannot be denied and overemphasised. The anthropomorphic depictions of YHWH such as “he found him” (*יִמְצֵאֵהוּ*) and “he carried him” (*יִשְׂאֵהוּ*) have rendered the view that Deuteronomy promotes a hypostatised presence of YHWH suspicious.¹⁴¹ The images employed here communicate a different picture of YHWH, whose constant parental attention reinforces the rhetorical questions asked in verse 6 through which the gravity of Israel’s apostasy is again brought to the fore.

יְהוָה בְּרֶדַךְ יִנְחֵנוּ 12
וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֹכַר:

*YHWH alone led him,
And there was no foreign god with him.*

Unlike the preceding verses which express YHWH’s faithfulness through the images of “the rock” (v.4), “father” (v.6), and “an eagle” (v.11), here his faithfulness is implicitly expressed by “he leads him” (*יִנְחֵנוּ*). The root word *נָחָה* (“lead,” “guide”), here in *hiphil*, is used in other parts of the Old Testament as well to express YHWH’s care for Israel as a shepherd would do for his sheep (Exod. 13:17, 21; 15:13; Neh. 9:12, 19; Ps. 23:3; 77:21; 78: 14, 52-53). With the exception of Psalm 23:3, *נָחָה* is used to describe YHWH’s care for Israel in the desert expressed through his guidance over her. *נָחָה* is also used with the same intention here (cf. v.10).¹⁴² The expression “And there was no foreign god with him” (*וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֹכַר*) can either

¹³⁹ Petersen and Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, p.76.

¹⁴⁰ Petersen and Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, p.76.

¹⁴¹ See more discussion of demythologisation in Chapter Three, section 2.1.2ff.

¹⁴² See Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.358; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.381; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.304; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.167, 384.

mean Israel has no strange gods with her or YHWH leads Israel without the aid of other gods. The latter is likely in view here because the suffix in עִמּוֹ probably relates to YHWH in the same way עִמָּדִי (“with me”) does in verse 39.¹⁴³ Furthermore the expression “YHWH alone” (יְהוָה בְּרַדְר),¹⁴⁴ which echoes the Deuteronomic claim that “YHWH alone is Israel’s God,” corresponds with the expression “And there is no god with me” (וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי, v.39b) which possibly also echoes the same Deuteronomic claim,¹⁴⁵ thus demanding Israel’s wholehearted devotion (Deut. 6:2).¹⁴⁶ The idea that YHWH has no foreign god aiding him in his providential action for Israel, therefore, coheres with the notion of YHWH’s supremacy which justifies his demand for Israel’s total allegiance (cf. Deut. 5:6-7).¹⁴⁷ However, it is also reasonable to read the expression “there was no foreign god with him” to mean that Israel has no foreign gods with her during her early history in the desert. This would anticipate verse 15 in which Moses reprimands Israel for deserting YHWH for foreign deities. In the latter case, both YHWH and Israel are alone:¹⁴⁸ the former is the sole deity in his redemptive activity while the latter has YHWH alone as her God. Hence, Nelson points out, “Verse 12 nicely underscores the *exclusive nature* of the election relationship.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ See also Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.358; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.381; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.304; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.167.

¹⁴⁴ Sanders points out the expression יְהוָה בְּרַדְר is unique. He says, “If in the Hebrew Bible YHWH is said to do something alone this idea is usually expressed by the word בְּרַדְר preceded by the preposition – ל followed by a pronominal suffix” cf. Exod. 22:19; Deut. 4:35; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; 1 Kgs 8:39; 2 Kgs 19:15, 19; Isa. 2:11, 17; 37:16, 20; 44:24; 63:3; Ps. 51:6, 71:16; 72:18; 83:19; 86:10; 136:4; 148:13; Job 9:8; Neh. 9:6; 2 Chron. 6:30. He also notes that this unique expression is closer to the one in Ps. 4:9, כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבַדְר לְבִטָּח הוֹשִׁיבֵנִי (“for thou alone, O YHWH, makes me dwell in safety”). See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.384 and n.444.

¹⁴⁵ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455.

¹⁴⁶ See McDonald, ‘*Monotheism*’, pp.59-75. McDonald traces the arguments concerning four main possibilities of the translations of Deut. 6:4: ‘YHWH is our God; YHWH is one;’ ‘YHWH, our God, YHWH is one;’ ‘YHWH, our God, is one YHWH;’ and ‘YHWH is our God, YHWH alone.’ McDonald argues that the Shema’s call for wholehearted love find its best expression in Song 6:8-9. See especially, pp.74-75.

¹⁴⁷ See also Ps. 44:20[21]; 81:9[10]; and Isa. 43:12.

¹⁴⁸ Petersen and Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, pp.76-77.

¹⁴⁹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.372 (italics mine).

13 יִרְכָּבְהוּ עַל־בְּמֹתַי אֲרָץ
 וַיֹּאכַל תְּנוּבַת שְׂרֵי¹⁵⁰
 וַיִּנְקְהוּ דָבֶשׁ מִסֵּלַע
 וְשֶׁמֶן מִחֶלְמִישׁ צוּר:

14 חֶמְאָת בָּקָר וְחֵלֶב צֹאן
 עִם־חֵלֶב פְּרִים וְאֵילִים בְּנֵי־כֶשֶׁן וְעֵתוּדִים
 עִם־חֵלֶב פְּלִיּוֹת חֶטָּה
 וְרֶם־עֵנֶב תִּשְׁתֶּה־חֶמֶר:

*He made him ride upon the high places of the land
 And he ate the fruits of the field
 And he suckled him with honey from the cliff,
 And oil from the flint rock.*

*Curds of cattle and milk of the flock,
 With fat of lambs, and rams of Bashan, and he-goats,
 With the fat of kidney of wheat,
 And the blood of grapes you drank [as] wine.*

Verses 13-14 have been generally viewed as a reference to Israel's settlement in the Promised Land.¹⁵² Here the expression "he made him ride" (יִרְכָּבְהוּ) continues the image of the eagle carrying its young. Wright proposes that verse 13 speaks of YHWH making Israel ride on the back of the Canaanite god of death Motu.¹⁵³ His reading is perhaps associated with the fact that "high place" (בְּמָה) has come to be regarded as having a connotation of cultic platform.¹⁵⁴ Yet, the mythical idea of Israel riding on the god of death is not attested in the Old Testament. According to Sanders, the *qal* form "ride" (רָכַב) carries the idea of "mount" and it often speaks of the act of "mounting" an animal or a vehicle.¹⁵⁵ Hence, although it remains conjectural, some scholars take the phrase "He made him ride upon the high places of the land" (יִרְכָּבְהוּ)

¹⁵⁰ Driver sees the form שְׂרֵי as an older form of שְׂרָה, which is retained in poetry for stylistic purpose. See Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.358.

¹⁵¹ LXX has it as "he fed them" (ἐψώμωσεν αὐτοὺς).

¹⁵² Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.385; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.372; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.168.

¹⁵³ Wright, "Lawsuit," p.29.

¹⁵⁴ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455. Also Mayes who notes that 'high places' in the Old Testament is "a term primarily used in a cultic sense with reference to a sanctuary (1 Kgs 3:4)." See Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.385.

¹⁵⁵ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.168, n.354; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.372.

(עַל־בְּמֹתַי אֲרָץ) as a portrayal of Israel's military conquest¹⁵⁶ of the highlands¹⁵⁷ in the Bashan region.¹⁵⁸ But LXX renders the expression "upon the high places of the land" as "the might of the land" (τῆς ἰσχύος τῆς γῆς) which, Wevers claims, probably means the fertility of the land as in Genesis 4:12 and Isaiah 58:14.¹⁵⁹ It is unclear if LXX had deliberately avoided the mention of "high places" for theological reason. Wevers' claim that "the might of the land" has the land's fertility in view may be strengthened by the expressions in verse 13: "high places of the land" (בְּמֹתַי אֲרָץ), "fruits of the field" (תְּנוּבַת שָׂדֵי), "from the cliff" (מִסֵּלַע), and "from the flint rock" (מִחֶלְמֵי־צוּר). The presence of the *qal* form "he eats" (יֹאכַל) amidst two *hiphil* form "he made him ride" (יַרְכִּיבֵהוּ) and "he suckled him" (יִנְקֵהוּ) is interesting. The LXX "he fed him" (ἐψώμισε) is apparently based on a *hiphil* form, like SamP, instead of MT's *qal* form "he eats" (יֹאכַל). This rendering retains the focus on YHWH as the subject to conform to the other two *hiphil* forms. However the *qal* form "he eats," if maintained for rhetorical purposes, shifts the focus from YHWH to Israel to emphasise that the latter has been, even until now, the beneficiary of the choicest things which YHWH had provided through the fertile land. The *qal* form "he eats" anticipates the charge "you grew fat, became thick, gorged with food" (שָׂמְנָה עֲבִיתָ כְּשֵׂיחַ, v.15b) to highlight the gravity of Israel's rejection of the God who creates and provides for her. The MT's "he eats" may be construed as an attempt to provide variety¹⁶⁰ and should be retained because it is a more difficult text.

LXX renders the MT's "he suckled him" (יִנְקֵהוּ) by "they sucked" (ἐθήλασαν). It may be that the portrayal of YHWH as having a feminine function was seen as unacceptable image in the later Hellenistic world.¹⁶¹ In any case, the MT's "he

¹⁵⁶ See Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, p.381. Craigie refers to the expression as a metaphor for the conquest and the invincibility of Israel as God's people in their possession of the land. Also Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.359; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455; Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (USA: Broadman & Holman, 1994), p.415; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.386. Mayes thinks that the expression indicates "Israel's establishing ownership of the land."

¹⁵⁷ Moran, "Some Remarks," pp.323-327; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.372; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.168-169. Echoing Tigay, Christensen thinks that "the high places of the land" refers to the central highland of Israel in Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.797.

¹⁵⁸ The reference to Bashan region is hinted at v.14. See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, pp.455-456.

¹⁵⁹ Wevers, *LXX*, p.516.

¹⁶⁰ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.359.

¹⁶¹ See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.389; Wevers, *LXX*, p.516.

suckled him” remains an arresting metaphor to convey the idea of YHWH’s maternal care for his children. It signifies YHWH’s love, which is further underscored when he provides his children with “honey” (דְּבַשׁ) and “oil” (שֶׁמֶן) from places such as rock in which “one would least expect to find sustenance.”¹⁶² However, references which speak of YHWH providing something from the rock are generally found in the context of Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness and the thing provided was usually water.¹⁶³ The provision of honey and oil only appears in Psalm 81:17 and the present verse. So alternatively, the presence of the honey and oil from the rock, if verses 13-14 were to be a depiction of Israel’s settlement in Canaan, may be understood to signify the land’s richness. Mayes thinks this picture represents “an accurate description of the land in which wild honey may be found among rocks, and oil from the olives growing in stony soil.”¹⁶⁴ Although his view may not be totally convincing, the expression “the fruits of the field” (תְּנוּבוֹת שָׂדֵי) and the list of choice food in verse 14, do suggest the land’s lushness.¹⁶⁵

Sanders thinks that the Song’s early dating may be supported by the idea of YHWH’s providence of “fat” (חֵלֶב) to Israel, a move which seems to infringe on the food law as listed in Leviticus.¹⁶⁶ Yet this is not a strong argument because one can also regard the same expression as the Song’s metaphorical description of the land.¹⁶⁷ In any case, whether YHWH expresses his maternal love through the provision of miraculous sustenance in barren places or through providing a land with natural wealth, the metaphor of a nursing mother is yet another striking image for YHWH’s intimate and exclusive devotion towards Israel.¹⁶⁸ The rhetorical effect is further brought across by the shift from the third to the second person, “you drink wine” (תִּשְׁתֶּה-חֶמֶר), through which “the truth of what is said” is driven home to Israel.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶² Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.797; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.381; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.305.

¹⁶³ Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:8-11; Deut. 8:15; Isa. 48:21; Ps 78:15-16, 20; 105:41; 114:8; Neh. 9:15.

¹⁶⁴ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.386.

¹⁶⁵ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.372. Nelson notes that the summary expression “produce [fruits] of the field” introduces the list of the richest food products of Palestine.

¹⁶⁶ See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.391. Cf. Lev. 3:16-17; 7:22-27.

¹⁶⁷ Driver reckons that “fat” is figurative of what is best or finest, as in Num. 18:12, in Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.360. Also Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.386.

¹⁶⁸ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.372. Nelson comments, “The maternal image of breast-feeding highlights Israel as a receptive and nearly passive object of divine providence.”

¹⁶⁹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.360.

YHWH is depicted here as being very near and active amongst his people. The image of suckling a child is especially striking in this regard.

3.1.5 *Israel abandoned YHWH for other gods (vv.15-18)*

15 וַיִּשְׂמַן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְעַט
 שָׁמֵן עֲבִית כָּשִׂית
 וַיַּטֵּשׁ אֱלֹהִים עֲשָׂהוּ
 וַיִּנְבֵּל צוּר יִשְׁעָתוֹ:

*But Yeshurun grew fat, and kicked;
 You grew fat, became thick, [and] gorged with food.
 And he forsook the God [who] fashioned him,
 And despised the rock of his salvation.*

The Song shifts abruptly from a description of YHWH's blessings in verses 13-14 to the condemnation of Israel's disloyalty.¹⁷⁰ The three waw-consecutives move the scene in quick succession: Israel becoming complacent, forsaking the God who blessed her, and eventually despising this God. Israel's violation of the First Command is about to be unveiled. The epithet "Jeshurun" (יִשְׂרָאֵל) is generally regarded as an honorific title for Israel derived from the root meaning "to be upright" (יָשַׁר).¹⁷¹ It is used positively in Deuteronomy 33:5 and Isaiah 44:2 but here it is used ironically to pinpoint Israel's unruly behaviour towards YHWH (cf. v.4). The use of the terms "Jeshurun" and "Jacob" (cf. v.9) may indicate the Song's presupposition of Israel's national existence.¹⁷² But the Song's immediate purpose in referring to Israel as "Jacob" (יַעֲקֹב) and "Jeshurun" (יִשְׂרָאֵל), and YHWH as "the Rock" (הַצּוּר) and "God" (אֱלֹהִים) is not simply to highlight Israel's unique status as YHWH's chosen people,¹⁷³ but also to emphasise the severity of her fall. Her ingratitude becomes even more hideous when contrasted with YHWH's election, love and providence for her. Moses' warning against pride and ingratitude has gone unheeded (cf. Deut. 8:11-20). Tigay rightly points out that this verse "underscores how Israel has failed to live up to

¹⁷⁰ Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.805.

¹⁷¹ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.387; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.382; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.373; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.179-180; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.305; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.797.

¹⁷² Giles and Doan, *Twice Used Song*, pp.110-111.

¹⁷³ See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.456.

her expected character.”¹⁷⁴ The *piel* “despised” (וִינַבֵּל) is reminiscent of “foolish/senseless” (נָבַל, v.6).¹⁷⁵ Israel’s condescending attitude towards YHWH leads to the rebuke in the second person which directs the charge on a personal level to each member within the community, as in verse 14.¹⁷⁶

16 יִקְנֵאֵהוּ בְזָרִים
בְּתוֹעֵבֹת יַכְעִיסֵהוּ:

17 יִזְבְּחוּ לְשָׂדִים לֹא אֱלֹהִים
אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִדְעוּם
חֲדָשִׁים מִקֶּרֶב בָּאוּ
לֹא שָׁעָרוּם אֲבֹתֵיכֶם:

*They made him jealous with strange [gods];
With abominations they provoked him to anger.*

*They sacrificed to demons, not god,
Gods [whom] they had not known;
New ones who came lately,
[Whom] your fathers did not dread.*

Verse 16 bears a striking resemblance to Psalm 78:58.¹⁷⁸ Both Deuteronomy 32:16 and Psalm 78:58 are chiasmic in structure. In Psalm 78:58, YHWH is angered by the high places and his jealousy is aroused by Israel’s idols. In the present verse, YHWH’s jealousy is provoked by Israel’s embracing the ‘strangers’ and is provoked by their abominable practices.¹⁷⁹ In the light of Psalm 78:58, hence, the expression “strangers” (זָרִים) is a reference to the foreign deities.¹⁸⁰ This is supported by how the

¹⁷⁴ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.306.

¹⁷⁵ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.306. Tigay says that a double-entendre may be intended. See also Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.362. He thinks that the intention here is to set up the situation that causes Israel to lapse before depicting how she forsakes YHWH and treats him with contempt.

¹⁷⁶ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.382. Sanders reckons that the “asyndetic connection of the verbs also reinforces the appeal.” See Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy* 32, p.180. Also von Rad who thinks that the change to 2nd person would “appear as a prophetic indictment.” See von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.198.

¹⁷⁷ לְשָׂדִים is used once in Deut. 32:17 and the other in Ps. 106:37. LXX renders שָׂדִים in both places by δαίμονιους (“demons”).

¹⁷⁸ וַיַּכְעִיסוּהוּ בְּמִזְבְּחֵיהֶם וּבַמְּסִלֹּתָיִם יִקְנֵאֵהוּ (“And they provoked him to anger with their high places, with idols they made him jealous.”)

¹⁷⁹ The resemblance between the two verses is also noted by Sanders in *Provenance*, p.181. While he focuses on the dating of the Song, my concern is to see how Ps. 78:58 may shed light on the meaning of זָרִים in Deut. 32:16.

¹⁸⁰ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.181. Sanders suggests that the deity is non-Israelite.

use of זָר ("strange") is usually associated with the worship of deities other than YHWH in other parts of the Old Testament.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, the expression "They made him jealous" (וַיִּקְנֵאֵהוּ, v.16) indicates that it is the issue of Israel's idolatrous worship that is in view here, as the word "jealous" (קָנָא) frequently describes YHWH's response towards Israel's foreign worship (cf. See Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:21).¹⁸² The word "jealous" reappears in verse 21, which reinforces the assertion made in verse 17 that the "strangers" are actually "not-god" (לֹא־אֱלֹהִים). McConville points out that YHWH's jealousy is "the obverse of his special love."¹⁸³ The issue of YHWH's jealousy cannot be examined apart from his election of Israel because divine jealousy is the covenantal response to the violation of covenantal faithfulness, as in the case here. YHWH's jealousy has been aroused because of Israel's apostasy and repugnant religious activities. This may be suggested by the expression "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה) which perhaps describes the rituals of foreign worship at the high places.¹⁸⁴ In this case, this verse illustrates how Israel exchanged YHWH's glory for the image of demonic beings.¹⁸⁵ The abhorrence of Israel's foreign worship is further clarified in verse 17.

The present verse explicitly denies the divinity of "demons" (שְׂרִימִים) with the apposition "not god" (לֹא אֱלֹהִים).¹⁸⁶ The negative rhetoric exposes the object of Israel's worship as "third-rate demons or pseudo-gods with no mighty deeds and

¹⁸¹ See the use of זָר אֱלֹהִים in Ps. 44:21 and 81:10; זָר in Isa. 43:12; and זְרִימִים in Jer. 2:25 and 3:13.

¹⁸² In this sense, although Albright thinks that v.16 is a case of *haplography*, his suggestion to insert "elim" or "elohim" before זְרִימִים seems unnecessary. See Albright, "Some Remarks," p.344, n.3.

¹⁸³ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.456.

¹⁸⁴ However, Mayes refers to תּוֹעֵבָה as speaking of the idols that were worshipped, not the rites by which they were worshipped. See Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.387. But Mayes' proposal seems unnecessary because the rituals of worship are intrinsically tied to the nature of the idol worshipped. This is particularly true in Eastern religions in which deities have specific requirements how their worshippers should approach them and sometimes by looking at the rites one may be able to tell the identity of the deity worshipped.

¹⁸⁵ See also Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.362.

¹⁸⁶ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.362. It is noteworthy that right after the verse denies the divinity of שְׂרִימִים it uses אֱלֹהִים ("gods") for these beings. Tigay suggests that the ambiguous use of אֱלֹהִים here is better understood as "so-called gods." See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.306. It is also noteworthy that the expression אֱלֹהִים לֹא יָדְעוּם ("gods they did not know") is also found in Deut. 11:28; 13:3, 7, 14; 28:64; 29:25. Sanders observes a strong relationship between the present verse and Deut. 13:7-8, see Sanders, *Provenance*, p.396.

reliability”¹⁸⁷ and as “nouveaux, [who] usurp YHWH’s rights.”¹⁸⁸ Hence the verse continues to assert that these “demons” are “new ones” (חֲדָשִׁים), distinct from YHWH who acted on behalf of Israel since the beginning of her history.¹⁸⁹ The sharp contrast is significant because, as Tigay notes, antiquity was a hallmark of authenticity in the ancient world.¹⁹⁰ YHWH is hence described implicitly here as “the ancient God” (cf. Deut. 33:27). The abrupt change from the third to the second person at the end of verse 17 highlights the ironical contrast between the hearers and their forefathers who “did not dread” (לֹא שָׁעְרוּם) the idols whom their descendants worshipped. The word “dread” (שָׁעַר) is also used in Jeremiah 2:12, Ezekiel 27:35 and 32:10, which seems to describe some kind of superstitious horror. But for the present verse, because these deities were non-effective pseudo-gods, Israel’s forefathers found no ground for fear. Israel’s lack of knowledge and faith in YHWH are implied here.

18 צוֹר יִלְדֶךָ תִּשִׂי
וּתְשַׁכַּח אֵל מִחִלָּלֶיךָ:

***[The] Rock [who] begot you, you forgot
You ignored the God [who] brought you forth painfully.***

Utilising the parental image verse 18 enters the climax of Israel’s ingratitude. The use of “rock” and the parental image connect this verse to verse 4 and 6 respectively. The image of “rock” speaks of YHWH as the ancient rock who fathered Israel from the beginning while the maternal image underscores a mother’s labour pains in child bearing. The images suggest that Israel “owes her existence totally to YHWH.”¹⁹¹ The parental image recalls YHWH’s providential acts of “surrounding him” (v.10), “caring for him” (v.10), “guarding him” (v.10), “carrying them” (v.11), “leading him” (v.12), “making him ride” (v.13), and “suckling him” (v.13). These metaphorical expressions hence lay emphasis on YHWH’s intimacy with Israel. The notion that YHWH resides in heaven and watches Israel ‘from a distance’ as such does not resonate well with the Song’s anthropomorphic depictions of YHWH’s

¹⁸⁷ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.373; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.306.

¹⁸⁸ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.456.

¹⁸⁹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.362; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.387.

¹⁹⁰ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.306.

¹⁹¹ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.387; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.307.

immanence. Rather, the imagery suggests YHWH's close proximity to his people and expresses his ownership over Israel, an idea which coheres well with the political notion of "to put his name there" (לְשֵׁם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם), Deut. 12:5) as espoused by de Vaux, Wenham, Richter and others.¹⁹² The Song does not provide a notion of divine presence that distinguishes YHWH's immanence from his transcendence. The hypothesis that Deuteronomy is a theological corrective of the anthropomorphic idea of YHWH certainly does not gain support from the Song.¹⁹³ On the contrary, the Song counters this allegation through its anthropomorphic imagery, and speaks with ease about YHWH's immanent involvement with Israel as the transcendent, supreme God. The parental imagery makes the Song's rhetoric sharp and succinct. The use of the second person further expresses Moses' astonishment, underscoring Israel's ingratitude in that she would even 'forget' YHWH's love for her after having benefited from his providence.¹⁹⁴ The Song's depictions of Israel's 'forgetfulness,' self-sufficiency, and betrayal bring its hearers back to the Deuteronomic warning of the need to 'remember YHWH' (Deut. 4:10; 5:15; 7:18; 8:2; 9:7, 27; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:9, 18, 22; 25:17; 32:7).

¹⁹² See the survey of the issues revolving around the study of Deuteronomy in Chapter Three.

¹⁹³ Such as those of von Rad, Weinfeld, and others. See further discussion in Chapter Three.

¹⁹⁴ McConville points out that the word 'forgetting' has "personal and moral overtones rather than suggesting mere neglect." See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.456.

3.2 YHWH's Response to Israel's faithlessness (vv. 19-27)

3.2.1 YHWH withdraws his protection from Israel (vv.19-21)

19 וַיִּרְא יְהוָה וַיִּנְאֹץ
מִכַּעַס בָּנָיו וּבָנֹתָיו:

20 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶסְתִּירָה פָּנַי מֵהֶם
אֲרֹאֶה מָה אַחֲרֵיהֶם
כִּי דֹר תִּהְיֶה הַמָּה
בָּנִים לֹא-אֱמֵן בָּם:

21 הֵם קִנְאוּנִי בְלֹא-אֵל
כַּעֲסוּנִי בְהַבְלִיָּהֶם
וְאֲנִי אֶקְנִיאֵם בְּלֹא-עָם
בְּגוֹי נָבָל אֶכְעִיסֵם:

*And YHWH saw and despised [them]
because of the provocation of his sons and daughters.*

*And he said, "I will hide my face from them,
Let me see what their end [will be];
For they [are] a generation of perversity,
Sons without faithfulness in them."*

*"They, they made me jealous with a no-god,
They vexed me with their idols.
So I, I shall make them jealous with a no-people,
With a foolish nation I shall make them vexed."*

The syntax of verse 19 in the MT looks problematic initially as the phrase "because of the provocation of his sons and daughters" (מִכַּעַס בָּנָיו וּבָנֹתָיו) does not seem to fit well with "And YHWH saw and despised" (וַיִּרְא יְהוָה וַיִּנְאֹץ). LXX renders "and he despised" (וַיִּנְאֹץ) by "and he was jealous and was provoked" (καὶ ἐζήλωσεν καὶ παρωξύνθη).¹⁹⁵ LXX's use of the verbal form "be jealous" (ζηλώω) corresponds well with the MT's "be jealous" (קִנְאָה, vv.16, 21). Furthermore, the phrase "was provoked" (παρωξύνθη) is explained by the second colon of verse 19,

¹⁹⁵ It has been pointed out that this LXX reading goes back to the Qumran manuscript (4QPhyl N) which reads ויקנא ("was jealous") for וינאץ. See more discussion in Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.368; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.187.

thus relating syntactically with the MT's "because of the provocation" (מִפְּעֵם).¹⁹⁶ In other words, LXX offers an attractive rendering of verse 19 but the MT seems to present a more difficult reading and is hence to be preferred. The syntactical problem of verse 19 could be partly a matter of poetic style. More importantly, the MT's reading of verse 19 is not obscure as it is clear from the context that what YHWH saw and despised was Israel's ingratitude and abhorrent idolatrous practices. The offence of Israel's immorality is expressed by the word "provocation" (פֶּעַם) which is also echoed in verse 21 in which the word is used to describe the provocative nature of the enemy.¹⁹⁷ Israel is portrayed as being worse than the enemy because she should have known better than to undermine YHWH's authority and jeopardise her privileged status as his chosen people. Verse 19 directs the hearers' attention to what YHWH is about to say in the subsequent verses. The scene now changes to focus on YHWH the rejected parent for the first time. One senses both his anger and pain in verses 19ff.¹⁹⁸ His response, "I will hide my face from them" (אֶסְתִּירָה פָּנַי מֵהֶם) signifies the withdrawal of his protection in revulsion Israel's behaviour.¹⁹⁹ The idiom "hide my face," which effectively means "hide my presence," is also used in the ancient Near East to speak of withholding of favour.²⁰⁰ Once again, the clear expression of YHWH's corporeality in the Song does not square up with the presupposed demythologisation programme in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 31:17). Contrary to the idea that Deuteronomy is anti-anthropomorphic and abstract in its understanding of YHWH's presence, the anthropomorphic and immanent notion of divine presence in fact gains further support here. YHWH's close proximity with Israel may be inferred from the hiding of his face [presence] from her. If the phrase "hide my face" does not suggest YHWH's immanence, it would be even more enigmatic to take this idiom as a reference to YHWH's hypostatized presence. In view of the Song's corporeality and anthropomorphism, the idiom makes better sense when read in terms of the divine immanence. Therefore, to insist that Deuteronomy promotes a transcendent God and

¹⁹⁶ Wevers, *LXX*, p.520; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.187.

¹⁹⁷ Also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.457. McConville observes that 'provocation' is a major theme in Deut. 29:22-28 and it also appears at the introduction to the Song in Deut. 31:29.

¹⁹⁸ Also Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.301.

¹⁹⁹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.364; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.457; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.373; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.188.

²⁰⁰ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.457.

not an immanent God is to ignore the context of Deuteronomy in its final form. The Song thus far shows that the hypothesis of the Name theologians is untenable.²⁰¹

The result of YHWH's 'hiding his face' is catastrophic, as expressed by "Let me see what their end [will be]" (אַרְאֶה מָה אַחֲרֵיהֶם). The word "end" (אַחֲרֵית) has in view Israel's military defeat, as verses 21-25 make clear. Israel's defeat is justified by two parallel descriptions: "a generation of perversity" (דֹּר תְּהַפֹּכֶת) and "sons without faithfulness" (בְּנִים לֹא־אֱמֵן).²⁰² The first description echoes "a perverse and crooked generation" (דֹּר עֲקָשׁ וּפְתִלְתֵּל, v.5) and the second one provides a sharp contrast with YHWH's nature as "A God of faithfulness" (אֵל אֱמוּנָה). Both descriptions in verse 20 serve to highlight Israel's waywardness and justify YHWH's chastisement of her. Israel's provocation of YHWH to jealousy and vexation will be requited with jealousy and vexation by YHWH. This is shown by the tight parallelism of ABA¹B¹ in verse 21. The phrase "not-god" (לֹא־אֵל) may not necessarily mean that they are non-existing but rather speaks of their dubious character that makes them unworthy of worship. The unworthiness of these beings is attested by the expression "breath/vapour" (הַבֵּל) in the parallel clause, which imply that these so-called gods are merely insubstantial, vapourous idols devoid of real power.²⁰³

As Israel has chosen to trust in a "no-god" (לֹא־אֵל) she will experience YHWH's wrath through a "no-people" (לֹא־עַם) raised to retaliate against her infidelity.²⁰⁴ But verse 21 remains vague as far as the identity of "no-people" is concerned and there is no consensus about it amongst the scholars.²⁰⁵ Nelson points out that the identity of this nation is "deliberately obscured."²⁰⁶ In fact, such vagueness should not surprise us because such ambiguity is not uncommon in poetry.

²⁰¹ See more discussion in Chapter Three below.

²⁰² Sanders notes the parallelism between דֹּר ("generation") and בְּנִים ("sons"). See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.189.

²⁰³ See also the use of הַבֵּל as a description for idols in 1 Kgs 16:13, 26; 2 Kgs 17:15, Jer. 2:5, 10:8; 14:22; 16:19; Jon. 2:9; Ps. 31:7.

²⁰⁴ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.373.

²⁰⁵ See the discussions concerning לֹא־עַם ("no-people") in Chapter One, pp.12-15 above.

²⁰⁶ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.373.

The obscured identity of “no-people” probably directs its hearers to focus on the nature of this people whom YHWH will use against his own people. The expression, hence, may be read as a reference to an unspecific enemy in any era raised against Israel’s disloyalty. In this way, the Song serves as an effective prophetic indictment to Israel. Just as “not-god” refers to the unworthiness of the foreign gods, the terms “no-people” is analogous to it,²⁰⁷ speaking of the people’s senseless, barbaric nature that makes them unworthy to be called ‘a people’.²⁰⁸ Hence, the expression “foolish nation” (גוי נבל) rightly describes the nature of this enemy. As Israel has been referred to as “foolish” (v.6), the expression “foolish nation” may also refer to her:²⁰⁹ Israel, by making YHWH look foolish through her apostasy, becomes a fool herself and a victim of the impious nation. Again, echoes of wisdom and Torah come to the fore. Memory of Israel’s past devotion is now evoked to arouse a sense of remorse: how could a wise and Torah-oriented nation like Israel would become imprudent and reject the God who saves them? The military invasion reinforces the terror of offending the divine warrior while at the same time it makes Israel jealous of the enemy’s success.

²⁰⁷ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.388.

²⁰⁸ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.365; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.190. Sanders suggests that in the compound word like לֹא-עַם the word לֹא indicates that “the following term does not apply to the phenomenon under discussion. In this case [of verse 21], the hostile nation does not deserve the designation ‘people’.”

²⁰⁹ Albright argues that גוי נבל (“foolish nation”) is a description of Israel. See Albright, “Some Remarks,” p.383.

3.2.2 YHWH wages war against Israel (vv.23-25)

22 כִּי־אֵשׁ קָרְחָהּ בְּאֶפֶי
וַתִּיקָר עַד־שְׂאוֹל תַּחְתִּית
וַתֹּאכַל אֶרֶץ וּבְלָהָהּ
וַתִּלְהֹט מוֹסְדֵי הָרִים:

23 אֶסְפָּה עָלֵימוֹ רָעוֹת
חֲצֵי אֶכְלֶה־בָּם:

24 מִזֵּי רָעַב וּלְחָמֵי רֶשֶׁף
וְקִטָּב²¹¹ מְרִירֵי
וְשֵׁן־בְּהֵמוֹת אֲשַׁלַּח־בָּם
עִם־חַמַּת זַחְלֵי עֶפְרַיִם:

25 מִחוּץ תִּשְׁפַּל־חֶרֶב
וּמִחֲדָרִים אֵימָה
גַּם־בָּחוּר גַּם־בְּתוּלָה
יִזְנֹק עִם־אִישׁ שִׁיבָה:

*“For a fire has been kindled in my wrath,
And it burns as far as to the lowest Sheol;
And consumes the earth and its produce,
And sets on fire the foundation of the mountains.”*

*“I shall gather against them evils;
My arrows shall I exhaust against them.”*

*“Sucked out [by] famine, consumed by pestilence,
And bitter destruction.²¹²
And the teeth of beasts I shall send against them,
With the poison of the crawlers of the dust.”*

*“From outside the sword will make childless,
And within the chambers, dread;
Both young man and young woman alike,
The suckling and the aged man.”*

The scene now shifts from a disclosure of the divine heartache to a display of divine wrath in graphic terms. Verse 22 lines up a series of destructive forces against

²¹⁰ The expression קָרְחָהּ is only used here and in Jer. 15:14.

²¹¹ מְרִירֵי is a *hapax legomenon*.

²¹² But see Sanders, *Provenance*, p.193. He translates v.24a as “My Sucker, Hunger and my Warrior, Reshep, and my Bitter one, Qeteb.”

Israel. The word “a fire” (אֵשׁ) is a metaphorical expression for divine anger, which is described as penetrating Sheol and back to the earth.²¹³ The depiction is striking and may suggest that YHWH’s judgement on Israel has “universal effects.”²¹⁴ Alternatively, it may also be taken as a graphic expression of the magnitude of YHWH’s devastating power on Israel.²¹⁵ The word “evils” (רָעוֹת, v.23)²¹⁶ is paralleled with “my arrows” (חֲצֵי, v.23), which is a figure of speech for the calamities expressed in verses 24-25. Most scholars have reckoned verses 24-25 to be a description of the consequences of natural disasters and war. Verse 24a has been a problematic verse to translate. It has been suggested that מָזִי as plural construct derives from an unattested root “to suck” (*mazza*) in Arabic and “to squeeze” (*mazû*) in Akkadian.²¹⁷ Hence מָזִי רָעַב can be taken to mean “sucked out [by] hunger.” Sanders argues that מָזִי רָעַב is a description of a demon because the Phoenician word *mzh* which appeared on a seventh or sixth century inscribed amulet from Arslan Tash, designating a demon, resembles the word מָזִי.²¹⁸ Although Sanders’ view is not wholly convincing, it nonetheless retains the active sense of מָזִי rather than treating it as a derivative with passive sense. Furthermore, the expression “consumed by pestilence or fire-bolts” (וּלְחַמֵּי רֶשֶׁף) is also problematic. The word רֶשֶׁף has been variously referred to as fire-bolts,²¹⁹ pestilence,²²⁰ or a name for a deity.²²¹ LXX renders it by “birds” (ὄρνέωσ).²²² Sanders thinks that the translation of רֶשֶׁף by

²¹³ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374.

²¹⁴ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.457.

²¹⁵ Hence, Craigie’s comment is instructive: “In verse 22 the anger takes precedence over pity; and the divine fire of anger, once kindled, knows no limits in its destructive force ... The anger of God is like the love of God, knowing no limits in the places to which it extends but the anger of God is an awesome and terrible thing exactly because it follows from a rejection of the equally pervasive love of God.” See Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.384.

²¹⁶ The use of רָעוֹת is also found in Deut. 31:17 and 21. See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.401. Sanders thinks that these passages allude to the use of this word in Deut. 32:23.

²¹⁷ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.368; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.194.

²¹⁸ Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.197-198. Hence, Sanders translates the phrase מָזִי רָעַב as “My Sucker Hunger” in which the *yod* at the end of מָזִי becomes the first personal suffix.

²¹⁹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.367. Nelson says that רֶשֶׁף can be taken as a common noun, “flame”, and use it either metaphorically as “fever,” “heat,” or literally as “bolt of fire.” See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374.

²²⁰ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.384; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.389; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.457; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.309; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.807.

²²¹ Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.194-195, 401-402. Sanders adopts De Moor’s reading of v.24 who regards

רָעַב, רֶשֶׁף, and קָטַב as deities subordinate to YHWH. See de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, p.157.

²²² See Wevers, *LXX*, p.523.

“birds” could be due to its use in Job 5:7b: “And the sons of Reshep make the flying high” (עוף) (וּבְנֵי־רֶשֶׁף יִגְבִּיהוּ עוֹף).²²³ Most scholars prefer to read רֶשֶׁף as “pestilence.” Some scholars, however, believe that רֶשֶׁף is a figure of the Phoenician god of plagues and diseases, *Resheph*, who seems to be an attendant of YHWH (cf. Hab. 3:5).²²⁴

Similarly, there is no unanimity concerning the meaning of מְרִירֵי קֶטֶב, which has been understood to mean “stinging,”²²⁵ “pestilence,”²²⁶ or “destruction.”²²⁷ However, the word קֶטֶב has also been taken as a designation for a demon.²²⁸ The difficulty is compounded by the fact that מְרִירֵי is a *hapax legomenon*. Most commentators translate this word as “bitter.”²²⁹ Still further, the expression “teeth of beasts” (שֵׁן־בְּהֵמוֹת) has been taken to mean the mythic creature Behemoth (cf. Job 40:15-24)²³⁰ and “crawlers of the dust” (זֹחְלֵי עָפָר) to be venomous serpents (cf. Mic. 7:17). The thought that YHWH sends wild beasts to devour and serpents to bite his people is also attested in other parts of the Old Testament (Num. 21:6; Jer. 8:17; Ezek. 5:17, 14:21; Hos. 13:8). In fact, the threat of being attacked by wild animals was one of the covenantal curses in Leviticus 26:22. Verse 24 here may mean that even the animal world will turn against Israel in the wake of YHWH’s judgement.²³¹ The idea of gods sending devouring animals to human beings is also common in the ancient

²²³ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.195.

²²⁴ Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.194-195. Also Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.368; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374. However Tigay, although he agrees that in a trace of personification of disasters, *reshef* is a member of God’s retinue, takes a cautious approach and regards *reshef* as simply one of God’s ‘arrows.’ See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.309.

²²⁵ Wright, “Lawsuit,” p.30; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.384.

²²⁶ Skehan, “Structure,” p.158; O. Essifeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32 1-43*, p.11; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.446; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.309; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.801.

²²⁷ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp.366, 368.

²²⁸ Johannes C. de Moor, “‘O Death, Where is Thy Sting?’”, in L. Eslinger, G. Taylor (eds.), *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical & other studies in memory of P.C. Craigie*, Sheffield, 1988, pp.101-104. De Moor suggests that קֶטֶב could have been regarded as a son of Mot, the god of death. Also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374. Sanders points out that the name קֶטֶב is also used in later Judaism for a demon. See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.196, n.541. For further discussion on קֶטֶב, see Sanders, pp.401-402.

²²⁹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.366; Skehan, “Structure,” p.158; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.384; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.446; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.364. According to Sanders, the word מְרִירֵי appears to be a form of the adjective מְרִיר, meaning “bitter.” He compares the Arabic adjective *marīr* meaning “bitter,” “strong,” or “robust,” from which the Arabic phrase *‘abu murrāh* (“father of bitterness”) is used as a designation for the devil. See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.196.

²³⁰ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.375.

²³¹ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.385.

Near East.²³² The brutality depicted in verse 25 points back to the theme of invasion in verse 21.²³³ But here, the verse uses “all-inclusive language”²³⁴ to describe the dreadful realities of war which would hit everyone, even those in the security of “the chambers” (חֲדָרִים), and in all places in such a way that neither age nor sex, combatant or non-combatant would be spared.²³⁵ In view of Israel’s engagement with demonic practices (cf. v.17), it is possible to interpret the consequences of disasters, the attack by wild animals, and war as a demonstration of demonic powers used by YHWH as his “arrows” against Israel. This is not an inconceivable idea since YHWH has been understood as the supreme God over life and death which necessarily includes his control of all creation (cf. v.39). YHWH’s judgement on Israel has far-reaching effects and is strikingly antithetical to the blessings Israel once enjoyed (cf. vv.13-14).²³⁶ The scenario is now reversed, with more deadly consequences described in the following verses.

²³² Sanders, *Provenance*, p.402. According to Sanders, a fragmentary Ugaritic text relates the battle between Motu, the god of death, and Baal in which the latter was attacked by *šn mtm dbtn* (“the teeth of the belly-death”) and serpents in Ugaritic literature usually embody powers of evil.

²³³ This is also echoed in Lam. 2:21.

²³⁴ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.375.

²³⁵ See also Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp.368-369.

²³⁶ Also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.457.

3.2.3 YHWH withholds his wrath upon Israel (vv.26-27)

26 אָמַרְתִּי אֶפְאַיֵּהֶם
אֲשִׁבִיחָהּ מֵאֵנוֹשׁ זְכָרָם:

27 לוֹלִי כִּעֵס אוֹיֵב אֲנֹר
פִּן־יִנְכְרוּ צְרִימוֹ
פִּן־יֹאמְרוּ יְדִינֵי רָמָה
וְלֹא יִהְיֶה פֶּעַל כָּל־זֹאת:

*“I [would have] said, ‘Let me cleave them into pieces,’
‘Let me blot them out from the memory of man.’”*

*“If I did not fear the provocation of the enemy,
Lest their adversaries misconstrue,
Lest they say, ‘Our hands [is] high,’
‘Not YHWH [who] has done all this.’”*

The root word “cleave into pieces” (פָּאָה) is a *hapax legomenon*. LXX renders it by “to scatter” (διασπερῶ) and some lexicons interpret it as cognate with the Arabic root “to cleave/to split/dash to pieces” (*pa'ā*).²³⁸ But scholars are not unanimous on this and various translations have been proposed: “cleaved/cut in pieces,”²³⁹ “make an end,”²⁴⁰ “reduced to naught,”²⁴¹ “strike down,”²⁴² “scatter,”²⁴³ “sweep away,”²⁴⁴ and “destroy.”²⁴⁵ “Cleave into pieces” seems to give a better sense of the intended devastation in view of the context (cf. vv.22-25), as well as from the parallel clause of verse 26b. Although this reading remains problematic in some ways, it depicts better the severity of YHWH’s judgement on Israel.²⁴⁶ Verse 27 begins with the word “if not/unless” (לוֹלִי) which expresses an unfulfilled condition. The use of “I fear” (אֲנֹר) is unique because it is probably the only place in the Old Testament in which it is used anthropomorphically of YHWH. The idea of YHWH

²³⁷ אֶפְאַיֵּהֶם is a *hapax legomenon*. LXX has it as “scatter them” (διασπερῶ αὐτούς).

²³⁸ BDB Hebrew Lexicon, Holladay Hebrew Lexicon, TWOT Hebrew Lexicon.

²³⁹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.369; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.376; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.801.

²⁴⁰ Skehan, “Structure,” p.157.

²⁴¹ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.309.

²⁴² Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.365.

²⁴³ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.389.

²⁴⁴ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.446.

²⁴⁵ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.202.

²⁴⁶ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.203. Sanders says that the Arabic verb does not necessarily correspond to the meaning of the Hebrew one but Mayes points out that the Arabic cognate “cleave” is “not unsuitable to this context.” See Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.389.

'fearing something' may be so unthinkable that LXX translators avoided the notion of divine fear by rendering it as "if not for the wrath of the enemies, lest they last long" (εἰ μὴ δι' ὀργῆν ἐχθρῶν ἵνα μὴ μακροχρονίσωσιν). The MT's "our hands [is] high" (יְדֵינוּ רָמָה) appears to be a difficult reading because the plural noun יְדֵינוּ ("our hands") is used with רָמָה ("high") when the latter is clearly singular.²⁴⁷ The position of "Not YHWH" (לֹא יְהוָה) is emphatic, suggesting that the enemy would have interpreted the military victory as an outcome of his own power and has nothing to do with YHWH. Notwithstanding the unique rendering of "I fear" (אָגַד) and the difficulty of "our hands [is] high" (יְדֵינוּ רָמָה) in the MT, scholars rightly point out that the Song at this juncture has come to a critical turning point in which, amidst the threat of destruction, a brief hope of vindication is raised.²⁴⁸ It asks the question why YHWH has not rejected his people despite their grave offences.²⁴⁹ Here, the verses capture a glimpse of divine deliberation within YHWH's heart. Israel would have been completely destroyed if YHWH had not taken into consideration his own reputation. The idea that YHWH relents from his destructive wrath against his people in order to defend his own honour is not uncommon in the Old Testament (Exod. 32:12; Num. 14:15; Deut. 9:28; 1 Sam. 12:22; Isa. 48:9, 11; Jer. 14:7, 21; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22, 36:21). Von Rad points out that such divine deliberation occurs in cases where the decision for salvation or for judgement is at stake.²⁵⁰ It is evident from here that Israel's hope is dependent solely on YHWH's own integrity, reputation, and love for his people (cf. v.36). Moreover, YHWH will not allow his "exclusive claim to be the source of both victory and defeat"²⁵¹ to be undermined in any way, much less by the military arrogance of the enemy. His 'fear of the taunts of the enemy' is certainly not a display of fright and weakness but a concern over the enemy's ignorance of his sovereignty and supremacy over the political situations of the world. The anthropomorphic depictions of YHWH are evident: YHWH "saw" (v.19), "hid" his face (v.20), was "stirred to jealousy" (v.21), and "feared the taunt of the enemy" (v.27). According to Chris Wright, the Song here depicts a "questioning, deliberating,

²⁴⁷ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.370.

²⁴⁸ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.198; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.389; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.375; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.457.

²⁴⁹ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.199.

²⁵⁰ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.199. See Gen. 6:5-7; Hos. 6:4, 11:8.

²⁵¹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.375.

wrestling” God.²⁵² Even von Rad, who thinks that Deuteronomy had avoided anthropomorphic language, has to concede that the verse here introduces “a soliloquy within the depths of the divine heart,” which is reminiscent of the divine deliberation in Genesis 6:5-7.²⁵³

3.3 *Israel Likened to the “No-People” (vv. 28-33)*

3.3.1 *With regards to her foolishness (vv.28-31)*

כִּי־גוֹי אֲבָר עֲצוֹת הַמָּוֶה 28

וְאֵין בָּהֶם תְּבוּנָה:

לֹא חָכְמוּ יִשְׁכִּילוּ זֹאת 29

יְבִינּוּ לְאַחֲרֵיהֶם:

אֵיכָה יִרְדֹּף אֶחָד אֶלֶף 30

וּשְׁנָיִם יְנִיסוּ רַבָּבָה

אִם־לֹא כִי־צוּרָם מְזָרֵם

וַיְהִי הַסְּגִירָם:

כִּי לֹא כְצוּרָנוּ צוּרָם 31

וְאֵיבֵינוּ פְּלִילִים:

*“Surely they [are] a nation lacking in counsel;
And there is no understanding in them.”*

*“Had they been wise they would have understood this,
They would have considered what [lies] after them.”*

*How could one pursue a thousand,
And two make ten thousands flee?
If their rock had not sold them,
And YHWH had [not] handed them over?*

*For their Rock is not like our rock;
[Even according to] our enemies’ assessment!*

Moses resumes his speech from verses 28-33. The most debated issue here is whether verse 28 is referring to Israel or her enemy as one who is “lacking in counsel” (אֲבָר עֲצוֹת). On one hand, verses 28-33 seem to echo the idea of Israel’s

²⁵² Chris Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.303.

²⁵³ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, pp.198-199.

foolishness and perversity (cf. vv.6, 20).²⁵⁴ On the other hand, if verses 28-33 were to be read as one section as a whole,²⁵⁵ the nation which is “lacking in counsel” would most likely be Israel’s enemy. Mayes thinks that the word “they” clearly means the enemy.²⁵⁶ Nelson also thinks that the enemy is in view here but maintains that the reference to Israel remains a possibility.²⁵⁷ Likewise Sanders argues that it is more natural to regard the enemy as the nation that “lacks in counsel.”²⁵⁸ One of the reasons²⁵⁹ for this is that the expression “their end” (אַחֲרֵיהֶם) has both a negative (Ps. 73:17-19) and positive implication (Deut. 4:30; 8:16) and he thinks that the positive implication which points to the enemy’s military success fits the context better.²⁶⁰ Descriptions of Israel’s enemy as foolish and without insight are also found in Isaiah 10:13 and 19:11-13, Jeremiah 49:7, and Obadiah 7-8.²⁶¹ However, Driver preferred to see verse 28 as a reference to Israel because he argued that it had been Israel’s lack of insight that led to YHWH withdrawing his favour.²⁶² Like Driver, Craigie regards Israel’s lack of discernment as the reason for YHWH’s judgement on her.²⁶³

Despite this, the issue as to whether Israel or her enemy is in view here remains unresolved. It may be thought unnatural to regard verses 28-29 as speaking of Israel while the preceding verses 26-27 speak of the enemy because the flow of

²⁵⁴ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.389.

²⁵⁵ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.390.

²⁵⁶ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.390. Also Skehan, “Structure,” p.159; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.310.

²⁵⁷ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.375. He regards the “dull-witted nation” as the enemy.

²⁵⁸ Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.207-208. He points out that v.21 has already announced that Israel would be judged by “a foolish nation” (גוי נבל). Second, the radical turn in v.26 seems to point out that YHWH’s withholding of his wrath is due to the enemy’s lack of insight. Third, the expression “their end” (אַחֲרֵיהֶם) has both a negative (Ps. 73:17-19) and positive implication (Deut. 8:16). Other scholars who also refer to these verses as speaking of the enemy are Labuschagne, “The Song of Moses,” p.96; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, pp.198-199; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.310.

²⁵⁹ See Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.207-208. Other reasons such as v.21 has already announced that Israel would be judged by “a foolish nation” (גוי נבל). Second, the radical turn in v.26 seems to point out that YHWH’s withholding of his wrath is due to the enemy’s lack of insight.

²⁶⁰ Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.207-210. This point is also raised by Nelson. He notes, “the word אַחֲרֵיהֶם denotes ‘what happens later’ or ‘the final stage,’ with either a negative (Ps. 73:17-19) or positive (Deut. 8:16) implication. This ‘end’ could refer broadly to how things must inevitably turn out for the enemy (or for Israel) or point more immediately to the enemy’s military successes or Israel’s defeats. See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.375. Tigay also believes that אַחֲרֵיהֶם means “circumstances, cause” as what its Akkadian synonym *arkatu* would do in idioms meaning “look into, investigate the circumstances or cause [*arkato*]” of someone or something. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.310.

²⁶¹ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.405.

²⁶² Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.371. For Driver, verse 29 declares that if Israel had been wise she would understand the necessity of YHWH’s judgement as described (vv.20-25). Then she would be able to discern her national catastrophe (v.20).

²⁶³ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.386. For Craigie, Israel’s deficiency in this regard renders herself foolish and blind to the events that YHWH has permitted to happen.

thought within verses 26-29 may then appear to be too abrupt. However, the apparent abruptness, or “sudden reversal” as Mayes claims,²⁶⁴ is not unusual in poetic texts. It is still possible to read verse 26-27 as speaking of the enemy while verses 28-29 about Israel due to the interplay of speeches between YHWH and Moses. In between YHWH’s speeches from verses 20-27 and verses 34-43, Moses’ speech is interjected in verses 28-33 to provide a critical synopsis of the situation. Despite this, it must be said that the immediate context may not necessarily shed more light on who verses 28-29 are referring to. But it is noteworthy that the Old Testament does not merely describe Israel’s enemies as foolish, it also describes Israel as foolish and without insight (cf. Isa. 1:3, 6:9; Hos. 4:14).²⁶⁵ Sanders’ argument for the dual implication of “their end” (אֲחֵרֵיהֶם) cannot be used to conclude that verses 28-29 must be speaking of Israel’s enemies since the word can be read both as a positive reference to the enemy’s military success and negative reference to Israel’s calamities.²⁶⁶ Therefore, the attempts to determine the subject of the verses remain conjectural. Rather than focusing on the ‘either or’ question, which the vagueness of the verses does not allow, it is better to consider the possibility that Moses may have both Israel and her enemy in view. In this way, verses 30-33 can be seen as the way in which Moses heightens the rhetoric by exposing the folly of both Israel and her enemies. Therefore, Christensen may be right to think that the section from verses 28-33 stands as Moses’ summary statements in which the ambiguity of these verses is probably “intentional.”²⁶⁷

Verse 30, therefore, can be taken as a rhetorical question directed at both Israel and her enemy. In reference to Israel, the language of the rhetorical question is reminiscent of 1 Samuel 18:7, although in that case it was Israel that had won great victories with the help of YHWH, against the odds.²⁶⁸ That situation, however, is reversed here. Israel has suffered a bizarre defeat at the hand of her own divine warrior by means of a weaker enemy (cf. v.30a).²⁶⁹ Such a peculiar rout is also echoed in Isaiah 30:17 in which Judah’s unrepentant reliance on her own military

²⁶⁴ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.389.

²⁶⁵ Interestingly, Sanders himself recognises this. See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.405.

²⁶⁶ See Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.207-210.

²⁶⁷ Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.808. See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.457. Likewise, McConville notes a subtle interplay between the accusation of the enemy and that of Israel in vv.28-35.

²⁶⁸ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.386.

²⁶⁹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.458.

strength meets with defeat wrought by YHWH by means of an enemy of inferior size. The situation can only be explained by the fact that it was YHWH who “sold” (מָכַר) Israel to her enemy. The expression of YHWH ‘selling’ his people to their enemies is attested in other parts of the Old Testament (Judg. 2:14; 3:8; 4:9; 10:7; 1 Sam. 12:9; Isa. 50:1; Ps 44:13).²⁷⁰ In reference to Israel’s enemy, verse 30 speaks of their miraculous victory over Israel.²⁷¹ It was easy for the enemies to think that their success was due to their own ingenuity. They could also have easily attributed their success to the power of their gods. However, the rhetorical question drives them to realise that YHWH was the one who delivered Israel to them and did it because neither the enemies nor their gods (rocks) were powerful enough to prevail against his protective power.²⁷² In fact the enemy’s realisation of YHWH’s supremacy is also expressed in various parts of the Old Testament (Exod. 14:25; Num. 23-24; Josh. 2:9-10; 1 Sam. 4:8, 5:7). Interestingly, within Deuteronomy itself, there is no clear reference that suggests such enemy’s acknowledge of YHWH’s power. The closest references are Deuteronomy 2:25 and 29:24-28 from which we may infer that other nations might have known something about YHWH’s power. The former speaks of YHWH empowering Israel over other nations and the latter about his punishing her for covenantal rebellion. But neither of them is explicit if the nations had finally realised about the supremacy of YHWH. In view of this, verse 31 is not only an emphatic declaration of YHWH’s incomparability;²⁷³ we may even say that this is the Song’s unique contribution to our reading of Deuteronomy regarding YHWH’s relationship with other nations.

As verse 31 suggests, not only Israel has to recognise that YHWH governs the affairs of the world with a power superior to that of other gods, even the enemies have to admit that their gods are “not responsible for the defeat of Israel.”²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ See also Sanders, *Provenance*, p.406. Sanders points out that the idea that gods punish their people by handing them over to their enemies is a common one in the ancient Near East.

²⁷¹ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.210.

²⁷² Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.386.

²⁷³ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.408. Sanders thinks that YHWH’S ‘singleness’ is implied here, as in 1 Sam. 2:2.

²⁷⁴ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.458. For a detailed discussion of the word פְּלִילִים, see Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.215-221. He thinks that the translation “judges” or “assessors” for פְּלִילִים suits the context. He argues, “This is exactly what [v.]31 wants to say: ‘our enemies may be assessors’.” Also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.376.

3.3.2 With regards to her perversity (vv.32-33)

כִּי־מִנְפֵן סֶדֶם וְנֶפֶן 32
 וּמִשְׂדֵּמַת עֲמֹרָה
 עֲנַבְמוֹ עֲנַב־רוֹשׁ
 אֲשֶׁכֶּלֶת מֵרַת לְמוֹ:

חֶמֶת תְּנִינִים יַיִן 33
 וְרֹאשׁ פְּתָנִים אֲכֹזֵר:

*For their vine [is] from the vine of Sodom,
 And from the field of Gomorrah;
 Their grapes [are] grapes of venom,
 Clusters of bitterness [are] theirs.
 The poison of serpents [is] their wine,
 The venom of fierce cobras.*

A number of scholars have understood these verses to be a description of Israel's enemy.²⁷⁵ The images provide a sharp contrast to the "customary use of vine and vineyard as images for Israel."²⁷⁶ They seem to highlight the fact that the plethora of the enemy's abundance comes from the bitter fruit of "falsehood and cruelty."²⁷⁷ Driver argues that the idea of YHWH's vengeance on Israel's enemy can be deduced from the word "it/that" (הִיא, v.34) which points back to their corruption expressed here.²⁷⁸ He also thinks that if Israel were to be intended here the Song would have said that Israel's vine has "degenerated" from her original stock.²⁷⁹ But by saying that the vine is corrupted in its origin the present text has Israel's enemy in mind.²⁸⁰ So, the metaphor of a vineyard, grapes, and wine may be used to compare the wickedness of Israel's enemy with the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19). However, it does not follow that the writer had in mind that the enemy would face the same fate as did the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, as some scholars espouse.²⁸¹ This idea remains conjectural since it is uncertain if the verses had intended it. Yet on the other hand, Driver also suggests that the context does support

²⁷⁵ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.372; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.199; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.386; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.390; Wevers, *LXX*, p.527; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.311; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.408; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.376; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.458; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, pp.817-818.

²⁷⁶ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.376.

²⁷⁷ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.458.

²⁷⁸ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.373.

²⁷⁹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.373.

²⁸⁰ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.373.

²⁸¹ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.311; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.376.

the reading of these verses as a reference to Israel's moral character.²⁸² This is further supported by the fact that it is common in prophetic writings to describe Israel as a corrupted vine and compare her with the viciousness of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. 1:10, 3:9; Jer. 23:14; Ezek. 16:46-49. Cf. Jer. 2:21; Hos. 10:1; Lam. 4:6; Ps. 80:9). The essential sin, particularly in Isaiah, has been Judah's revolt against YHWH and contempt for him (Isa. 1:2, 4; 3:8; 5:4; 28:12; 29:15), which resulted in her negligence, pride, lack of faith, practice of magic, fornication, and idolatry (Isa. 17:10; 22:11; 2:7ff; 3:16ff; 9:8ff; 28:1ff; 7:9; 31:1; 2:6; 2:8, 20). The Song puts emphasis on Israel's idolatry but points out that such perversity stems from her ingratitude towards YHWH.²⁸³ At any rate, whether the Prophets have influenced the Song or vice versa, the direction of influence does not remove the possibility of seeing fit to compare Israel to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Israel's foolishness and perversity recall the analogous expression "no-people" (cf. v.21) which depicts the senselessness and barbaric nature of her enemy. Israel runs the danger of becoming like her enemy, unworthy of the designation 'people'. Hence, it remains possible that the Song may have both Israel and her enemy in view here. This idea makes good sense of the text both rhetorically and contextually.

²⁸² Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.373.

²⁸³ Deut. 32:5-6; 15, 18.

3.4. YHWH's verdict on Israel and Enemies (vv. 34-43)

3.4.1 The Certainty of Judgement and Vindication (vv.34-35)

34 הֲלֹא־הוּא כָּמֶס עֲמָדִי²⁸⁴
חָתָם בְּאוֹצְרוֹתַי:

35 לִי נִקְמָ וְשָׁלֵם
לְעֵת תְּמוּט הַגִּלָּם
כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם אֲיָדָם
וְחָשׂ עֲתֵדָת לָמוֹ:

*“Is it not stored up with me,
Sealed up in my treasuries?”*

*“Vengeance and recompense belong to me.”²⁸⁵
Their foot will slip in [due] time;
For near [is] the day of their calamity,
And the impending things have hastened upon them.”*

YHWH's speech resumes after Moses' at this juncture. Craigie refers to “it”/“that” as YHWH's judgement implied in verses 32-33.²⁸⁶ Although YHWH uses the enemy to chastise Israel, the enemy is nonetheless responsible for his actions for which YHWH will recompense them at the appropriate time (v.35).²⁸⁷ Here again we see this logic not being found in Deuteronomy but in the Prophets. Driver refers to verses 34-35 as speaking of YHWH's remembering and storing up the moral corruption of Israel's enemy until the day of retribution during which judgement will be administered and followed swiftly by his destruction.²⁸⁸ Nelson thinks that the image of gathering and storing the poisonous wine of the enemy connotes the

²⁸⁴ כָּמֶס is a *hapax legomenon*. See also Harold R. Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the light of Akkadian and Ugaritic* (Missoula: Scholar Press, 1978), p.39. Cohen points out that כָּמֶס appears to have been equated with the Akkadian *kamāsu* “to gather”.

²⁸⁵ LXX renders it by ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐκδικήσεως ἀνταποδώσω (“In that day of vengeance I will repay”).

²⁸⁶ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.387. Likewise Sanders, who echoes Ehrlich, argues that הוּא has יָנָם in verse 33 as its antecedent. See Sanders, *Provenance*, p.226.

²⁸⁷ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.387. But see Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.390; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.818. As for the idea of YHWH's vengeance, see Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.391. Mayes argues that נִקְמָ does not mean ‘to avenge’. Rather, it is derived from the contexts of “mythological and international politics with the meaning of defensive vindication.” It hence carries a specialised meaning: “the executive exercise of power by the highest legitimate authority for the protection of his own subject.”

²⁸⁸ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp.373-374.

intention of eventually unsealing it.²⁸⁹ It follows that YHWH has intended to punish the enemy who has trespassed his boundary as instrument of the divine wrath (v.35).²⁹⁰ As seen, verses 34-35 have been regarded as a declaration of the destruction of Israel's enemy. This understanding, Driver claims, is clear from verse 36 which states that YHWH will show compassion on Israel²⁹¹ and the decision could not have been motivated if Israel's guilt was in view here.²⁹² However, there is no indication that YHWH's determination to vindicate Israel is not also motivated by his faithfulness to her (cf. v.3-4). Contrary to the opinion of some, verses 34-35 could be speaking of YHWH's judgement on Israel as well²⁹³ but she would be dealt with mercifully (cf. 36a). So, if YHWH had in view both Israel and her enemy as the recipients of his wrath, it begs the question: who really are his servants?

Israel's apostasy jeopardises her unique position as YHWH's treasured possession. As a nation entrusted with the Torah and endowed with high status, it remains unthinkable that she has actually despised her calling, disregarded the commandments, and forsaken YHWH for other divine beings. The Song contrasts her with the heavens, earth, divine beings, and the unnamed enemy, who are apparently more ready to do YHWH's bidding. In this sense, whether Israel could still be referred to as YHWH's servant remains enigmatic. Rhetorically, the irony would have raised the question: "Who then is YHWH's servant?" The Song does not leave the matter totally unresolved. The rhetoric reaches a climax in which we are told that YHWH is seen relenting, showing compassion to his servants, in this case, Israel. This indicates that YHWH himself is motivated by a concern for his own reputation and covenantal love to spare Israel from total annihilation. The divine deliberation is in view here and serves as a witness to YHWH's saving acts toward Israel. YHWH's benevolence towards Israel echoes overtly the important theme of the Song: the greatness of YHWH (v.3). For YHWH to remain great and sovereign his justice must prevail in Israel's unrighteousness as much as his faithfulness and mercy in times of her helplessness. The notion of YHWH's vengeance here has been commonly viewed as just retribution towards the enemy. The vengeance is aimed at vindicating Israel

²⁸⁹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.376.

²⁹⁰ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.376.

²⁹¹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp.373-374.

²⁹² Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp.373-374.

²⁹³ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.458. McConville hints that the rhetoric of v.35 might also be directed at Israel to reinforce the warning to them.

for the cruelty she suffered at the hands of her enemy. But in view of Israel's idolatry, it is likely that YHWH unleashes his vengeance as a legitimate demonstration of his justice to protect his honour which Israel has failed to uphold. Only when YHWH upholds the First Command himself which safeguards his own glory can Israel harbour the hope of restoration and salvation. If it was not for YHWH's defence of his integrity, Israel's ingratitude would have been enough ground for her to be wiped from the face of the earth.

3.4.2 *Vindication for His People (vv.36-38)*

כִּי־יִדְרִין יְהוָה עִמּוֹ 36
וְעַל־עַבְדָּיו יִתְנַחֵם
כִּי יִרְאֶה כִּי־אָזְלָת יָד
וְאָפֶס עָצוּר וְעִזּוּב:

וְאָמַר אֵי אֱלֹהֵימוֹ 37
צוּר חֲסִיוֹ בּוֹ:

אֲשֶׁר חֲלַב זִבְחֵימוֹ יֹאכְלוּ 38
יִשְׁתּוּ יַיִן נְסִיכֶם²⁹⁴
יִקּוּמוּ וַיַּעֲזְרֶכֶם
יְהִי עֲלֵיכֶם סִתְרָה:

*For YHWH will bring justice to his people,
Upon his servants he will have compassion;
When he sees [that] [their] power is gone,
And both bound and free, fail.*

*And he says, "Where [are] their gods?
[The] rock in which they sought refuge?"*

*"Who devour the fat of their sacrifices,
Drink the wine of their drink offering[s]?
Let them rise up and help you!
Let him be a hiding place over you!"²⁹⁵*

²⁹⁴ נְסִיכֶם is a *hapax legomenon*.

²⁹⁵ Nelson comments that the plural "let them rise" applies to the gods of v.37a while the singular "let it be" pertains to the 'rock' of v.37b. He reckons that the shift in number is necessary because the foreign gods are numerous but the 'rock' metaphor requires the singular. See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.377.

Verse 36a resembles Psalm 135:14,²⁹⁶ in which the psalmist recounts the supremacy of YHWH, specifically in the way he fought against the foreign nations on behalf of his people to deliver them from the suffering afflicted on them. In verse 36, YHWH's supremacy is also in view. The word "bring justice" (יָדַן) denotes a sense of 'to right a wrong,'²⁹⁷ or, vindication. This interpretation is strengthened by the parallelism between "he will bring justice" (יָדַן) and "he will have compassion" (יִתְנַחֵם), which according to von Rad, together signify "the legal act of deliverance."²⁹⁸ Hence, it follows that YHWH's act of vindication aims to deliver Israel from her suffering out of compassion. It is Israel's desperation that moves YHWH to assert himself against her enemy and vindicate her. Such desperation is the precondition to divine deliverance.²⁹⁹ Therefore, scholars have rightly noted that this verse expresses YHWH's care for his people and that he will take compassion on them in view of their extreme need.³⁰⁰ YHWH's response to Israel's misery humbles her for her reliance on the idols, as explained by the following verse.

Here Moses cites YHWH from verses 37-38. The rhetorical question "Where [are] their gods" (אֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶמוֹ) ridicules the inability of the foreign gods.³⁰¹ In verses 37-38, YHWH mocks at the false claims of these gods in that they are merely "gobblers of sacrifices"³⁰² but incapable of protecting their worshipers. Hence the epithet "rock" (צוּר), which is used of YHWH (v.4), is here used sarcastically to disparage the powerlessness of these gods. Rhetorically, the ironic use of "rock" underscores Israel's folly in entrusting herself to the impostors.³⁰³ In verse 38, the Song further levelled its sarcasm at these pseudo-gods to emphasise their intrinsic

²⁹⁶ כִּי־יָדִין יְהוָה עַמּוֹ וְעַל־עַבְדָּיו יִתְנַחֵם ("For YHWH will bring justice to his people and will have compassion upon his servants").

²⁹⁷ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.376; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.459; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.312.

²⁹⁸ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.199.

²⁹⁹ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.387. He says, "Israel has to be totally drained of self-assurance and totally freed from their alliance with foreign gods, since Israel's defection was largely a result of the arrogance of believing in their own strength."

³⁰⁰ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.375; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.199; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.387; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.376; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.459; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.312; Wevers, *LXX*, p.529; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.231.

³⁰¹ It is also found in Jer. 2:28.

³⁰² McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.459.

³⁰³ Also Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.377.

worthlessness.³⁰⁴ Moses may be here “feigning acceptance” of these gods in order to show how useless they were when compared to his own god YHWH. Scholars have thus far believed verses 37-38 to be a reference to Israel. But could these verses be read as an indictment to Israel’s enemy as well? It seems that the rhetoric of the verses can go both ways.³⁰⁵ In the light of verses 27 and 39, it is logical to read verses 37-38 as speaking of YHWH’s derision of the enemy and the foreign gods.

3.4.2 YHWH Asserts His Supremacy (v.39)

39 רֵאנוּ עֵתָהּ כִּי אֲנִי הוּא
וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי
אֲנִי אֲמִית וְאֲחִיָּה
מִחַצְתִּי וְאֲנִי אֲרַפָּא
וְאֵין מְדַרֵּי מִצִּיל:

*“See now that I, I am he;
And there is no god with me;
I put to death and I make alive;
I struck and I heal;
And there is no one [who can] deliver from my hand.”*

YHWH resumes his speech. The expression “See now” (רֵאנוּ עֵתָהּ) draws attention to his sole divinity and absolute power in bringing the calamities upon Israel and her enemy. This idea is made more emphatic by “I, I am he” (אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא), cf.

³⁰⁴ It appears that the MT expresses the idea of the pseudo-gods actually consuming the sacrificial offerings. LXX, on the other hand, uses a second person “you ate” (ἤσθητε) and “you drank” (ἐπίνατε) to speak of the worshippers themselves consuming the offerings. It is possible that the notion that gods could eat and drink sacrifices was a common view during the time of LXX translators. Through the use of the second person, LXX translators could have either resisted this idea or differentiated Israel from the idolatrous nations in that Israel only took part in the cult but had not instituted it herself. Conversely, the MT’s reading does not seem to reflect such concern. The assumption that v.38 may have espoused the idea of gods eating and drinking the offerings could have stemmed from a widespread concept in the ancient Near East. This certainly does not have to mean that the Song advocates this ancient Near Eastern idea since the extent of its influence on the Old Testament writings remains debatable. As a matter of fact, the Old Testament hardly describes YHWH as one experiencing hunger or thirst, and in need of food or consuming the offerings (cf. Isa. 1:11, 66:3; Jer. 6:20; Amos 5:21; Ps. 50:12-13; Prov. 15:8). The conjecture that gods eat and drink could have been deduced from the fact that the Song does not attempt to deny the existence of these gods (cf. vv.8-9; v.12; vv.16-17; v.21). So, v.38 needs not be seen as presupposing the view that YHWH consumes the offerings. See Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.235, 415; Wevers, *LXX*, p.530; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.313.

³⁰⁵ See also Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.392. Mayes suggests that v.38 probably continues the thought of YHWH’s destruction of the enemies.

Isa. 48:15; Hos. 5:14).³⁰⁶ This assertion expresses YHWH's uniqueness as the sole incomparable God who exercises supreme power to control history.³⁰⁷ Closely linked to this assertion is "and there is no god with me" (וַאֲיִן אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי), which is reminiscent of verse 12. It is interesting that the expression "And there is no God besides me" (וַאֲיִן אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי, v.39) has close parallels in other parts of the Old Testament (Deut. 4:35, 39; 2 Sam. 7:22; 1 Kgs 8:60; Isa. 26:13; 45:6, 14, 18, 21-22; 46:9; Hos. 13:4; 2 Chron. 14:10-11; 20:6; Ps. 18:31-32). But it remains unclear if these passages reflected a monotheistic stance in a strict, ontological sense of the word. It is probable that the expression (at least in the Song) conveys the idea that YHWH does not ally himself with or need the help of any companion god or consort (cf. v.12).³⁰⁸ In contrast to the incompetence of false gods, YHWH's competency in dealing with matters of life and death is reinforced by "I put to death and I make alive" (אֲנִי אָמִית וְאֶחְיֶה, v.39b). This capability is an attribute of divinity (cf. 2 Kings 5:7; Job 5:17-18).³⁰⁹ It is noteworthy that within the expression "I struck and I heal" (מָחַצְתִּי וְאֲנִי אֲרַפֵּא) both *qatal* and *yiqtol* forms are used to depict YHWH's power of life and death. Sanders thinks that the *qatal* form "I struck" (מָחַצְתִּי) expresses YHWH's responsibility for both Israel's and the enemy's dire situations while the *yiqtol* form "I heal" (אֲרַפֵּא) announces his restoration of Israel.³¹⁰ If this is true, it might mean that verse 39 has been formulated with Israel's situation in mind. More importantly, the verse underscores the fact that everything that has happened to Israel happens only under the power of YHWH.³¹¹ The central message has been sufficiently clear: only YHWH alone can perform the act of deliverance.³¹² This deliverance is one of the prime examples of his unsurpassed activity and power. His

³⁰⁶ To be sure the expression אֲנִי הוּא is also found especially in Isa. 41:4; 43:10, 13; 44:6; 45:6-7, 21-22; 46:4; 48:12; 52:6. See also Sanders, *Provenance*, p.419.

³⁰⁷ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.378; Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh*, pp.114-115, n.3; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, pp.388-389; Jos Luyten, "Primeval and Eschatological Overtones in the Song of Moses (Dt 32:1-43): pp. 341-347," in N. Lohfink, *Deuteronomium* (Leuven: University Press, 1985), p.346; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.313; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.377; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.459; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.819; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.238.

³⁰⁸ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.377.

³⁰⁹ See also Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.313.

³¹⁰ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.240.

³¹¹ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.389. He comments, "Life, health, and victory were a result of God's blessing. But death, disease, and defeat were equally a part of God's dealings with his people; they did not indicate any diminution of God's power." See particularly the excellent discussion of this verse 39 in L. Juliana M. Claassens' "I Kill and I Give Life': Contrasting depictions for God in Deuteronomy 32," in *OTE* 18/1 (2005): pp.35-46.

³¹² McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.459.

incomparability is asserted in terms of his unique attributes: his self-existence “I, I am he” (אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא), his supremacy “There is no god besides me” (אֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי), and his sovereignty “I put to death and I make alive” (אֲנִי אָמִית וְאַחֲיָה).³¹³ The assertion of YHWH’s incomparability is doubled-edged in that it is a direct response to Israel’s folly and a battle cry against the enemy. The latter is seen in the emergence of the divine warrior advancing with his final pronouncement of judgement, as the following verses show.

3.4.3 Judgement on His Enemies (vv.40-42)

40 כִּי־אָשָׂא אֶל־שָׁמַיִם יָדִי
וְאָמַרְתִּי חַי אֲנִי לְעֵלָם:

41 אִם־שָׁנוֹתֵי בָרַק חֲרָבִי
וְחִתְּחִזוּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט יָדִי
אָשִׁיב נָקָם לְצָרָי
וְלִמְשִׁנָּי אֲשַׁלֵּם:

42 אֲשַׁכֵּיר חֲצֵי מִדָּם
וְחֲרָבִי תֹאכַל בָּשָׂר
מִדָּם חָלָל וְשִׁבְיָה
מִרֹאשׁ פְּרָעוֹת אוֹיֵב:

*“For I lift up my hand towards heavens,
And I say, ‘As I live forever,’”*

*“When I have sharpened the lightning of my sword,
And my hand grasps with judgement,
I shall return vengeance to my enemies,
To those who hate me, I shall recompense.”*

*“I shall make my arrows drunk from blood,
My sword will consume flesh;
From the blood of the slain and captives,
From the head of the leaders of the enemy.”*

Once again, the alleged notion of demythologisation in Deuteronomy falls in the face of these anthropomorphic expressions such as “I lift my hand,” “I say,” “I

³¹³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Bible* in <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc1.Deu.xxxiii.html>.

live forever,” “sharpened my sword,” “my hand grasps,” and “make my arrows drunk from blood.” YHWH the divine warrior is here depicted as taking up his battle station with his hand lifted up. Many scholars have considered this act of hand lifting as a gesture of oath-taking.³¹⁴ However Johan Lust, appealing to the texts and pictures of the ancient Near East, argues that the gesture of the raised hand may be related to an oath in modern culture but that this was not necessarily the case in the culture from which the Song originates.³¹⁵ Rather, it expresses the idea of “active intervention for or against somebody.”³¹⁶ He proposes that verse 40 is to be read as a parallel to the last colon of verse 39: “And none delivers from my hand” (v.39c) “for I lift up my hand to heaven” (v.40a).³¹⁷ Lust also examines the expression “He lifts [the] hand” (נָשָׂא יָד) in other parts of the Old Testament and comes to a similar conclusion.³¹⁸ But, that this expression is used in conjunction with “towards heavens” (אֶל-שָׁמַיִם) remains interesting. Since the expression “towards heavens” may be used of human beings calling upon the gods, it is clear that YHWH cannot be the subject of such a calling.³¹⁹ Yet, in view of Psalm 63:4 in which the psalmist is said to have prayed with his hand lifted “in thy [YHWH’s] name” (בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה), it may be possible that YHWH could have been depicted as taking an oath in his own name for the purpose of emphasising his resolute to take vengeance on the enemy. That there is no other name greater than YHWH’s by which he would call upon is alluded to in Moses’ proclamation (v.3) and YHWH’s self-proclamation (v.39). Furthermore, the next clause “and I say, ‘As I live forever’” (וְאָמַרְתִּי חַי אֲנֹכִי לְעֹלָם), v.40b) may be read as a synonymous parallelism with verse 40a to explicate the use of “He lifts [the] hand” here. YHWH’s oath-taking may be supported by the next clause in which his

³¹⁴ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.379; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, pp.199-200; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.389; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.313; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.377; Sanders, *Provenance*, p.241; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.818.

³¹⁵ Johan Lust, “For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear: Deut 32:40,” in F.G. Martinez, A. Hilhorst (eds), *Studies in Deuteronomy in Honor of C.J. Labuschagne on the occasion of his 65th birthday* (Leiden: BRILL, 1994), pp.155, 159-160.

³¹⁶ Lust, “For I lift up my hand,” p.160.

³¹⁷ Lust, “For I lift up my hand,” pp.156, 164.

³¹⁸ Lust, “For I lift up my hand,” p.162. For נָשָׂא יָד with man as subject: Ps. 28:2; 63:5; 134:2; Lev. 9:22; 2 Sam. 18:28; 20:21; 1 Sam. 24:7, 11; 1 Kgs 11:26-27. For נָשָׂא יָד with God as subject: Ps. 10:12; Isa. 49:22 Ezek. 36:7; 44:12.

³¹⁹ Lust, “For I lift up my hand,” pp.160-163. Also Sanders, *Provenance*, p.241.

swearing by his everlasting life could be an expression of his determination to destroy the enemy (cf. Deut. 30:7).³²⁰

Verse 41 is reminiscent of verse 35a in which the idea of YHWH paying back what is due to the enemy is reinforced. In contrast to the enemy's injustice and unrighteousness, the expression "I shall return vengeance" (אָשִׁיב נָקָם) signifies that YHWH's vengeance is an appropriate and just act.³²¹ The metaphor "sword" (חֶרֶב) reappears as in verse 25. The sword which was once against Israel is now taking aim at the enemy. Its image is made graphic by the description "it will consume flesh" (בְּשָׂר תֹאכַל).³²² Another metaphor is "arrows" (חֵץ) which were previously directed against Israel (cf. v.23) but are now aiming at the enemy in a 'blood-thirsty' image: "I shall make my arrows drunk with blood" (אֲשַׁכֵּיר חֵצֵי מַדָּם).³²³ The completeness of YHWH's vengeance is exemplified by the expression "from the blood of the slain and the captives" (מִדַּם חֲלָל וְשִׁבְיָה), which Driver reckons to be an allusion to the tradition of slaughtering the prisoners after the victory was won.³²⁴ As for the meaning "from the head of the leaders of the enemy" (מִרֹאשׁ פְּרָעוֹת אוֹיֵב), several interpretations are proposed.³²⁵ The interpretation of פְּרָעוֹת as 'long, upbraided hair' and 'leaders' seem appealing, since it is supported by its immediate context, its use in Judges 5:2, its possible counterpart in Ugaritic, and LXX. Many scholars have regarded this verse to be a reference to Israel's enemy. But it remains doubtful if the

³²⁰ Nelson thinks that YHWH's lifting up of his hand can be regarded as a martial posture of a warrior raising his fighting arm, which he says, is a familiar image from the ancient Near East iconography. See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.377.

³²¹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.377.

³²² Such graphic depiction of the sword is also found in other parts of the Old Testament such as in 2 Sam. 2:26; 11:25; Isa. 1:20; Isa. 34:5-6; Jer. 46:10.

³²³ In view of the use of חֶרֶב and חֵץ here, it is possible to see v.41a as a synonymous parallelism with v.42a while v.41b as a climactic parallelism with v.42b. Reading the verses this way means that the phrase בְּמִשְׁפָּט ("with judgement," v.41a) may not need to be referred to as a metaphorical weapon, as some scholars reckon. See Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.379; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.377; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.313; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.819. Neither do we need to assume ellipsis of חֶרֶב ("the lightning of my sword," v.41a), as Sanders thinks it is. See Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.243-244.

³²⁴ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.380.

³²⁵ See Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.380; Wright, "Lawsuit," p.32; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, pp.392-393; De Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, p.159; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.450; Nelson, p.368, n.v; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp.314, 405, n.169; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.246-247; Wevers, *LXX*, p.533; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.388; Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.820.

foes whom Moses had in mind were only “the victorious heathen” and not “the sinners in Israel” as well.³²⁶ It remains possible that the Song has intended this imprecision as an awakening mechanism to explain Israel’s disaster (as in vv.23-25) and at the same time deter her from future apostasy. When the Song is recited the apostates would have compelling reasons to fear YHWH’s wrath (cf. Deut. 4:24). Therefore, just as YHWH’s indictment could have been directed at both Israel and her enemy in verses 37-38, the rhetoric in verses 40-42 may be taken as having the similar function.³²⁷

3.4.4 Invitation to Worship (v.43)

43 הַרְנִינוּ גוֹיִם עַמּוֹ
כִּי דַם־עַבְדָּיו יִקּוּם
וְנִקְמָם יָשִׁיב לְצָרָיו
וְכִפֵּר אֶדְמָתוֹ עַמּוֹ:

*Shout for joy, O nations, with his people;
For the blood of his servants he will avenge,
And vengeance will be returned to his enemies,
And he will make propitiation for his land, his people.*

The text of this verse has been much discussed. Consequently, a decision will have to be made concerning which version of the variant texts represents the original reading of this verse. Verse 43 is preserved in six cola in the Qumran text, four in the MT, and eight in LXX.³²⁸ But scholars are not unanimous in their choices. A

³²⁶ Contra Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.379.

³²⁷ See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.459.

³²⁸ The following version of 4QDeut^a is cited from Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.248-252:

<p><i>Shout for joy, O heavens, with his people; And prostrate yourselves before him, all [you] gods For the blood of his sons he will avenge, And vengeance will be returned to his enemies, And those who hate him he will repay And he will purge the land of his people.</i></p>	<p>הַרְנִינוּ שָׁמַיִם עַמּוֹ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לוֹ כָּל אֱלֹהִים כִּי דַם בְּנָיו יִקּוּם וְנִקְמָם יָשִׁיב לְצָרָיו וְלִשְׂנְאָיו יִשְׁלַם וְכִפֵּר אֶדְמַת עַמּוֹ:</p>
--	--

LXX reads:

εὐφράνθητε οὐρανοὶ ἅμα αὐτῷ
καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ
εὐφράνθητε ἔθνη μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἐνισχυσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ
ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται
καὶ ἐκδικήσει καὶ ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς
καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἀνταποδώσει
καὶ ἐκκαθαριεὶ κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.

comparison of the MT with the Qumran text and LXX tends to suggest that the MT may have suffered more from *haplography*. Despite this, the MT seems to be the version generally preferred. Furthermore, the MT displays a poetic balance expressed by the chiasmus “his people-avenge-avenge-his people” (עַמּוֹ - נָקַם - נָקַם - עַמּוֹ).³²⁹ Moreover, Tigay suggests that the Qumran text and LXX (even the MT as well) may not have reflected the original reading exactly.³³⁰ If this was the case, the choice for the MT would be a natural one because it is a briefer and a more difficult reading. But, does the context help decide which version(s) of the variant reading would fit better here? Here, too, are varied opinions.³³¹ The Qumran reading may relate well with the themes as a whole and represents a more appropriate finale to it. For example, the invocation of the heavens connects well with that of verse 1. The first invocation calls the heavens to be a witness against Israel’s rebellion while the second one invites the heavens to rejoice with YHWH for his wisdom, power, and faithfulness in how he dealt with his people. Taken together, these two verses form an *inclusio* to the whole Song. Both their use of *hiphil* imperative is also suggestive of this possibility. Second, verse 43a would correspond to verse 8b which in both places contain the references to divine beings other than YHWH. This is surely not a foreign idea in the Old Testament, as noted (Deut. 4:19-20; Ps. 29:1-2; 97:7; Job 1:6; Neh. 9:6). The correspondence between verses 8b and 43a forms a significant summary statement which argues against a strict monotheistic stance but expresses the idea that divine forces are subservient to YHWH. Third, if the Song has aimed to elevate the idea of YHWH’s greatness in terms of his incomparability (cf. vv. 4, 12, 36, 37, 38, 39), then verse 43 may be seen as giving expression to a similar idea through its call to worship. Hence, it may be said that 4QDeut^d reading of verse 43

Rejoice, O heavens, with him and worship him all [you] sons of God. Rejoice, O nations, with his people and be strengthened towards him all [you] angels of God because he will avenge for the blood of his sons and will punish and recompense justice to his enemies and to those who hated [him]. The Lord will clear the land of his people.

³²⁹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.447.

³³⁰ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.516.

³³¹ Of those who follow the MT’s reading of 4 cola, see Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.348; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.388; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.393; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.315; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, pp.447, 450. Skehan also follows a 4-cola reading but with modification, see Skehan, “Structure,” p.160. Of those who follow the Qumran’s reading of 6 cola, see Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.366, 379-380; Sanders, *Provenance*, pp.248-256. Christensen follows a 5-cola reading, see Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, p.812. Albright proposes a 8-cola reading of v.43, see Albright, “Some Remarks,” pp.340-341.

underscores YHWH's uniqueness as the incomparable, sovereign God over all creation.

The MT, on the other hand, seems to have put emphasis on Israel's uniqueness as YHWH's elected nation. The focus on Israel draws attention to her vital role in YHWH's plan for the world.³³² The call to the nations picks up the themes of vindication and vengeance. The nations are invited to bear witness to the certainty of YHWH's vindication for his servants and his vengeance on the enemy. Several scholars have preferred the reading of "his sons" (בְּנָיו) in 4QDeut^d and LXX to MT's "his servants" (עֲבָדָיו) because they believe that "his sons" is "characteristic of the Song" (cf. vv.5a, 19a, 20b).³³³ However, it is interesting that "his sons" only occurs within the first part of the Song in which YHWH's parental relationship to Israel has been the focus. But when expressing YHWH's wrath on Israel after verse 20 there has been no mention of "his sons". Instead, the word "his servants" is used as a reference to Israel (v.36). One compelling reason for adopting the word "his servants" instead of "his sons" in verse 43 could be due to the antithetical parallelism between "his servants" and "his enemies" (צָרִי). Contextually, the parallelism revisits the open question as to who really are YHWH's servants and enemies. Israel, who is supposed to be YHWH's chosen servant, betrayed YHWH for foreign gods. This pries open the question whether Israel can be decisively called YHWH's servant. Rhetorically, the parallelism drives home a doubled-edged message that YHWH will act on behalf of those who remain faithful to him but to those who set themselves against him, he will deal with them and their folly with a fatal blow. The latter is strengthened in the next clause "those who hate him he will recompense" (לְמִשְׁנֵי לְאֹשְׁלִים) which is repeated from verse 41. The word "his servants" would be a more ambiguous term than "his sons." Yet it is precisely its ambiguity that renders the Song such a powerful device in invoking soul-searching then and for the generations to come. Certainly, the word "his servants" can be taken as a reference to the faithful Israelites who were massacred by their enemies. But it is unclear if the Israelites who forsook YHWH can rightly be referred to as "his servants" since they had in a sense

³³² McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.450; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.314; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.378.

³³³ Sanders, *Provenance*, p.253. See also Skehan, "A Fragment of the 'Song of Moses' (Deut 32) from Qumran," in *BASOR* 136, 1954, pp.14-15; Albright, "Some Remarks," pp.340-341; Wright, "Lawsuit," p.33.

become YHWH's enemies. In this light, a tension is thus created through the vagueness of this expression.³³⁴

The Song closes with a promise to expiate the land, which could have been defiled by the murderous campaign of Israel's enemies (cf. Num. 35:30-34)³³⁵ and/or by the defilement wrought by Israel herself with her foreign worship.³³⁶ In either case, verse 43 would conclude with an appropriate note: Israel, who has a special place in YHWH's universal plan for the world (cf. vv.8-9), will be delivered from her catastrophes and restored to YHWH. Furthermore, her land must and will be cleansed from impurities.³³⁷ That the Song has in view Israel's crucial role in the world is suggested by the present verse. The land-cleansing is significant in view that Israel's land functions as an important channel by which YHWH's just and righteous character is manifest against the tyrannical rules of the other nations. In this way, other nations may take note of Israel's wisdom and understanding, and the righteousness of the Torah, thus acknowledging the greatness of YHWH (Deut. 4:6-8; cf. Deut. 32:3). Conversely, Israel's disobedience to YHWH would also have international impact on the other nations. The raising up of the unnamed nation against Israel is a case in point (Deut. 32: 21). In this sense, we can say that how Israel lives out her role as YHWH's agent of righteousness is pivotal to her own national affairs as well as her relations with the other nations. The Song concludes powerfully with a sense of certainty over Israel's restoration and thus gives hope to its readers. However, there remains an openness concerning the way in which such restoration may come about. In this light, other nations are therefore called to witness the inevitable outcome of YHWH's faithfulness to Israel.

³³⁴ MacDonald may be right in pointing out that if the Song were to be a reflection upon the tensions between YHWH's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness, then it is appropriate that it should end with an expression of these tensions. He also points out, "... the declaration that YHWH will avenge the blood of his children whilst also taking vengeance on his adversaries may express in a different way the tension present in the more familiar Deuteronomic presentation of election in 7:9-10. In other words, YHWH'S vengeance both operates for his people, and against them if they hate him." See MacDonald, *'Monotheism'*, p.179.

³³⁵ See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.378.

³³⁶ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.381; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.200; Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, p.304, McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.459.

³³⁷ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.381. Tigay, however, thinks that the phrase here should be read as YHWH "will wipe the tears away his people's tears." See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.315.

4. Summary

The foregoing literary and theological analysis has attempted to trace how the Song weaves together the ideas of YHWH's supremacy over creation, his primeval election and control of history, his love for his people, Israel's salvation history, prosperity, and apostasy, in order to criticise Israel's violation of the First Command. It also vividly recalls YHWH's care and providence for Israel in order to amplify the extent of her moral failure to 'remember YHWH.' Amidst the dramatic depiction of this strained relationship between YHWH and Israel is an echo of how another nation, in this case the unnamed enemy, has been given a role in YHWH's universal plan for the world as an instrument of wrath against Israel because she has failed in her vocation as witness, tarnishing YHWH's reputation as the supreme God. For the sake of keeping YHWH's name from dishonour, the Song is adamant that only YHWH brings about punishment and deliverance. This logic of safeguarding the divine honour seems to have been more vigorously applied than in Deuteronomy. Hence the focus of the Song seems to fall heavily on the logic of punishment and salvation. The Song's rhetorical technique of comparing Israel in character with the enemy is a special take on the questions Deuteronomy puts against Israel's election (Deut. 7:6-7) and the giving of the land (Deut. 9:6). The Song clarifies how Israel's election and gift of land is not due to her righteousness but YHWH's grace. It is also intriguing how the Song provides the characterisation of the enemy with an interesting twist. While the Song refers to the enemy as "lacking in counsel" and having "no understanding" (v.28), it also ironically implies, as opposed to Deuteronomy itself, that the enemy is indeed 'wise' to recognise YHWH's supreme power and that all that has happened to Israel is YHWH's doing. And the Song is also clear in affirming that while YHWH may use the enemy to punish Israel, he will also punish the enemy in return for its own sin, as well as making atonement for the land (cf. Lev.18:27; Num. 35:33).

Throughout the Song, the hearers come face to face with the question: 'Who is YHWH's servant - the ungrateful Israel or the obedient enemy?' The Song's answer to this question has been subtle. However, the subtle images and language have not rendered the rhetoric obscure and ineffective. In fact, their subtlety enhances the attempt to make Israel comprehend her true situation. It involves the hearers in such a

way that when the enemy's perversity is condemned, so is the hearers': 'You are just like them'. While the identity of YHWH's servant may be ambiguous, YHWH's greatness has been a clear constant focus throughout the Song. To the question "what constitutes YHWH's greatness?" the Song weaves into its fabric two characteristics of YHWH: faithfulness and incomparability. These become the Song's twin emphases because they are the qualities of YHWH which Israel had failed to remember - her "forgetting" of YHWH expresses their ungratefulness toward his kindness and her "scorning the Rock" ridicules his sovereign power. The emphases aim to destroy Israel's 'forgetfulness' and haughtiness in a memorable way. With gripping expressions and images, YHWH's faithfulness and incomparability are constantly kept in view as the Song discloses fresh insights into Israel's calamities and future in order to unsettle the emotions of its hearers to lead them towards repentance. This feature, I think, is what makes the Song so powerful rhetorically. As the Song continues to witness against the subsequent generations of Israel, it will have the rhetorical potential to 'awake' them as it had with their forefathers.

The result of this analysis must lead us to ask how the Song relates to its contexts, which is the concern of the subsequent chapters. A closer look at how the Song functions in its immediate context of Deuteronomy will be the focus of Chapter Three. This is then followed by a discussion of its function in the larger context in Genesis-Kings in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SONG'S RELATION TO DEUTERONOMY

1. Introduction

After the analysis of the Song in Chapter Two, we must now ask how the Song relates to Deuteronomy. To investigate the relationship between the Song and the rest of Deuteronomy, we must first attend to the history of interpretation of Deuteronomy and the key themes of the book. As is widely known, Deuteronomy has been traditionally linked with Josiah and his regime. Along with this understanding goes the idea that Deuteronomy demythologises the mode of divine presence and advocates centralisation of worship at a single site. The Deuteronomic demythologisation and centralisation of worship have become dominant ideas in the study of Deuteronomy yet a growing number of scholars espouse an alternative reading of the book. I argue that the alternative reading of Deuteronomy gains further support when the Song's perspectives are taken into consideration and read together with Deuteronomy. The method will be to reconsider certain central tenets of Deuteronomy in the light of the Song. The discussion in this chapter comprises three parts. The first section recapitulates the Deuteronomic issues of demythologisation and centralisation of worship. The second section reconsiders what constitutes the central concerns of Deuteronomy. Finally, the third section compares the Deuteronomic themes with those of the Song in order to show how a consideration of the Song's thematic affinities and differences with Deuteronomy provides us with a better understanding of the book.

2. Deuteronomistic Issues Revisited

2.1 Preliminary

Since Wilhelm de Wette, the book of Deuteronomy has been understood to be associated with Josiah, and was even believed to be the product of his reign.¹ But many scholars today have modified the view, believing that Deuteronomy or the core of it was instead composed in Hezekiah's time, hidden during Manasseh's time, but re-discovered in the temple during Josiah's time and eventually became the basis of the sweeping Josianic reformation.² However, some scholars link Deuteronomy with the Josianic reform differently. For example, von Rad believed that not all Josiah's reforms were stimulated by Deuteronomy because of the book's utopian character.³ Rather, the reform was partly due to the political decline of the Assyrian empire which might have encouraged Josiah to restore the Davidic kingdom by breaking away from his vassalage and from the Assyrian religions.⁴ Such an intention, von Rad argues, would hardly go well with a book in which the notion of a sacral tradition

¹ Wilhelm M.L. de Wette's doctoral thesis *Dissertatio critica qua a prioribus Deuteronomium pentateuchi libris diversum, alius cuiusdam recentiori auctoris opus esse monstratur* (1805). See also Ernest W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p.1. According to Nicholson, the view that Deuteronomy was the law book of Josiah was suggested by some church fathers such as Athanasius, Jerome, Chrysostom, and others (p.1, n.2); also Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, pp.46-47. Craigie points out that de Wette went further to advocate the view that Deuteronomy was essentially the product of Josiah's reign. For a summarised list of reasons for de Wette's hypothesis, see Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), pp.81-82.

² E.g. see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, p.83; Miller, *Deuteronomy*, p.3; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.4-8; Alexander Rofé, *Deuteronomy: Issues and Interpretation* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), p.6; Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p.90. But see Katherine Stott, "Finding the Lost Book of the Law: Re-reading the Story of 'The Book of the Law' (Deuteronomy-2 Kings) in Light of Classical Literature," in *JSOT* Vol. 30.2 (2005): pp.153-169. Stott argues that the reference to 'the book of the Law' is but a "literary ploy to bolster the credibility of the texts within which they appear."

³ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.27. Von Rad thinks that the association between Deuteronomy and Josiah has been "undoubtedly overestimated."

⁴ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.27. See also Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition*, pp.1-17, 83-106. Nicholson sees the first stage of Josiah's reform as an effort to gain independence from Assyria and the second stage of the reform as motivated by "the demands of the book." Hence, he does not think that Deuteronomy has been designed to be the "blue print" for Josiah's reform. Neither was it the work of the Judean reform in the 7th century nor that of the Jerusalem priesthood. Norbert Lohfink, on the other hand, thinks that the early form of Deuteronomy was the work of the Jerusalem court officials (scribes and priests) during Hezekiah's time familiar with wisdom literature and expressions for the purpose of countering the Assyrian worldview. See Norbert Lohfink, "Distribution of the Functions of Power: The Laws concerning Public Offices in Deuteronomy," in Duane L. Christensen (ed.) *A Song of Power and the Power of Songs*, pp.343, 345-346 and also Lohfink, "Culture Shock and Theology: A Discussion of Theology as a Cultural and Social Phenomenon Based on the Example of a Deuteronomistic Law," in *BTB* 7 (1977): pp.12-22. For a different view, see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, pp.69-74. For further discussions, see also Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, pp.46-49; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp.xix-xxiv; Rofé, *Deuteronomy*, pp.4-5; Peter T. Vogt, *Deuteronomistic Theology and the Significance of Torah* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp.6-14.

of kingship is absent.⁵ A.D.H. Mayes, also argues that Deuteronomy could not have been a catalyst to Josiah's reform because the book was a product of the Deuteronomist's redactional work after the temple's renovation and Josiah's death had taken place.⁶ Mayes believes that the reason for connecting Deuteronomy with Josiah's reform was to show that Josiah was a righteous king because his reform was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the law.⁷ However, the connection between Deuteronomy and Josiah remains established and it has almost become axiomatic to understand Deuteronomy in the light of this historical hypothesis.⁸ Bernard Levinson has recently supported this view by arguing that the Deuteronomic legal corpus underwent a scribal hermeneutical transformation to legitimatise the idea of centralisation from the very texts of the Covenant Code which prohibit it, so that Josiah's centralising effort can be now seen as being sanctioned by the older laws.⁹ And we have seen in Chapter One that Leuchter, following this idea of textual sequencing, argues for similar reflexes concerning the Song's placement in Deuteronomy, thus connecting the Song with Josiah.¹⁰ Hence, in the light of Deuteronomy's association with Josiah, scholars have understood the main focus of the book to be the centralisation of worship at a single site. Many have held that Deuteronomy refers to Jerusalem as the place of worship. Moreover, Deuteronomy has also been understood as having a demythologising programme to reject the anthropomorphic and immanent concept of YHWH by means of the corrective Name theology. But as pointed out, these traditional views are contested by scholars who advocate an alternative reading of Deuteronomy. The following discussion revisits

⁵ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, pp.27-28. Von Rad is convinced that Deuteronomy due to its utopian character "could not be used just as it stood as a programme for the reform."

⁶ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, pp.87, 101-103. Like von Rad, Mayes argues that the repairs to the temple were carried out to revolt against the weakening Assyrian power.

⁷ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.101.

⁸ See McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, p.2. He points out that in the effort of preserving the Bible from misappropriation by Christian dogma, classical critical scholarship has viewed biblical narratives as having different aspirations: "The 'J' document was propaganda for the Davidic Empire; the Priestly parts of the Pentateuch promoted the interests of the Aaronide priests; the deuteronomic literature promoted the reform of King Josiah, and thus the interests of the royal court of Judah." See also Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p.90: "It is a primary assumption of critical scholarship that Deuteronomy is to be understood as the 'scroll' that was found in 2 Kings 22 and that served as the impetus for the religiopolitical reform of King Josiah in 621 B.C.E. That scroll caused King Josiah to reconstitute his political realm in terms of a Yahwistic covenant. Consequently, we are able to connect the tradition of Deuteronomy to the late seventh century in Judah."

⁹ Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁰ Leuchter, "Why is the Song of Moses?" pp.309-310. See Chapter One, pp.45-50 above.

the ideas of Deuteronomic demythologisation and centralisation. We will firstly review the topic of demythologisation before considering the centralisation of worship.

2.2 *Divine Presence, Demythologisation, Name Theology*

It is believed that Deuteronomy constitutes a demythologising programme to replace an anthropomorphic and immanent concept of YHWH with a more abstract and transcendent idea of YHWH. In this programme a new understanding of the mode of divine presence is provided by what is called Name theology. This theology says that YHWH no longer dwells in the temple but only his name resides in it. According to Sandra Richter, the modern version of Name theology develops from an early rabbinic re-interpretation of the mode of divine transcendence. This involved a departure from anthropomorphic concepts of YHWH in which the Deuteronomic idiom “to set his name there” (*l'šakkēn š' mō šām*) referred to his *Skekinah*, the dwelling of his presence.¹¹ This rabbinic reinterpretation, Richter points out, could have “planted the seeds of modern speculations regarding the ‘evolution’ of God of Israel and the hypostatization of his name.”¹² One of the well-known works that deals with this matter is that of Julius Wellhausen, who changed the face of Pentateuchal studies with his reconstruction of the development of Israelite religion from which a definitive formulation of the Documentary Hypothesis was advanced.¹³ Wellhausen discerned an evolutionary development from the “Jehovist” (JE) to Deuteronomy (D) and then to the Priestly Code (P).¹⁴ Central to his argument is the view that Josiah’s

¹¹ Sandra L. Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: l'šakkēn š' mō šām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), pp.11-14.

¹² Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.14. These ideas were later picked up by modern scholarship from which two streams of thought are expressed: “Nominal Realism” and Julius Wellhausen’s three-stage, evolutionary paradigm of Israelite religion “from the simple to the complex, the immanent to the transcendent, the pre-logical to the abstract.” According to Richter, the term “Nominal Realism” comes from the discipline of child psychology which is used to describe pre-abstract thought in children. This term suggests that in the child’s perception of things, there is a concrete, ontological relationship between words and the things and actions which the words describe. For more explanation of “Nominal Realism” and Wellhausen’s paradigm, see Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.14-26. See also for more discussion on ancient Jewish interpretation in McConville’s “Time, Place and the Deuteronomic Altar-Law,” in J. Gordon McConville, J. Gary Millar, *Time and Place in Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp.100-105.

¹³ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (ET; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994; Reprint of the first edition, Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1885).

¹⁴ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp.104-105. He states, “...it is indisputable that the Priestly Code has its nearest relations with Deuteronomy, but goes beyond it in the same direction as that in which Deuteronomy itself goes beyond the Jehovistic legislation.” See also Douglas A. Knight’s foreword to Wellhausen’s *Prolegomena*, pp.xii-xiii.

reformation was “begun by Deuteronomy.”¹⁵ What started by Deuteronomy was later brought into mature transformation by the Priestly Writer which led to an abstraction of the deity.¹⁶ This abstract notion of YHWH subsequently resulted in a spiritualisation of worship in Israelite religion.¹⁷

Wellhausen’s work became foundational to modern scholarship on Deuteronomy in the early part of the twentieth century in which scholars came to regard the Deuteronomic idiom “the place in which I will cause my name to dwell” (Deut. 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2) as a circumlocution to correct the older idea of YHWH’s literal dwelling in the temple.¹⁸ So, while JE speaks of YHWH’s immanence using anthropomorphic language, D promotes an abstract view by means of YHWH’s *Extensionsgestalt*, his Name. This Name is a strategic corrective tool to promote a hypostatised presence in the temple to justify particularly its destruction.¹⁹ With the altered concept of divine presence comes a demythologisation of the ark and the temple. Whereas the ark with the mercy-seat (כַּפֹּרֶת) on it was previously considered as the place in which YHWH made his presence known (Exod. 25:10-30; Num. 7:89), it is now reduced to a didactic tool, a receptacle for the tablets of the law (Deut. 31:26). The temple, previously regarded as “the place of God’s throning” (cf. 2 Sam. 7), is now a house of prayer (cf. 1 Kgs 8:27-29).²⁰ This paradigm of interpretation has become dominant in the study of Deuteronomy and Joshua-Kings. However, the questions remain whether the alleged concept of divine presence is consistent with the biblical data and whether Deuteronomy posits a corrective Name theology. The debate on Deuteronomy’s notion of divine presence centres particularly on Deuteronomy 4 and 12. The former is a rhetorical presentation of the

¹⁵ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p.104, also pp.76-78; See also Knight’s foreword to Wellhausen’s *Prolegomena*, p.xiv.

¹⁶ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp.76-79, 81, 104. Wellhausen argues, “Like the worship itself, its subject also became abstract, a spiritual entity which could be kept together by no other means except worship...the connection of all this with the Judaizing tendency to remove God to a distance from man, it may be added, is clear.” He goes on to say in his footnote, “the idea of God is here even strikingly remote from the anthropomorphic...” (p.79, n.1).

¹⁷ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p.81.

¹⁸ See the list of scholars in Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.24-26.

¹⁹ See Trygve N.D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (ConBOT 18; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982), pp.50, 60-61. Mettinger believes that the Name theology projects a transcendent God who is immune to disaster that might affect his temple. He claims that the Name theology in the D-work is “fully developed after the devastation of the temple” to resolve the “cognitive dissonance” arose when Zion-Sabaoth theology “were confronted with harsh reality.”

²⁰ Mettinger, *Dethronement*, p.49.

event at Horeb in which a repudiation of the idea of YHWH's immanence is ostensibly discerned. The latter has several occurrences of the name formula and is regarded as the clearest presentation of the Deuteronomic revolution by influential proponents of Name theology.

2.2.1 *A Demythologised Deuteronomy?*

It was von Rad who developed the modern critical notion of Name theology in Deuteronomy. Following Wellhausen, von Rad argues that the Name theology takes on an aggressive, polemical nature in Deuteronomy to militate against the older theology of divine presence found in JE (Exod. 20:24).²¹ He expresses this view explicitly in what has become a classic statement on the Name theology:

As we see it in Deuteronomy, it [the name] may be established in a particular place, the conception is definite and within fixed limits; it verges closely upon a hypostasis. The Deuteronomic theologumenon of the name of Jahweh clearly holds a polemic element, or, to put it better, is a theological corrective. It is not Jahweh himself who is present at the shrine, but only his name as the guarantee of his will to save; to it and it only Israel has to hold fast as the sufficient form in which Jahweh reveals himself. Deuteronomy is replacing the old crude idea of Jahweh's presence and dwelling at the shrine by a theologically sublimated idea.²²

In von Rad's scheme the demythologisation does not stop at D but is taken further in P in which even the hypostasis of D is rejected.²³ Moshe Weinfeld, however, thinks that the reverse is more probable.²⁴ He argues that the anthropomorphic descriptions

²¹ Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (London: SCM Press, 1953), pp.37-38. Von Rad's operating premise is that Deuteronomy represents a new epoch in Israel and a spiritualising device that purifies the Israelite faith by delineating a new place and way in which Israel communes with YHWH in the place where YHWH puts or causes his name to dwell.

²² Von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, pp.38-39; Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), p.184. See also von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (London: SCM, 1966), pp.89-90. He argues that three repetitions of the centralising law can be identified in Deut. 12: 2-7, 8-12, 13-19 with all of them building up to what he calls "the real centralising formula" for making "his name dwell there (vv5, 11, 14)." This centralising formula resembles that of the altar law in the Covenant Code (Exod. 20:24-26), in which von Rad claims that there is no assumption of a personal presence of YHWH in the sanctuary except that YHWH is said to have 'come' to his people when invoked. If the Exodus tradition was silent about YHWH's immanence, von Rad thinks that Deuteronomy makes the notion of transcendence even more precise with the name formula. The concept of the name, he argues, must be taken as "a protest against popular conceptions of the actual presence of Yahweh at the sanctuary."

²³ See von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, pp.39-40.

²⁴ Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1972), pp.179-183. Weinfeld questions Wellhausen's hypothesis of P's lateness and its dependence on D. Like Y. Kaufmann, he thinks it unlikely that P depends on D as there are no verbal and conceptual parallels. Furthermore, since the Priestly editor has incorporated his tradition in JE material, it would be

of YHWH are developed distinctively in the Priestly circles, but in Deuteronomy in contrast they become abstract.²⁵ This justifies the idea that Deuteronomy has in it an explicit, revolutionary programme of reform to centralise the Israelite cult which necessitates the demythologisation of divine presence as well as the secularisation of priests and temple during the Hezekian-Josianic reform.²⁶ Hence, the Deuteronomic school must oppose all “sacral context and import” and react polemically against P’s ‘Glory of God’ through the advocacy of the “Name of God.”²⁷ Support for the corrective Name theology continues with Tryggve Mettinger arguing that Deuteronomy’s abstract presentation of YHWH rejects the anthropomorphic idea of the Zion-Sabaoth theology. That Deuteronomy speaks of Israel not having seen any form but only heard YHWH’s voice at Sinai (Deut. 4:12, 15)²⁸ is an indication that YHWH is “relocated” to the heavens.²⁹

Scholars such as Weinfeld and Mettinger support their arguments particularly with the phrase “Your dwelling place” in 1 Kings 8:12-13, which they claim is suffixed with the word “in heaven” by the Deuteronomist(s) in order to change it from

enigmatic that he did not incorporate his tradition in D as well, if D had antedated him. Hence Weinfeld reckons that it was the Deuteronomic school that edited the Priestly tradition: “Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic historiography show traces of Priestly views and phraseology while the Priestly strand shows no contact with the Deuteronomic school.”

²⁵ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, pp.191-193.

²⁶ This is evident from Weinfeld’s classic statements in *Deuteronomic School*, p.190: “The centralisation of the cult was in itself, of course, a sweeping innovation in the history of the Israelite cultus, but its consequences were decisively more revolutionary in nature, in that they involved the collapse of an entire system of concepts which for centuries had been regarded as sacrosanct. With the elimination of the provincial cultus Israelite religious life was completely wrested from the control of priest and temple. It was freed from its ties to the cult and was transformed into an abstract religion which did not necessarily require any external expression. Indeed the very purpose of the book of Deuteronomy was to curtail and circumscribe the cultus and not to extend or enhance it. The Deuteronomic conception of the cult is vastly different from that reflected in the other Pentateuchal sources; it represents a turning-point in the evolution of the religious faith of Israel.”

²⁷ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, pp.197-200. See 2 Sam.7; 1 Chron. 17:5; Ps. 46:5; 48:9; 50:2; 43:3. Weinfeld continues, “It is by no means coincidental of the Deity and that the only passages which reflect a quasi-abstract conception of the deity and negation of his corporeality are to be found in Deuteronomy...‘You heard the sound of words, but saw no form’ (Deut. 4:12)... These later conceptions then are diametrically opposed to the earlier views articulated in the JE and P documents and in the prophetic books antedating Deuteronomy.”

²⁸ Mettinger, *Dethronement*, p.46. A similar view is held by Weinfeld, in *Deuteronomic School*, p.207.

²⁹ Mettinger, *Dethronement*, pp.46-47. Mettinger states, “The Deuteronomistic preoccupation with God’s voice and words represents an auditive, non-visual theme...the Deuteronomistic theology shattered this unitary conception [YHWH reigning on his cherubim throne] by emphasising the transcendence of God; we could, if the expression be allowed, say that God became ‘relocated’ to the heavens above.”

a reference to the temple to a denotation for heaven (cf. 1 Kgs 8:30, 39, 43, 49).³⁰ Furthermore, Mettinger sees the pairing of the terms “to sit, dwell” (“*lēšibtī*”) and “for my name” (“*lišmī*”) in Nathan’s prophecy in 2 Samuel 7:5 and 13 respectively to be another demythologising effort.³¹ For Mettinger, hence, the Name theology is “expressing a thorough-going transformation”³² of the idea of YHWH and he thinks that it is a necessary step to protect the notion of YHWH’s sovereignty amidst disaster.³³

The idea of demythologisation, however, is rejected by Roland de Vaux. His point of departure is that the Deuteronomic idiom לָשׂוּם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁמָּה (“to put his name there”) does not have the notion of abstract connotation as espoused by von Rad and others. Rather, the idiom has its parallel in the Amarna Letters which carries the idea of ownership. In other words, the use of the idiom suggests the idea of YHWH’s ownership of the temple.³⁴ He points out that due to Deuteronomy’s infrequent mention of the ark, von Rad and others were led to think that Deuteronomy had attempted to demythologise its ark.³⁵ De Vaux’s argument is echoed by Gordon Wenham and Georg Braulik. Wenham questions the existence of a Name theology that distinguishes YHWH’s transcendence over his immanence.³⁶ For him, the Deuteronomic idiom not only speaks of ownership, it also carries the idea of conquest

³⁰ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, p.195. So far as the Deuteronomic litany of Solomon in 1 Kings 8 is concerned, Weinfeld reckons the temple to be a house of worship, not a place of habitation for YHWH because his dwelling place is in heaven. He thus asserts, “The Deuteronomic editor is clearly disputing the older view implied by the ancient song that opens the prayer (vv.12-13) and designates the temple as God’s ‘exalted’ house and a dwelling place forever.” Mettinger also believes that the phrase “Your dwelling place” was deliberately modified by “in heaven.” He reckons that such example of modification is also found in Isa. 63:15, Ps.76:3, Deut. 4:36, 26:15, and 33:26.

³¹ Mettinger, *Dethronement*, p.49. In these texts, Solomon was commissioned to build the temple “not as a house in which God himself would dwell (“*bayit lēšibtī*,” v.5), but as only an envelope for his Name (“*bayit lišmī*,” v.13).”

³² Mettinger, *Dethronement*, p.50.

³³ Mettinger, *Dethronement*, p.50. Mettinger argues, “It is impossible to doubt that this theology accomplished an important mission in a changed situation, in that the Name theology presents us with a transcendent God who is invulnerable to any catastrophe which might conceivably affect his Temple...In this changed situation the Name theology reasserts the conviction that Israel will always be able to invoke her God: the presence of the Name at the sanctuary is the sole necessary prerequisite for prayer (1 Kgs 8:29).”

³⁴ Roland de Vaux, “Le lieu que Yahvé a choisi pour y établir son nom,” in *Das ferne und nahe Wort, Festschrift L. Rost* (ed. F. Mass; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967), pp.219-229. See also Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, p.194.

³⁵ See Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), p.301. In P, de Vaux notes that the ark is also present as ‘Ark of the Testimony’. According to extra-biblical documents, de Vaux sees no contradiction in the contrast between the ideas of ark as a throne and that as a receptacle because the Decalogue was put into the ark under the feet of YHWH.

³⁶ Gordon Wenham, “Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary,” in *TynBul* 22 (1971), pp.103-118.

and is often associated with the erection of a stele or victory monument.³⁷ There is also the attempt to associate the idiom with the inscribing of a name on the foundation stones of sanctuaries to validate the temple.³⁸ Hence the idiom can be regarded as the “etymological equivalent of Akkadian *šakānum šumam* and ‘to put his name there’ is the semantic equivalent.”³⁹ As for Braulik, the Name theology is used to avoid the misconception that YHWH’s activity was limited to the sanctuary or that he himself was localised there.⁴⁰ He too refers to ‘dwelling for his name’ as an expression of YHWH’s ownership of the sanctuary.⁴¹

But de Vaux’s argument is refuted by Weinfeld. He accepts that the Deuteronomic idiom does not have in itself an abstract idea of YHWH, but that it was nevertheless endowed with this notion by the Deuteronomic school.⁴² He criticises de Vaux’s view of ‘ownership,’ arguing that the assertion of YHWH’s ownership of a place is synonymous with the claim that his name is there.⁴³ This, Weinfeld believes, is what the Deuteronomist referred to in his Name theology.⁴⁴ He insists that the idea of possession does not militate against the Deuteronomist’s concept of Name theology, since the very notion of ownership would have already implied the idea of extending one’s name and presence.⁴⁵ Weinfeld’s argument is reminiscent of Ronald Clements’ view postulated in 1965.⁴⁶ Clements believed that the Deuteronomists divested the

³⁷ Wenham, “Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary,” p.113.

³⁸ Wenham, “Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary,” pp.113-114. See also McBride, *The Deuteronomic Name Theology*, p.93f.

³⁹ Wenham, “Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary,” p.114. See also Wenham, ‘The Structure and Date of Deuteronomy’ (Ph.D thesis, 1969), p.249; also McConville, “God’s ‘Name’ and God’s ‘Glory,” in *TynBul* 30 (1979): p.152: “The ideas attendant on the Akkadian phrase *šakān šumšu* can plausibly be carried over to Deuteronomy. The phrase ‘the place which the Lord shall choose to put his name there’ indicates that the chosen sanctuary will be Yahweh’s possession for ever, and indeed affirms his lordship over the whole land. Thus the name-theology of Deuteronomy becomes a way of expressing the essential Deuteronomic theme of conquest and possession of the land.”

⁴⁰ Georg Braulik, OSB, *The Theology of Deuteronomy* (Dallas: BIBAL, 1994), p.14. He illustrates this by reading 1 Kings 8 into Deuteronomy 4:7 in which speaks of a God who is available to men but is not restricted by time or place (p.16).

⁴¹ Braulik, *The Theology of Deuteronomy*, p.15.

⁴² Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, p.193.

⁴³ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, p.194. Weinfeld argues, “He [de Vaux] is right in saying that the expression does not necessarily have any abstract connotation. However the question is whether Deuteronomy’s introduction of this metaphor of ownership in place of the earlier, simpler notion of ‘dwelling in the house’ does not indicate a theological shift to a more abstract understanding of the abode of God.”

⁴⁴ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, p.194.

⁴⁵ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, p.194.

⁴⁶ Ronald E. Clements, *God and Temple: The Idea of the Divine Presence in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p.67. Responding to de Vaux who rejects the symbolic references of the temple’s features [See de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp.328f.], Clements argues that the temple furnishings

“magico-religious way” of linking God and his world through symbolism and made the link a spiritual one.⁴⁷ They demythologised the temple in order to break away from the crude, mysterious, and unspiritual notion of YHWH’s presence at the sanctuary⁴⁸ by offering a sublimated concept of YHWH’s dwelling on earth through his “*alter ego*, by means of which he made himself present to men, without ever leaving his heavenly dwelling-place.”⁴⁹

Suffice it to say that von Rad’s view remains influential and de Vaux’s idea of ownership rather less so. Consequently, von Rad leaves the imprint of his thought on many scholars such as, amongst others, Ian Cairns,⁵⁰ Thomas Mann,⁵¹ Jeffery Tigay,⁵² Walter Brueggemann,⁵³ and Alexander Rofé.⁵⁴ However, alternative readings of

possess “cosmic symbolism” that expresses the idea of YHWH’s dominion and ownership over the created order, including Israel. He states this more explicitly three years later by claiming that the reference to the name as a “cultic proclamation” may also be connected to the idea of ownership. To the Deuteronomists who were influenced by the old altar law (cf. Exod. 20:24), the name was a mode of conveying YHWH’s blessing and giving expression to the belief that YHWH was “both the owner of the sanctuary and of the land.” But the Deuteronomists had intentionally omitted the notion of YHWH coming and blessing his people as stated in the old law because they had wanted to give a more sublimated concept of YHWH’s nature. Hence YHWH’s transcendence precluded his actual presence, which is mediated through his name. See also Ronald E. Clements, *God’s Chosen People: A Theological Interpretation of the Book of Deuteronomy* (London: SCM, 1968), pp.78-79.

⁴⁷ Clements, *God and Temple*, pp.91-92. Clements believes that the idea that YHWH dwelt in his temple is “fully and firmly rejected by the Deuteronomistic historian.” To him the assertion that YHWH resides in heaven has been so “markedly” repeated that it is difficult not to read it as “a refutation of those who held another view.”

⁴⁸ See Clements, *Deuteronomy*, pp.52-53.

⁴⁹ Clements, *God and Temple*, pp.94-95. Also Clements, *God’s Chosen People*, p.78. See further details of Clements’ view on the interrelatedness of the Name theology and centralisation in pp.201ff. below.

⁵⁰ Ian Cairns, *Deuteronomy: Word and Presence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1992), p.127: “God places the ‘name’ as an extension of the divine self in the earthly shrine.”

⁵¹ Thomas Mann, *Deuteronomy* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), pp.108-109: “Deuteronomy thinks of the central sanctuary as the place where God’s name stands for the Lord’s presence, since he cannot and will not be there in any sense.”

⁵² Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.120: “Only his name dwells there but God is in heaven.”

⁵³ Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), p.144: “In Deuteronomy YHWH is not completely committed to being present to Israel, but his name is given in the place of worship.”

⁵⁴ Alexander Rofé, *Deuteronomy: Issues and Interpretation* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), p.10: “The sanctuary is merely the place where YHWH placed his name, or caused his name to reside.” What is of particular interest is that Rofé believes that there is a demythologisation programme because of Deuteronomy’s “monotheistic consciousness.” It not only exorcises the idea of heavenly creatures serving as YHWH’s attendants (Cf. Deut. 4:9-13, 15-18, 23-24), it also reduces the portrayal of the ark to a box for the tablets of the Law (Deut. 10:1-5). It further advocates a single cultic site which necessitates an elimination of divine entities besides YHWH, despite the differing view from the Song in Deuteronomy 32. See Rofé, *Deuteronomy: Issues and Interpretation*, pp.9-10. In my view this is a significant point. Rofé rightly notes that the Song does not deny the existence of other divine entities other than YHWH himself (cf. Deut. 32:8). Although Rofé’s observation is with reference to the Song’s distinct understanding of the heavenly beings, a similar observation can be made on the issue of

divine presence provide a robust rebuttal to the hypothesis of demythologisation on exegetical and archaeological-philological grounds.

2.2.2 *A Matter of Context and Emphasis*

Exegetically, Ian Wilson has argued that Deuteronomy has explicit references to YHWH's actual presence in the fire at Horeb (Deut. 4:12, 15-16; 33, 36; 5:4, 12, 24, 26; 9:10; and 10:4).⁵⁵ The alleged description of YHWH having 'no form'⁵⁶ does not sit well with the prohibition of image-making, for example in Deuteronomy 4, because the embargo itself suggests that YHWH was present in the fire.⁵⁷ The people were prohibited to make image of YHWH because the appropriate way of actualising his presence is through obeying the Torah.⁵⁸ Furthermore, while the Name theologians believe that Deuteronomy 4:36 speaks of a demythologised presence of YHWH,⁵⁹ its context actually renders the view untenable. The highlight of Deuteronomy 4:32-40 is YHWH's uniqueness in terms of his redemptive power⁶⁰ with his transcendence and immanence expressed by the imagery in verse 36⁶¹ and

divine presence from the standpoint of the Song. As it stands, the Song does not seem to project the dichotomy between YHWH's transcendence and immanence.

⁵⁵ See Ian Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire: Divine Presence in Deuteronomy* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), pp.53-54, 56-57.

⁵⁶ See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomistic School*, pp.206-208; Mettinger, *Dethronement*, p.48.

⁵⁷ See Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, p.63. Wilson argues that the people's "non-perception of YHWH's presence" does not mean that YHWH is absent. Rather he is "invisible or veiled."

⁵⁸ See also Peter T. Vogt, *Deuteronomistic Theology and the Significance of Torah* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), p.130-133. Vogt thinks that image-making not only contradicts the means of YHWH's presence, it would also mean that YHWH can be substituted with dumb idol, and be subject to the control of the worshipers on their terms. He states, "Deuteronomy here is conceiving of Yahweh's presence qualitatively or experientially rather than spatially or quantitatively...the idea of Yahweh's presence through Torah and its adherence should be seen as a complement to that idea [YHWH's presence in the fire], not a contrast."

⁵⁹ Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, p.66. For advocates of a demythologised presence of YHWH, see Clements, *God and Temple*, p.90; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomistic School*, pp.206-207; Mettinger, *Dethronement*, p.48.

⁶⁰ Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, pp.71-73. In Deut. 4:32-35 Wilson notes that the emphases are on YHWH's uniqueness in terms of his speaking from the fire and bringing about the Exodus, and the people's privilege status. What YHWH did for his people is further elaborated in Deut. 4:36-39. He argues that the purpose is to illustrate from the people's experience the fact that YHWH operates in two spheres, which eventually leads to the conclusion in Deut. 4:39 that YHWH is God in heaven and on earth. Wilson believes that v.36 actually functions as an affirmation of YHWH's location in both heaven and on earth. Therefore, it is erroneous to refer to 4:36 as speaking of YHWH's absence from the earth.

⁶¹ Andrea Zeiss, 'Presence of God in Deuteronomy' (Ph.D Diss., University of Gloucestershire, 2009), p.58. Also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.113. Zeiss points out that YHWH is likened to the storm deity whose riding in the sky is viewed as a "surprising and unforeseeable manifestation." Furthermore, the metaphor of the fire speaks of his destructive power, which probably emphasises the fact that YHWH is more powerful than other gods.

בְּפָנָיו (“by his face/in his presence”) in verse 37⁶² respectively. Therefore, a contextual reading of Deuteronomy 4 shows a careful balancing of YHWH’s immanence and transcendence.⁶³ Weinfeld’s selection of materials for comparison is hence heavily criticised.⁶⁴ His insensitivity to contexts and emphasis resulted in his views such as that Deuteronomy “has shifted from the visual to the aural plane,”⁶⁵ it “cannot conceive of the possibility of seeing the Divinity,”⁶⁶ and that in Deuteronomy “the danger threatening the people is that of hearing the voice of the Deity.”⁶⁷ These assertions have shown that he has overstated his case and based his line of argument on dubious grounds.⁶⁸

Believing that Deuteronomy emphasises divine transcendence, Mettinger argues that the expression לְפָנֵי יְהוָה (“before YHWH”) in Deuteronomy 12-26 is “a sort of linguistic fossil, bearing no semantic cargo of importance.”⁶⁹ However, Wilson contested this assertion as untrue in view of the frequent occurrence of this expression in Deuteronomy 12-26⁷⁰ and its strong link with the “chosen place” with

⁶² Zeiss, ‘Presence of God,’ pp.60, 63-64.

⁶³ Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, pp.58, 74-81, 88-89. Wilson reckons that more than half of all the references to that fire insist that the people had a visual experience of YHWH speaking to them (E.g. Deut. 4:11, 12, 15, 33, 36 (2x); 5:4, 5, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26; 9:10, 15; 10:4; and 18:16). Also Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.60. He argues that Deuteronomy emphasises both his transcendence and immanence, “When Yahweh is said to have caused his name to dwell at a sanctuary the intention is to indicate the real and effective presence of Yahweh himself at that sanctuary.” See also Vogt, *Deuteronomical Theology*, pp.133-134; Zeiss, *Presence of God*, pp.35-64.

⁶⁴ See especially Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, pp.90-91.

⁶⁵ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomical School*, p.207. Weinfeld believes that Deut. 4, unlike Exod. 19 in which YHWH’s presence is described in corporeal terms, cannot bear the idea of seeing YHWH. See a critique of Weinfeld’s view in Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire*, pp.92-94.

⁶⁶ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomical School*, p.207. This assertion, however, betrays Weinfeld’s presupposition that Deuteronomy depicts a transcendent YHWH (See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomical School*, p.95). Weinfeld’s exegetical ground is questionable. His exegetical error is conspicuous because there are no parallels in both accounts in which the references to gazing at or seeing YHWH occur.

⁶⁷ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomical School*, p.208. This, Wilson argues, is proven untrue because Deuteronomy, like Exodus, does stress both the danger of hearing YHWH, as seen in the people’s response (5:24, 26), and of the seeing fire (5:25; 18:16). See Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, p.96.

⁶⁸ Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, p.97. Contra Weinfeld, Wilson concludes, “Our justification of the inadmissibility of the visual versus aural distinction thus contributes to the general thesis that we are arguing, namely that Deuteronomy does envisage the localization, as well as the transcendence, of YHWH in its depiction of Israel’s wilderness encounter with him.” See more comparison of the Deuteronomy and Exodus accounts in Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, pp.97-104.

⁶⁹ Mettinger, *Dethronement*, p.53.

⁷⁰ לְפָנֵי יְהוָה can be found in Deut. 12:7, 12, 18 (2x); 14:23, 26; 15:20; 16:11; 18:7; 19:17; 24:4, 13; 26:5, 10 (2x), 13. Wilson observes that לְפָנֵי יְהוָה is used a total of sixteen times in Deut. 12-26. See Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, pp.131-157.

the prepositional לְפָנַי יְהוָה.⁷¹ He points out that if לְפָנַי יְהוָה was used to emphasise YHWH's transcendence, the expression would be enigmatic because in its plain meaning it connotes the nearness of YHWH's presence.⁷² Hence, the use of לְפָנַי does not deny the idea of YHWH's presence in the "chosen place," rather, it affirms it.⁷³ Furthermore, the idea of demythologisation is also inconsistent with Deuteronomy 12:1-7 because of the function of שֵׁם ("name," vv.3, 5). McConville points out that שֵׁם is used in the contexts of daily worship generally in Deuteronomy.⁷⁴ He thinks that the use of שֵׁם is necessary in Deuteronomy's polemics against the worship of foreign gods in which YHWH's name is contrasted with the gods'.⁷⁵ In this light, שֵׁם is used as part of the rhetoric in Deuteronomy 12 to juxtapose YHWH's presence with that of the Canaanites gods⁷⁶ in order to highlight his supremacy over them,⁷⁷ his ownership over Israel, and choice of the worship site.⁷⁸ Hence Deuteronomy 12 concerns YHWH's demand for proper worship.⁷⁹ This is also echoed by Richard Nelson who reckons that לְפָנַי יְהוָה, if taken literally,

⁷¹ Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, p.154. Wilson notes the ratios of the occurrences in Deut. 12-26 to those in the OT as a whole: eat 5/8, rejoice 3/6, say 2/3, set down 1/5, worship 1/6. Hence he retorts, "It needs to be asked why the writer included/retained the phrase at all, when most of the same activities at the chosen place are referred to without the use of it, and when the text would make perfect sense even if it were omitted altogether."

⁷² For other reasons as to why לְפָנַי יְהוָה is unlikely a circumlocution for "at the sanctuary," see Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, pp.154-156.

⁷³ Wilson, *Out of the Midst*, pp.155-156, 158, 195. See also Zeiss, 'Presence of God,' pp.81-82. She argues, "While the phrase does not explain in what manner God was understood to be present, it nevertheless ought to engender in the reader a strong sense of God's special involvement in the occasion described in this chapter. It also has to be noted that the celebrations Deuteronomy asks for are 'this-worldly and material'. If Deuteronomy intends to promote a more otherworldly understanding of God, this is not true for his worship, which is still expressed and enjoyed in a very tangible form."

⁷⁴ J. Gordon McConville, "God's 'Name' and God's 'Glory,'" in *TynBul* 30 (1979): p.161.

⁷⁵ See more details in McConville, "God's 'Name' and God's 'Glory,'" pp.149-163.

⁷⁶ Vogt, *Deuteronomical Theology*, p.195. This is further evident from the chiasmic structure of 12:2-3, 12:4, and 12:5-7. In 12:2-7, Vogt argues, the worship of Canaanite gods is contrasted with the worship of Yahweh. The Israelites are not permitted to seek the places and names of these gods but to only seek the place in which YHWH chooses, a place that marked his name.

⁷⁷ Vogt, *Deuteronomical Theology*, p.196. The emphasis of YHWH's supremacy can be further seen in 12:29-31 in which the elimination of Canaanite worship is once again the focus.

⁷⁸ Vogt, *Deuteronomical Theology*, p.195. See also Zeiss, 'Presence of God,' pp.71-77. Zeiss does not think that the name formula in Deuteronomy 12 concerns the manner of YHWH's presence. Rather, she believes that it is adapted from the Akkadian to speak forcefully about YHWH being the sovereignty ruler over Israel and the land. Both Vogt and Zeiss are echoing de Vaux's idea of ownership which is revived in the work of Sandra Richter. See further details of Richter's work below.

⁷⁹ Vogt, *Deuteronomical Theology*, pp.198-199, 203. Vogt concludes, "The emphasis [in Deuteronomy 12] is not on the nature of Yahweh's presence or absence from the central sanctuary. Rather, the emphasis is on the need for the people to demonstrate loyalty to Yahweh by rejecting false worship and living lives of obedience to him and to Torah."

expresses the idea of YHWH's actual presence, not in terms of a place that localises his presence but a sphere which speaks of his ownership.⁸⁰ He believes that there is an amalgamation of the idea of transcendence and the literal expression of "before YHWH."⁸¹ In his view, Israel did experience both the transcendence and immanence of YHWH (cf. Deut. 4:7, 8, 13-14, 20, 34, 37, and 38).⁸² In addition, the claim that Deuteronomy promotes an abstract notion of YHWH meets difficulty with its corporeal expressions such as אֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים ("finger of God," Deut. 9:10), יַד־יְהוָה ("hand of YHWH," Deut. 2:15), בְּיַד הַזֹּקֵן ("by a mighty hand," Deut. 3:24; 4:34; 5:15, 6:21; 7:8, 19; 9:26; 11:2) and דִּבֶּר ("he speaks," Deut. 1:6; 2:1; 3:26; 4:15; 5:4, 5, 22; 6:19; 9:3, 10; 10:4, 9; 11:25; 18:2; 19:8; 26:19; 29:13; 31:3). Whether or not these expressions belong to earlier material,⁸³ their presence in Deuteronomy as it stands would undermine what Deuteronomy is allegedly advocating. Furthermore, in the light of the ancient Near Eastern conception of divine presence which Israel generally shared, especially in terms of the parallels between the ark and the tent of meeting and ancient Near East god images and temples, it appears unlikely that Deuteronomy is polemicising against the idea of YHWH's immanence.⁸⁴ According to Pekka Pitkänen, Israel's ark, tent of meeting, and the temple were functionally equivalent to ancient Near Eastern god images and temples. For example, Israel's building and dedication of the tent of meeting and the temple followed an "ancient Near Eastern literary pattern."⁸⁵ The case in which YHWH's glory resided in the

⁸⁰ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.9, 149, 152-153.

⁸¹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.70. This is evident from his comments on Deut. 4:37 in which he maintains that the verse emphasises "personal involvement and the absence of any mediator, and perhaps correcting traditions such as Numbers 20:16."

⁸² Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.70-71, 153. Another such scholar is Samuel L. Terrien in, *The Elusive Presence: Towards a New Biblical Theology* (USA: Harper & Row, 1978), pp.200-201. Terrien argues that the 'Name' seems to be "a device for designating Yahweh's will to create a holy people within the history of mankind and at the same time Israel's acceptance of this election." He hence disagrees with von Rad that the 'Name' "verges closely upon a hypostasis" because the 'Name' implies man's participation in cultic activities in real time and to speak of the place in which the 'Name' dwells is to refer to "the ceremonial of a congregation at worship." For Terrien, the 'Name' cannot be separated from "the divine purpose in history" and from whatever had taken place during sacrificial worship. It is in fact a theology that implies "a presence which transcends the *hagios topos*" ("holy place") because "it involves the prolongation of the cult in a particular mode of behavior outside the shrine."

⁸³ Weinfeld argues that the story in vv.9-21 is dependent on the E source. See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy I-II*, pp.407-408.

⁸⁴ Pekka M.A. Pitkänen, 'Central Sanctuary and Centralisation of Worship in Ancient Israel from the Settlement to the building of Solomon's Temple: A Historical and Theological Study of the Biblical Evidence in its Archaeological and Ancient Near Eastern Context' (Ph.D Diss., Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, 2000), pp.22-44.

⁸⁵ See the list of literary pattern in Pitkänen, 'Central Sanctuary,' pp.33-34.

tabernacle and the temple after the ark was brought into “corresponds to an Assyrian *tērubat bitim*, the entry of the god to the house.”⁸⁶ Furthermore, the role of the ark in battle was similar to that of ancient Near Eastern divine symbols.⁸⁷ The temporary placing of the ark in the house of Abinadab (1 Sam. 7:1) also had its parallel in the ancient Near East.⁸⁸ However, Pitkänen notes, there were important differences that made the ark a unique object. For instance, whereas the ancient Near East god images were “anthropomorphic representations of the corresponding deity,” the ark was not.⁸⁹ In the ancient Near East, the god resided in the god image but in Israel YHWH was “not present *in* the ark but *at* the ark.”⁹⁰ However this idea that YHWH was present at the ark becomes an important reason why it is “difficult to think that Deuteronomy would deny the presence of Yahweh in the temple or the tent of meeting, especially when there is no explicit denial of Yahweh’s presence in a sanctuary in Deuteronomy.”⁹¹ Furthermore, Pitkänen also argues that as the idea that heaven was the primary dwelling-place of gods was attested in Egypt and Sumer, it is not peculiar “if Deuteronomy emphasized this aspect of divine presence.”⁹² Hence, he states, “The ark and the tent of meeting and temple are analogous to ancient Near Eastern god images and temples. Yahweh is (basically) continually present on earth at the ark which is normally kept in the tabernacle or temple, the house of Yahweh.”⁹³

2.2.3 *The Meaning of the Deuteronomic Idiom*

Further questions are raised when the Deuteronomic idiom לָשׂוּם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם (“to put his name there”) is examined in the light of the ancient Near Eastern archaeology and philology.⁹⁴ Richter asserts that the idiom must be understood within the political notion of הַמְּקוֹם (“the place”), an expression connected to the

⁸⁶ Pitkänen, ‘Central Sanctuary,’ p.34.

⁸⁷ Pitkänen, ‘Central Sanctuary,’ p.34.

⁸⁸ Pitkänen, ‘Central Sanctuary,’ p.35. Pitkänen quotes V.A. Hurowitz, “The use of temporary housing, institution of cultic dues and performance of mourning rites for gods who were for some reason or other displaced from their own sanctuaries are practices known also from several Mesopotamian texts.”

⁸⁹ Pitkänen, ‘Central Sanctuary,’ p.35.

⁹⁰ Pitkänen, ‘Central Sanctuary,’ p.36. See further details in ‘Central Sanctuary,’ pp.36-40.

⁹¹ Pitkänen, ‘Central Sanctuary,’ p.40.

⁹² Pitkänen, ‘Central Sanctuary,’ p.41.

⁹³ Pitkänen, ‘Central Sanctuary,’ p.43.

⁹⁴ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.36-205. According to Richter, the transitive לָשׂוּם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם (Deut. 12:5, 21; 14:24; 1 Kgs 9:3; 11:36; 14:21; 21:4, 7) has been used to replace the Piel לָשׂוּם שְׁמוֹ שָׁם (Deut. 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2). That the Deuteronomist chooses to use *lāsûm* (לָשׂוּם) to make an important association between the Deuteronomic legislation and the temple has convinced Richter that these formulae were interchangeable at the early stage of the Hebrew Bible’s transmission.

idea of the land which YHWH gave as Israel's inheritance.⁹⁵ The expression **הַמִּקְדָּשׁ** has been variously used as a reference to the sanctuary of YHWH's enthronement (Exod. 15:16-17),⁹⁶ "the place" which YHWH prepared and gave (Exod. 23:20; Num. 10:29; 14:40),⁹⁷ and subsequently "the house (temple)" and "the city" in the Deuteronomistic History and the Chronicler's History.⁹⁸ In the legal corpus of Deuteronomy, **הַמִּקְדָּשׁ** is again brought to the fore in that Israel is commanded to purge foreign worship from it to remove the claims of other gods (cf. Deut. 12:2-3).⁹⁹ Furthermore, the legislation concerning the Passover through which Israel is to celebrate YHWH's redemption (Deut. 16:1-17) and the offering of the first fruits upon entry into **הַמִּקְדָּשׁ** (Deut. 26:1-11) are particularly striking in terms of expressing the fact of "YHWH's patronage of Israel, a patronage that has resulted in his enthronement in their midst and in their secure possession of his land, the place."¹⁰⁰ Hence in Richter's view, the idiom has to do with expressing Israel's vassal relationship with her suzerain.

Richter re-examines the two standard texts from which the Name theologians usually argue for their case: 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Kings 8. Her findings show that the idiom in the former has to do with the idea of establishing a reputation¹⁰¹ whereas in the latter, all twelve references to the Name have to be regarded as "expressions of memorial and reputation or ownership."¹⁰² The link between **הַמִּקְדָּשׁ** and the idiom, Richter argues, is not the result of some form of evolutionary development but of the "microcosmic nature of sacred place in the ANE thought."¹⁰³ The crux of her contention against the Name theologians lies in the understanding that the idiom is a "loan-word" borrowed from the East Semitic "to put" and it resembles the G-stem

⁹⁵ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.56.

⁹⁶ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.37, 54.

⁹⁷ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.37, 54.

⁹⁸ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.55.

⁹⁹ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.55-56.

¹⁰⁰ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.56.

¹⁰¹ See more details in Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.69-75.

¹⁰² See more details in Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.79-90.

¹⁰³ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.95-96. She asserts, "The deity's "palace" on earth serves as a symbol for the entire relationship between the divine king and his human populace. Thus, YHWH "plants" Israel in the "place of his enthronement" and the resulting human kingdom is spoken of as YHWH's "sanctuary" (cf. Exod. 15:17). In Deuteronomy, YHWH's people are commanded to come before him at the central cult site as one would come before a king, to perform the functions of a vassal at the place in order to maintain their land tenure."

Akkadian idiom *šuma šakānu* (“to place the name”).¹⁰⁴ It has to do with the installation of a victory stele for the purpose of announcing that “the territory in question has been claimed by a new suzerain.”¹⁰⁵ Significantly, numerous examples along the Mediterranean coast of the northern Levant support the suggestion that there is a relationship between the Deuteronomic and Akkadian idiom.¹⁰⁶ The clearest example is the bilingual inscription (Aramaic and Akkadian) on the Tell Fakhariyeh statue of the ninth century.¹⁰⁷ Therefore Richter is convinced that the biblical writers “were aware of the semantic cargo of their borrowed idiom,” and ‘the place YHWH will choose’ is associated with “an inscribed monument or newly claimed territory or both.”¹⁰⁸ It is the idea of YHWH’s sovereignty over the land and the nation which serves as “a catalyst” for the cultic law in Deuteronomy 12-26.¹⁰⁹ As noted, back in 1967 de Vaux in his dispute with von Rad already made the point that the Deuteronomic idiom “to put his name there” has its parallel in the Amarna Letters which carries the idea of ownership.¹¹⁰ Wenham made a similar point a couple of years later.¹¹¹ However, their views did not garner large followings and were overlooked in past scholarship. What Richter has done is to put the interpretation of the idiom back on the agenda. She has strongly argued that this idiom cannot be interpreted as an expression of the mode of divine presence and so vindicates de Vaux for the suggestion criticised by Weinfeld¹¹² and Mettinger.¹¹³ The Deuteronomic idiom לָשׂוּם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם or לְשָׂכַן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם therefore has nothing to do with a corrective Name theology. Rather, the evidence suggests that the Deuteronomist as a

¹⁰⁴ Richter points out, “Whereas the uses of *l’sakkēn š’mō* in the Hebrew Bible and *šakan šumšu* in the Amarna letters are rare, in Mesopotamian monumental inscriptions, *šuma šakānu* is quite common” (p.122). See Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.96-122, 217.

¹⁰⁵ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.125.

¹⁰⁶ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.125.

¹⁰⁷ Sandra L. Richter, “The Place of the Name in Deuteronomy,” in *VT* 57 (2007): p.343. See also Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.199-205. She states, “[This monument] establishes that biblical Hebrew *lāsūm š’mō šām* is also derived from Akk. *šuma šakānu* in that it was understood throughout the first millennium BCE as a North West Semitic claque of the Akk. phrase. Thus, it is now apparent that the writers of both Deuteronomy and the DH recognized their descriptor of “the chosen place,” by it *l’sakkēn š’mō šām* or *lāsūm š’mō šām*, as a derivative of the Akk. idiom *šuma šakānu*, “to place his name” – a centuries-old, foreign idiom with a specific application within its native semantic field.”

¹⁰⁸ Richter, “The Place of the Name,” p.344.

¹⁰⁹ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.205. Richter argues that “when Dtr¹ adopts this same idiom, he does so to speak of YHWH’s ongoing suzerainty over Israel.”

¹¹⁰ De Vaux, “Le lieu que Yahvé a choisi pour y établir son nom,” pp.219-229.

¹¹¹ Wenham, ‘The Structure and Date of Deuteronomy,’ p.249 and “Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary,” pp.103-118. Also McConville, “God’s ‘Name’ and God’s ‘Glory;” p.152.

¹¹² Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, p.194.

¹¹³ Mettinger, *Dethronement*, pp.43-44, 56-57.

political historian used this borrowed idiom to highlight YHWH's sovereignty and his right of ownership over Israel and her land.¹¹⁴

The work of scholars such as Wilson and Richter, therefore, have raised questions about Deuteronomy's alleged demythologisation by means of Name theology. We now move on to consider a related issue, the question of centralisation of worship in Deuteronomy.

2.3 *The Chosen Place, Centralisation, Kingship*

Since de Wette and Wellhausen, Deuteronomy has been regarded as a document aimed to bolster Hezekiah's or Josiah's reform and the altar-law as demanding the centralisation of Yahwistic worship at a single sanctuary in Jerusalem.¹¹⁵ Hence Deuteronomy is widely thought to be inseparable from the centralising effort in the seventh century which directs all important political and religious activities previously performed at local sanctuaries to the Jerusalem temple.¹¹⁶ Consequently, local shrines were abolished to curb forms of foreign or syncretistic worship and to secularise the sacral dimension of religious life by steps such as permitting 'profane slaughter' and reducing the control of the local priests.¹¹⁷ According to Weinfeld, cult centralisation results in the collapse of a system, made possible through demythologisation of the divine presence and secularisation (or desacralisation) of the judicial authority.¹¹⁸ Since the idea of Deuteronomy constituting a demythologising programme has been called into question, we should revise our understanding of Deuteronomy's centralisation.

¹¹⁴ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.217. Richter therefore concludes that "Dtr has chosen this particular, borrowed idiom in order to emphasize the sovereignty and fame of YHWH by right of conquest. As had the great kings and heroes of Mesopotamian history and legend, YHWH states that he has "placed his name" in the Promised Land."

¹¹⁵ See Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp.32-34; Clements, *God and Temple*, p.76. See also the centrality of centralisation in Deuteronomy in Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.146. See a more detail account of Deuteronomy in Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, pp.29-55.

¹¹⁶ However, some have now seen Deut. 12 as post-exilic, and essentially requiring exclusive Yahwistic worship, with the place undetermined. See Wolfgang Oswald, *Staatstheorie im Alten Israel: der politische Diskurs im Pentateuch und in den Geschichtsbüchern des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009), pp.103-104.

¹¹⁷ The impact of cult centralisation is well summarised in Weinfeld's classic statement. See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, p.190. Also quoted in p.126, n.26 above.

¹¹⁸ See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, pp.190-243.

2.3.1 *The Chosen Place and Centralisation*

One of the strongest advocates of Jerusalem as the chosen place for cult centralisation is Ronald Clements. Since 1965 Clements has held the view that Deuteronomy does not merely demand a central sanctuary, but a sole sanctuary in Jerusalem.¹¹⁹ For him, the Jerusalem temple was the only place that had “a status commensurate with the requirement of centralisation” and he is also “almost certain” that while Deuteronomy is silent about Jerusalem, the chosen sanctuary which was intended from the start was to be in Jerusalem because the Deuteronomistic historians had explicitly named it in 1 Kings 8:15ff.¹²⁰ But, what were the reasons for centralised worship? It has been argued that centralisation was implemented for political purposes in the aftermath of the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom.¹²¹ It is also believed that centralisation aimed to maintain a pure cult in Israel.¹²² Clements explained that cult centralisation sought to purge the menace of the Canaanite high-places with their crude nature worship and at the same time introduce a new theology of divine presence to eliminate the Canaanite elements from Israel’s religious life.¹²³ Hence, cultic symbolism originating from a mythological and polytheistic background had to be decisively rejected.¹²⁴ It was a way of eliminating unorthodox religion, a form of “theological power play,” as Nelson puts

¹¹⁹ Clements, *God’s Chosen People*, p.76. This was on the basis of the pre-eminent Solomon’s temple which was “associated with the Davidic dynasty and the doctrine of their divine election to be rulers of all Israel” Clements also argues that Jerusalem cannot be mentioned in a document like Deuteronomy since it is presented as spoken by Moses

¹²⁰ Clements, *God and Temple*, p.92, n.10.

¹²¹ See de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p.336. De Vaux points out that after the destruction of the northern kingdom, Hezekiah wanted to “strengthen and to unite the nation by a return to traditional ways.” Hence the centralisation of the cult at Jerusalem was one element in this policy. Likewise for Josiah, who tried to shake off the weakening Assyria by rejecting the foreign cults and religious customs of Assyria to secure the centralisation of Yahwistic cult at Jerusalem; Moshe Weinfeld, “Cult Centralisation in Israel in the Light of a Neo-Babylonian Analogy,” in *JNES* 23 (1964): pp.202-212. He thinks that the centralising effort of Hezekiah sought to secure the loyalty of the Judahite countryside to Jerusalem. As to whether Josiah’s centralisation was motivated by such political reasons, Weinfeld remains neutral. See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, p.75; Ernest W. Nicholson, “The Centralisation of the Cult in Deuteronomy,” in *VT* 13 (1963): pp.380-389. Nicholson reckons that by removing competing worship sites Hezekiah’s centralisation aimed to reunite the nation around Judah and Jerusalem. See also, Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.148-149. Nelson believes that Hezekiah’s centralisation would strengthen Jerusalem economically and ideologically, a national unification needed to counter the Assyrian threat. But Tigay argues that it remains unclear if Hezekiah’s centralisation had realistically fostered loyalty to Jerusalem since by closing down local sanctuaries it would deprive the people of the ability to sacrifice and thus could have caused them to resent his regime instead. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.460.

¹²² Clements, *God and Temple*, p.97. See also Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, pp.74-77.

¹²³ Clements, *God and Temple*, p.97.

¹²⁴ Clements, *God and Temple*, p.97.

it.¹²⁵ Therefore centralisation restricted Israel's sacrificial worship to one shrine in which proper control could then be ensured in order to "maintain vigilance over the operation of the cult."¹²⁶ For this reason, Clements believed the Deuteronomists "see the value of having a sole sanctuary based upon the earlier claim of the Jerusalem temple to be the pre-eminent sanctuary for all Israel."¹²⁷ In his later work,¹²⁸ he insists that the name formula should be understood as a post-exilic attempt to deny YHWH's corporeality.¹²⁹ Convinced of Mettinger's argument for YHWH's hypostatised presence,¹³⁰ Clements maintains his view of the corrective name formula and the pre-eminence of Jerusalem as Deuteronomy's chosen place,

That Deuteronomy's name theology is a post-587 BCE development in the book appears to me to be so probable as to be a virtual certainty. It arose in consequence of the temple's destruction, aimed at retaining Jerusalem's claim to be Israel's primary focus of religious authority and precluding acknowledgement of any alternative.¹³¹

Hence the Name theology not only functions to emphasise YHWH's transcendence following the temple's destruction, it also reinforces the idea that Jerusalem was "the sole seat of religious authority" for Yahwistic worship despite the absence of the temple.¹³² Clements states,

It is not surprising that the restoration and rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem was a foremost priority of the survivors of the disastrous events of 587 BC (so Isa 44:28). The Deuteronomic name theology was essentially a piece of theological bridge-building at a time of acute political and religious crisis. It aimed to maintain a minimal groundwork of religious continuity and authority when both were threatened with eclipse. Jerusalem was to continue as the sole legitimate location for the worship of Yahweh, whether or not a temple stood on its sacred ground and a Davidic king reigned in its royal palace.¹³³

¹²⁵ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.149-150. See also Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, pp.210-214; Nicholson, "The Centralisation," pp.380-389.

¹²⁶ Clements, *God and Temple*, p.96. Also Clements, *God's Chosen People*, p.77.

¹²⁷ Clements, *God's Chosen People*, p.77.

¹²⁸ Ronald E. Clements, "A Dialogue with Gordon McConville on Deuteronomy: The Origins of Deuteronomy: What are the clues?," in *SJT* (2003): pp.508-516.

¹²⁹ Clements, "A Dialogue," p.512.

¹³⁰ See Mettinger, *Dethronement*, pp.50, 60-61. Cf. p.127, n.33 above.

¹³¹ Clements, "A Dialogue," p.512.

¹³² Clements, "A Dialogue," p.513.

¹³³ Clements, "A Dialogue," p.513.

It was Hezekiah and Josiah who effectively centralised all worship in Jerusalem and made the temple the sole sanctuary,¹³⁴ and therefore during their time 'the place in which YHWH will choose' was evidently Jerusalem. Similarly, after the exile Jerusalem became the "sole Jewish sanctuary in Palestine."¹³⁵ Yet the fact remains that in Deuteronomy the chosen place was not explicitly mentioned.¹³⁶ While it could be argued, as Clements did, that Jerusalem simply could not be mentioned since Deuteronomy is presented as spoken by Moses,¹³⁷ to insist that Deuteronomy promotes Jerusalem as *the* chosen place does sidestep the possibility that the Deuteronomic phrase "the place" could have originally been speaking of a central sanctuary in the northern areas such as Shechem, Bethel, Gilgal and Shiloh before Jerusalem eventually became the pre-eminent sanctuary. According to the Deuteronomic historian, these places also enjoyed in their times the status of the place of centralised worship.¹³⁸ The recent work by Richter has shown that the literary, archaeological, epigraphic, and geographical data point to the Deuteronomic identification of 'the place' as Mount Ebal.¹³⁹ She argues that Mount Ebal was the first locale in which YHWH "places his name," a fact which was accepted by later theologians who compiled Deuteronomy 5-28 (cf. Deut. 11:29; 27:4).¹⁴⁰ If the Deuteronomists had sought to protect the sacredness and eminence of Jerusalem as

¹³⁴ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p.336.

¹³⁵ Wenham, "Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary," p.109.

¹³⁶ See de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p.338. Also Nicholson, in arguing against the view that Deuteronomy expresses the Jerusalem traditions, points out that Deuteronomy's polemics against kingship and its strict limitations placed on the monarchy "rule out quite decisively any possibility of its origin among Jerusalem circles." See Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition*, p.93.

¹³⁷ See p.138, n.119 above.

¹³⁸ J. Gary Millar, *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998), p.101. See further details of these places in Wenham, "Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary," pp.105-109.

¹³⁹ Richter, "The Place of the Name," pp.342-366.

¹⁴⁰ Richter, "The Place of the Name," p.366. Richter also states, "The Book of Deuteronomy itself provides the identity of its unique, chosen "place." Recognizing that the cultural cargo accompanying the nine deuteronomic references to "the place in which I choose to place my name" involves inscribed monuments, that the opening paragraph of Deuteronomy xii exhorts Israel to remove the inscriptions of the Canaanite deities from their cult sites as Yahweh will be placing his own inscription at his own site, and that Deuteronomy xi and xxvii communicate how, when, and where Yahweh's inscribed monument is to be installed, it seems that the book does indeed answer the question it poses: the "place of the name" within the Book of Deuteronomy is Mt. Ebal" (pp.364-365). Richter further states, "The probability is that somewhere in Israelite history there existed large plastered and inscribed stelae at a cultic site in need of explanation. The continuance of the sentence title within the centralising formula in the DH and in Jeremiah - 'the place in which Yahweh your God will choose to place his name' - also points to the possibly that these stele were understood to have been installed first at Ebal, then Shiloh, and eventually Jerusalem" (p.366, n.70).

YHWH's chosen place of centralised worship, it remains doubtful whether Deuteronomy in its final form has been successful in this objective.

It follows that the identity of the 'place' may not be the essential point in Deuteronomy. It is likely, rather, that the command about the chosen place has to do with Israel's uncompromising worship of YHWH.¹⁴¹ This reading is further strengthened by Richter's argument concerning the function of the Deuteronomic idiom לְשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה or לְשֵׁם יְהוָה ("to put his name there"), as noted earlier.¹⁴² In that light, Deuteronomy's 'place' may be understood to refer to the land, which can also be seen as the sanctuary of YHWH's enthronement.¹⁴³ Several references in Deuteronomy 12-26 may be read as associating the chosen place of worship with the land (Deut. 12:1, 2-3; 26:2, 9-10).¹⁴⁴ These connections between the place and land speak of the "importance of right worship" for covenant-keeping and possession of the land.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, they also mean that the altar-law "participates in the provisionality of 'places' in Deuteronomy."¹⁴⁶ This results in Deuteronomy's "refusal to give finality to Jerusalem."¹⁴⁷ Hence McConville states,

If the language of 'place' in Deut. 12:1-5 is carefully interwoven with the theme in the wider context of the book, then the idea of a chosen place of worship is less concerned with identifying and supporting the claims of a sanctuary than with laying claim to the allegiance of Israel in worship, within a covenantal context, in which particular historical situations are subject to change.¹⁴⁸

Moreover, he also notes that the Deuteronomic place formula emphasises not so much the identity of the 'place' but the divine act of 'choosing.'¹⁴⁹ This understanding correlates with Deuteronomy's depiction of YHWH as the sovereign God who chooses

¹⁴¹ See J.G. McConville and J.G. Millar, *Time and Place in Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp.123-132. See also Millar, *Now Choose Life*, p.101. Millar reckons that there is no need to be too preoccupied with the identity of the place since it is seemingly unclear as "it is perfectly in keeping with the Deuteronomic concern to preserve the freedom of Yahweh as the transcendent God who knows no limits, while insisting that, in his grace, he has chosen to make his presence known at his own place."

¹⁴² Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.217. See pp.134-137 above.

¹⁴³ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.37, 55.

¹⁴⁴ See further explanation in McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, pp.130-132.

¹⁴⁵ McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, p.132.

¹⁴⁶ McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, p.132.

¹⁴⁷ J. Gordon McConville, "A Dialogue with Gordon McConville on Deuteronomy: A Response from Gordon McConville," in *SJT* (2003): p.528.

¹⁴⁸ McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, p.132.

¹⁴⁹ J. Gordon McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), pp.30-32.

Israel and gives her the Torah to set in motion Israel's path to greatness as a nation distinct in worship and governance (Deut. 7:6-16; 12-26). Deuteronomy's notion of centralisation is bound up with the idea of YHWH's freedom of choice over Israel, their worship, and his right to her absolute loyalty. In this sense it may be said that the land of Israel is the chosen sanctuary which bears YHWH's name (cf. Deut. 26:9).¹⁵⁰ In line with this, the Song in Deuteronomy 32:43 speaks of the necessity of expiating Israel's land from defilement by her enemies or/and by her own wrongdoing (cf. Deut. 24:4). The importance of cleansing is made clearer when it is understood in relation to Israel's special place in relation to YHWH's world (cf. Deut. 4:6-8; 32:8-9). Closely related to centralisation is the idea of judicial authority, as the following discusses.

2.3.2 *The Judicial Authority and Centralisation*

The idea that Deuteronomy is concerned with cult centralisation received an added boost in the work of Bernard Levinson who believes that Deuteronomy's legal corpus represents an innovative, radical hermeneutical manipulation of the Covenant Code. He argues that the scribes, in their effort to transform the cultic institutions and rituals, justified their innovation of centralisation from the older authoritative laws for the purpose of making them appear as if they endorsed the idea of centralisation even though those laws conflicted with the scribes' centralising agenda.¹⁵¹ It was important for the scribes to reuse these older laws because they believed that they would give their innovations "the guise of continuity with the past and consistency with traditional law."¹⁵² They therefore reworked these laws to "erase the conflict" by picking up key words and phrases (lemmas) from the earlier Code and supplying them with "new contexts and meanings," while at the same time concealing their innovative works with "terms of the older dispensation."¹⁵³ Two literary devices are especially evident in this reworking: repetitive resumption and what Levinson refers to as Seidel's law. Repetitive resumption occurs when clauses from the text, be it verbatim

¹⁵⁰ See McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, p.91. He points out that the relationship between the chosen place of worship (centre) and towns of Israel (locations) is "one of mutuality, not opposition." He reckons that this is a point "that is not always recognized in formulations of deuteronomic 'centralization.'" He says, "The Deuteronomic programme as it bears upon the relation between centre and localities is quite different. While Yahweh's name is memorialized at a particular chosen place (the 'centre'), it is nevertheless the whole land that is sanctified by his possession of it."

¹⁵¹ On the delegitimation of the Book of the Covenant in favour of the Deuteronomic law-code, compare Oswald, *Staatstheorie im Alten Israel*, pp.126-127. Oswald, unlike Levinson, does not see Deuteronomy as centralizing worship in Jerusalem.

¹⁵² Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.21.

¹⁵³ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, pp.5-6, 20-21.

or abridged, are repeated after the interruption to signify the resumption of the text.¹⁵⁴ The Seidel's law, which does almost the same thing as repetitive resumption, reverses the elements of the text in a chiasmic form, for example, AB is cited as B¹A¹.¹⁵⁵ Essentially, in Levinson's scheme the scribal innovation in Deuteronomy resulted negatively in the abrogation of sacrificial worship at local altars and curtailment of the king's judicial authority, but positively in the centralisation of worship at a single site.¹⁵⁶

According to him, cult centralisation resulted in a revision of the judicial procedures and of the sources of judicial authority in the local and central sphere. In the local sphere the judicial function which was usually performed at the local altars had to be revised and a reduction in the judicial authority of the elders was necessary if cult centralisation were to succeed.¹⁵⁷ In the central sphere, the judicial authority which was once held by the monarch had to be transferred to the temple and its officials so that it could now take on its new role in judicial administration.¹⁵⁸ The effect of such changes is an interesting aspect of centralisation because, while cult centralisation has been usually viewed as an enhancement of the king's position and authority, it was not so in Levinson's view.¹⁵⁹ Levinson argues that Deuteronomy 17:8-13 bestows supreme judicial authority on the sanctuary, but suppresses the exalted view of kingship as expressed in the ideology of the royal psalms.¹⁶⁰ In these psalms the king has a divinely appointed role of administering justice, like the kings of the ancient Near East, except that the Israelite king does not compose the law.¹⁶¹ This idea of kingship is evident in the examples of David and Solomon who dealt with complex legal cases and judicial appeals.¹⁶² Solomon, in particular, was especially glorified for his "divine wisdom in executing justice" (1 Kgs 3:28), an

¹⁵⁴ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.18.

¹⁵⁵ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.18.

¹⁵⁶ See another legal innovation in Joseph Fleishman, "Legal Innovation in Deuteronomy XXI 18-20," in *VT* LIII, 3 (2003): pp.311-327.

¹⁵⁷ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.98.

¹⁵⁸ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.98.

¹⁵⁹ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.98. Levinson states, "In the central sphere, the role played by the king as the final arbiter of justice also had to be transformed. That role, conforming to Israelite and broader ancient Near East convention, had to be radically revised in order to permit the central sanctuary to occupy its new place in the judicial administration."

¹⁶⁰ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.138.

¹⁶¹ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.138.

¹⁶² Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.140.

idealisation which for Levinson is a reflection of the ancient Near Eastern ideology.¹⁶³ However, all these are radically transformed in Deuteronomy 17:8-13. This restriction on the king's judicial authority is then followed by five distinct prohibitions on what the king should be and should not do, followed by a unique demand of what he must do (Deut. 17:14-20). The Israelite king (1) should be a fellow Israelite brother whom YHWH chooses (v.15); (2) should not be a foreigner (v.15); (3) should not multiply horses (v.16); (4) wives (v.17); and (5) silver and gold (v.17) for himself. Rather, he must write a copy of the Torah in order to meditate upon and practice it (vv.18-19). For Levinson, the Israelite king is hence "reduced to a mere titular figurehead of the state, more restricted than potent, more otiose than exercising real military, judicial, executive, and cultic function."¹⁶⁴ Although Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22 have been typically understood as dealing with "Office-bearers of the theocracy," the texts actually do not reflect this conventional view.¹⁶⁵ Levinson rightly points out that the arrangement of the topics: local judiciary (16:18-20; 17:2-7), central justice (17:8-13), monarch (17:14-20), priests (18:1-8), and prophets (18:9-22), shows that the authors were not emphasising the administrative organisation. In that case, the text sequence would probably have ranked the king at the top of the hierarchy and the official with the least authority at the bottom.¹⁶⁶ Instead, he thinks that the re-sequencing in which the king is placed in the middle was an editorial strategy to emphasise the fact that the temple is now given the "pride of place judicially and textually" by reassigning to it the judicial authority which was once held by the king.¹⁶⁷

Levinson's hypothesis of Deuteronomy as a document subject to a literary reformulation arises from the widely-held assumption that it was a product of the seventh century which prompted a wide-scale reform through its demand for centralised worship. However, as we have seen, this understanding is not without its problems. Furthermore, the idea that Deuteronomy is a literary reformulation of the Covenant Code remains debatable. Vogt raises the question of the audience to whom

¹⁶³ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.141.

¹⁶⁴ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.141.

¹⁶⁵ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.142. He points out, "The texts reflect the authors' drawing the consequences of centralisation for both judicial and public administration. Deuteronomy's cultic center eclipses the king both in textual priority and in claiming supreme judicial authority at royal expense."

¹⁶⁶ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.142.

¹⁶⁷ Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.143.

this reformulation was directed. He argues that if the target audience were familiar with the old authoritative texts they would be aware of the disparity between the old texts and the revised one in spite of old terminologies being reworked into the new.¹⁶⁸ The reverse is also true. If the audience had limited knowledge of the older texts, a literary reformulating of the older laws into Deuteronomy may not necessarily have made much difference to them. Most importantly, one has to explain how the idea of cult centralisation coheres with the idea that the king, presumably Josiah, would order a wide-scale reform in Israel only to have his royal power and judicial authority usurped and himself reduced to what Levinson calls, a “titular figurehead.”¹⁶⁹ Moreover, in view of the socio-political situation of the seventh century, the effort of centralisation would make sense precisely because such an effort would fortify the power of the king politically and financially.¹⁷⁰ Yet, Deuteronomy presents a different scenario of what the king should be and how tithes were to be given. The peculiarity is conspicuous. If the overall Deuteronomic aim is to legislate for the idea of centralisation, how could such an idea co-exist with a text like Deuteronomy 17:14-20? In this sense, von Rad is right to point out that Deuteronomy’s low view of human kingship can hardly be seen as promoting Josiah’s regime.¹⁷¹ This presents a real problem if Deuteronomy is linked with Josiah’s reign, as Levinson himself acknowledges. Nevertheless, what remains interesting in Levinson’s hypothesis is his recognition of the Deuteronomic curtailment of the king’s power, which was in stark contrast to the ancient Near Eastern world.¹⁷² That the Israelite king was limited in authority by being prohibited from amassing for himself military might, wives, and material wealth but binding him to the study of the Torah points to the fact that unlike kings of the ancient Near East, he was forbidden to place himself at the apex of the political and religious hierarchical system. Israel, despite having a human king, was to remain as a theocracy and her king was restricted from pursuing personal advantage and was not above the law. Rather, he was to submit to YHWH’s authority

¹⁶⁸ Vogt, *Deuteronomic Theology*, p.66.

¹⁶⁹ Vogt argues the similar point. See Vogt, *Deuteronomic Theology*, p.66.

¹⁷⁰ See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.148; Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.153.

¹⁷¹ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, pp.27-28. See p.121 above.

¹⁷² Reimer, in arguing that the origin of the prohibitions against a return to Egypt in Deut. 28:68 is a reflection of Moses’ word in Exod. 14:13, concludes that this “anti-Egypt polemic” is later introduced into the law of the king in Deut. 17:16. See more detail in David J. Reimer, “Concerning Return to Egypt: Deuteronomy XVII 16 and XXVIII 68 Reconsidered,” in J.A. Emerton (ed.) *Studies in the Pentateuch* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp.217-229.

who is the true king of Israel. The strength of the Deuteronomic critique of the human monarchical kingship cannot be ignored.

The curtailment of the king's power points the readers of Deuteronomy to the emphasis on YHWH's supreme rule. Mark O'Brien in his recent synchronic analysis of 16:18-18:22 affirms that one of the convictions this pericope aims to maintain is that Israel was one people set apart from all the nations for the exclusive service of YHWH and hence was to commit herself to the Torah in the challenging new situation of living in the land and in proximity to surrounding nations.¹⁷³ In Deuteronomy YHWH's rule is expressed through the Torah, within which is a sanctioned political and social order which, if implemented, would transform Israel into a different kind of society befitting a people of YHWH.¹⁷⁴ Deuteronomy is concerned with how this revolutionary order can be worked out in the political and religious spheres. Interestingly, the curtailment of the royal authority as one of the effects of centralisation also gives prominence to an important theological concept undergirding the Song: it is YHWH, not the monarchical king, who is the sovereign and supreme ruler in the political and religious affairs of Israel. In view of these features, the dynamic relationship between the Song and Deuteronomy can be seen expressed in how they work together to focus the audience on an important question: what kind of a nation should Israel be in order to serve YHWH? The next section explores how Deuteronomy deals with this question before asking how the Song relates to it.

3. The Deuteronomic Concern: A Distinctive Israel

Deuteronomy emphasises Israel's uniqueness and refers to her as YHWH's inheritance (יְהוָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, Deut. 4:20). Her uniqueness is derivative from YHWH's own, which Deuteronomy expresses in terms of his righteous character (Deut. 4:31; 5:10; 10:17-18; 32:4; cf. 1 Sam. 26:23) and his supremacy over the gods of other nations (Deut. 4:34-35; 10:17-18; 32:4, 39). These qualities are manifested in his redemption

¹⁷³ See Mark O'Brien, "Deuteronomy 16.18-18.22: Meeting the Challenge of Towns and Nations," in *JSOT* Vol. 33.2 (2008): pp.155-172.

¹⁷⁴ Deuteronomy's relationship with the Prophets (e.g. Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah), McConville points out, suggests that Deuteronomy should be seen as a "radical spiritual and political blueprint" for Israel's national life to counter the Assyrians' "social-political-religious programme" in the context of the ancient world. See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, pp.21, 35.

of Israel from Egypt (Deut. 1:27; 4:37; 8:14) his provision for her in the wilderness (Deut. 8:2-4, 15-16; 32:10-12) and his giving of the fertile land to her as an inheritance (Deut. 4:21, 38; 8:7-9; 15:4; 19:10; 20:16; 21:23; 24:4; 25:19; 26:1). In return, Deuteronomy insists that Israel must show loyalty to YHWH and express his sovereign rule and righteous character in all aspects of her national life in order to distinguish herself from the other nations (Deut. 5:6-10; 6:13-14; 10:12-20; 12:1-26:15).¹⁷⁵ It is necessary for Israel to maintain her distinctiveness as a Yahwistic nation amidst the religious diversity and political ideologies of the ancient Near East. In this light, Deuteronomy insists on two fundamental principles according to which Israel is governed as a distinctive nation: the purity of worship and the centrality of Torah.

3.1 *Purity of Worship*

Deuteronomy is conscious that worship does not merely signify the worshippers' obligation to give sacrificial offerings to the deity (Deut. 12:6; 16:2; cf. Exod. 5:1, 3) but their reliance on and devotion to the service of that deity. This idea of reliance and devotion may be typified by the Deuteronomic expression "bow down and serve them" (הִשְׁתַּחֲוִי וְעַבְדָתֵם) which describes the nature of Israel's foreign worship (Deut. 4:19; 8:19; 30:17; cf. Jos. 23:16; Judg. 10:6, 13; 1 Kgs 9:6; 2 Chron. 7:19).¹⁷⁶ Since Israel has been "allotted" (חֶלֶק) to YHWH as his inheritance and people (Deut. 4:19-20; 29:26; cf. 32:8-9),¹⁷⁷ her foreign worship is tantamount to undermining YHWH's power and denies his right over her. As Brian Rosner points out, "Idolatry as a concept is an attack on God's exclusive rights to our love, trust and obedience."¹⁷⁸ This explains why Deuteronomy insists that Yahwistic worship must be non-negotiable in Israel's national life, as illustrated by the frequent warnings against idolatry (Deut. 5:7; 6:14; 7:4; 8:19; 11:16, 28; 13:2-3, 6, 14; 17:3; 18:20; 28:14; 29:25 [29:26]; 31:8, 20). In this regard, Deuteronomy resembles the Prophets

¹⁷⁵ See also Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.96-122.

¹⁷⁶ Brian Rosner points out that "serve" and "worship" signify more than "isolated acts of cultic worship" in ceremonial contexts. He says, "When it is said that the people 'serve' Baal or other gods or the Lord the term implies not only the exclusive nature of the relationship but the total commitment and, in effect, obedience of the worshipper. That to 'serve' a deity involved doing their bidding is made clear in passages like Matthew 6:24/Luke 16:13 where the 'service' is rendered to a master and the Pauline phrase 'bow the knee', which is a synonym for worship." See Brian S. Rosner, "The Concept of Idolatry," *Them* 24.3 (May 1999): pp.26-27.

¹⁷⁷ See also Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, p.206; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.108.

¹⁷⁸ Rosner, "The Concept of Idolatry," p.27.

who lay stress on obeying the First Command, and call Israel back to her loyalty to YHWH. Deuteronomy's demand for loyalty even requires the annihilation of those whom YHWH sees as threats to Israel's devotion: she must totally destroy these people (הַחֲרִים הַחֲרָם תַּחֲרִים, Deut. 7:2; 13:16 [13:15]; 20:16-17); she must not make any covenant with them (לֹא-תִכְרַח לָהֶם בְּרִית, Deut. 7:2) nor show any mercy to them (לֹא תַחֲנֵם, Deut. 7:2) but must demolish all their worship places and idol images (Deut. 7:2, 15; 12:2-4). The severe stance taken by Deuteronomy in this matter is primarily grounded on two concepts: YHWH's election and holiness.

3.1.1. YHWH's Election

The ideas that Abraham (and Israel) is "known by God" (כִּי יִדְעָתוּ, Gen. 18:19) and that Israel is "set apart for God" (לִי קָדָשִׁים, Lev. 20:26) are expressed in Deuteronomy by the phrase "YHWH has chosen" (בָּחַר יְהוָה, Deut. 7:6; 14:2).¹⁷⁹ The idea of election is foundational to the notion of Israel's allotment to YHWH (Deut. 7:6; 14:2) in that it is linked to the concept of "possession" (סִגְלָה, Deut. 26:18). This, according to Weinfeld, is a status that has its meaning "rooted in the ANE political sphere" in which the sovereign ruler would confer this special status on his vassal whom he singled out.¹⁸⁰ Two aspects of the idea of election in Deuteronomy make Israel a unique vassal: antiquity and love. The former may be inferred from Deuteronomy 4:32 in which the expressions "former days which were before you" (יָמִים רִאשֹׁנִים אֲשֶׁר-הָיוּ לְפָנֶיךָ) and "the day that God created man" (לְמַן-הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אָדָם) ostensibly place YHWH's acts of preservation and redemption in the context of all world history in order to highlight Israel's unique experience as the outcome of her election since creation (Deut. 4:33-34). This idea of antiquity is not restricted to the Deuteronomic prose but is also confirmed in the Song (Deut. 32:7-9),¹⁸¹ in which the expression "days of old" (יָמֹת עוֹלָם, Deut. 32:7) suggests that Israel's unique status was the result of the divine choice in ancient time. In this light, YHWH is rightfully Israel's ancient and legitimate God (אֱלֹהֵי קָדֶם,

¹⁷⁹ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, p.60. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.111.

¹⁸⁰ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, p.60. See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.155.

¹⁸¹ See also Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, p.211; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.371; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, pp.453-454.

Deut 33:27).¹⁸² Thus, the Song disparages Israel's foreign gods by referring to them as "strangers" (זָרִים, Deut. 32:16; cf. Ps. 44:21 [44:20]; 81:10 [81:9]; Isa. 43:12; Jer. 2:25; 3:13), "new ones" (חֲדָשִׁים, Deut. 32:17), "demons" (לְשָׂרִים, Deut. 32:17), "gods whom they have not known" (אֱלֹהִים לֹא יָדְעוּם, Deut. 32:17; cf. Deut. 11:28; 13:3, 7-8, 14; 28:64; 29:25), and "no-gods" (לֹא אֱלֹהִים, Deut. 32:21) in order to distinguish them from YHWH (Deut. 32:10-14).¹⁸³ The sharp contrast between the antiquity of YHWH and the 'newness' of the foreign gods is significant because, as Tigay points out, antiquity was a hallmark of authenticity in the ancient world.¹⁸⁴

The second aspect of election is YHWH's "love" (אַהֲבָה) for Israel and her patriarchs (Deut. 4:37; 7:7-8; 23:5; 33:3). Deuteronomy relates how YHWH loved Israel through his redemption of her from Egypt (Deut. 1:27, 30; 4:20, 30, 34, 37, 45, 46; 5:6, 15; 6:12, 21, 22-23; 7:8, 19; 8:14; 9:7, 12, 26, 28-29; 11:3, 4, 10; 13:5-6, 10-11; 15:15; 16:1, 3, 6; 20:1; 23:5; 24:18; 25:17; 26:8; 29:2, 16; 34:11) and provision in the wilderness (Deut. 1:6-7, 42; 2:2-7, 9-13, 17-18, 24-25; 3:2; 8:2-4, 15-16; cf. Exod. 13:21-22). Furthermore, YHWH's love and "compassion" (רַחֲמִים) for Israel are seen in his unwillingness to 'destroy and forget' her despite her disobedience (Deut. 4:31). They are also exemplified in the idea of his giving of the land promised to Abraham and his descendents (Gen. 12:1-2), which, however, remains unfulfilled in Deuteronomy due to Israel's unbelief, as typified by the expressions "her unwillingness" (לֹא אֲבִיתָם, Deut. 1:26), "rebelliousness" (תְּמָרוֹת, Deut. 1:26), and "grumbling" (תְּרַגְּנוּ, Deut. 1:27). Despite this, Deuteronomy anticipates the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of the land through which Israel might express her distinctive nationhood in terms of her social-political-religious outlook. By virtue of this, other nations might take notice of her wisdom and understanding (Deut. 4:6) and be made aware of the righteousness of the Torah (צְדִיקִים כָּל־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, Deut. 4:8), and her greatness as a Yahwistic nation (מִי גִוִי גְדוֹל, Deut. 4:7-8). When

¹⁸² See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.456. McConville points out that Israel's poetic names such as Jacob and Jeshurun are used with YHWH's poetic names such as the Rock and Eloah to reinforce the idea that YHWH is Israel's God.

¹⁸³ See esp. v.12 אֵין עָמוֹ אֵל נִכְבָּר. See Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.362; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.387.

¹⁸⁴ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.306.

Deuteronomy compares Israel with other nations, Braulik notes, her incomparability is “ultimately founded on a gift of grace.”¹⁸⁵

In view of the purpose and antiquity of YHWH’s election of Israel Deuteronomy insists on Israel’s absolute loyalty to YHWH as the only God whom she is to love as her own God.¹⁸⁶ In this sense, the assertion of the oneness of YHWH in Deuteronomy 6:4 may be understood as a polemic against the gods of other nations which Israel is to refrain from worshipping.¹⁸⁷ But besides the idea of election, the Deuteronomic insistence on Israel’s purity in Yahwistic worship is also due to her calling to holy living in the light of YHWH’s holiness.

3.1.2 YHWH’s Holiness

The holiness of YHWH has profound implications for Israel’s worship. The word “holiness” word groups (קִדְּוָה) is used more than two hundred times from Exodus to Deuteronomy. For Deuteronomy YHWH’s holiness describes his supremacy as “the God of gods and Lord of lords” (אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וַיְאָרְנֵי הָאָרְצִים) (Deut. 10:17; cf. Deut. 4:35; 32:39), as well as his integrity and character (Deut. 4:31; 5:9-10; 32:4; cf. 1 Sam. 26:23). Deuteronomy therefore calls upon Israel to avoid the snare of idolatrous, perverted polytheistic beliefs. As idolatry is “the ultimate expression of unfaithfulness”¹⁸⁸ to YHWH, Deuteronomy obligates Israel to remain loyal to YHWH by abandoning idolatry in the land (Deut. 4:3-4, 15-18, 19, 25; 5:8-9; 6:14-15; 7:4, 16, 25-26; 8:19; 9:7-8, 18-20; 11:7, 16; 11:28; 13:2, 5-6, 11, 13; 17:2-3, 5, 7; 23:16; 27:15; 28:14, 36, 64; 29:17, 18, 24-29; 30:17; 31:29; 32:16, 21) and remembering YHWH’s faithfulness towards her and her ancestors. But upholding YHWH’s holiness also requires ethical living on Israel’s part. Although Deuteronomy

¹⁸⁵ See Braulik, *The Theology of Deuteronomy*, pp.2-3, 8-9, 14. For Braulik, the idea of YHWH’s grace to Israel was also extended to assure his exiled people of the validity of their election and encourage them to live according to their elected position despite them being “bitterly humiliated” (p.14). Braulik therefore believes that the pericope in Deut. 4:1-40 was inserted into the Deuteronomic Torah (chap. 5-28) in the late exilic times to address the question of Israel’s identity in the light of her exile and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (pp.2-3, 8-9). He read it as an echo of the Solomonic prayer in 1 Kings 8 and lay stress on the concept of YHWH’s transcendence as a response to the destroyed Temple (p.8). See Gary Millar’s critique of Braulik’s argument in McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, pp.32-49.

¹⁸⁶ Braulik, *The Theology of Deuteronomy*, p.103. Braulik points out that Deuteronomy lays more stress on “the commandment to love God than on the statements about God” and the emphasis on this commandment is more frequent than in “any comparable Old Testament text.”

¹⁸⁷ Also Braulik, *The Theology of Deuteronomy*, p.103.

¹⁸⁸ Rosner, “The Concept of Idolatry,” p.21.

points out that Israel's election is a matter of divine grace (Deut 7:6; 14:2), it insists on Israel's obligation towards holy living by keeping YHWH's commandments as an expression of her obedience to him (Deut. 28:9; cf. Deut. 30:1-10).¹⁸⁹ This seeming paradox serves to point out that divine sovereignty is intertwined with human responsibility. Deuteronomy thus promotes personal and national ethics through the motifs of YHWH's grace and holiness. It holds Israel accountable for manifesting YHWH's quality of justice and righteousness in her inherited land. This is why Deuteronomy lays stress on the need for Israel to keep and teach the Torah (Deut. 5:1; 6:7; 11:8, 19) in order to deepen her memory of YHWH's deeds and words.

Integral to the idea of YHWH's holiness is the idea of his judgement. The fact that YHWH is holy means that Israel must face his "wrath" (קִצְוֹף, Deut. 9:7-8, 19, 22; 29:27) if she breaks faith with him, which explains the frequent Mosaic exhortations to dissuade her from disloyalty (Deut. 1:22-40; 4:3, 21-28; 8:19; 9:6-21, 22-24; 11:16-17, 26-28; 27:11-26; 28:15-68; 29:14-28; 30:16-20). However, these repeated exhortations may also suggest Deuteronomy's consciousness of Israel's tendency to disobedience. This awareness is further hinted at with the use of the Deuteronomic expressions such as "other gods" (אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, Deut. 5:7-8; 6:14; 8:19; 9:6-12; 12:3-4; 13:1-2, 6-7, 13; 27:15; 29:18; 30:17; 31:16, 20; 32:16-17), "idol images" (פְּסִל, Deut. 4:16, 23, 25; 5:8; 7:5; 27:15) and emotive words like "consuming fire" and "jealous" (אֵשׁ אֹכְלָה and קִנְיָא; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:21). The severity of infringing YHWH's holiness and incurring his judgement is clearly expressed when even Moses himself was denied entry into the land but died outside of it precisely because he failed to uphold YHWH's holiness in some unspecified way (Deut. 32:48-52; cf. Deut. 3:23-25; 34:4-5; Num. 20:12).¹⁹⁰ Olson points out that Moses' death

¹⁸⁹ See the discussion of the nature of law and grace in Deuteronomy in Paul A. Barker, *The Triumph of Grace in Deuteronomy* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), pp.175-181. Barker points out that law and obedience could be understood as "the response to grace." He further says, "Israel's obedience to the law depends on YHWH's grace and is not merely a response to it. YHWH's grace ... enables obedience to the law."

¹⁹⁰ Whether Moses was suffering with and for the people or as a result of his own fault, this sad episode highlights the uncompromising nature of YHWH's judgement. See Wright, *Deuteronomy*, pp.41-42. Wright points out that Moses' death outside the land would witness to the reality of judgement in the same way as Joshua's victorious entry into the land would witness to the reality of forgiving, covenant grace.

“has in some way opened up the possibility for the hope and life to the rest of Israel.”¹⁹¹ Here we can see a glimpse of divine grace in action.

Hence, Israel must worship YHWH alone. By focusing Israel on YHWH’s election and holiness, Deuteronomy’s demand for the purity of Yahwistic worship forms an essential component of Israel’s distinctiveness. To further curb the menace of foreign worship, Deuteronomy speaks of centralising Yahwistic worship at a place which YHWH chooses (Deut. 12:2-7), as discussed earlier.¹⁹² This emphasis of YHWH’s choice of the worship place speaks of his sovereign freedom to choose, in this case, Israel to be a nation distinct in worship and system of government (Deut. 7:6-16; 12-26). Her worship declares her loyalty to YHWH’s supremacy, conveys her gratitude to his love and faithfulness, and expresses her obedience to his commands as terms of their covenantal relationship dictated in the Torah. Deuteronomy is therefore able to demand that Israel “keeps YHWH’s commands” (תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה) (Deut. 6:17) and “does what is right and good” (עָשִׂיתָ הַיָּשָׁר וְהַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה) (Deut. 6:18; cf. 12:28). In this way, the Torah becomes the essential means of governing the national life of Israel.¹⁹³

3.2 *Centrality of Torah*

To strengthen Israel’s loyalty to YHWH, Deuteronomy insists on the need to obey the Torah, which is the most important expression of YHWH’s covenantal terms (Deut. 4:2, 13, 40; 5:10, 29, 31; 6:2, 17; 7:9; 8:1, 2, 6, 11; 10:4, 13; 11:1, 13, 27, 28; 13:4, 18; 26:13, 17, 18; 27:1, 10; 28:1, 9, 13, 15, 45; 30:8, 10, 16; 31:5).¹⁹⁴ Within the Torah is a political and social order that is decisively different from those of the ancient Near East. According to Dean McBride, the teachings of the Torah are not merely understood as Mosaic admonition and advice but are set forth as “sanctioned political policies, to be ‘diligently observed’ by Israelite king and common citizen alike.”¹⁹⁵ In view of this, Deuteronomy is described as a polity for an actual people of a particular time and context. It is neither idealistic nor theoretical but constitutes a

¹⁹¹ Olson, *Death of Moses*, pp.150, 165-166.

¹⁹² See discussion of centralisation of worship in pp.140-150 above.

¹⁹³ See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.43. McConville points out, “The aim of the Torah is to create a righteous community.”

¹⁹⁴ See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.43.

¹⁹⁵ S. Dean McBride, Jr., “Polity of the Covenant People: the Book of Deuteronomy,” in *Int* 41 (1987): p.233.

social order for Israel to implement in order to secure its existence as the people of YHWH, with its underlying political vision that concerns the nature of Israel and how she is to interact with her world.¹⁹⁶ Distinctively, the judicial system within the Torah puts severe limitations on the king's power, and focuses the nation on the supremacy of YHWH's rule under which judicial authority is placed in the hands of the whole people of God (Deut. 16:18-18:5).¹⁹⁷ It reforms the social and economic practice by insisting on the unity and brotherhood of all Israelites expressed in concrete terms in the releasing of debts and slaves, and restoring the disadvantaged into the communal life (Deut. 15:1-18).¹⁹⁸ Even the Israelite king must be "one of your brothers" chosen by YHWH and be made subject to the Torah (Deut. 17:15-17).¹⁹⁹ The importance of the Torah, hence, cannot be overemphasised because it is the fundamental component in regulating Israel's political and religious life, and the means by which YHWH makes known his intention to Israel.²⁰⁰ In view of this, how does Deuteronomy show its emphasis on the Torah?

The Torah (תּוֹרָה) is mentioned twenty-two times in Deuteronomy,²⁰¹ besides thirty-seven references to "the word(s)" (הַדְבָר),²⁰² ten to "the commandment(s)" (מִצְוֹת),²⁰³ and twenty-eight to "the statutes and judgements" (חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים).²⁰⁴ As Israel's obedience to the Torah is of the utmost importance, Deuteronomy uses different learning strategies to ensure that Israel would not forget it,²⁰⁵ for example, she is to "listen/hear" (שָׁמַע, Deut. 4:1; 5:1; 6:4; 9:1; 11:13; 17:12), "keep and do" (שָׁמַר and עָשָׂה, Deut. 4:6; 5:1, 32; 7:12; 11:8, 32; 13:1 [12:32], 4; 24:8;

¹⁹⁶ McBride, "Polity," p.233.

¹⁹⁷ McBride, "Polity," p.240. See also Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* [trans. Allan Mahnke] (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1996), pp.234-235; Robert Wilson, "Deuteronomy, Ethnicity, and Reform: Reflections on the Social Setting of the Book of Deuteronomy," in John Strong and Steven Tuell (eds.), *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), p.121.

¹⁹⁸ Crüsemann, *The Torah*, pp.224-234; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp.144-150; McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, pp.92-93; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.190-192.

¹⁹⁹ McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, pp.92-93. Also Crüsemann, *The Torah*, p.235.

²⁰⁰ Crüsemann points out that the Torah is the centre by which YHWH connects with Israel, a gift with which their relationship can be established and verified. See Crüsemann, *The Torah*, p.204.

²⁰¹ Deut. 1:5; 4:8, 44; 17:11, 18, 19; 27:3, 8, 26; 28:58, 61; 29:20, 28; 30:10; 31:9, 11, 12, 24, 26; 32:46.

²⁰² Deut. 4:2, 10, 12-13; 36; 5:22; 6:6; 9:10; 10:2, 4; 11:18; 12:28; 13:1 (12:32); 15:15; 17:11, 19; 18:18, 19, 21; 27:3, 8, 26; 28:14, 58; 29:1, 9, 19, 29; 30:14; 31:1, 12, 24, 28, 30; 32:1, 44, 45, 46.

²⁰³ Deut. 4:2; 6:17; 8:6; 10:13; 11:27, 28; 17:20; 28:9, 13; 30:11.

²⁰⁴ Deut. 4:1, 5, 8, 14, 40, 45; 5:1, 31; 6:1, 2, 17, 20, 24; 7:11; 8:11; 10:13; 11:1, 3; 12:1; 16:12; 17:19; 26:16, 17; 27:10; 28:15, 45; 30:10, 16.

²⁰⁵ See MacDonald, 'Monotheism', pp.128-133.

29:8), “learn/teach” (לָמַד, Deut. 4:1, 10; 5:1; 6:1, 7; 11:19; 31:19),²⁰⁶ “bind” (קָשַׁר, Deut. 6:8; 11:8) and “write” (כָּתַב, Deut. 6:9; 11:20) it. Through all these, the teaching of the Torah was to be deeply ingrained in the life of the Israelite community. Furthermore, the structure of Deuteronomy is also suggestive of such emphasis. For example, the Torah assumes central place at the outset when Moses is said to “expound this law” (מִשָּׁה בְּאֵר אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, Deut. 1:5). Subsequently, its importance is stressed throughout through words such as “now” (עַתָּה), “hear/listen” (שָׁמַע), and “keep” (שָׁמַר).²⁰⁷ Deuteronomy also repeats the Decalogue to ensure that Israel keeps faith with YHWH (Deut. 4:44-5:33)²⁰⁸ and follows it with extended exhortation (Deut. 6-11). At the heart of this exhortation is the *Shema* (שָׁמַע, Deut. 6:4-9) which, significantly, shows that Deuteronomy’s emphasis on the Torah does not mean a legalistic adherence to it, but that the essence of obedience to it lies in loving YHWH with the whole being (Deut. 6:5; cf. 4:29; 10:12-19; 26:16; 30:2, 6, 10),²⁰⁹ which involves the intellectual, volitional, and emotional faculties (Deut. 6:5; cf. 4:29; 10:12-13; 26:16; 30:2, 6, 10).²¹⁰ The Deuteronomic concept of loving YHWH principally speaks of rendering the loyalty and service a vassal owes to the suzerain.²¹¹ It is only by remaining loyal to YHWH that Israel can ensure its greatness and survival as a distinctive nation (Deut. 6:12-19, 24). Within the extended exhortation in Deuteronomy 6-11, further motivations are provided for loving and obeying YHWH (Deut. 6:4, 21-23; 7:9, 21; 8:1-10; 9:1-10:11, 14, 17-18,

²⁰⁶ לָמַד is used in one occasion to mean “to teach” (Deut. 24:8).

²⁰⁷ Deut. 1:1; 4:1, 44-45; 5:1; 6:1; 8:1; 11:1, 32; 12:1; 28:1, 69 (29:1); 30:1, 10-11; 31:1, 30.

²⁰⁸ But see Crüsemann, *The Torah*, p.202. He sees Deuteronomy not as an amplification of the Book of the Covenant but a replacement of it.

²⁰⁹ The use of לֵבָב (“inner man/mind/heart/will”) can be a reference to both heart and mind in Deuteronomy.

²¹⁰ See also Jacqueline E. Lapsle, “Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy,” in *CBQ* 65 (2003): pp.350-369. Contending with William Moran’s idea of love in Deuteronomy which she feels is devoid of affective quality, Lapsle asks, “Is it not possible that love can mean loyalty and obedience to the law at the same time that it bears an affective connotation, asking and even commanding people to *feel* a particular way about God?”

²¹¹ See William L. Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy,” *CBQ* 25 (1963): pp.77-87; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.91; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, pp.338, 351-352. Weinfeld points out that the meaning of love here is “loyalty and obedience,” following from Deut. 6:6. Furthermore, he also argues that the way love is described here “corresponds to the way loyalty is depicted in the vassal treaties.” Also Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.77. Tigay points out that the emphasis is on the word “all.” Reason being, “since YHWH alone is Israel’s God, she must love and serve him with undivided devotion.” With respect to the idea of YHWH alone and its relation to the *Shema*, see also J. Gerald Janzen, “On the Most Important Word in the Shema (Deuteronomy VI 4-5),” in *VT* XXXVII, 3 (1987): pp.280-300.

20-21). These reasons are grounded primarily in the ideas of YHWH's election and holiness. Deuteronomy 11 crystallises the foregoing exhortation by picking up the essential points: Love YHWH (וְאַהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, v.1), consider his mighty acts (וַיִּדְעֶתֶם, vv.2-7), and obey him to ensure longevity in the land (וְלִמְעַן תִּאָּרְיֶכֶם, v.9). Then Deuteronomy moves on to expound the Ten Commandments at length in its laws (Deut. 12:1-26:15).²¹² Worshipping YHWH means Israel must pay attention to the concerns of daily living. The laws not only concern with acts of worship and the danger of apostasy, but also administrative roles of king, priests and Levites, and ethical behaviour towards foreigners, the needy, the disadvantaged, servants, and even domestic animals.

In the foregoing section, we have seen how Deuteronomy shows deep concern for a quality of character that befits Israel's calling as the people of YHWH. Its insistence on Yahwistic worship and the need to reinforce the solidarity of the whole people sets Israel on the path to fulfilling her mission to the world, a mission which is only effective if she emulates YHWH's own qualities of justice and righteousness as expressed in the Torah. Deuteronomy's emphasis on the uniqueness of YHWH and Israel also finds resonance in the Song. But the symbiotic relationship between the Song and Deuteronomy is expressed in an interesting way in that while they are connected to each other thematically, they have definite differences from each other as well. The following section, therefore, examines their thematic similarities and differences to show the way in which their relationship helps forge a more accurate reading of Deuteronomy as a whole.

²¹² Georg Braulik, "Die Abfolge der Gesetze in Deuteronomium 12-26 und der Dekalog," in Norbert Lohfink (ed.) *Das Deuteronomium* (Leuven: University Press, 1985), pp.252-272 [ET Georg Braulik, "The Sequence of the Laws in Deuteronomy 12-26," in Duane L. Christensen (ed.) *A Song of Power and the Power of the Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), pp.313-315.

4. The Song and Deuteronomy

4.1 *The Song's Thematic Affinities with Deuteronomy*

4.1.1 *Israel as YHWH's inheritance*

Israel is spoken of as YHWH's allotted inheritance in the Song (נַחֲלָה, vv.8-9). These are the only verses in Deuteronomy that relate the special relationship between YHWH and Israel to the divine administration in the primeval past.²¹³ These verses trace the election of Israel back to "the divine allocation of nations" in the ancient times before the beginning of human history.²¹⁴ In this regard, they speak of YHWH's multinational control of history,²¹⁵ a theme which is later picked up in verses 28-33. The word "inheritance" (נַחֲלָה) is also used repeatedly in Deuteronomy. Of a total of twelve occurrences of נַחֲלָה, three refer to Israel as YHWH's inheritance (Deut. 4:20; 9:26, 29), whereas the remainder refer to the land which Israel inherited (Deut. 4:21, 38; 15:4; 19:10; 20:16; 21:23; 24:4; 25:19; and 26:1).²¹⁶ Despite the Song's only mention of "inheritance" as designation for Israel (vv.8-9), its thematic link with Deuteronomy in terms of this idea is clear.

4.1.2 *Israel as YHWH's children / YHWH as 'father'*

In the Song Israel is called YHWH's "children/sons and daughters" and YHWH her "father" (vv. 5-6, 19, 20). This special relationship is also expressed through the maternal imagery of YHWH begetting Israel (יִלְדָהּ, v.18). The parental imagery coheres with the imagery of YHWH's providential care in the wilderness (cf. vv.10-12), which not only suggests his close proximity to Israel but also underscores the gravity of her rebellion. The father-son theme is amplified at the beginning of Deuteronomy. The idea of "sonship" in Deuteronomy 1:31 counters Israel's accusation of YHWH in Deuteronomy 1:27, and at the same time aims to inspire trust and obedience by recalling how YHWH cares for Israel in the way a father cares for his son (כִּי־אֵשֶׁר יִשְׂאֵל־אִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ).²¹⁷ In Deuteronomy 8:5, the father-son theme is

²¹³ See more discussion of Deut. 32:8-9 in Chapter Two, pp.69-74 above.

²¹⁴ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.299; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.371; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.197.

²¹⁵ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.300.

²¹⁶ See Barker, *The Triumph of Grace*, pp.45-46. Barker points out that normally in Deuteronomy every occurrence of נַחֲלָה does not refer to other nations but to Israel, except for Deut. 32:8.

²¹⁷ See further discussion in Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.29.

again picked up to focus the audience on the idea of parental discipline. It argues how the idea of the YHWH-Israel relationship is not “an adversarial relationship” but one that is shared between “a caring parent and a grateful child.”²¹⁸ The idea of Israel’s sonship also appears in Deuteronomy 14:1a in which it is used in conjunction with the theme of holiness and election, thus highlighting YHWH’s covenantal relationship with Israel.²¹⁹

4.1.3 *Guidance in the wilderness*

Both Deuteronomy and the Song contain memories of Israel’s experience with YHWH in the wilderness. The wilderness tradition in Deuteronomy speaks of how YHWH granted Israel victories over the enemies and met her needs in the desert (Deut. 1-3), as well as relented from destroying her (Deut. 9). The Song’s series of wilderness images lays stress on YHWH’s grace and providence towards Israel (vv.10-12). But in the Song’s broader context, its wilderness depiction underscores Israel’s infidelity by describing how after it benefited from YHWH’s leading it repaid him with scorn and provocation (cf. Deut. 32:15-18). In this sense, the Song brings into focus Israel’s ‘heartlessness’ which was probably a result of her ingratitude and pride, a condition well depicted in Deuteronomy 8. But then we observe that the wilderness account in Deuteronomy 8 is different from that of Deuteronomy 1-3 and 9 in that Deuteronomy 8 speaks of Israel’s wilderness experience as a test in order to “know what was in her heart” (לָדַעַת אֶת־אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבָּבָךְ, Deut. 8:2).²²⁰ In fact, the mentions of YHWH’s “commandment” (מִצְוֹתַיִו, Deut. 8:2), “mouth of YHWH” (פִּי־יְהוָה, Deut. 8:3), and “the manna” (הַמָּן, Deut. 8:3) in Deuteronomy 8 seem to recall Israel’s grumbling and murmurings (cf. Exod. 16:3-4; Num. 11:4-6; 21:5).²²¹ Hence Paul Barker rightly points out, “the key illustration as a test is one in which Israel clearly failed.”²²² Significantly, as Barker also notes, the word “know” (יָדַעַ, Deut. 8:2, 3, 5, 16) becomes a particularly important idea here in that Israel’s knowledge of YHWH must involve “a deep and correct acknowledgement of and

²¹⁸ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, p.106.

²¹⁹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.247.

²²⁰ Barker, *The Triumph of Grace*, p.64.

²²¹ Cf. Exod. 16:3-4; Num. 11:4-6; 21:5.

²²² Barker, *The Triumph of Grace*, p.66. See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, pp.169-170.

response to YHWH.”²²³ Both the Song and Deuteronomy 8 affirm Israel’s memory of YHWH’s guidance in the desert, but the Song goes further to expose the corruption of Israel’s heart.

4.1.4 *Entry into fertile land*

The idea that the land is YHWH’s gift to Israel, first mooted in the calling of Abraham through which his descendents would become a great nation (Gen. 12:1-2), becomes a constant focus in the Pentateuch.²²⁴ In Deuteronomy the gift of land is extended not only to Israel but also to other nations such as Edom (Deut. 2:5), Moab (Deut. 2:9), and Ammon (Deut. 2:19). The Deuteronomic idea that YHWH gives land to non-Israelites may be largely in conformity with the Song’s idea that YHWH could have also given land to the other nations as he parcels out these nations as inheritance to the divine beings (vv.8-9).²²⁵ However, it is noteworthy that while one may infer from the Song that lands were given as inheritance to these nations along with the division of humankind, it remains unclear if the same inference could be made about Israel, as there seems to be an indication otherwise, which we will discuss further in section 4.2.2.²²⁶ At this juncture, it is clear that Deuteronomy speaks of the land as Israel’s inheritance and getting into it requires destroying its enemies (Deut. 3:6; 7:2; 13:16, 18; 20:17). With the providence of the land also comes the abundance of resources in it (Deut. 6:3; 7:13; 8:7-10; 11:9; 26:9; 27:3). These resources serve to remind Israel of YHWH’s goodness (Deut. 8:11-20) so that she might not become “proud” and “forget” him (וְרַם לְבַבְךָ וְשָׁכַחְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה, Deut. 8:14). The Song also speaks of Israel’s entry into the land and its fertility (Deut. 32:13-14) but describes how she became ungrateful and forsook YHWH eventually (Deut. 32:15).

4.1.5 *Israel’s rebellion and foreign worship*

The Song’s main contention against Israel has been her disloyalty to YHWH, as expressed in her foreign worship (Deut. 32:15-18). The Song describes this as “sacrificing to demons,” (זָבַחוּ לְשֵׁדִים, Deut. 32:17) with rituals referred to as

²²³ Barker, *The Triumph of Grace*, p.69.

²²⁴ See Gen. 13:15, 17; 15:7; Exod. 6:3-4; 33:1; Lev. 18:3; 23:10; 25:2; Num. 15:2; 34:12-1; Deut. 4:14, 22, 25; 5:31, 33; 6:1, 3; 8:7-9; 11:9-12; 12:1, 10; 15:4; 19:14; 25:19; 26:9, 15; 27:3; 28:8; 30:16.

²²⁵ If the Qumran reading is adopted. See Chapter Two, pp.69-74 above.

²²⁶ See pp.167-169 below.

“abominations” (תועבה, Deut. 32:16), which provoked YHWH to anger (יכעיסהו, Deut. 32:16, 21). In Deuteronomy, apart from the expressions noted above,²²⁷ other expressions are also used to hint at Israel’s predisposition towards rebellion such as you were “unwilling and rebelled” (לא אביחם ותמררו, Deut. 1:26; cf. Deut. 1:43; 9:23), “murmured” (ותרגנו, Deut. 1:27), “did not believe” (אינכם מאמינים, Deut. 1:32), “become corrupt and make an idol” (והשחתם ועשייתם פסל, Deut. 4:25; Deut. 31:29), “there you will serve gods, the work of man’s hands” (ועבדתם שם אלהים, Deut. 4:28; cf. Deut. 4:19; 8:19; 9:16; 11:16; 30:17), “stiff-necked people” (עם קשה-ערה, Deut. 9:6; Deut. 9:13; 10:16; 31:27), “remember how you provoked YHWH” (זכר את אשר הקצפת את יהוה, Deut. 9:7), “your heart turns away” (יפתה לבבכם, Deut. 11:16; Deut. 29:18; 30:17),²²⁸ “the evil of your deeds” (רע מעלליך, Deut. 28:20), “play harlot with strange gods” (וזנה אחרי אלהי, Deut. 31:16), and “forsake me and break my covenant” (ועזבני והפר את בריתי, Deut. 31:16; cf. Deut. 31:20). Both the Song and Deuteronomy, therefore, stand firmly against Israel’s rebellion and apostasy.

4.1.6 YHWH’s jealous anger / YHWH as ‘warrior’

As YHWH’s jealous anger is provoked by Israel’s foreign worship (Deut. 32:16), the Song speaks of YHWH’s passive reactions against her, such as withholding his favour or protection from her, as in the expression “I will hide my face from them” (אסתירה פני מהם, Deut. 32:20) in order to see “what their end shall be” (אראה מה אחריהם, Deut. 32:20). In verse 21, YHWH’s passive reaction turns active and provokes Israel to jealousy by raising up a “no-people” (לא-עם, Deut. 32:21) against her. Nelson rightly points out that YHWH’s threat to destroy Israel is described “in the language of the Divine Warrior.”²²⁹ The wrath of the divine warrior is expressed by the phrase “a fire is kindled” (אש קדחה, Deut. 32:22) which burns to the “deepest level of the cosmos”²³⁰ (עד-שאול תחתית, Deut. 32:22). Divine arrows

²²⁷ See p.153 above.

²²⁸ Also the use of סור (“turn aside”) in Deut. 13:5; 31:29.

²²⁹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374.

²³⁰ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.374.

are used against Israel (חֲצִי אֶכְלֶה־בָּם, Deut. 32:23): the arrows of “hunger” (רָעָב, Deut. 32:24), “pestilence” (רָשָׁף, Deut. 32:24), “destruction” (קָטָב, Deut. 32:24), “teeth of beasts” (שֵׁן־בְּהֵמוֹת, Deut. 32:24), and “poison of serpents” (חֲמַת זֹחֲלֵי עֶפְרָר, Deut. 32:24). YHWH as the divine warrior not only unleashes his wrath against Israel’s covenantal violation, at the end he also vindicates Israel by deploying his arrow and sword against her enemy (Deut. 32:41-42). In Deuteronomy, the idea of divine jealousy is likewise expressed when YHWH is referred to as a “jealous God” (אֵל קַנָּא, Deut. 4:24; cf. Deut. 5:9; 6:15; 29:20), which speaks of his intolerance of Israel’s foreign worship.²³¹ Israel’s apostasy violates YHWH’s covenantal stipulations and leads to the implementation of the covenantal curses in Deuteronomy 28 that threatens to eradicate Israel from the land and subject her to suffering. Like the Song, however, not only does Deuteronomy relate YHWH waging war against Israel, it also speaks of him vindicating Israel, returning her enemies with covenantal curses (Deut. 30:7; 32:34-42).²³²

4.1.7 YHWH’s presence

As discussed earlier in this chapter, many scholars have understood Deuteronomy as having a demythologised programme which rejects corporeal and anthropomorphic language to emphasise YHWH’s transcendence over his immanence by means of the Name theology (Deut. 12:5). Others, however, have called this into question²³³ and their views gains support from the Song’s depiction of YHWH and his presence. A look at the Song shows that it does describe YHWH anthropomorphically; giving expression to both his transcendence and immanence, and also that there is no concept of the Name theology (Deut. 32:10-14, 19, 20, 22, 27, 36, 39, 40-42). In fact, both the anthropomorphic and immanent notions of YHWH’s are found throughout. For example, the four-fold expression “he found, surrounded, considered, guarded” (יִצְרְנֶהוּ, יְבוֹנְנֶהוּ, יִסְבְּבֶנְהוּ, יִמְצְאֶהוּ, v.10) relate well with the ideas of YHWH’s close proximity with Israel, protecting and training her (cf. v.11).

²³¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.109.

²³² See a brief but helpful discussion on YHWH as the divine warrior in Olson, *Death of Moses*, pp.141-143. However, Olson does not link the Song’s depiction of the divine warrior with that of Deuteronomy.

²³³ See pp.130-137 above.

The paternal imagery is explicit in expressions such as “not his children” (לֹא בָנָיו, v.5), “is he not your father?” (הֲלוֹא־הוּא אָבִיךָ, v.6), “the rock who begot you” (צוּר יִלְדֶךָ, v.18), “God who gave you birth” (אֱלֹהֵי לִדְּךָ, v.18), and “the provocation of his sons and daughters” (מִכַּעַס בָּנָיו וּבָנֹתָיו, v.19). These relational expressions do not give the impression of YHWH’s abstract presence. Moreover, the Song’s readiness for corporeal and anthropomorphic imagery is also evident in expressions such as “the pupil of his eye” (אִישׁוֹן עֵינָיו, v.10), “he suckled him” (יִנְקָהוּ, v.13), “I will hide my face from them” (אֶסְתִּירָה פָּנַי מֵהֶם, Deut. v.20), “They made me jealous” (הֵם קִנְאוּנִי, v. 21), “I fear” (אֶגֹּר, v.27), the three occurrences of “my hand” (יָדִי, vv.39-41), and the idea of YHWH deliberating and wrestling over Israel and her enemy (vv.28-33). Hence the Song’s descriptions of YHWH and his presence suggest that not only has corporeality not been rejected, the mode of divine presence is also not demythologised. The understanding of an abstract and demythologised Deuteronomy immediately runs into difficulty when the Song is taken to be an integral part of Deuteronomy. The Song confirms the minority critical view that Deuteronomy neither rejects corporeal depictions of YHWH nor corrects the mode of his presence. The Song’s anthropomorphic language of YHWH also provides the evidence in this regard. If we are to read Deuteronomy in the light of the Song, this will suggest a re-evaluation of the theme of divine presence, in line with the recent tendency to query the established view regarding transcendence and demythologisation.

4.1.8 *YHWH’s defence of his integrity and reputation*

The critical turning point of the Song is the soliloquy in verses 26-27, in which we are given a glimpse of divine deliberation over Israel’s destiny. According to these verses, the reason why Israel was not subject to total destruction is YHWH’s own integrity and reputation.²³⁴ He will not allow himself to be undermined and ridiculed, much less by the arrogant enemy.²³⁵ Deuteronomy also echoes the idea of YHWH defending his honour, for example, in Moses’ warning against Israel’s self-sufficiency (Deut. 8:17). In this pericope Israel is exhorted to acknowledge that her

²³⁴ See also Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, p.280.

²³⁵ See also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.375.

ability to create wealth does not originate from herself but from YHWH to whom she must give due recognition. By honouring YHWH Israel might remain humble and obedient, thus escaping the divine wrath (cf. Deut. 8:19-20). The idea that YHWH defends his honour is further expressed in Moses' plea for Israel when he appeals to YHWH's integrity and reputation as reasons for pardoning Israel (Deut. 9:28-29; cf. Ezek. 20:22).²³⁶ However, unlike in Deuteronomy YHWH's change of attitude in the Song does not seem to be the result of any Mosaic intervention, although Sonnet thinks that YHWH "seems to have interiorized the Mosaic plea."²³⁷ This however is not evident from the Song. Nevertheless, it is clear that both the Song and Deuteronomy express YHWH's concern for his honour before the watching world. Defending his integrity and reputation is critically important in view of his sovereignty over international affairs of the world, as the next theme shows.

4.1.9 *YHWH's control of history*

The Song has in view YHWH's sovereign control over history (vv.28-33). Verse 30, in particular, suggests that the reason for Israel's military defeat was because YHWH had "sold them" (מִכָּרָם) and "delivered them up" (הִסְגִּירָם). The enemy's victory was "YHWH's doing"²³⁸ and the enemy seemed to have recognised this fact (v.31). The idea that YHWH controls the rise and fall of political states, in this case, Israel and the unknown nation, is evident (cf. v.21). Deuteronomy also expresses YHWH's sovereignty over nations, for example, in the giving of land to the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, and the specific instruction to Israel to keep peace with them (Deut. 2:1-23).²³⁹ Furthermore, when entering the promised land, Israel is also instructed to "cast out many nations" (נִשְׁלֵן גּוֹיִם רַבִּים) which pose threat to her Yahwistic devotion, namely, the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (Deut. 7:1-5). That YHWH dictates the destiny of the nations, including Israel, is succinctly pointed out in Deuteronomy 28:7 and 25. The former speaks of how YHWH would bless Israel with victory over her enemies when she keeps faith with him whereas the latter relates how she would be defeated

²³⁶ See also Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, p.280; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.186.

²³⁷ Compare Deut. 9:28 and 32:26-27. See Sonnet, *The Book within the Book*, p.177.

²³⁸ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.302.

²³⁹ With the exception of Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan, both of whom YHWH delivered to Israel (Deut. 2:24-34; 3:1-7).

by her enemies, as part of the covenantal curses when she disobeys him. Interestingly, this indicates Israel's significant role in YHWH's universal dealing with the political affairs of the world - how Israel lives up to her covenantal obligations would have profound implications for the political stability of the surrounding nations, including hers. If Israel suffers disaster it would mean that YHWH has brought it upon her, not because he is too weak to protect her but because she has transgressed against him.

4.1.10 *Salvation after judgement*

After the dreadful imagery of divine judgement, the Song focuses on YHWH's vindictory acts through the image of the divine warrior (vv.35-43). The Song speaks of YHWH judging Israel favourably (יָדִין, v.36) and showing her "compassion" (יִתְּנָחֵם, v.36).²⁴⁰ YHWH exercises vengeance against those who have afflicted Israel, as well as those who "hate him" (לְמִשְׂנְאָיו, v.41; cf. Isa. 10:5-19, 24-27; Jer. 25:12-14). His restoration of Israel also encompasses the cleansing of her land polluted by her foreign worship and bloodshed through warfare (v.43). In all these, the Song upholds the idea of divine enabling in that YHWH will vindicate Israel against her enemy when she no longer relies on her strength to save herself (אֶזְלֶחָ יָדָי, v.36). In a similar vein, Deuteronomy is concerned with YHWH's promise of restoration and forgiveness. It speaks of Israel returning to YHWH and obeying his voice (Deut. 30:2),²⁴¹ and points out that this is in fact a result of YHWH's transforming her heart so that she would love him wholeheartedly (Deut. 30:6). It also anticipates Israel returning to the land from captivity (Deut. 30:3-5). In this sense, we can say that both Deuteronomy and the Song speak eloquently of YHWH's grace and faithfulness to Israel.

²⁴⁰ See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.312.

²⁴¹ See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.54. Tigay distinguishes the idea of "return" in the Torah from the Prophets. In the former, "return" is mentioned only as something after punishment has taken place whereas in the latter, it is to avert punishment.

4.2 *The Song's Ostensible Differences from Deuteronomy*

4.2.1 *Exodus from Egypt*

One of the significant themes which is frequently mentioned in Deuteronomy but is absent from the Song is the idea of Israel's exodus from Egypt.²⁴² In Deuteronomy YHWH proves his superiority (Deut. 4:34) and his faithfulness (Deut. 7:7-8) through Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and this remains an important reason why Israel must pledge loyalty to YHWH. Israel's exodus from Egypt is portrayed in Deuteronomy as a supernatural event, rescuing a group of "disorganised and military inexperienced" slaves from one of the mightiest powers on earth in those days.²⁴³ But despite its importance, the Song has no mention of it.²⁴⁴ Scholars have tried to explain this fact. For example, von Rad thinks that the Song, unlike Deuteronomy, describes Israel's origin with "an old tradition."²⁴⁵ He claims that this old "tradition of the finding" (Deut. 32:10-14) was "half-forgotten" and had been "pushed aside and overlaid" by other traditions of election such as the exodus and patriarchal traditions.²⁴⁶ Craigie, on the other hand, argues that the Song's wilderness tradition was actually a reference to Israel's sojourn in Egypt.²⁴⁷ He points out that the first two lines of verse 10 refer to a "wilderness" and "a land of testing" for Israel, and suggests that they were meant to contrast Egypt with the richness of the promised land which YHWH was about to give Israel.²⁴⁸ Without having to polarise the views, Patrick Miller argues that, in the view of the eagle imagery in the Song and Exodus 19:4, verses 10-11 can be understood as "an allusion" to Israel's wandering in the wilderness and a reference to the way in which YHWH took care of her in Egypt.²⁴⁹ Other scholars also think that the Song's silence about the exodus does not mean that it was unaware of it. Rather, the exodus was actually implied in the Song, and the wilderness tradition had been viewed as Israel's post-exodus experience.²⁵⁰ Tigay, for example, argues that the Song's metaphor of "finding" Israel is also used in Hosea

²⁴² Deut. 1:27, 30; 4:20, 34, 37, 45, 46; 5:6, 15; 6:12, 21, 22; 7:8, 15, 18; 8:14; 9:7, 12, 26; 10: 19, 22; 11:3, 4, 10; 13:6, 11, 15; 16:1, 3, 6, 12; 17:16; 20:1; 23:5; 24:9, 18, 22; 25:17; 26:5, 8; 28:27, 60, 68; 29:1, 15, 24; 34:11.

²⁴³ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (USA: Broadman & Holman, 1994), p.131.

²⁴⁴ Also Giles and Doan, *Twice Used Song*, p.110.

²⁴⁵ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.197.

²⁴⁶ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.197.

²⁴⁷ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.380.

²⁴⁸ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, p.380.

²⁴⁹ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, p.228.

²⁵⁰ E.g. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, p.299; Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, p.414; MacDonald, 'Monotheism', p.146; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.304; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455.

9:10, where it is like the delight of discovering grapes in the desert.²⁵¹ Furthermore the metaphor also conveys the idea of providence and sustenance in Ezekiel 16:2-6. He believes that the prophets' use of the "finding" metaphor was not because they did not know the patriarchal and exodus traditions but rather that they "chose to ignore it" in order to lay stress on YHWH's delight in and providence for Israel.²⁵² For Tigay, the Song uses this metaphor in the same way.²⁵³ Arguing slightly differently, Brueggemann points out that the evidence of YHWH's caring fidelity in the Song actually "follows the narrative recital of 26:5-9" which "focused upon love in the wilderness and well-being in the land."²⁵⁴

It remains unclear why the Song is apparently silent about Israel's exodus from Egypt which Deuteronomy heavily emphasises. It is possible that the Song, like Hosea, may have bypassed the idea of exodus and used the "finding" metaphor for specific emphases. Von Rad's redaction-critical hypothesis that the Song retains the older tradition of Israel's origin, albeit conjectural, is not unreasonable as it seems to go well with the idea that the Song is an independent unit,²⁵⁵ which the redactor saw fit to incorporate into Deuteronomy despite the differences in traditions because he wanted to preserve the Song's older, independent tradition for the readers. Craigie's view of the Song's wilderness tradition as a reference to Egypt is seemingly eisegetical because how the words "wilderness" (מִדְבָּר) and "Egypt" (מִצְרַיִם) are used to relate to each other in the Old Testament remains a subject of debate. There are four occurrences in which "wilderness" appears together with "Egypt" in the same verse. Amongst these, three of them clearly distinguish "wilderness" from "Egypt" (Jer. 2:6; Ezek. 20:10; Am. 2:10) but only one seems to suggest their close association:

As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord God. (Jer. 20:36)

Yet the context shows that "wilderness" and "Egypt" are understood as two distinct geographical locations (cf. Ezek. 20:1-26, esp. vv.10, 13, 15, 18, 23) with

²⁵¹ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 304.

²⁵² Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 304.

²⁵³ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 304. See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.356.

²⁵⁴ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, p.279.

²⁵⁵ See Chapter One, p.11 ff. above.

“wilderness” being the place in which YHWH threatened to annihilate Israel (Ezek. 20:13-14, 17). So, the question still remains: do the Song and Deuteronomy really differ in opinion regarding Israel’s origin and how do we make sense of this difference? There is no simple answer, as the scholarly views above indicate. While it is believed that the Song may have related a different tradition of Israel’s origin from Deuteronomy, it is also important to note that despite their differences the Song and Deuteronomy were redacted to co-exist in their final form. Their co-existence has no doubt puzzled some. LXX rendering of “he found him” (וַיִּמְצֵאֵהוּ) as “he supplies him” (αὐτάρκησεν αὐτὸν) seems to suggest the possibility of conflicting traditions here and may be understood as LXX translators’ attempt to resolve the difficulty the texts imposed.

It seems then, that the Song’s perspective on Israel’s origin differs from that of Deuteronomy. But once again we want to focus on a reading of the Song and Deuteronomy together. In this we follow, presumably, a redactor who re-interpreted the Song into Deuteronomy, utilising the Song’s perspective in such a way to achieve his compositional goal. Verses 8-14 show that the wilderness event is closely connected to the idea of YHWH’s primeval election of Israel. While verses 8-9 focus on the divine choice of Israel, and speak of how her national identity as a Yahwistic nation was determined in time past, verses 10-14 relate the outcome of that choice and express Israel’s identity by focusing directly on her existence in the wilderness. While the “finding” metaphor is used in Hosea 9:10 to express YHWH’s affection and care for Israel, it is also used here to make a case against Israel for her ‘wrongness’ in abandoning her national god, YHWH, while concurrently expressing YHWH’s ‘rightness’ in bringing judgement on her (Deut. 32:4). The redactor utilises these perspectives to articulate the depth of YHWH’s anguish over Israel’s apostasy despite his election and redemption of Israel from Egypt. Hence, we can see the rhetorical impact of the Song in that its wilderness tradition and concept of primeval election bring Israel’s disloyalty into sharper focus, expressing the extent of her mutiny and justifying YHWH’s severe criticism and disciplinary acts.

4.2.2 *Land not an inheritance and no conquest of it*

As pointed out, inference may be made from the Song concerning how lands might have been given as inheritances to the nations in the beginning.²⁵⁶ This idea is expressed in Deuteronomy, which singles out in this respect the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites (Deut. 2:1-23). The Song (vv.8-9), however, does not clearly apportion land. What is certain is that while Deuteronomy speaks of YHWH's gift of land as an inheritance to Israel and that the way for her to receive it was by destroying the occupants of the land (Deut. 3:6; 7:2; 13:16, 18; 20:17), the Song does not speak of the gift of land as an inheritance to Israel, nor is there an indication that Israel was to conquer and destroy the occupants of the land (Deut. 32:10-13), unless one takes the expression "he made him ride on the high places" (יִרְכַּבְהוּ עַל-בְּמוֹתָיִם, Deut. 32:13) as a portrayal of Israel's military conquest of the highlands, as some scholars do.²⁵⁷ Mayes (following Vaughan), for example, points out that the expression "ride on the high places" carries the idea of ownership of land as it is commonly connected in this sense with "tread upon the high places" in other parts of the Old Testament (cf. Am. 4:13; Mic. 1:3; Hab. 3:19; Job 9:8).²⁵⁸ In this light, hence, Mayes regards the Song's expression here as an indication of "Israel's establishing ownership of the land."²⁵⁹ However, it remains unclear if Mayes' idea of "ownership" as such implies inheritance and conquest. It is uncertain if verse 13 should be read as a reference to a military campaign, especially when LXX's rendering and the poetic balance of chiasmus of this verse seem to suggest its focus on the land's fertility.²⁶⁰

It is clear that the idea of land is an important one in both Deuteronomy and the Song. That the land in Deuteronomy plays a fundamental role in Israel's covenantal relationship with YHWH in terms of her worship and ethical living has been argued by Millar.²⁶¹ According to him, Deuteronomy's theology of the land conveys both the ideas of YHWH's redemptive act on Israel from Egypt and his

²⁵⁶ See p.158 above.

²⁵⁷ E.g. Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.359; Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, p.381; Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy*, p.168; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.455; Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, p.419.

²⁵⁸ See Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.386.

²⁵⁹ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, p.386.

²⁶⁰ See the discussion of Deut. 32:13-14 in Chapter Two, pp.81-82 above.

²⁶¹ See Millar's insightful discussion of the land in relation to Deuteronomy's covenant thought and ethics in *Now Choose Life*, pp.55-62.

fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise concerning the gift of land.²⁶² It brings together the ideas of redemption and providence to express YHWH's ownership of Israel and the land²⁶³ in which Israel, whilst enjoying the land's bounty, must now fulfill her covenantal responsibility in the land as the appropriate response to YHWH's acts of grace.²⁶⁴ The Song, on the other hand, chooses to express its theology of the land in a slightly different way. It does not focus on the acquisition of the land but on living in it, or precisely in this case, how Israel had not lived responsibly in YHWH's land. Although Israel lived in the land, it ultimately belonged to YHWH who placed her in it. The Song picks up the theme of ownership to criticise Israel's disloyalty that resulted in her abusing YHWH's gift and resources for idol worship (vv.15-18). Although the Song does not mention Israel's destruction of the land's occupants, it certainly speaks of Israel's enemy destroying her, the custodian of the land (vv.20-21). It describes how YHWH takes Israel to task and brings upon her the covenantal curses by sanctioning the enemy's military invasion of the land (vv.23-25; cf. 28:25-37). That the land is now in need of cleansing after the ravage is suggested at the end of the Song in which YHWH, the rightful owner of the land, is said to make propitiation (כַּפֵּר, v.43) for it. The divine cleansing of the land is necessary due to both the polluting effects of bloodshed in warfare²⁶⁵ and Israel's civil and cultic evil²⁶⁶ in order that Israel might live her covenantal life in the land again.²⁶⁷ In all these we can see the theme of YHWH's sovereign ownership over Israel and the land running throughout the Song.

The ideas of military conquest and the inherited land are not prominent in the Song, but this is not to say that it dismisses them as unimportant. Rather, the Song holds out a different concern for Israel arising from her having lived in the land. The literary interplay of the waw-consecutive expressions in verses 13-15 gives us a clue as to what the Song is driving at from a perspective after the event. In verse 15 the expressions "but Jeshurun grew fat and kicked" (וַיִּשְׂמַן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְעֵט), "you have

²⁶² Millar, *Now Choose Life*, p.55.

²⁶³ See more discussion concerning the Deuteronomic idiom in pp.134-137 above. Also Clements, *God and Temple*, pp.51-53; Christopher J. H. Wright, *God's People in God's Land* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), pp.11-13.

²⁶⁴ See Millar, *Now Choose Life*, pp.55-62, 145-146.

²⁶⁵ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.378.

²⁶⁶ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.381; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p.200; Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, p.304, McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.459.

²⁶⁷ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, p.282.

grown fat, thick, and gorged” (שָׂמְנָה עֲבִיִּת כָּשִׂיחַ), and “he forsook” (וַיִּטֹּשׁ), relate the idea of Israel’s indulgence and complacency. The phrase “but he grew fat” (וַיִּשְׂמֵן) connects with the preceding expressions “he consumed” (וַיֹּאכַל), “he made him suck” (וַיִּנְקְדוּ), and the list of choice food in verses 13-14 in order to disclose Israel’s false sense of security in the comfort and richness of the land. More tragically, Israel fed on YHWH’s rich provisions but refused to give recognition and exclusive allegiance to him (v.18), the very temptation that Deuteronomy against (Deut. 8:11-14). The Song makes use of the notion of land, in this case its abundance, to expose Israel’s misplaced focus, greed, ingratitude, and particularly her disloyalty. In this sense the Song stands in complete continuity with Deuteronomy in spite of their apparent difference: what Deuteronomy anticipates about Israel’s ‘forgetfulness’ and defiance, the Song confirms in retrospect, even supplying graphic descriptions of the extent of her rebellion such as “he despised” (וַיִּנְבֹּל, v.15), “with abominations they provoked him” (בְּחֹעֲבֹת יִכְעִסְהוּ, v.16), “they sacrificed to demons” (וַיִּזְבְּחוּ לַשִּׁדִּים, v.17), “you forgot” (תָּשִׁי, v.18), and “you ignored” (וַתִּשְׁכַּח, v.18). The Song’s lack of explicit mention of an inherited land and conquest, therefore, does not contradict or diminish the rhetorical effect of Deuteronomy as a whole. Rather, the creative fusing of the Song into Deuteronomy provides a sharper reading of the Deuteronomic message, that is, at the end it is not the physical land *per se* that is of primary importance, but Israel’s response to her covenantal God. The Song’s perspective further renders the claim that Deuteronomy characterises “a declension from grace to law” problematic.²⁶⁸ Rather, we see how the Song relates with ease both divine providence (Deut. 32:8-14) and the divine purging and cleansing (Deut. 32:15-43). This suggests that the ideas of divine grace and demand are inseparable in YHWH’s covenantal dealing with Israel.

4.2.3 *Sinai, Moab, and the Torah*

Deuteronomy’s profound theology of divine grace and demand finds its expression through the dynamic interplay between the Horeb and Moab covenants (Deut. 29:1[28:69]). Scholars have noted the transitional nature of this verse but

²⁶⁸ Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of Hexateuch and other Essays* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), p.85.

opinions are divided with some seeing it as a conclusion to the preceding blessings and curses section (Deut. 27:1-28:68),²⁶⁹ while others regard it as an introduction to what follows (Deut. 29:2-30:20).²⁷⁰ Yet others understand the verse as both conclusion and introduction.²⁷¹ There are also various opinions concerning the way in which the Horeb and Moab covenants co-exist in Deuteronomy.²⁷² The general consensus is that the Moab covenant is not replacing the Horeb covenant.²⁷³ Tigay, for example, even argues that they are “virtually identical.”²⁷⁴ Olson claims that although the Horeb covenant emphasises YHWH’s election and Israel’s responsibility, it “deconstructs itself” with its ambiguities and eventually “shipwrecks upon the curses of Deuteronomy 28.”²⁷⁵ The Moab covenant thus “decenters” the Horeb covenant by laying stress on YHWH’s judgement and saving acts to create an obedience that the Horeb covenant cannot achieve.²⁷⁶ Olson seems to make a clear distinction between the Horeb and Moab covenants, highlighting the inadequacy of the former yet seeing the validity of the former covenant and he has to admit that it still remains effective.²⁷⁷ Without rehearsing the scholarly arguments in detail, it is important to point out that Deuteronomy does not promote the Moab covenant as a way to “decenter” the Horeb covenant, as Olson argues, as if the latter were a temporary, weak and inferior covenant that needs a better one to rectify it. Millar points out that the Moab covenant is “ultimately unable to deliver” because, like the Horeb covenant, it does not resolve “Israel’s existential problems” since its hope is eschatological in nature.²⁷⁸ Meanwhile, Israel must continue to strive to obey,

²⁶⁹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p.319; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp.274-275; Rofé, *Deuteronomy: Issues and Interpretation*, p.195.

²⁷⁰ Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.278-279; Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, pp.372-373; Olson, *Death of Moses*, pp.7, 128; Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, p.180; Millar, *Deuteronomy*, p.91.

²⁷¹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.339; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, pp.401-402.

²⁷² E.g. See Millar for a short but helpful discussion in *Now Choose Life*, pp.91-93, 172-176; Olson, *Death of Moses*, p.176. Also Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, p.279; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.274; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.409; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.338.

²⁷³ Millar says that the Moab covenant is “augmenting and upgrading” that of Horeb in *Now Choose Life*, p.92; McConville refers to Moses’ teaching as “a new embodiment of the Horeb covenant,” hence “the essence of the Moab covenant” in *Deuteronomy*, pp.401, 409. See also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.338.

²⁷⁴ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.274.

²⁷⁵ Olson, *Death of Moses*, p.176.

²⁷⁶ Olson, *Death of Moses*, p.176.

²⁷⁷ Olson, *Death of Moses*, p.176. Thompson also thinks that Deut. 29:1 [28:69] is making a contrast between the Moab and Horeb covenants. While he sees a close relation between them, he also points out that the Moab covenant “contains many new regulations.” See Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, p.279.

²⁷⁸ Millar, *Now Choose Life*, p.173.

knowing that she is “doomed to fail.”²⁷⁹ Although Millar sees a real possibility of a change of heart in Israel through the Moab covenant, he basically thinks that both covenants are “fatally flawed” because they cannot do anything about the problem of human nature.²⁸⁰ In fact Millar sees yet another covenant (Deut. 30:1-30) in which what the Moab covenant promises (Deut. 29:1[28:69]-29) is brought to fruition.²⁸¹

Contra Millar, it seems more probable to read chapters 29-30 as a unit. Conspicuously, both chapters are thematically linked with the idea of “heart” (לֵב) and relate the divine response to Israel’s condition in that her lack of a discerning heart will be addressed by YHWH’s circumcising her heart (Deut. 29:4[29:3]; 30:6).²⁸² The interplay between the two covenants as the expression of Deuteronomy’s theology of divine grace and demand is evident. The Horeb covenant speaks of YHWH’s past acts of grace which provides the fundamental basis for Israel to express her loyalty to YHWH. While the Moab covenant affirms Israel’s failure in maintaining that loyalty to YHWH (Deut. 29:4), it holds out YHWH’s future acts of grace for the very purpose of enabling Israel to be loyal to YHWH “with all her heart” (Deut. 30:6). The failure to love YHWH and obey the Torah due to human weakness is resolved through the divine gift of a ‘new heart’ so Israel will be made able to love YHWH and obey the Torah again (Deut. 30:6-8). Hence, Millar rightly notes that while the Moab covenant does not replace the Horeb covenant, it in fact brings a change to the former covenant in that Israel can now have “good reason to hope” because she will be able to respond appropriately to YHWH in the future.²⁸³ Yet this does not need to mean that the Horeb covenant is devoid of hope because the Deuteronomic depiction of the Horeb and Moab covenant expresses a full picture of YHWH’s dealings with Israel. In both covenants we see the expression of YHWH’s grace in terms of election and enabling, as well as Israel’s calling to faithfulness to

²⁷⁹ Millar, *Now Choose Life*, p.174.

²⁸⁰ Millar, *Now Choose Life*, pp.172-174.

²⁸¹ Millar, *Now Choose Life*, pp.174-176. Millar says, “If the covenant at Moab reveals the need for something to be done about human nature, then the new covenant promised in chapter 30 meets that need.”

²⁸² See more discussion how chapter 29 and 30 relate to each other in McConville, *Deuteronomy*, pp.413-414, 423. McConville points out that both chapters form an important sub-section of the book and the logic which begins in chapter 29 continues to chapter 30. Also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.346. Nelson reckons both chapters to be a distinct unit of thought, which together with chapter 4, are “associated in topic and language.”

²⁸³ Millar, *Now Choose Life*, p.173.

YHWH through her obedience of the Torah. From beginning to end we see the outworking of YHWH's grace for the obedience of Israel. Central to this YHWH-Israel relationship is the knowledge of YHWH's character expressed through the Torah which becomes the regulating instrument for Israel's national life. However, despite the fact that both covenants, as well as the Torah, play a central role in Deuteronomy's theology, it is striking that the Song does not even mention them. One might argue that the Song has some allusions to the Torah, for example, through expressions such as "words of my mouth" (אִמְרֵי־פִי, Deut. 32:1b), "my teaching" (לִקְחֵי, Deut. 32:2), and "my speech" (אִמְרָתִי, Deut. 32:2). But these expressions are not the usual Deuteronomic descriptions of the Torah.²⁸⁴

The Song plays a positive role in relation to Deuteronomy's covenantal theology, and may be read with aspects of that theology in mind. Each has a concept of election, even if these are different. Israel's eventual inability to remain loyal, as the Horeb covenant anticipates, is expressed poignantly through her idolatrous worship (vv.15-18). The Song then speaks of YHWH's withdrawing his favour from Israel and allowing military invasion, which recalls the consequences in judgement, which in some ways echoes the Horeb covenantal curses (vv.20-26). Furthermore, the Song also speaks of Israel's (and the enemy's) lack of discernment (vv.28-29), which anticipates what YHWH has ordained for Israel in the future (Deut 29:4 [29:3]; 30:6). The Song then moves to focus on YHWH's acts of vengeance on the enemy, thus echoing the covenantal blessing (cf. Deut. 28:7). This leads to the climactic expression of YHWH's faithfulness to Israel and assertion of his supremacy over the enemy (vv.36-43). At the end, YHWH's grace for Israel prevails, as promised in the Moab covenant (Deut.30:6-8). In a similar vein, the Song's failure to mention the Torah does not mean that it has no regard for it. In fact, we can see the close relationship between the Song and the Torah, in which the former clarifies the latter. In Deuteronomy 31 the Song is closely linked with the Torah (cf. Deut. 31:9, 26)²⁸⁵ in that they have a similar role of reinforcing Israel's loyalty and witnessing against her disloyalty (Deut. 30:15-20; 31:19, 26). However, while they have the same role, they work it out in different ways. Deuteronomy sets out how Israel should love and stay

²⁸⁴ See the Deuteronomic descriptions of the Torah in p.153 above.

²⁸⁵ See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.361. See also Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, pp.164-165.

loyal to YHWH, pointing out how such an attitude is precisely the ultimate aim of the Torah and the reason for centralisation of worship. In this light, the Torah and centralisation of worship are but instruments to this end. The Song, on the other hand, explicates the true meaning of the Torah by going directly to the heart of Deuteronomy to criticise Israel's violation of the most important commandment upon which the entire Torah rests, that is, the First Command (Deut. 32:15-18; cf. Deut. 5:7). By abandoning YHWH, Israel abandons everything that the Torah represents, and this naturally makes the centralising of worship a futile endeavour. The Song shows how violation of this command has devastating and far-reaching consequences. While Deuteronomy anticipates these dreadful consequences (Deut. 28:15-68), the Song confirms them with graphic imagery. In these ways, we see the Song's prophetic character at work and that it has strong affinities with prophecy, which also, broadly speaking, does not insist on law-keeping as such, but goes to the heart of what it means for Israel to be loyal to YHWH.

In sum, the fusing of the covenant ideas and the explication of the Torah shows that the Song, like Deuteronomy, does not merely emphasise Israel's disobedience. Far from being legalistic, Deuteronomy and the Song work in unison to speak of YHWH's promise of restoration and forgiveness. Deuteronomy talks about Israel returning to YHWH and obeying his voice (Deut. 30:2),²⁸⁶ and points out that this is in fact a result of YHWH's transforming her heart so that she would love him wholeheartedly (Deut. 30:6). The Song picks up the idea of divine enabling in that YHWH would vindicate Israel against her enemy when she no longer relies on her strength (Deut. 32:36; cf. 32:39-43). At the end, we can see that the Song expresses the essence of the Horeb-Moab covenants and the Torah to speak eloquently again with Deuteronomy of divine grace and faithfulness to Israel.

4.2.4 A place of worship

As pointed out, since de Wette Deuteronomy has been regarded as a document demanding the centralisation of Yahwistic worship at Jerusalem and strengthening the

²⁸⁶ See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.54. Tigay distinguishes the idea of "return" in the Torah from the Prophets. In the former, "return" is mentioned only as something after punishment has taken place whereas in the latter, it is to avert punishment.

regime of Hezekiah or Josiah.²⁸⁷ This traditional, dominant reading of Deuteronomy is also bound up with the idea of the Deuteronomic demythologisation made effective by the corrective Name theology. But all these have been disputed, and Deuteronomy's place formula has also been differently understood. Deuteronomy's place of worship expressed by the idiom "to put his name there" (לְשֵׁבֶן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם or לְשֵׁבֶן אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם) does not clearly promote Jerusalem as the sole site of worship, because Deuteronomy has refused to name any definite worship site. The anonymity of the worship site, in fact, is in keeping with Deuteronomy's fundamental focus on loyalty to YHWH alone and its awareness of the human tendency to attach unwarranted allegiance to human and religious institutions. This important principle of worshipping YHWH alone is further expressed in Deuteronomy's limiting of the power and prestige of human authorities such as the Israelite king (Deut. 17:14-20). The Deuteronomic curbing of individual power is also consistent with its emphatic focus on the Israelites' "brotherhood,"²⁸⁸ which in itself is a radical concept in Israel for the purpose of critiquing and safeguarding against the tyrannical dictatorship found in the ancient Near East. Richter's recent findings show that the identity of the first locale of worship was Mount Ebal in which YHWH placed his name, hence rendering the alleged view of Jerusalem as the original sole worship place untenable.²⁸⁹ Interestingly, the view that cult centralisation is the focal point of Deuteronomy and that Deuteronomy regards Jerusalem as the chosen worship place finds no echo in the Song. The Song neither promotes the idea of centralisation nor even mentions any place of worship, let alone Jerusalem. This peculiar situation may cause us to question the reason for the Song's inclusion in Deuteronomy, because its presence not only does not support what many scholars believed to be the main focus of Deuteronomy, namely, cult centralisation and the place of worship, it may even appear puzzling that the Song is silent about it, if indeed it is an important part of the Deuteronomic message. This, then, is another case where a reading of the Song brings an important perspective to reading Deuteronomy as a whole. It suggests that Deuteronomy is concerned not so much with cult centralisation and the identity of

²⁸⁷ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp.32-34; Clements, *God and Temple*, p.76. See the centrality of centralisation in Deuteronomy in Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.146. For a detailed account of the redaction-history of Deuteronomy, see e.g. Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, pp.29-55.

²⁸⁸ Deut. 1:16, 28; 2:4, 8; 3:18, 20; 10:9; 13:7; 15:2, 7, 9, 11, 12; 17:15, 20; 18:2, 7, 15, 18; 19:18; 20:8; 22:1-4; 23:8, 20, 21; 24:7, 14; 25:3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11; 28:54; 32:50; 33:9, 16, 24.

²⁸⁹ Richter, "The Place of the Name in Deuteronomy," pp.342-366.

worship site *per se* but YHWH's ownership of Israel and his prerogative over her political and religious life, as Richter and others have argued. The Song certainly speaks volumes about YHWH's sovereign rule over Israel's political and religious affairs at national and international levels.

Although the Song does not speak of the alleged centralisation of worship, it is certainly concerned about Yahwistic worship, and shows contempt for Israel's idolatrous worship, as does Deuteronomy (Deut. 28:15-68; 32:15-25). Hence, reading the Song with Deuteronomy shows an emphatic, overriding concern for how Israel should respond to YHWH's sovereign and rightful ownership of her. The historicity of centralisation and the importance of Jerusalem are undeniable. But the Song shows us that these are not the main foci, but are means to express the need for wholehearted loyalty and right worship which Deuteronomy and the Song have painstakingly advocated.

4.2.5 *A theory of leadership*

Deuteronomy expresses a view of judicial, monarchical, priestly, and prophetic leadership, a view that goes along with its focus on the responsibility of the whole people of God. In Deuteronomy 1:9-18, judicial leaders are said to have been chosen on the basis of three criteria (cf. Exod. 18:21): they should be "wise" (חֲכָמִים, v.13), "discerning/understanding" (נִבְנִים, v.13), and "experienced" (וִיֵדְעִים, v.13). These leaders were responsible to "hear and judge righteously" (שָׁמַעַ ... וְשִׁפְטֶתֶם צְדָקָה, v.16), be impartial (לֹא־תִפְרֹוּ כְּנִים, v.17), and be "fearless" (לֹא תִגֹּרֻ מִפְּנֵי־אִישׁ, v.17). Their roles and responsibilities are to be understood in the context of Deuteronomy's emphasis on brotherhood: the choosing of wise, discerning, and experienced leaders was to be done from within the "tribes" (לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם, v.13) in order to appoint them as "heads" of the tribes (בְּרָאשֵׁיכֶם, v.13). They were to execute their judicial roles righteously "between your brothers" (בֵּין־אֶחָיִכֶם, v.16), as well as amongst the "aliens" (גֵּרִים, v.16). Moreover, they were to be impartial and fearless so as to judge "the small and the great alike" in the tribes (כְּקָטָן כְּגֹדֵל תִּשְׁמָעוּן, v.17). Putting it differently, these tribal leaders were called to judge righteously, not

distorting justice but recognising that the “judgement is God’s” (הַמִּשְׁפָּט לַאלֹהִים, v.17), which implies the need for straight dealing and loyalty to all the members of the community.²⁹⁰ The appointment of leaders with judicial integrity was meant to maintain Israel’s national unity by making sure that her civil disputes, literally “load, burden, and strife” (טָרְחַכֶּם וּמִשְׁאָכֶם וְרִיבֵכֶם, Deut. 1:12), were properly managed. The focus on societal unity through judicial integrity must continue after Israel settles in the land. The emphasis on appointing leaders is again taken up in Deuteronomy 16:18-20. Here, as in Deuteronomy 1:9-18, the leaders were to be chosen by the people (Deut. 16:18) and required to maintain justice and impartiality when carrying out their responsibilities. They must not “bend justice” (לֹא־תִטֶּה מִשְׁפָּט, v.19), show partiality (לֹא תִפְיֵר פָּנִים, v.19), or take a bribe (לֹא־תִקַּח שֹׁחַד, v.19). This lays the foundation for how Israel as a nation must function.

Deuteronomy’s unique prescription for Israel’s monarchical leadership comes after that of the judicial. This is hardly accidental but strongly suggests that having a sound judicial system with judges committed to justice and righteousness is of first importance to Israel’s covenant theocracy.²⁹¹ That is why the appointment of judges was mandatory while the appointment of the king was merely because of the demand of the people (cf. 1 Sam. 8:5-9).²⁹² But while YHWH acceded to Israel’s request, Israel must adhere to YHWH’s demand that the king be divinely chosen and had to be one from “among your brothers” (מִקִּרְבֵי אַחֵיךָ, Deut. 17:15). Although it was not a necessity for Israel to have a king, when appointed, the king would play an important role in the covenant life of Israel.²⁹³ Unlike kings of the ancient Near East, however, the Israelite king was not above the judicial law. On the contrary, his royal activities were severely limited (Deut. 17:15-17) and most importantly, he was made subject to the Torah so that YHWH’s instruction would permeate his behaviour politically, administratively, judicially, and militarily (Deut. 17:18-20).²⁹⁴ For Deuteronomy, the quality of the Israelite king was dependent on how well he obeyed YHWH’s rule as

²⁹⁰ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.66.

²⁹¹ Also Wright, *Deuteronomy*, pp.207-208. Wright points out that the judge can be seen as “standing closer to divine functions” than the king (p.208).

²⁹² Compare Deut. 16:18 with 17:14.

²⁹³ See also Lohfink, “Distribution,” p.340: “The Deuteronomic law concerning kings is based upon the presupposition that Israel, having completed occupation of the land, will want to install a king.”

²⁹⁴ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.209.

expressed in the Torah. In this sense, Miller may be right to point out that whereas the judge by doing justice and righteousness “reflects the way of YHWH,” the monarchical king reflects the way of “a true Israelite.”²⁹⁵ We can see once again that Deuteronomy’s depiction of monarchical leadership is in keeping with its emphasis on YHWH’s rule and the ‘brotherhood’ of Israelites, as well as its protection against oppressive, tyrannical rule.²⁹⁶

Deuteronomy’s law of the king has been much discussed. Apparently, on the one hand, the law of the king suggests a negative critique of Israelite kingship in view of its curtailment of the royal authority²⁹⁷ while, on the other hand, it also seems to give divine sanction to the institution of monarchy.²⁹⁸ However, does it follow that Deuteronomy’s aim is to support King Josiah and his policy of centralisation, in view of this depiction of a limited Israelite kingship? These seemingly irreconcilable ideas led von Rad to conclude that Deuteronomy’s low view of human kingship does not suggest that it is promoting Josiah’s reign.²⁹⁹ Even Levinson, who believes that Deuteronomy underwent a scribal hermeneutical manipulation in support of Josiah’s regime, has himself noted the difficulty posed by Deuteronomy’s curtailment of the king’s power.³⁰⁰ It seems probable that, rather than seeing Deuteronomy’s centralising law as legislating for Josiah’s reign, we should recognise that Deuteronomy’s law of the king is to be understood in the light of the book’s broader concern for Israel’s loyalty to YHWH. Deuteronomy 17:17 suggests the danger of the king’s inclination to apostasy and idolatry. This is typified by the expression “lest his heart turn away” (לֹא יָסִיר לְבָבוֹ), resulting from having many wives and excessive riches. Furthermore, the insistence that the king “reads the law” all his life and “learns to fear YHWH” (Deut. 17:19) expresses the duties incumbent upon all Israelites.³⁰¹ This is again consistent with Deuteronomy’s assertion that YHWH is to be feared “all the days of one’s life” (Deut. 4:10; 5:26; 14:23; 31:13), which implies

²⁹⁵ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, p.147. Also Lohfink, “Distribution,” p.349. Lohfink considers the king to be an “administrator and model Israelite.”

²⁹⁶ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, p.148.

²⁹⁷ Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition*, p.93.

²⁹⁸ See also Clements, *Deuteronomy*, p.59: “This presentation of the role of the king in Deuteronomy represents an important endorsement of an institution.”

²⁹⁹ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, pp.27-28.

³⁰⁰ See Levinson, *Legal Innovation*, p.141.

³⁰¹ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, pp.148-149; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.209.

“a constant awareness of God.”³⁰² Learning to fear YHWH is accomplished by hearing YHWH’s words (וַיִּשְׁמַעְמָם אֶת־דְּבַר־יְהוָה, Deut. 4:10), which may also necessarily imply reading and studying the Torah (Deut. 17:19; 31:12-13).³⁰³ As the model of a true Israelite, Israel’s king exemplifies and demonstrates true obedience to YHWH so that he might not elevate himself above his brothers but remain loyal to YHWH, the supreme ruler of Israel (Deut. 17:20).

In the same way, the Levites who were given priestly leadership were also to be model Israelites in their dependence on YHWH and service to him (Deut. 18:3-5).³⁰⁴ Once again, we see Deuteronomy’s emphases on divine choice and the brotherhood of Israelites in that the Levite was chosen by YHWH from amongst the tribes (Deut. 18:5) and his role was to safeguard against idolatrous sacrificial worship (Deut. 18:9-12). Last in Deuteronomy’s series of leadership roles comes the prophet, but this does not mean that the office of prophet is the least significant. On the contrary, prophets function as YHWH’s mouthpieces to speak against Israel when judicial, monarchical, and priestly leaders go astray (Deut. 18:18-19).³⁰⁵ In Deuteronomy the portrait of Moses reaches its climax in the depiction of him as the model prophet who faithfully declares YHWH’s words and will to Israel. The proclamation of YHWH’s perpetual witness against Israel’s apostasy is a case in point (Deut. 31:16-22; 32:1-43). Finally, Deuteronomy’s depiction of public office is incomplete without mentioning the transfer of authority from Moses to Joshua. To be sure, Moses was replaced not just by another human leader (Deut. 31:7-8, 14-15, 23) but also by a text (Deut. 31:9-13, 24-29), and the Song (Deut. 32:1-43). The combination of these three replacements expresses a recognition that Israel would become even more rebellious after Moses’ death.³⁰⁶ Nonetheless, a human leader is required to lead the new generation of Israelites. Joshua, hence, was named Moses’ successor to undertake the tasks of a military leader for the conquest of Canaan and subsequently as the distributor of the conquered land as inheritance to the Israelites (Deut. 3:18-28; 31:2-8, 14-15, 23). Norbert Lohfink, in his argument for the literary

³⁰² Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, p.280.

³⁰³ See also Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, pp.279-280. Weinfeld comments, “As the fear of God has to be practised ‘all the days’, so also the Torah has to be studied all the time.”

³⁰⁴ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.214.

³⁰⁵ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p.216.

³⁰⁶ Olson, *Death of Moses*, p.134.

coherence of Deuteronomy's portrayal of Joshua's replacement of Moses, has demonstrated that the portrayal of the transfer of authority between these two great leaders was deliberately advanced step by step to clarify an important, fundamental theological principle - it is YHWH who gives the office, dictates the carrying out of the task involved in the office and remains the "driving force" to lead the officeholders.³⁰⁷ Lohfink's analysis is adopted by Olson who also observes a literary progression of three short texts concerning the transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua. They are: Moses' commission of Joshua without YHWH actually being present in the meeting (Deut. 31:7-8); YHWH's commission of Joshua with Moses present in the meeting (Deut. 31:14-15), and eventually YHWH's commission of Joshua alone (Deut. 31:23). This progression shows the limitations of mortality and human claims to authority and power. YHWH alone remains supreme in leadership.³⁰⁸ His kingship is expressly mentioned for the first time in Deuteronomy: "He was king in Jeshurun" (וַיְהִי בִישֻׁרוּן מֶלֶךְ, Deut. 33:5).³⁰⁹

We can see, therefore, that the Deuteronomic view of leadership consistently focuses on YHWH's ultimate leadership over his people. One may question the validity of such a reading of the laws since it remains debatable whether all the laws in Deuteronomy concerning offices are of the same antiquity or if they are originally written for the purpose of setting up public offices in Israel. However, it is undeniable that in the final form of Deuteronomy and through the creative hand of the redactor, these laws are now understood as, in Lohfink's words, "a self-consistent and comprehensive piece of legislation" about the functions of power in Israel.³¹⁰ Lohfink may be right to assert that the distribution of the functions of public power is the key concept of the constitution of Israel. Such a division of powers certainly ensures that no one becomes too powerful in Israel. The king, for example, is no longer the supreme judge, and his power is severely curbed. Furthermore, the

³⁰⁷ Lohfink, "The Deuteronomic Picture of the Transfer of Authority from Moses to Joshua," in *Theology of the Pentateuch: Themes of the Priestly Narrative and Deuteronomy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994): pp.234-247.

³⁰⁸ Olson, *Death of Moses*, pp.134-135.

³⁰⁹ Other occurrences of "king" (מֶלֶךְ) as a divine title are found in Num. 23:21; 1 Sam. 12:12; Isa. 6:5; 33:22; 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; Jer. 8:19, 10:7, 10; 46:18; 48:15; 51:57; Mic. 2:13; Zeph. 3:15; Zech. 14:9, 16, 17; Mal. 1:14; Ps. 5:3; 10:16; 24:7, 8, 9, 10; 29:10; 44:5; 47:3, 7, 8; 48:3; 68:25; 74:12; 84:4; 95:3; 98:6; 99:4; 145:1; 149:2; Dan. 4:34. See more discussions on YHWH's kingship in Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology Vol. I* (USA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), pp.152-159.

³¹⁰ Lohfink, "Distribution," pp.343-345.

function of priest is also scaled down with the prophet now functioning as YHWH's representative and interpreter of the Torah, thus "embodying a counterbalance to all other authorities."³¹¹ But interestingly, although Deuteronomy speaks a great deal about the nature of leadership, in particular, about the limitation placed on Israel's king, the Song in fact contains no reference to king or monarchy, or any form of human leadership. How are we to understand this?

The Song is silent in these matters because it has no interest in administrative and judicial organisation. Hence, it does not see the need to go into detail regarding the characteristics or roles and responsibilities of Israel's leadership in the way Deuteronomy does. Instead, it goes beyond them to focus on the responsibility of the whole nation, criticising the people for their broken covenantal relationship with YHWH. The Song sharply criticises Israel's wayward and perverse national life (vv.4-5). It reprimands her for being "foolish and not-wise" (v.6), and having "no understanding" (v.28). It criticises her outright defiance against YHWH's supreme rule (vv.15-19), which was fuelled by her self-sufficiency (v.15) and eventually resulted in her apostasy, concretised in the nation's demonic sacrificial activity (v.17). By focusing on the whole people of Israel, the mode of the Song could fit with any kind of administrative or judicial organisation.

With respect to leadership, furthermore, we see that in Deuteronomy the idea of leadership is closely connected to the ideas of wisdom and obeying the Torah (Deut. 4:5-6, 8) in that it remains the fundamental task of Israel's public leaders to subject all national affairs to the Torah in order that Israel might walk in wisdom. However, whereas Deuteronomy speaks of Israel's need to walk in wisdom, the Song exposes her lack of it. When Yahwistic worship is compromised and the Torah no longer becomes the nation's political and religious guide, the nation will head for a catastrophic end. That is why the Song is vehement about Israel's need to get right with YHWH by obeying the First Command so that she might walk in wisdom again. In this sense, we can see that the Song's presence in Deuteronomy serves to pinpoint that Israel's fundamental flaw lies in her rejection of the Torah and ultimately YHWH as her supreme ruler. Therefore, Deuteronomy's distribution of public powers is a

³¹¹ Lohfink, "Distribution," pp.348-349.

necessary step towards preventing any form of “absolutism” within a covenantal community³¹² but the Song diverts attention from secondary issues and goes to the heart of the message of Deuteronomy as a whole: loyalty to YHWH.

5. Conclusion: The Song and the Deuteronomic Concern

This chapter examined how the Song functions in relation to Deuteronomy. However, an exercise like this cannot be done without first exploring Deuteronomy itself, in particular, its emphases and themes in order to find out what constitutes the Deuteronomic concern. To begin the process, a re-visitation of some important issues revolving around Deuteronomy was necessary. The dominant critical view of Deuteronomy has regarded the book as a demythologising and centralising programme that promotes Jerusalem as the chosen place of worship for the purpose of bolstering the regime of Josiah. However, we saw that there are reasons to question this view.

The examination of Deuteronomy’s alleged demythologisation begins by reviewing the argument for and against the idea of the Deuteronomic Name theology of transcendence and asks if Deuteronomy is a corrective programme against older anthropomorphic concepts of YHWH. 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Kings 8 are often used to support the idea of an abstract view of YHWH in Deuteronomy. However, the assertion that Deuteronomy constitutes a corrective programme that elevates YHWH’s transcendence over his immanence has in fact resulted in a false (and forced) distinction between the idea of YHWH’s dwelling and that of his name. As a result, scholars who advocate an alternative reading of Deuteronomy have called into question the old consensus view of the mode of divine presence. They have demonstrated that the old view is a far cry from the biblical data and that the different depictions of the mode of divine presence between JE and D are a matter of context and emphases.³¹³ Moreover, evidence has been provided by Richter to show that the

³¹² See Lohfink, “Distribution,” pp.336-352.

³¹³ This is succinctly summed up by McConville, “In ch.4 transcendence was expressed by the insistence that God was in heaven and invisible to human beings; his immanence could not be expressed by making of idols, but was bound closely to the keeping of his commandments in the context of covenant faithfulness. In ch. 12, God’s transcendence implied his freedom to choose the place of worship, while his immanence was expressed in his real presence at the sanctuary, together with the obligation of the people to meet him there in faithful worship.” See McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, p.141.

Deuteronomic idiom “to put his name there” (לְשֵׁם אֱת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם or לְשֵׁבֶן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם), which is widely understood to be the *theologumenon* for demythologising the mode of divine presence, has nothing to do with the idea supposed in the corrective Name theology. Rather, it is an adaptation of the Akkadian idiom “to place the name” (*šuma šakānu*) associated with the installation of victory stele to announce the ownership of the new suzerain. In this light, Deuteronomy’s use of the idiom is meant to express the idea of YHWH’s sovereignty and ownership over Israel and her land. In fact, this line of interpretation of Deuteronomy finds further support when the Song’s perspective is taken into consideration because the ideas of demythologisation, anti-anthropomorphism, and the distinction between YHWH’s transcendence and immanence by means of the Name theology do not resonate in the Song. On the contrary, the Song speaks of YHWH anthropomorphically (Deut. 32:10, 13, 20, 21, 27, 28-33, 39-41) and expresses not only his transcendence but also his immanence with ease (Deut. 32:5-6, 10, 11, 18-19). The Song upholds the idea of YHWH’s corporeality and his mode of presence has not been demythologised. To argue that Deuteronomy constitutes a demythologising programme neglects the witness of the Song in the final form of Deuteronomy.

This chapter also examines the view that Deuteronomy’s focal point is its legislation for cult centralisation, demanding that sacrificial worship to be carried out at a single site in Jerusalem. Integral to the idea of centralisation are Deuteronomy’s place formula and its idea of human leadership. Hence, if the centralisation of worship is the focal point of Deuteronomy, as the traditional view claims, how then should the readers of Deuteronomy understand it in relation to Deuteronomy’s own expression of the chosen place and its view of kingship? Despite the widely held belief that Deuteronomy advocates Jerusalem as the chosen place of worship, it is noteworthy that Deuteronomy itself does not explicitly mention it. The insistence on Deuteronomy’s reference to Jerusalem as the chosen place ignores the possibility that Deuteronomy could also have had in mind central sanctuaries in other places such as Shechem, Bethel, Gilgal, and Shiloh, or even Mount Ebal. Furthermore, in keeping with Deuteronomy’s depiction of YHWH as the sovereign God who chooses Israel, gives her the Torah, and makes her a distinctive nation in worship and in system of governance (Deut. 7:6-16; 12-26), it is reasonable to construe the Deuteronomic place

formula to be speaking of YHWH's freedom of choice, his ownership of the land, and the need for Israel's allegiance, rather than the identity of the "place." Moreover, to relate Deuteronomy's place formula to centralisation in Jerusalem does not square with Deuteronomy's own constitutional proposal (Deut. 16:18-18:22), which seeks to curb what cult centralisation might eventually result in: political and financial advantage to Israel's kings. If Deuteronomy's overall concern is for cult centralisation, then the incorporation of the Song into Deuteronomy does nothing to keep it. The Song's silence about cult centralisation, worship place, and kingship is striking. In my view, the Song's presence in Deuteronomy tells us that the main focus of the book is not the idea of cult centralisation *per se* that is essential but the underlying implication of it. Hence, it seems best to regard Deuteronomy's centralisation, place formula, and its view of the king, not as defining concerns of the book, but as enhancing a broader and more fundamental concern: YHWH's supremacy and Israel's loyalty to him (cf. Deut. 33:5).

In sum, the review raises a significant point, in that the Deuteronomic interest in the place of worship need not be associated with ideas like demythologisation and secularisation. Rather, 'the laws about the chosen place' can be understood in line with Deuteronomy's assertion of YHWH's supremacy in all aspects of Israel's national life and with its call for a total eradication of foreign, idolatrous worship. Finally, this chapter attempted to relate central Deuteronomic concerns and themes to those of the Song. The examination shows that while Deuteronomy and the Song are thematically connected, there are also differences between them. These differences are significant in that they help to re-appraise what is at the heart of Deuteronomy's theology. The dynamic relationship between the Song and Deuteronomy is expressed in how they speak together of the kind of nation Israel ought to be in order to serve YHWH. Through its criticism of Israel's disloyalty, the Song crystallises for its audience the Deuteronomic emphases of YHWH's superiority and faithfulness, the true meaning of the Torah, the need for covenant loyalty, right worship, and YHWH's demand for justice and righteousness. However, the Song's distinctive views are not restricted to the immediate context of Deuteronomy. They are also significant in contributing to a more informed reading of the larger context in the Pentateuch and Joshua-Kings, as the following chapter explores.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SONG'S RELATION TO GENESIS-KINGS

1. Introduction

According to Brueggemann, "Theological interpretation must attend to the larger narrative ... and to the ways in which the smaller narrative elements (which may have at some point existed independently) have been made to serve the larger theological intentionality of the whole."¹ Brueggemann's assertion is certainly relevant to the present discussion of the relationship between the Song (although not a narrative text) and the larger narrative in Genesis-Kings. In the previous chapters I mention that the Song is presented in Deuteronomy as Moses' prophetic criticism of Israel, which focuses its audience on the central command of the Torah, Israel's ingratitude, and the nation's failure to fulfil her vocation as a witness to other nations. In this chapter, I shall reflect on the way in which the Song might function in the larger corpus in Genesis-Kings. I am basically asking how reading the Song in the context of Genesis-Kings helps us understand what is truly important particularly concerning the commandments in the Torah and the worship of YHWH. The selection of the texts for discussion here cannot be comprehensive but only serves as working examples from which we look for specific connections with the Song. In doing so, I seek to argue that the Song can be understood as playing an important role within the corpus by affirming the broader stance of the Pentateuch and Joshua-Kings,

¹ Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p.44. Brueggemann's comment is a reaction against how Old Testament scholars are so preoccupied with the particularity of small units of the texts (through the influence of Hermann Gunkel's form-critical analysis) that the larger interpretive intentionality of the completed form of the texts may have been overlooked.

and also providing the readers with a way of thinking which goes beyond the surface of the commandments.

2. The Song and the Pentateuch

2.1 *Preliminary*

The Pentateuchal narrative comprises important accounts which move from the primeval history of creation to the election of Abraham and establishment of his descendents as a free nation about to possess the land YHWH promised.² There are many significant aspects of these accounts that deserve our examination. However, while not wishing to diminish their importance, I limit my reflection to the aspect of the Pentateuchal laws. It has been commonly accepted that the Pentateuchal laws have undergone some form of careful re-interpretation. These re-interpretations were part of the result of wanting to maintain their relevance in the changing phases of Israel's national history. According to Bernard Levinson, the Pentateuchal laws were systematically re-deployed from the Book of the Covenant to address Israel's new situations in Josiah's time. For him, Deuteronomy represents such scribal innovation in which phrases and terms from the older laws were deliberately re-framed in favour of Josiah's regime.³ However, as previously pointed out, Levinson's hypothesis is problematic when Deuteronomy is understood in the light of Josiah's centralising measures, because the limitation Deuteronomy placed on Israel's king does not suit this line of interpretation well.⁴ Yet despite his qualification, Deuteronomy does show that the Torah must always adapt to new contexts and address the challenges that arise from them. Deuteronomy's relation to the former law code serves as an example of the need for contextualisation of the laws. The Israelites in Deuteronomy, who, according to the book's self-presentation, face the prospect of entry into Canaan, must now understand how the laws given at Sinai can be applied in this new era of their history, in which re-regulating worship and festive celebrations, demarcating the land and determining its use, as well as establishing just government to ensure righteous and harmonious living amongst the natives, slaves, and sojourners become a priority. In a similar vein, a later generation of Israelites who eventually lost their

² For a brief but useful explanation of the Pentateuch, see the article by Richard E. Friedman, "Torah (Pentateuch)," in David N. Freedman, *ABD* Vol. 2 (New York: DoubleDay, 1992), pp. 606-622.

³ Cf. Chapter Three, section 2.3.2, pp.142-146 above.

⁴ See Chapter Three, pp.144-146 above.

land to tyrannical powers, must also now grapple with the relevance of YHWH's promises and the fragility of their future hope (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:46-53). The exiled community must now make sense of the divine laws. The younger Israelites who had not experienced first hand the pain of exile from their motherland also would have had to ask what YHWH's laws would mean to them amidst foreign cultures and diverse religious convictions. Hence, how do we as modern readers of the final form of the Pentateuch, who are far remote from the rich historical heritage and predicaments of ancient Israel, understand the variety of the Pentateuchal laws as they stand? This is the key point in which I believe the Song provides its readers, whether Israelites or modern readers, with a way of reading all the commands of the Torah. In other words, the Song is a special form of communication that crystallises for the readers the essential aspects of the Torah. Some examples to illustrate this must suffice.

2.2 *Concerning the Sabbath*

The Sabbath law, according to John Durham, is the most expanded and re-applied of all the commandments.⁵ This was perhaps due to the increasing difficulty of applying this commandment in weekly routine. In fact Amos 8:4-8 attests to such difficulty, suggesting that the Sabbath law was potentially regarded as a menace by unscrupulous merchants who had to grudgingly withhold their exploitation of the needy whilst hoping impatiently for the Sabbath to pass quickly.⁶ But the Sabbath law remains important for Israel, and its significance can be gauged by the rather extensive explication of it in the Decalogue, as compared to the remaining commandments after it (Exod. 20:8-11). It is also referred to as a "Sabbath to YHWH" (שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה, Lev.23:3; cf. 25:2), stressing that it was to be observed in honour of him.⁷ The importance of the Sabbath law is further underscored when Deuteronomy formulates and re-applies it (Deut. 5:12-15).⁸ The most significant part of this re-application is the way in which Deuteronomy motivates its hearers to

⁵ John I. Durham, *Exodus* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), p.288.

⁶ Also Durham, *Exodus*, p.288.

⁷ John E. Hartley, *Leviticus* (Dallas: Word, 1992), p.376. The centrality of Sabbath idea is also seen in the fact that the Sabbath command "heads the festive calendar" and sets a pattern for the feasts, as well as "undergirding the institution of Jubilee." See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.128.

⁸ Also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.81-83; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp.68-69.

observe this law.⁹ Exodus grounds the observance of the Sabbath law on the fact that it was a holy day because YHWH rested on it after his six days of creative work, but Deuteronomy grounds it on YHWH's redemptive act for Israel in Egypt. The difference in motivation may seem peculiar but it is totally understandable when one keeps in view of Deuteronomy's overall rhetorical emphasis on the idea of "remembrance". In this case, the basis for Deuteronomy's motivation for keeping the Sabbath law is that Israel must remember that she was once a slave exploited by the Pharaoh, and that it was YHWH who redeemed her from the oppressive rule of Egypt to his own righteous rule. The observance of the Sabbath law, hence, is an important expression by which Israel celebrates YHWH's supreme, redemptive power over the gods of Egypt and testifies to YHWH's justice and righteousness. To this end, Deuteronomy's addition of "ox and donkey and any of" into the Sabbath law serves to reinforce the emphasis of acting justly and righteously not only towards fellow countrymen but even towards domestic animals. Deuteronomy's Sabbath law, in this sense, "enshrines a concept of society" in that it is emphatic about including everyone in Israel, especially servants,¹⁰ in the Sabbath rest.¹¹ Yet, while recognising this, the readers are still faced with the question of how to understand the differences between the Sabbath law in Exodus and that of Deuteronomy.

To an extent the differences in both accounts are inevitable in view of the varied situations each must address. Tigay tries to resolve their differences by positing that, whereas Exodus focuses on the idea of YHWH resting as motivation for observing the Sabbath, Deuteronomy avoids such a notion due to its less anthropomorphic view of YHWH.¹² But, as has been argued in the preceding chapter, it is questionable whether we should regard Deuteronomy as less anthropomorphic in its depiction of YHWH.¹³ A better way to understand their tension is to ask what the real intent of this law is. This is where the Song sheds light on how we can resolve the tension. Although the Song has no mention of the Sabbath command, or even because of this, it nonetheless helps us understand that the real intent of this law has

⁹ See Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* [trans. Walter Jacob] (New Jersey: Hoboken, 1992), pp.584-587.

¹⁰ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.69. Tigay points out that Deut. 5:14 insists that while all must rest from labour on the Sabbath, the emphasis rests on the benefits to servants.

¹¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.128.

¹² Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.69.

¹³ See Chapter Three, esp. pp.125-137, 181-182.

to do with the very heart of the Torah: worship and loyalty. Worshipping YHWH and showing loyalty to him entail the need to cultivate obedience to him and to know his heart and mind. To obey and worship YHWH is to submit to his supreme rule and depend on his creative and redemptive providence in daily affairs. It also means cultivating a love for his character and precepts as well as a love for what he loves – life, liberty, graciousness, justice, and righteousness. One of the ways in which Israel expresses love for YHWH, his character, and all that his precepts represent would be to free her fellow countrymen and domestic animals and not exploiting them with unending round of labour. In this light, we can say that the Song shows us that the true meaning of the Sabbath law is not limited to one particular motivation for keeping it but is about rendering devotion and loyalty to the God of the Sabbath. The Song provides a way for us to understand that although the form of the Sabbath law may change to adapt to different contexts of its hearers, the spirit behind it remains, in principle, relevant and authoritative for the people of YHWH. The Song provides a hermeneutic for reading the varied laws of the Pentateuch together.

2.3 Concerning slaves, the violated virgin, and the needy

Another example of contextualising the Pentateuchal law is the re-application of the remission, or more precisely, the manumission law. According to Exodus 21:2-6, if a Hebrew male slave wishes to leave his service, he is only allowed to do so after his sixth year of service and under this circumstance the master is not obliged to pay him for his departure (v.2). Furthermore, if the master gave the slave a wife who later bore him children, and if the slave decides to leave, his wife and children must remain with the master (v.4). A similar law also appears in Deuteronomy 15:12-18. Both Exodus and Deuteronomy agree that the slave must be released after sixth years of service (Exod. 21:2; Deut. 15:12) but if he decides to remain, his ear must be pierced with an awl as an indication of his permanent service to the master (Exod. 21:5-6; Deut. 15:16-17). Despite the similarities in both accounts, there are also very telling differences in the way Deuteronomy develops this law compared to the Exodus account. In Exodus the impoverished person who enters the creditor's service is labelled 'a slave' (עֶבֶד, Exod. 21:2) whereas in Deuteronomy, while his service is described by the same verb (עֶבֶד, Deut. 15:12), he is called "a brother" (אָח, Deut. 15:12), a familial term applied to both male and female in this case. In Exodus it is

the master who “buys” the slave (תִּקְנֶה, Exod. 21:2) whereas in Deuteronomy the brother “sells himself or herself” to the master (יִמְכֹּר, Deut. 15:12).¹⁴ Hence at the very outset, we see some striking differences in that Exodus refers to the master in a third person address whilst Deuteronomy addresses him in second person, “you” (אַתָּה, v.12). Furthermore we see that whereas Exodus speaks only of the male slave, Deuteronomy includes both male and female, and also avoids the term “slave” in order to highlight the equality and brotherhood of all Israelites in the covenantal community.¹⁵

Tigay downplays the differences between these two accounts by arguing that Deuteronomy’s granting equal treatment to the female need not be viewed as superseding Exodus because Exodus is also concerned about female slaves.¹⁶ For example, he thinks that Exodus 21:7-11 relates to female slaves who were minors, sold conditionally for marriage, and therefore would not be eligible for release after six years.¹⁷ Deuteronomy 15:12 on the other hand could be speaking of females who became indentured due to insolvency without the intention of marriage. So, Tigay does not agree that the manumission law in Exodus 21:2-6 only had the males in view because the same law could also have been applied to indentured women, as in Deuteronomy.¹⁸ Tigay’s argument, however, remains conjectural at best because it is not clear that the text in Exodus 21:2-6 has indentured females in view.¹⁹ It is more likely that it has only the males in mind, and that Deuteronomy in fact develops it further to include the females.²⁰

However the differences between Exodus and Deuteronomy in this case do not stop here. In Exodus the law does not require the master to make provision for the slave when the latter leaves after six years of service (Exod. 21:2). By the same token, if the master gives a wife to him and they have children, if he then leaves his master,

¹⁴ The idea in Deuteronomy may be taken as emphasising on the person’s initiative to sell himself. See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.262.

¹⁵ See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.262; Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, pp.197-198.

¹⁶ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.148.

¹⁷ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.149.

¹⁸ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, p.149.

¹⁹ Neither is it clear that Exod. 21:7-11 refers to the female slave who was a minor, as Tigay has construed.

²⁰ See also Durham, *Exodus*, p.321.

he cannot bring his own family with him because they remain as the master's property (Exod. 21:4). But Deuteronomy goes beyond Exodus and expects the master to provide generously for the slave when releasing him (vv.13-14). It thus reminds the master of his origin in slavery and points him back to YHWH's redemptive acts (Deut. 15:15). This is in order that this wealthier 'brother' might be motivated to show kindness to his 'slave-brother' the way YHWH has shown kindness to him. In Exodus if the slave decides to remain in the service of the master because of his love for him as well as for his own wife and children, the master is to pierce the slave's ear with an awl at the doorway "before God" (אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים, Exod. 21:6), which could possibly mean holding the ear-piercing ceremony at a local shrine.²¹ But Deuteronomy does not speak about the question of the slave's wife and children nor his affection towards them or whether he could bring them with him when he leaves.²² Furthermore, if he chooses to continue his service, Deuteronomy simply attributes that decision to the slave's love for his master and his household. Again, no mention of the slave's own family is made, as compared to Exodus. Still further, to indicate the slave's permanent service, Deuteronomy speaks of the master piercing the slave's ear with an awl simply at "the door" which appears to take the ceremony out of the cultic sphere (Deut. 15:17).

The law which concerns the violated virgin is another case in point (Exod. 22:15-16 [ET 16-17]; Deut. 22:28-29). In Exodus 22:15-16, a man is charged with seducing an unbetrothed virgin and thus compromising her father's opportunity to arrange for a marriage for her. The offender is then required to pay a marriage price to compensate for the father's financial loss,²³ and to marry the young woman he violated. But if the young woman's father refuses to endorse the marriage, the offender has to pay the father a penalty price equal to the marriage price. However, in Deuteronomy the offender is not said to have "seduced" (הִפְתָּ, Exod. 22:15 [ET v.16]) but "seized" (שָׁבַח, Deut. 22:28) the unbetrothed virgin, which expresses the idea of

²¹ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.199.

²² Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.198; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.263. McConville points out that in the light of its general concern for women, it may be inferred that Deuteronomy does not intend to make the same restriction as Exodus does.

²³ Durham, *Exodus*, p.327. Durham says that the primary focus here is financial.

rape.²⁴ He is liable to pay fifty pieces of silver as compensation to her father and is required to marry the violated woman with no right to divorce her (Deut. 22:29). These striking differences from Exodus tend to suggest that Deuteronomy is more concerned with the woman's security, as Nelson argues.²⁵ Moreover, there is no mention of the father's right to block the marriage.²⁶

Similarly, the Exodus law which regulates money-borrowing is also developed differently in Deuteronomy. When advancing a financial loan to the needy, the creditor is prohibited from withholding the man's collateral deposit such as a cloak but must return it to him when the night falls (Exod. 22:25-26 [ET vv.26-27]). This law insists that the basic needs of the impoverished person such as having a covering for the night must be met despite his economic plight. In Deuteronomy the humane aspect of this law is extended by prohibiting the creditors from entering the home of the borrowers for the deposit in order that no undue pressure may be exerted on them (Deut. 24:10-13). Deuteronomy also provides a different theological motivation from Exodus in that if the creditor does what is instructed it would be his "righteousness before YHWH" (צִדְקָה לְפָנַי יְהוָה, Deut. 24:10-13), as opposed to Exodus' seeming threat if the creditor disobeys, "if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am gracious" (וְהָיָה כִּי־יִצְעַק אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּי כִּי־חַנּוּן אָנִי, Exod. 22:26 [ET v.27]).

In view of the above Pentateuchal laws, therefore, it is clear that there are significant differences in how they are regulated and motivated in Exodus and Deuteronomy. What perspective, then, does the Song provide to help us understand them in spite of their differences? It is important to recognise that Exodus and Deuteronomy communicate the laws in their own distinctive ways with appropriate emphases befitting the situation which they address. Hence, to try to harmonise them

²⁴ See also Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.273. Nelson notes that the matter of rape and seduction is less clear here as opposed to the Exodus account. He argues that the fact that they "are found" (נִמְצְאוּ, v.28) may indicate "some responsibility on her part." But ironically, he later suggests the possibility of rape here in view of the weaker verb "seize" (חָזַק) in Deut. 22:25.

²⁵ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.273.

²⁶ Tigay points out that according to halakhah, the father retains the right to disapprove his daughter's marriage to the rapist. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp.208-209. See also McConville, *Deuteronomy*, p.342. However, Nelson points out that there is still a possibility that the young woman is still required to marry the rapist. The woman's feelings about marrying her rapist in this case, he argues, are irrelevant to the purpose of this law. See Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, p.273.

by downplaying their differences would not do justice to their specific intentions. Yet it might be said that despite their diversity in emphases, they are nonetheless given an overarching focus. This is where the Song helps us. The Song is detached from the particularities of these laws and brings the readers back to focus on loyalty to YHWH and wholehearted worship, which forms the primary basis for righteous dealing with other members of the covenantal family. Moreover, the Song further elucidates the divine self-introduction, “I am YHWH” (אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה, Exod. 20:2; Deut. 5:2; cf. Lev. 19:18), which underpins the giving of the Decalogue, by telling its readers the nature of this God, “A God of faithfulness and there is no iniquity, just and upright is he” (אֵל אֱמוּנָה וְאֵין עָוֹל צְדִיק וְיָשָׁר הוּא, Deut. 32:4b). Hence the Song intensifies the idea of YHWH’s authority as Israel’s God as well as his faithful character in order to obligate the readers of the need to protect the interests of the weak and helpless, and to promote solidarity amongst the covenantal people of YHWH. It also helps the readers to see that solidarity of brotherhood is found only in a society that understands itself as owing its existence to YHWH (cf. Deut. 32:6, 8-10, 12).²⁷ This further obligates the readers to recognise the need to do good to all members of that society since they stand in covenant relationship with YHWH.

In this light, the Song reinforces the great Levitical command to “love your neighbour as yourself” (אָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמֹדֶךָ, Lev. 19:18). It invites the readers to look beneath the surface and highlights to them the need for discernment in terms of how the call to ‘love one’s neighbour’ can be applied in specific situations. However, the Song may also be spoken of as having a prosecuting function when Israelites disregard the exercise of love and deal corruptly with one another. Its admonishing expression, “Do you thus repay YHWH?” (הֲלִיְהוּהָ תִגְמְלוּ-זֹאת, Deut. 32:6) may be seen as a strong reprimand against the people’s wickedness. Therefore, what we can see here is that, first, not only does the Song urge the readers to remember the essential command to love YHWH and the need to show gratitude to him, it also goes further to magnify an important implication of such an attitude of devotion: to love his people by doing what is just and right to them. Second, the Song also has the effect of

²⁷ See Mary E. Mills, *Joshua to Kings: History, Story, Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), p.121.

affirming the various forms of the laws, as well as showing the need for Israel to be ready to adapt them further when necessary.

2.4 *Concerning Worship*

We have seen that a number of scholars have argued against the view that Deuteronomy represents a document for legislating for Josiah's reign and Jerusalem as the place of worship.²⁸ I have argued that the Song when read as part of Deuteronomy supports the alternative reading of Deuteronomy suggested by these scholars. There is a more fundamental point which Deuteronomy is trying to drive home to the audience, that is, YHWH and his supreme rule, and how Israel must cling onto YHWH at different stages of the journey: not only in the wilderness and at the final place where she keeps the Deuteronomic law-code,²⁹ but also in foreign lands during her exile (cf. Deut. 30:1-10). The Song affirms this primary concern and emphasises that the only appropriate response to such a God in every circumstance is ultimately an undivided loyalty through wholehearted worship. It is not the 'place' of worship that counts but the 'heart' of worship that is of true significance.

Other Pentateuchal texts support this. For example, Noah built an altar to offer burnt offerings after the flood as an act of thanksgiving for YHWH's covenantal, saving acts (Gen. 8:18-21; cf. 6:18-20). It is striking that the place at which Noah offered the sacrifice was not even mentioned by the narrator. While this is so, there are times when the narrative does mention the place of worship. For instance, Abraham is said to have built three altars to YHWH at three different locations. The first location was in Shechem, possibly at a Canaanite sanctuary where the Oak of Moreh stood (Gen. 12:6-7).³⁰ Abraham did this after YHWH appeared and affirmed his promise of posterity to him. In a sense Shechem signified a place of beginning, as in this case, for Abraham, who began his new religious faith with YHWH. Later, Jacob also erected an altar at Shechem (מִזְבֵּחַ, Gen. 33:18-20) but subsequently abandoned the place, buried his family's idols under the Oak of Moreh, and headed for Bethel (Gen. 35:1-4). De Vaux argued that Jacob's abandoning of Shechem for

²⁸ See Chapter Three, section 2.3, pp.137-146.

²⁹ Cf. Mills, *Joshua to Kings: History, Story, Theology*, p.104. See also McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, p.31.

³⁰ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p.287.

Bethel signified a "pilgrimage from one sanctuary to the other" and that it was "an abandoning of pagan practices, parallel to the rejection of foreign gods ... because they [Jacob and his followers] had chosen to serve Yahweh."³¹ The second location where Abraham set up an altar was at a mountain between Bethel and Ai (Gen. 12:8). Bethel became an important worship place consequently but its significance was understood to be closely associated with Jacob.³² We shall discuss this further shortly.³³ The third location for Abraham's altar was at Mamre (Gen. 13:18), from which he later received the three mysterious visitors (cf. Gen.18:1-8). Because of this mysterious visitation, Mamre became a place of worship which, according to de Vaux, was "venerated until the Byzantine epoch."³⁴

Now it is noteworthy that in the above occurrences, we are told that Abraham built the altars after YHWH spoke to him concerning his future and posterity (Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-16). Whether it is the case that because Abraham built the altars at these places it means he founded them as cult centres remains a subject of debate. Cassuto pointed out that Abraham's so-called 'altars' were actually not altars in the etymological sense of the term because there were no actual offerings of sacrifice on them. Rather, he argued that these altars should be referred to as memorial monuments to commemorate YHWH's appearing to Abraham.³⁵ Nahum Sarna, however, does not think that these altars were meant to be mere memorial monuments. As far as the site of Shechem is concerned, Sarna thinks that it was a "sacred site," although he has to concede the fact that there was no mention of sacrifice being

³¹ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p.290.

³² Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, p.224. According to Wenham, Bethel in Genesis is "glorified as a most holy sanctuary owing its foundation to Jacob himself."

³³ See p.195 below.

³⁴ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp.278-279, 292-293. He points out, "The Book of Jubilees (XIV, II) explicitly locates the nocturnal scene of Gn 15 in Mambre, and other apocryphal books interpret it as a revelation of mysteries: Abraham, it is said, there saw the future Jerusalem and learnt the secrets of the end of time. In the first centuries A.D., Mambre was a pilgrimage centre, and the tree of Abraham was greatly venerated: every year a big fair was held where, according to Sozomenus (*Hist. Eccl.*, II, iv), Jews, Christians and pagans transacted business and performed their devotions, each in his own way. This was the final chapter in a long history: the Roman and Byzantine ruins of Mambre are still to be found at Ramath el-Khalil, 2 miles north of Hebron, and beneath these later sanctuaries traces of Israelite occupation have been found."

³⁵ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis [trans. Israel Abrahams]* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1974), pp.328-329. See also Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, p.155. He argues, "The building of the altar is not a general reference to a divine revelation, but to the oracle given to Abraham, the promise. Because the promise refers to the possession of the land, the building of the altar is Abraham's response." Although Westermann is commenting on Gen. 12:7, the idea that Abraham's altars did not signify the founding of a sanctuary also applies in Gen. 12:8 and 13:8. See Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, pp.156, 181.

offered on the altar there.³⁶ But Wenham does not see a difference in this respect. He argues that the silence about sacrifice does not mean it was not carried out because he reckons that “building an altar and offering sacrifice were expressions of faith integral to the worship of God,” as in the case of Noah.³⁷ However, the varied opinions about the precise nature of these sites should not render the focus of these accounts obscure, which I believe, is essentially about Abraham’s act of obedience and thanksgiving to YHWH, rather than the locations at which he set up the altars. Interestingly, Walter Moberly points out that Abraham’s setting up of the altars to YHWH in the north (Shechem), centre (Bethel and Ai), and south (Mamre, Hebron) suggests that “the entire land is being symbolically claimed and dedicated to YHWH.”³⁸ If Moberly was right, then again we see that the focus here is primarily about Abraham’s devotion to YHWH and his belief in YHWH’s sovereign power.³⁹ Such a faith would hence entail Abraham’s loyalty to this God.

Similarly, Isaac was also said to have built an altar and called on YHWH’s name at Beersheba (Gen. 26:23-25). The origin of Beersheba as a worship site may be traced back to Abraham who is said to have planted a tamarisk (לְשֵׁן) and called on YHWH’s name there (Gen. 21:33). Subsequently, Beersheba may have been regarded as a prominent worship site perhaps due to the divine manifestation that Isaac experienced there.⁴⁰ However, the context seems to suggest that, Isaac’s act of worship, as in the case of Abraham, was a response to YHWH’s promise of posterity (v.24).⁴¹ The focus, in other words, was how he expressed his allegiance to YHWH. We may again infer from here that this narrative concerns Isaac’s attitude towards YHWH, rather than the location of his worship.

³⁶ Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation Commentary* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1989), pp.92-93, 101.

³⁷ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), p.280.

³⁸ R.W.L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), p.145. Richter’s argument that the Deuteronomic idiom “to put his name there” (Deut. 12:5) carries the idea of YHWH’s sovereignty and ownership supports such a view. See Chapter Three, section 2.2.3, pp.134-137 above.

³⁹ Richter’s argument that the Deuteronomic idiom “to put his name there” (Deut.12:5) carries the idea of YHWH’s sovereignty and ownership supports such a view. See Chapter 3, section 2.2.3, pp.134-137 above.

⁴⁰ Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 [trans. John J. Scullion]* (Minneapolis: Augsburg House, 1985), p.428

⁴¹ So Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, p.428. He comments, “Like Abraham, Isaac’s response to the promise is to build an altar and call on the name of Yahweh (cf. Gen. 12:8).” Also Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, p.192. But see Sarna, *Genesis*, p.186. He says “He [Isaac] builds an altar, thereby *establishing* Beer-sheba as a cult site with which his name becomes closely associated” (Italics mine).

As mentioned, the significance of Bethel may have been attributed to Jacob.⁴² In the so-called “sanctuary narrative” in Genesis 28 (also in Gen. 35:1-15),⁴³ it is recorded that Jacob spent a night “in a place” (בַּמָּקוֹם, v.11) and dreamt of a stairway (סֹלֶם, v.12) between heaven and earth, with angels ascending and descending on it (v.12). And YHWH appeared to him and affirmed his promise of posterity (vv.13-15). Jacob woke up in a fright and claimed that he must be in the “house of God” (בֵּית אֱלֹהִים, Gen. 28:17). And wanting to show his piety to YHWH, he set up a stone as a sacred pillar (מִצְבֵּה, Gen. 28:18), poured oil on it, and named that place where the pillar stood as “Bethel” (בֵּית-אֵל, Gen. 28:19). He then made a vow saying that “this stone will be a house of God” (בֵּית אֱלֹהִים, Gen. 28:22). Wenham points out that Jacob’s oil-pouring resembles a gesture which was associated with the idea of “consecrating cultic items” (Exod. 40:9-13; Lev. 8:10-12; Num. 7:1).⁴⁴ Together with the vow he made, it has been said that this particular stone pillar seemed to be a “cult object endued with divine power and representing God himself.”⁴⁵ If this was true, it would have well illustrated the reason why Bethel was later regarded as one of the most prominent places of worship (cf. Judg. 20:18, 26-28; 21:2).⁴⁶ The prominence of Bethel was further epitomised by Jeroboam’s sanctioning of calf worship at Bethel and Dan, and the people’s consequent acceptance of it (1 Kgs 12:28-30). But again, the emphasis of this sanctuary narrative, I believe, rests on Jacob’s response to YHWH after he received the divine revelation of posterity (Gen. 28:12-17). It was the first time Jacob encountered YHWH, and through it he expressed “heartfelt worship.”⁴⁷ For this reason, his vow to YHWH is central to the plot development of this narrative (vv.20-22). His act of worship suggests that what truly matters is not the sacred stone, whatever its precise significance, nor the place where this stone stands but the resolution to pledge loyalty to the God of Israel. As mentioned, Jacob built an altar at Shechem as well (Gen. 33:18-20).⁴⁸ The context also suggests to us that his purchasing of the land and setting up of the altar at Shechem were expressions

⁴² Cf. p.194 above.

⁴³ Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, p.452. According to him, this narrative aims to speak about the origin of a sanctuary and “the discovery of this holy place as an experience of the discoverer.”

⁴⁴ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994), pp.223-224.

⁴⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, p.224.

⁴⁶ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p.291.

⁴⁷ Also Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, p.226.

⁴⁸ Cf. pp.193-194 above.

of his thanksgiving to YHWH for protecting him against Esau and enabling him to come safely to Shechem (v.18; Gen. 33:1-17). Another example is found in Exodus 24, in which Moses was said to have built an altar at the foot of Mount Sinai, after he recorded all that YHWH spoke to him on top of the mountain (vv.1-8). Again, the context suggests that the focus was not the place at which the altar was erected, Mount Sinai in this case, but the covenant-making (vv.3, 7-8) through which the people of Israel pledged their loyalty to worship and obey YHWH.

Still, a further example is found in Exodus 20:22-26. This pericope forms a part of the Covenant Code (CC) of Exodus 20:22-23:33. Many scholars have debated the relation of CC to the Deuteronomic Code (DC). John Van Seters notes that since the time of Wellhausen, CC has been regarded as “the oldest legal tradition in the Pentateuch”⁴⁹ and that the priority of CC over DC was one of the basic components of Wellhausen’s Documentary Hypothesis.⁵⁰ But, while believing that CC was the bedrock for the formulation of DC, Wellhausen nonetheless saw a conflict between the altar-law in Exodus 20 and that of Deuteronomy 12: the former allows a plurality of worship sites while the latter restricts worship to only one site.⁵¹ Many have tried to offer harmonising explanations for this, but according to Cornelis Houtman, none of their arguments is satisfactory.⁵² Eventually, the alleged discrepancy between the altar-laws led to the identification of Deuteronomy as having a distinctive centralising agenda.⁵³ In keeping with our discussion here what immediately

⁴⁹ See John van Seters, “Cultic Laws in the Covenant Code and their Relationship to Deuteronomy and the Holiness Code,” in Marc Vervenne (ed.) *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1996), pp.319-345.

⁵⁰ See n.51 below. See also Seters, “Cultic Laws,” p.319; Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus Vol. 3: Chapters 20-40* [trans. Sierd Woudstra] (Leuven: Bondgenotenlaan Peeters, 2000), p.101.

⁵¹ See Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp.32-34. He argued, “The Jehovistic Book of the Covenant lies indeed at the foundation of Deuteronomy, but in one point they differ materially [i.e. the place of worship, as opposed to multiple places of worship].” He further stated, “The Law [Deuteronomy] is never weary of again and again repeating its injunction of local unity of worship. In doing so, it is in conscious opposition to ‘the things that we do here this day,’ and throughout has a polemical and reforming attitude towards existing usage ... As the Book of the Covenant, and the whole Jehovistic writing in general, reflects the first pre-prophetic period in the history of the cultus, so Deuteronomy is the legal expression of the second period of struggle and transition. The historical order is all the more certain because the literary dependence of Deuteronomy on the Jehovistic laws and narratives can be demonstrated independently, and is an admitted fact (pp.32-33).” See also Houtman, *Exodus*, p.101.

⁵² See a brief description of the scholarly arguments in Houtman, *Exodus*, p.101.

⁵³ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p.33. Wellhausen believed that it was Deuteronomy that started Josiah on destroying local sanctuaries. He argued, “This [Deuteronomy] alone, at least, of all the books of the Pentateuch, gives so imperious an expression to the restriction of the sacrificial worship to the one chosen place, here only does the demand make itself so felt in its aggressive novelty and dominate the whole tendency of the law-maker.”

interests us is Exodus 20:24 in which it says offerings must be sacrificed at “an altar of earth” built for YHWH (מִזְבֵּחַ אֲדָמָה תַעֲשֶׂה-לִי) “in every place” where he commemorates his name (בְּכָל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֶזְכֵּר אֶת-שְׁמִי). And in doing so, YHWH says he will come and bless his people (אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבֵרַכְתִּיךָ). Houtman notes that the MT and LXX render this verse differently. The pointing in the MT, Houtman says, shows that “in every place” (בְּכָל-הַמָּקוֹם) is taken as the beginning of a new sentence, whereas in LXX this phrase is connected with verse 24a to indicate where offerings are to be brought.⁵⁴ Houtman prefers the MT’s reading, and argues that “I will come to you” (אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ) should be connected with “where” (אֲשֶׁר) rather than with “in every place,” because he believes such a connection will clarify “I will commemorate my name” (אֶזְכֵּר אֶת-שְׁמִי).⁵⁵ And he adduces the demand for the earthen altars in support of this interpretation.⁵⁶ The reason why Houtman segregates “I will come to you” from “in every place” is because he believes that Exodus 20 was formulated not only in view of the centralisation law of Deuteronomy 12,⁵⁷ but also for the Diaspora Jews.⁵⁸

However, Houtman’s interpretation remains unconvincing, and does not take adequate account of the context of this verse. What remains conspicuous in Exodus 20:24, in my view, is the fact that YHWH is calling attention to himself. Expressions such as “make for me” (תַעֲשֶׂה-לִי), “I will commemorate my name” (אֶזְכֵּר אֶת-שְׁמִי),

⁵⁴ Houtman, *Exodus*, p.107.

⁵⁵ Houtman, *Exodus*, p.107.

⁵⁶ Houtman, *Exodus*, p.103. Houtman thinks that the demand for earthen altars expresses the idea that natural things (earth and stone) are holy whereas chiselling of these natural things such as stone affects the holiness. Thus, he agrees with Theodoret, who believes that an altar of stone could be easily demolished to prevent others from using it to worship their false gods. But Houtman also adds, “One could ask whether at Exod. 20 the writer did not already have Deut. 12 (worship at one fixed place) in mind and consciously placed Israel’s worship in the desert period in the tradition of the patriarchs so as to underscore its temporary and transient nature. After use, the nature altar reverts to nature and can never be a competitor of YHWH’s definite abode.”

⁵⁷ Houtman adopted C. Levin’s view, who regards CC as laws for the non-Palestinians, and that Exod. 20:24b is added to support Deut. 12. See C. Levin, *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), p.96, n.94 [quoted in Houtman, *Exodus*, p.101].

⁵⁸ Houtman, *Exodus*, p.101. See also Van Seters, “Cultic Laws,” p.329. Van Seters claims, “The issue in the exilic period is no longer one of centralization of worship but of religious survival, and a quite different understanding this law [Exodus altar-law] is possible. It allows for the simple construction of an altar in Jerusalem after the temple’s destruction and the continuation of the cult there. It does not restrict worship to that place but allows for the possibility of invoking the deity and the receiving of divine blessing everywhere, especially in the diaspora.”

“I will come to you” (אָבֹא אֵלֶיךָ), and “I will bless you” (בְּרַכְתִּיךָ) within this verse alone must at least alert us to the fact that the emphasis may not necessarily be on the place of worship itself but YHWH’s freedom of choice in choosing “every place” he wishes.⁵⁹ Furthermore, taking the verse as it is, it is also difficult to argue against the idea that YHWH could have had multiple places of worship in mind.⁶⁰ Van Seters, in his attempt to move away from the debate of multiple worship sites, argues that the problem lies with the expression אֲזַכֵּיר verse 24. Citing the use of תִּזְכֵּיר (“you will invoke”) in Exodus 23:13, he claims that אֲזַכֵּיר should also be read as second person singular, since, he argues, “it makes no sense for the deity to say, ‘I will invoke my name’.”⁶¹ Hence, verse 24 is read as: “In every place where you invoke my name, I will come to you and bless you.”⁶² In this way, verse 24b cannot be arguing for the plurality of altars since the activity of invoking YHWH’s name need not be associated with the existence of an altar.⁶³ For Van Seters, therefore, this verse presents an “alternative to the sacrificial cult” and YHWH’s blessing is not limited to “the reception of sacrifices at the one altar.”⁶⁴ In other words, as far as Van Seters’ argument goes, the verse’s attention is directed to YHWH, not the worship site.

It is noteworthy that, whilst Van Seters’ reading of אֲזַכֵּיר as second person singular is not without its problem, his view actually strengthens our argument here. It is significant to note that verse 24 was given as an implication of the First Commandment in verse 23, “You shall not make [other gods] besides me; gods of silver or gods of gold” (לֹא תַעֲשֶׂוּן אֱלֹהִי אֲחֵרִי כֶסֶף וְזָהָב). One may infer from this that the demand for earthen altars could be a polemic against the “gold and silver” altars of the foreign gods. However, Van Seters argues that we can no longer assume

⁵⁹ See also Durham, *Exodus*, p.319. Responding to Wellhausen’s view that the specifications of the earthen altar here indicates the antiquity of these instructions, Durham goes to the main focus of this verse, saying, “What is more important, even if these instructions are quite old, is the statement that Yahweh himself will choose the place where such altars are to be built and that he will come in person to his people assembled at these places and there blesses them.”

⁶⁰ E.g. Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus* (London: SCM Press, 1974), p.466. Arguing against Benno Jacob’s view on the supremacy of Jerusalem, Childs argues, “In spite of the efforts of conservative commentators (Jacob) to bring the command into line with later Jerusalem theology, the command presupposes a multiplicity of legitimate places of worship and is not a reference to Jerusalem alone.”

⁶¹ Van Seters, “Cultic Laws,” p.325.

⁶² Van Seters, “Cultic Laws,” p.326.

⁶³ Van Seters, “Cultic Laws,” p.326.

⁶⁴ Van Seters, “Cultic Laws,” p.326.

that the Israelite altar-laws had an anti-Canaanite thrust because of the arguments postulated by N.P. Lemche. According to Van Seters, Lemche questions whether there was really a real distinct Canaanite culture in the pre-monarchy period. In fact Lemche argues that such a distinction was an "ideological construct of later biblical writers."⁶⁵ But Richard Hess expresses doubt about this.⁶⁶ He traces some significant historical sources which he thinks "had an impact on the interpretation and reconstruction of the period represented in the Bible."⁶⁷ In one of his concluding statements, he states:

Evidence for cult centers at Mount Ebal and at Shiloh, as well as details such as the diet of the hill country inhabitants, do correlate in a variety of points with the picture of early Israel's worship as suggested both by Biblical law codes and by the narratives of Joshua, Judges, and the books of Samuel.⁶⁸

He further cautions:

Whether one understands the extrabiblical sources as little more than a commentary on the biblical text, whether one holds to notions of historical traditions embedded in later texts, or whether one discounts any historical value to the biblical account may have more to do with how and why one reads the Bible and with that community of readers where one has found or seeks to find acceptance. This observation is not intended to reduce the discussion of Israelite origins to a psychological or sociological determinism. Instead, it seeks to recognize how little we actually know about the world of ancient Israel (despite all the recent discoveries) and to urge caution concerning all the attempts to "prove" or to "disprove" the biblical accounts on the basis of extrabiblical evidence and of sociological models.⁶⁹

But notwithstanding this, Van Seters also argues why Israelite earthen altars cannot be seen as an expression of antagonism to Canaanite altars by citing the

⁶⁵ N.P. Lemche, *The Canaanites and Their Land* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), quoted in Van Seters, "Cultic Laws," p.326.

⁶⁶ Richard S. Hess, "Early Israel in Canaan: A Survey of Recent Evidence and Interpretations," p.494, n.1, in V. Philips Long (ed.) *Israel's Past in Present Research: Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), pp.492-518. Originally published in *PEQ* 125 (1993): pp.125-42. Hess points out, "Lemche has recently challenged the application of the terms 'Canaan' and 'Canaanite' to their traditional regions and peoples in the second millennium B.C. However one regards his interpretation of the biblical evidence, his conclusions require a particular interpretation of the references to Canaan in Egyptian sources and especially in the Amarna correspondence."

⁶⁷ Hess, "Early Israel in Canaan," p.493.

⁶⁸ Hess, "Early Israel in Canaan," p.511. See more of his concluding statements in pp.510-512.

⁶⁹ Hess, "Early Israel in Canaan," p.512. See also Hess' critical review of Robert B. Coote, *Early Israel: A New Horizon* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), in *WTJ* 54.1 (1992): pp.175-178.

example of Solomon's temple building as evidence for it.⁷⁰ The line of reasoning is simple: if earthen altars were meant to oppose those of the Canaanites, then presumably earthen altars should be found in Solomon's temple. But in fact they were not. Yet Van Seters has to concede immediately that this kind of altar was indeed known from the second temple (cf. Ezr. 3:2-6).⁷¹ Seeing this, he has to defend, "If the altar law is so important to the dating of the whole corpus of laws, then the question of why this instruction [i.e. earthen altars be made] is given must be answered."⁷² But, the example of Solomon's temple and Solomon's subsequent idolatry, as well as the nation's syncretistic worship, precisely bring us back to the significance of loyalty and faithfulness (cf. 1 Kgs 11:1-8; 14:22-24; 16:29-33). The pain of exile as a result of Israel's apostasy must have shaken up the returning Israelites to the urgency and importance of obeying the First Commandment. Hence, their building of "the altar of the God of Israel" (וַיִּבְנוּ אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), Ezr. 3:2) in the second temple, presumably as in those mentioned in Exodus (Exod. 20:24-25), was a striking expression of their resolution to worship YHWH only. Therefore, it is likely that the perspective of Exodus regarding the setting up of altars for YHWH reflects the fundamental concern for upholding the First Command, loyalty to YHWH, and that the outcome of building the earthen altar at every place YHWH chooses is a declaration of that loyalty to the God of Israel, as opposed to the gods of Canaan.⁷³ Hence, Pitkänen argues that the idea of the earthen altar is in keeping with "the aniconic character of Israel's faith," as well as with the fact that Israel is prohibited to adopt how the Canaanites might have fashioned their altars with finished stone.⁷⁴ Furthermore, and interestingly, the use of earthen altars also has a unique purpose of emphasising YHWH's relationship with his people, as Pitkänen points out, "It is an

⁷⁰ Van Seters, "Cultic Laws," p.326.

⁷¹ Van Seters, "Cultic Laws," p.326.

⁷² Van Seters, "Cultic Laws," p.326.

⁷³ See also Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), pp.243-244. Commenting on 20:24-26, Fretheim argues, "The transition from idols to altars (vv.24-26) shows that the concern for the proper worship of Yahweh is understood to be a natural extension of the issue of idolatry. Loyalty to God will find its most explicit expression in the nature of Israel's worship (cf. Chap. 32)."

⁷⁴ Pitkänen, 'Central Sanctuary,' p.50. But see Fretheim, *Exodus*, pp.243-244: "The reasons for the specific instructions regarding the altar, however, are not always clear ... it may suggest a concern for focus on the God who is worshiped rather than the setting ... Nevertheless, there are limits on the number of altars. Altars are to be built only upon the divine initiative, at those places where God has appeared and given the divine name (see Gen. 26:24-25), and they belong to God ("for me"). They are thus not places that Israel can do with as it pleases; practices associated with them are to be 'meet, right and salutary' according to the will of God. Israel's worship of Yahweh must thus not be careless of times and places; they will have a profound impact on issues of continued loyalty to God."

earthly meeting place between Yahweh and the worshipper who is on earth. This would then fit with the command that since Yahweh has spoken from heaven [Exod. 20:22], people are to make an altar of earth [Exod. 20:24].”⁷⁵

Therefore, the above examples suggest to us that Yahwistic worship need not be absolutely limited to a single place. Despite this, we can still consider this subject from a different angle. For example, we may say that the multiplicity of worship sites was due to the reason that there was no requirement to centralise worship at a single site in those days, because Israel’s patriarchs had not actually possessed the land to begin with. The narratives may simply recognise this. Alternatively, we may acknowledge that the narratives suggest that the patriarchs did regard these worship sites as significant locations. Others did also, as we know from Jeroboam’s adoption of Bethel (1 Kgs 12). And in the history of Israel, it was Jerusalem that eventually won out in a conflict amongst them. Yet despite this, it remains reasonable to reckon that in the Pentateuchal story no worship place has absolute importance ultimately. As I have shown in Chapter Three, the Song supports the view that even Deuteronomy itself, in its final form, is not really advocating the centralisation of Yahwistic worship at a single place, as opposed to the dominant interpretation of Deuteronomy. What do we then make of this now by reading the whole Pentateuch in the light of the Song as it stands? Clearly, the Song has not found it necessary to affirm a programme of centralisation over against other views about the place of worship found in the Pentateuch. The Song may be taken to support the view that true worship of YHWH is not confined to one place in the land. In fact it is not even confined to the land! It shows us that this is a broadly Pentateuchal perspective which has not been lost by the end of Deuteronomy and hence, it enables the readers to see that true Yahwistic worship may be undertaken at different places from time to time. This notion of Yahwistic worship becomes a very significant concept for Israel in her history outside the land.

⁷⁵ Pitkänen, ‘Central Sanctuary,’ p.50.

3. *The Song and Joshua-Kings*

3.1 *Preliminary*

In 1943 Martin Noth's groundbreaking work *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* established the theory that the large corpus from Deuteronomy through 2 Kings, which he designated as "the Deuteronomistic History," represents an editorial unit of Israel's history from Moses to the last Davidic king Jehoiachin in the Babylonian Exile.⁷⁶ Arguing against the older notion that Joshua-Kings originated as independent units that were subjected to multiple redactions,⁷⁷ Noth argued that the historical account is a self-contained whole,⁷⁸ compiled and rewritten by a single exilic editor/writer whom he calls, "the Deuteronomist (Dtr)" who was wholly responsible for "the coherence and unity of the whole history in Joshua-Kings which is clearly *intentional*"⁷⁹ as is shown by the form of these books."⁸⁰ Dtr uses Deuteronomy 1-3 as an introduction to the entire Deuteronomistic historical narrative,⁸¹ and Deuteronomy 31-34 as a conclusion to Deuteronomy and transition to Joshua.⁸² The coherence of the Deuteronomistic History can be seen in the linguistic uniformity characterised by Dtr's use of simple expressions, vocabulary, diction, and sentence structure.⁸³ Furthermore, the unity can also be seen in how Dtr formulates speeches for "leading personages" at key junctures to interpret the course of events.⁸⁴ For instance, Joshua's speeches as initiation and completion of the time of settlement (Josh. 1:11-15; 23:2-24:27), Samuel's speech which serves as a transition from the era of the judges to kings (1 Sam. 12:1-24), and Solomon's prayer which completes the era of the united monarchy, introduces the temple, and anticipates the catastrophic

⁷⁶ Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I, Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1943) [ET *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981)].

⁷⁷ See Samuel R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1929), pp.103-203; G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1976), pp.192-195; Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1948), pp.293-412. See also Nicholson's introduction to Noth's *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.vii-ix.

⁷⁸ Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.4.

⁷⁹ Noth's emphasis.

⁸⁰ Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.10. Noth also argues, "Dtr was not merely an editor but the author of a history which brought together material from highly varied traditions and arranged it according to a carefully conceived plan. In general Dtr simply reproduced the literary sources available to him and merely provided a connecting narrative for isolated passages."

⁸¹ Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.14.

⁸² Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.13. See also Richter, "Deuteronomistic History," p.221.

⁸³ Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.5.

⁸⁴ Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.5-6.

divided monarchy (1 Kgs. 8:12-51). Moreover the unity of the Deuteronomistic History is also seen in Dtr's summarising theological reflections on Israel's history (Josh. 12; Judg. 2:11-23; 2 Kgs. 17:7-23).⁸⁵ Noth's distinctive contribution to the study of Joshua-Kings was his belief that there was only one Dtr who crafted this account of Israel's history. Because Dtr wanted to show the true reason for the destruction of YHWH's people, he structured this account with selected traditions and elaborated on them from the perspective of the Deuteronomic law code (Deut. 4:44-30:20) in order to attribute the demise of Israel and Judah to their failure to fulfil the demands of the law due to their disloyalty to YHWH.⁸⁶ Hence Noth argues,

Dtr did not write his history to provide entertainment in hours of leisure or to satisfy a curiosity about national history, but intended it to teach the true meaning of the history of Israel from the occupation to the destruction of the old order. The meaning which he discovered was that God was recognisably at work in this history, continuously meeting the accelerating moral decline with warnings and punishments and, finally, when these proved fruitless, with total annihilation. Dtr, then, perceives a just divine retribution in the history of the people ... He sees this as the great unifying factor in the course of event, and speaks of it not in general terms but in relation to the countless specific details reported in the extant traditions.⁸⁷

Noth's classic work was not without difficulties, as later work showed. His Dtr's negative perspective⁸⁸ on Israel's history led von Rad to contend for the theme of grace and hope within the Deuteronomistic History. Von Rad criticised Noth for not taking into consideration the message of hope and grace which he thought was the important emphasis in the Dtr's effort to stimulate hope when defending YHWH's promise to David (2 Sam. 7).⁸⁹ He argued that Dtr's account on the release of Jehoiachin from the Babylonian prison is a significant case in point because it holds

⁸⁵ But see Dennis J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," in *JBL* 84 (1965): pp.131-138 and Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp.241-264. Both of them argue that 2 Sam. 7 operates with important ideas and hence should be included into Noth's list of passages which form the framework of the Deuteronomistic History.

⁸⁶ See Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, pp.12-17, 89. See also Steven L. McKenzie, "Deuteronomistic History," in David N. Freedman, *ABD Vol 6* (New York: DoubleDay, 1992), p.161; Sandra L. Richter, "Deuteronomistic History," in Bill T. Arnold and Hugh G.M. Williamson, *TDOT: Historical Books* (Leicester: IVP, 2005), p.220.

⁸⁷ Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.89.

⁸⁸ Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.99. Noth says, "The negative characteristics of Dtr are exactly the same as those in the Deuteronomic law."

⁸⁹ Also in 1 Kgs. 8:20, 25; 9:5; 11:5, 13, 32, 36; 15:4; 2 Kgs. 2:4; 8:19; 19:34; 20:6.

up the hope of restoration of the Davidic line.⁹⁰ However, in 1961 Hans Walter Wolff offered an important critique of both Noth's and von Rad's interpretations of the Deuteronomistic History.⁹¹ Wolff generally agrees that Noth has taken insufficient account of the hope YHWH promised in Nathan's oracle which appears to be as yet unfulfilled at the end of the historical account (2 Kgs. 25:27ff.).⁹² He questions how Noth's Dtr who had been conscientious and careful in selecting and organising his materials as Noth claims he was, would have missed out this important aspect in his account of Israel and Judah.⁹³ On the other hand, Wolff also disagrees with the view that Dtr had wanted to stimulate hope when trying to explain YHWH's righteous judgement on his people.⁹⁴ This idea of a "windfall hope," he argues, is inconsistent with Nathan's oracle which is dependent on obedience to Moses' word in Deuteronomy.⁹⁵ In short, Wolff does not think that Dtr's purpose was totally negative as perceived by Noth nor was it to offer unequivocal hope as von Rad had argued. Rather, he discerns in the Dtr's narration a pattern of apostasy, punishment, repentance, and deliverance, which he finds most clearly expressed in Judges.⁹⁶ He strengthens this by pointing out that the catchword שׁוּב ("return") is the central idea in key passages⁹⁷ and argues that Dtr's exilic audience belonged to the second part of this pattern. This explains Dtr's emphasis on the importance of repentance and turning back to YHWH.⁹⁸ In fact Wolff notes that the catchword שׁוּב ("return") also appears in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 and the Jeremiah traditions, which he believes do not belong to the earlier materials that Dtr used. He suggests, rather, that they were used by a second writer after Noth's Dtr.⁹⁹

⁹⁰ See Von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, pp.74-79.

⁹¹ Hans W. Wolff, "Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk," in *ZAW* (1961): pp.171-186 [ET "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historical Work," in Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (eds.) *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), pp.62-78].

⁹² Wolff, "The Kerygma," p.65.

⁹³ Wolff, "The Kerygma," p.65.

⁹⁴ Wolff, "The Kerygma," p.65.

⁹⁵ Wolff, "The Kerygma," pp.65-66.

⁹⁶ Wolff, "The Kerygma," pp.66-69.

⁹⁷ Passages include Judg. 2:1; 1 Sam. 7 and 12; 1 Kgs. 8; 2 Kgs. 17; 23:25. See Wolff, "The Kerygma," pp.69-72.

⁹⁸ Wolff, "The Kerygma," p.69.

⁹⁹ Wolff, "The Kerygma," pp.72-76. However, for an important critique of Wolff's view, see J. G. McConville, "1 Kings 8:46-53 and the Deuteronomic Hope," in Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (eds.) *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), pp.358-369.

Although Wolff admits that the idea of a deuterio-Deuteronomist only remains a hypothesis,¹⁰⁰ it subsequently triggered two important variations of Noth's idea of a single Dtr. First is the 'Harvard school' begun by Frank Moore Cross. Cross perceives a more complex development of the Deuteronomistic History, arguing for the preservation of the Davidic covenant by two redactors, a pre-exilic Dtr¹ who admonished his readers to obedience to the Mosaic covenant reinstated by Josiah and a postexilic Dtr² who blamed the eventual exile on Manasseh.¹⁰¹ Cross's theory of a double redaction of the Deuteronomistic History became influential and was further developed by his students Jon D. Levenson,¹⁰² Richard E. Friedman,¹⁰³ Baruch Halpern,¹⁰⁴ and Richard D. Nelson.¹⁰⁵ Friedman, in particular, strengthens Cross's theory of double redaction by showing how the concept of Egypt is used by Dtr¹ and Dtr² to undergird the structural unity of the Deuteronomistic History.¹⁰⁶ The Deuteronomistic History, he notes, tells "the story of Israel from Egypt to Egypt" in its final form.¹⁰⁷ The exilic Dtr² repeated and emphasised YHWH's words from the Song, "I shall hide my face from them, I shall see what their end will be" (Deut. 32:20; cf. 31:17-18) in order to "impose a direction upon the earlier edition of the history which points to YHWH's ultimate abandonment of his people."¹⁰⁸ Hence, with Deuteronomy matching the events of 2 Kings, Friedman argues that the Deuteronomistic History "produces the image of a unified work" that speaks of Israel's broken covenant with YHWH which resulted in them going back to where they started – Egypt, to repent and hope for restoration.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰ Wolff, "The Kerygma," p.75.

¹⁰¹ Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp.274-289.

¹⁰² Jon D. Levenson, "Who Inserted the Book of the Torah?" in *HTR* 68 (1975): pp.203-233.

¹⁰³ Richard E. Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: the formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly works* (Chicago: Scholars Press, 1981); also his "From Egypt to Egypt: Dtr 1 and Dtr 2," in Baruch Halpern and Jon Levenson (eds.) *Traditions in Transformation: Essays in Honour of Frank Moore Cross* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981), pp.167-192.

¹⁰⁴ Baruch Halpern, "Sacred History and Ideology: Chronicles' Thematic Structure," in Richard Friedman (ed.) *The Creation of Sacred Literature: Composition and Redaction of the Biblical Text* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981).

¹⁰⁵ Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981).

¹⁰⁶ Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt," p.171.

¹⁰⁷ Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt," p.191.

¹⁰⁸ Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt," p.191.

¹⁰⁹ Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt," p.192. See also the explanation of the structural unity of the Deuteronomistic History in Terence E. Fretheim, *Deuteronomic History* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), pp.40-44.

A further distinct development was that of Rudolf Smend's 'Göttingen school'.¹¹⁰ Essentially, Smend affirms that there was an original version of the Deuteronomistic History compiled by a postexilic redactor (which is Noth's Dtr) whom Smend designates as DtrG. However, he claims that this original Deuteronomistic History was subsequently updated by yet another postexilic writer who saw that the law had not been observed since there was an ongoing presence of foreign peoples in the land. Smend calls this writer DtrN(omistic). Smend's theory of two postexilic redactors is further picked up by his students Walter Dietrich and Timo Veijola, who believed that there was yet another postexilic redactor, DtrP, who added the prophetic materials into DtrG's original work before DtrN came into the scene. However, there have also been attempts which tried to refine Noth's theory of a single exilic author by elevating the significance of Dtr². Brian Peckham, for example, proposes that there was an initial history of the pre-exilic period extended from Deuteronomy to Hezekiah. But through the historiographic effort of the exilic Dtr², this history was inserted into a larger work which ultimately became the entire account from Genesis-Kings.¹¹¹ Hence Peckham advocated the idea of a Deuteronomistic redaction of the Pentateuch.¹¹² Robert Polzin tried to show that the Deuteronomistic History is more a unified literary, theological work than a historiographic one. He contends against the scientific historical-critical method of recovering the original sense of the text, finding such quests for sources and redactions unproductive. Instead, he argues for a hermeneutical approach to seeing the Deuteronomist as an authoritative interpreter of the Mosaic Law for the exiles, an approach which allows the message of the Deuteronomistic History to be constantly reapplied to new situations.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ See more details in McKenzie, "Deuteronomistic History," p.163; Richter, "Deuteronomistic History," pp.224-225.

¹¹¹ Brian Peckham, *The Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985). Peckham proposes that an initial history of the pre-exilic period extended from Deuteronomy to Hezekiah. This history was later inserted into a larger work reaching from Genesis to 2 Kings 25. But John van Seters contends against the theories of Israelite historiography and postulates that the so-called historiographic 'sources' used by Dtr may be only a fictional, literary device. See John van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp.43-49. Baruch Halpern, on the other hand, remains optimistic about the historiographic nature of Dtr's sources and argues that these historiographic materials were selectively shaped by Dtr for the composition of the Deuteronomistic History. See Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), p.31.

¹¹² Peckham, *The Composition*, p.73. See also Richter, "Deuteronomistic History," p.225.

¹¹³ Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980).

The above-mentioned studies on the composition of the Deuteronomistic History are but selective examples to show briefly how scholars have perceived the redactional, literary, and structural unity of Joshua-Kings in relation to Deuteronomy. Space prohibits a fuller account. Nevertheless, attention may be drawn to a recent provocative article by K.L. Noll which actually de-emphasises the unity of the corpus. He attacks Noth's Deuteronomistic History hypothesis by positing that what we have here is not a Deuteronomistic history but a Deuteronomistic debate.¹¹⁴ Noll's contention arises from his frustration over the disarray of Nothian scholarship in recent times.¹¹⁵ Basically he tries to show that the corpus in Joshua-Kings is Deuteronomistic in the sense that the separate books existed in a predeuteronomistic form but were edited together by a small group of scribes in the Persian or Hellenistic era who "debated among themselves the merits of Deuteronomy's theology" and who did not intend to create authoritative scripture because their writings were not intended for mass consumption.¹¹⁶ The result of this scribal debate is that each book is distinctively antagonistic towards Deuteronomy. Their responses range from indifference (Joshua),¹¹⁷ anti-deuteronomistic (Judges),¹¹⁸ anti-YHWH (Samuel),¹¹⁹ to confusion in terms of having multiple viewpoints competing for attention (Kings).¹²⁰ In other

¹¹⁴ K.L. Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate? (A Thought Experiment)," in *JSOT* 31.3 (2007): pp.311-345.

¹¹⁵ Such as the publications by Gary Knoppers, "Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History;" Walter Dietrich, "History and Law;" Jon Levenson, "Who Inserted the Book of the Torah?;" John van Seters, *In Search of History*; etc. See Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate?," pp.314-316.

¹¹⁶ Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate?," pp.318-336 and n.68.

¹¹⁷ Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate?," pp.337-339. Noll argues that the final edition of Joshua undermines the Deuteronomistic theme by multiple and unrelated insertions such as the partial conquest (13:1-6; 23:4-5, 12-13, as opposed to 11:15, 23; 21:43-45; 22:4; 23:1-3, 9-10, 14), a comic relief of the spies story as well as a pietistic farce of the conquest of Jericho and the sequel of Achan's sin, and also the Gibeonite tale. Furthermore, the theme of rest appears anti-deuteronomistic with YHWH providing rest and not a central worship site as promised in Deut. 12:10 (Josh. 21:44; 22:4). Moreover, Joshua 22 seems to expose the absurdity of the centralisation law.

¹¹⁸ Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate?," pp.339-341. Noll points out that while Deuteronomy instructs Israel to select its own leaders, in Judges YHWH raises up these judges. Throughout the Book of Judges, YHWH seems to be portrayed as a poor judge of character, hence a problem rather than a solution. Gideon's leading the people into idolatry is a case in point (Judg. 6:11-32; 8:27).

¹¹⁹ Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate?," pp.341-342 and also n.86. Noll argues that the Book of Samuel introduced YHWH as an unreliable patron deity whose words and deeds cannot be trusted, as he reneges on the promise of an eternal priesthood (compare 1 Sam. 2:27-36 with 2 Sam. 7), he is unwilling to grant the people's request for a king when it is explicitly permitted in Deuteronomy (compare 1 Sam 8:5, 8 with Deut. 17:14-15), and makes bad choices of leadership such as Saul and Absalom.

¹²⁰ Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate?," pp.342-344. E.g. stray verses show up at inappropriate spots (2 Kgs. 1:1 with 3:5; 8:25 with 9:29); Elijah failed to carry out divine instructions (1 Kgs. 19:15-17), chronological ambiguity (2 Kgs. 1:17; 3:1), and the narrative about

words, the final form of Joshua-Kings, for Noll, is a heated “conversation with Deuteronomy,” in which the stories either “attack or probe the Deuteronomistic ideology and find it wanting.”¹²¹ He invites readers to permit Joshua-Kings to be “the recalcitrant hodgepodge of narrative discontinuities that they really are.”¹²² Noll’s analysis of Joshua-Kings is radical and it remains to be seen whether his thesis will stand up to scholarly scrutiny. For him, the diversity of the materials seems to be larger, even to the extent of absurdity, than their unity. But, although he apparently refuses to see any degree of coherence within the corpus and ignores contextual emphases, he has nonetheless shown that there are complex, differing views within each book of the corpus which may not be easily resolved. A rather different perspective was offered by McConville, who points out that there is indeed an idea of unity within the diverse materials of the Deuteronomistic History.¹²³ McConville notes that this unity can be discerned when one considers how the presence of editorial connections work to resume the story from one book to another.¹²⁴ Furthermore, there are also clear thematic links as well as a continuation of plot, character, and motif within this corpus which suggest a concerted effort to unite these materials.¹²⁵ While the unity is clear, the complex diversity in the narrative is also apparent, for example, between the Davidic promise and the problematic kingship.¹²⁶ McConville argues for the need to accept the distinctive character of each book and understand that their distinctiveness has been preserved despite the fact that the books have been shaped to relate to one another within this large yet loosely edited Deuteronomistic corpus,

It seems as if the material of the narrative existed at various stages in blocks, and that these were united into a coherent narrative by a transmission process that is lost to us. These blocks may have developed independently, and finally been redacted together by the exilic period, but in a way that preserves their individuality. This seems to be the only satisfactory explanation of the fact

Ahab’s relationship with Elijah and Micaiah suggests that it is subtly designed to attack and undermine Deuteronomy’s teachings about prophecy, etc.

¹²¹ Noll, “Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate?,” p.344.

¹²² Noll, “Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate?,” p.344.

¹²³ J.G. McConville, “The Old Testament Historical Books in Modern Scholarship,” in *Them* 22.3 (1997): pp.3-13. McConville indicates in his article that Claus Westermann has also read the Deuteronomistic History along similar lines of understanding.

¹²⁴ McConville, “The Old Testament Historical Books,” p.9.

¹²⁵ McConville, “The Old Testament Historical Books,” p.9.

¹²⁶ McConville, “The Old Testament Historical Books,” p.10. See also Noll’s list of contradicting ideas within the corpus in n.74-77 above.

that modern literary treatments ... are able to focus on the individual books, and find coherence of expression and theme within them.¹²⁷

Approaching Joshua-Kings this way helps, in McConville's words, "break down the rigid division between the historical books and the Pentateuch."¹²⁸ This also means that while the books of Joshua-Kings address their own concerns, they are also able to interact broadly with those of the Pentateuch in terms of their theological connections through important themes such as covenant, law, election, to name but a few.¹²⁹ McConville's recent work "God and Earthly Power" is one example of how one might read Genesis through Kings on the subject of Yahwistic monotheism so as to interpret this large corpus politically.¹³⁰

In light of our purpose in this chapter, the perceived unity of the Deuteronomistic History, and in fact of Genesis-Kings, actually strengthens the rationale for asking how the Song affects our reading of it as a whole. Significantly, recognising their unity alerts the readers to the likelihood that the Song can be regarded as a hermeneutical lens for reading Genesis-Kings in its final form. We have seen how the Song supplies its hermeneutical perspective, for example, to help readers go beyond the varied Pentateuchal laws to accentuate the fact that loyalty remains the most essential aspect of Israel's relationship with YHWH. However, when readers approach the narrative of Joshua-Kings, the challenge to understand the multiple, interrelated themes within this corpus becomes even more acute, as shown in the above survey in which we see themes such as idolatry and divine judgement (Noth), grace and hope (von Rad, Cross), repentance and deliverance (Wolff), and obedience (Smend, Dietrich, Veijola). We have noted how major contributors have tried to pitch one theme against the other. But it remains essential that we should try to make sense of their thematic multiplicity. This is where the Song points a way forward to understanding them. It shows the readers that they can accept the diversity of themes within the corpus precisely because it resonates well with all of them. The Song, by encompassing these themes in relation to one another, is able to exercise a

¹²⁷ McConville, "The Old Testament Historical Books," p.10.

¹²⁸ McConville, "The Old Testament Historical Books," p.10.

¹²⁹ See William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament* [2nd Edition] (Leicester: Apollos, 2002).

¹³⁰ J.G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

hermeneutical influence on the readers of Joshua-Kings which helps guard against a biased reading that overemphasises a particular idea. At the same time it brings the various expressed themes to bear on the significance of obeying the First Command. As we have seen that the demand to obey the First Command has been the dominant Pentateuchal concern, in the following discussions we shall see how the First Command also resonates all through Joshua-Kings and the way in which the Song affirms it through its interaction with the corpus.

3.2 *Worship YHWH, not Baal*

The whole of the Deuteronomistic History may be compared to a type of 'tragic' narrative in a loose sense of the word 'tragedy' in Greek theatrical drama.¹³¹ Mills notes that throughout the story of Israel's settlement in the land in Joshua to her loss of the land in Kings this tragic narrative ponders the "fatal flaws" which affect Israel and Judah and eventually lead to their demise.¹³² In fact, and more significantly, the underlying problem, in my view, is a crisis of faith. As far as Dtr saw it, the rampant disobedience to YHWH's law is a symptom of a more pervasive problem – disloyalty to YHWH.¹³³ Fretheim is therefore correct when he says that the heart of the Deuteronomistic History is the concern over the violation of the First Commandment (1 Kgs. 9:8-9; Deut. 29:24-28; cf. Deut. 32:15-18).¹³⁴ This is where we can see that the Song's fundamental contention is being reflected in Joshua-Kings. Mills also points out that the tragic narrative also contains a subtheme, the guilt of foreign worship, which links the stages of Israelite history throughout the whole nation in all its generations.¹³⁵ This subtheme becomes especially acute in Kings in which the demise of Israel and Judah is understood as the direct result of centuries of national apostasy brought about by the monarchical kings. Hence the tragedy of Israel, Mills argues, is the fact that "the people cannot live out their potential greatness, falling back from initial promise."¹³⁶

¹³¹ See Mills, *Joshua to King*, pp.71-82.

¹³² Mills, *Joshua to Kings*, p.79.

¹³³ Fretheim, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.21.

¹³⁴ Fretheim, *Deuteronomistic History*, p.21.

¹³⁵ Mills, *Joshua to Kings*, pp.81-82.

¹³⁶ Mills, *Joshua to Kings*, p.82.

In fact as early as in Joshua 22-23, Joshua's address to the people concerning the proper worship of YHWH has anticipated Israel's disloyalty (Jos. 22:5, 16, 22-29; 23:6-8, 16).¹³⁷ The covenant-making in Joshua 24 thus becomes the crucial point by which Israel would be judged whether she lives up to her agreement to keep faith with YHWH. But then we see that Israel's devotion soon falters and Judges 2 implicitly attributes this to parental negligence in imparting the knowledge of YHWH to their children (v.10; cf. Deut. 6:1-9) who, as a result, apostatise (Judg. 2:11-13; Judg. 3:1-7). Here, the narrative in Judges not only attempts to recall the Deuteronomic command concerning children's education about YHWH (Deut. 6:4-9) but it also brings to mind the Song's admonition over the need to pass on traditions from generation to generation (Deut. 32:7b). Interestingly, we also see similar expressions used in Judges and the Song such as Israel "forsook" YHWH (עָזַב, Judg. 2:12; cf. Deut. 32:15),¹³⁸ "forgot" about him (שָׁכַח, Judg. 3:7; cf. Deut. 32:18), and YHWH's "anger" burning against them (אָרַב, Judg. 2:14; 3:8; cf. Deut. 32:21-22). The narrative finally makes a transition from the long rebellious, turbulent years of the Judges to the era of the monarchy in Samuel-Kings. Peter Miscall points out that unlike Joshua and Judges, 1 Samuel "does not begin with a specific problem or crisis" to be addressed. In a sense he is right but a closer reading of Hannah's thanksgiving in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 shows that the use of "affliction" (עָנִי, v.11), "remember" (זָכַר, v.11), and "do not forget" (לֹא-שָׁכַח, v.11) may be suggestive of a subtle, but nonetheless important, connection with the poignant depiction of the ongoing national crisis left off in Judges 21:25.¹³⁹ Hence, Hannah's thanksgiving may be read as a thematic continuation from Judges, setting the stage for the story of a tricky remedy for Israel's lawless years: monarchical kingship. Viewed in this way, Hannah's thanksgiving then takes on special significance for our reading of Samuel-Kings (1 Sam. 2:1-11). Contrary to Miscall's suggestion that Hannah's many statements here have "the flavour of platitudes with no predictable relevance to the context" and that her thanksgiving has

¹³⁷ Cf. Fretheim, *Deuteronomic History*, pp.77-78.

¹³⁸ Judg. 2 uses a more common word עָזַב for "forsake" (occurs 215 times) while the Song uses שָׁכַח (occurs 40 times).

¹³⁹ This is at the level of suggestion. One may find an allusion to YHWH's deliverance here but admittedly the link is stronger between Hannah's thanksgiving in v.10 and the Book of Kings.

no substantial relation to the context, Hannah's thanksgiving in fact serves as an "important introit to the history of early monarchy," as Robert Gordon puts it.¹⁴⁰

Central to Hannah's thanksgiving is the idea that YHWH is a God of knowledge (v.3) and the judge of the earth (v.10). The perspective of YHWH's sovereign wisdom and universal rule here has close echoes with the Song. The thematic affinities between them in a way inform us of their connectedness, thus the need to read them in relation to each other. For example, both refer to YHWH as "the rock" (1 Sam. 2:2; Deut. 32:4) and his incomparability: there is "no one besides him" (1 Sam. 2:2; Deut. 32:39).¹⁴¹ Both relate to his righteous and faithful dealing with his people (1 Sam. 2:4b, 5, 8, 9a, 10b; Deut. 32:4, 36, 43). They also speak of his sovereign power over life and death ("kills and makes alive," 1 Sam. 2:6; Deut. 32:39), as well as judgement (1 Sam. 2:3-4, 9-10a; Deut. 32:23-25, 34-35, 41-42). When the context of Judges-Kings is taken into consideration, the assertion of YHWH's sovereignty and universal power becomes important because it affirms to the readers that Israel's national calamities, present and future, do not happen as a result of divine mismanagement as such but as a part of divine judgement. Reading Hannah's thanksgiving in the light of the Song further reinforces this (cf. Deut. 32:19-25). But while there are similarities between them, there is also a distinct difference which actually emphasises the importance of the Song's contribution here: whereas the Song has no mention of kings, Hannah's thanksgiving ends with an anticipatory statement of how YHWH would strengthen his anointed king (מְשִׁיחַ, v.10). It is not clear from here whether Hannah's statement about the king can be taken as an expression of her or the author's pro-monarchical stance. But what is important in our reading of the final form is that this statement needs to be understood within the idea of YHWH's kingly rule expressed in her thanksgiving as a whole. This is where the Song's distinct difference with Hannah's thanksgiving becomes important. The Song's silence about kings and pointed criticism of Israel's and Judah's national apostasy, which is largely consistent with the mainly negative effect of human kingship that Samuel-Kings portrays, suggests that the destruction of Israel and Judah was due to the kings' disloyalty to YHWH and how they had led the whole nation

¹⁴⁰ See Robert P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986), pp.78-79.

¹⁴¹ Ernest Wright also identified the theme of war in both Hannah's prayer and the Song, esp. at Deut. 32:39. See Wright, "The Lawsuit," pp.57-58.

astray with their idolatry. Hence, reading Hannah's thanksgiving in the light of the Song focuses the reader on the joy of giving ultimate loyalty to the sovereign, wise, and universally powerful God of Israel.

Joshua-Kings itself highlights the poignant fact of Israel's disloyalty persistently. The monarchical era has not been painted as a largely blissful picture. It is in fact suggested that Israel's monarchy was founded on the people's rejection of YHWH and their insistence to be "like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5, 7). At the very outset, therefore, the picture depicted seems to indicate that the basis for Israel's demand for monarchical kings is in itself problematic and potentially dangerous. Samuel-Kings follows up with this idea to show that while the best efforts of David, Hezekiah, and Josiah did bring temporal prosperity, ultimately they could not prevent the destruction of Israel and Judah which comes as a cumulative punishment for the actions of the kings and people right through their national history. The sins of Jeroboam I and Manasseh were especially noted (1 Kgs. 14:14-16; 2 Kgs. 21:1-16). In the case of Manasseh, it remains amazing that whereas the destruction of northern Israel was due to the sins of all the northern kings throughout their history (2 Kgs. 17), Kings charges Manasseh as the man whose grave sins in his generation were responsible for the destruction of Judah (2 Kgs. 21:2-9), a divine decree which even Josiah's reforms could not overcome (2 Kgs. 21:10-16). Frank Cross offers a simple and interesting argument for this. He suggests that the attribution of Judah's demise to Manasseh was not part of the original account of the pre-exilic Deuteronomistic History. It was added by the exilic Dtr² who updated the historical account in the exile. As part of this he reworked the account of Manasseh's reign in order to equate Judah's fate to that of Samaria and Manasseh's role to that of Jeroboam.¹⁴² Marvin Sweeney basically follows Cross on this line of interpretation but with some variations. He argues that Kings' singular condemnation of Manasseh was due to the fact that it was unable to trace the corruption of the Davidic kings as it did for the northern kings. In this light, Kings' association of Manasseh with Ahab (2 Kgs. 21:3) was an attempt to "reprise the condemnation of the house of Omri for the Judean branch of the Omride line."¹⁴³ While Sweeney could be right, we nevertheless should not overlook the extremity of Manasseh's syncretism and idolatry which Kings has

¹⁴² Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp.285-289.

¹⁴³ Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2007), pp.426-432.

portrayed in a sufficiently clear way (vv.2-15). In fact 2 Kings 17 attributes Israel's predicament to the extreme, idolatrous worship of the kings and the people of Israel in general, and thus suggesting that they do not escape blame for their apostasy (vv.7-23). In a sense, the Song may be seen as helping the reader to understand broadly the severity of Israel's situation. Although it does not offer any explicit connection with Israel's syncretistic worship, human sacrifice, and divination as depicted in Kings, it may nonetheless conjure up in the reader's mind that her idolatrous practices were tantamount to worshipping the demons (אֱלֹהִים, Deut. 32:17). Moreover, the magnitude of her nationwide apostasy may be referred to as a repugnant, perverse act of insurrection against YHWH, and the Song suggests to us that the heinous act was probably motivated by her defective and corrupted nature (v.5). In this way, the Song reinforces Kings' notion of the irreversible consequence of forsaking YHWH, thus instilling the urgent call for loyalty.

3.3 *YHWH or Jerusalem?*

The case of Jeroboam's sins is not as straightforward as that of Manasseh. Richard Nelson points out that Israel transgressed against YHWH by being disloyal in two fundamental ways: worship of "other gods" and sacrifice to YHWH at sites other than Jerusalem.¹⁴⁴ Both Nelson and Sweeney hold that Jeroboam's offering of sacrifices outside of Jerusalem was a breach of the Deuteronomic covenant stipulation (Deut. 12:5).¹⁴⁵ But while Nelson is adamant that the criticism of Jeroboam is mainly levelled at his sacrifice on the altars at Bethel and Dan, Sweeney lays more stress on Jeroboam's calf worship.¹⁴⁶ Sweeney also points out that Jeroboam's sins comprise not only the establishment of golden calves in Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs. 12:26-31), but also his building of administrative centres (1 Kgs. 12:25) and appointment of non-Levitical priests (1 Kgs. 12:32-33; 13:33-34).¹⁴⁷

Jeroboam's case touches on the idea of the 'chosen place' and the stance of Joshua-Kings on this subject is a complicated one. However, it is still reasonably

¹⁴⁴ Richard Nelson, *The Historical Books* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), p.73.

¹⁴⁵ Nelson, *The Historical Books*, pp.73-74; Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, p.178.

¹⁴⁶ Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, pp.176-177.

¹⁴⁷ Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, p.176. Concerning Jeroboam's appointment of non-Levitical priests, Sweeney also argues that Jeroboam could have acted in accordance with an earlier Israelite tradition of consecrating the firstborn to serve as priests, such as in the case of Samuel, the firstborn of Hannah.

clear that, according to these books, several different places other than Jerusalem were understood as the chosen place at different times: Gibeon (Josh. 9:27; cf. 10:1), Bethel (Judg. 20:26-27), Gilgal (1 Sam. 11:15; 15:21), Shiloh, which was apparently 'central' for all Israel at a time (Josh. 22; 1 Sam. 1-3; cf. Jer. 7:12), and even Shechem could also be viewed as 'central' place (Josh. 24:1, 25; 1 Kgs. 12:1). Contra Nelson and others, the idea that the sin of northern Israel was due to Jeroboam's sacrificial worship outside Jerusalem does not quite seem to square up with Kings' notion that northern Israel was finally condemned because they had forsaken YHWH and rejected the prophets he sent to her (2 Kgs. 17, esp. vv.7-18). This line of thought is further reinforced in the dramatic showdown of Elijah with Ahab in which the heart of the conflict was not about a place of worship but about whether northern Israel would choose YHWH or Baal. It is also noteworthy that the drama between Elijah and Ahab's Baal prophets took place at Mount Carmel (1 Kgs. 18, esp. vv.20-21)! Subsequently, Judah was also condemned for abandoning YHWH even though the people of Judah did worship at Jerusalem. The question, therefore, is not where sacrifices were made but to whom were they offered. Although 2 Kings 21:4 seems to suggest the idea that Jerusalem was the only chosen place of worship, a closer look at the context shows that it does more to emphasise the extent of Manasseh's grievous sin of desecrating YHWH's holy temple than advocating Jerusalem as the only legitimate place of worship.

The above line of interpretation finds resonance in the Song, whose silence about the place of worship and its severe criticism levelled at the people of YHWH shows that the most fundamental issue is not how or where to worship but whom to worship. For the people of YHWH their choice was clear. They opted for foreign gods and even worshipped them in the temple of Jerusalem (2 Kgs. 21).

4. *Israel and the other Nations*

The Old Testament testifies to the fact that Israel is the chosen witness of YHWH. But the election of Israel does not mean that the other nations are rejected. On the contrary, a number of texts from Genesis-Kings suggest that not only is Israel's self-awareness as a unique people of YHWH foundational to her worldview and national identity, but also that her existence as witness of YHWH is to be

understood in relation to YHWH's universal, sovereign purpose for the other nations.¹⁴⁸ Of course, many other Old Testament texts address this same concern, such as Psalms 67 and 87, and parts of Isaiah and Zechariah. But for our purpose here, I limit reflection on this topic to the context of Genesis-Kings, and ask how the Song affirms the perspective of Genesis-Kings in a specific way.

The idea that Israel is called to be YHWH's witness is brought out through the Abrahamic call (Gen. 12:1-3). The promise given to Abraham reflects a particular way in which YHWH will deal with the nations in the light of the disintegrated human society (cf. Gen. 11). By means of the Abrahamic covenant, YHWH promises that Abraham's descendants (Israel) will be a channel by which all the peoples of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 12:3). In this light Israel plays a prominent role in the world in YHWH's plan for all humanity. The idea of Israel's relation to YHWH is further picked up in Exodus 19:5-6, a text which is as pivotal as Genesis 12:1-3. To be sure, the literary problem and contextual significance of Exodus 19:5-6 have been subject to much scholarly debate, and according to Durham, it may even have reached an impasse.¹⁴⁹ The designations that Israel is "YHWH's possession from all peoples" (מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים לִי סְגֻלָּה, v.5b), a "kingdom of priests" (מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים, v.6), and "a holy nation" (גּוֹי קָדוֹשׁ, v.6), continue to intrigue scholars in terms of the precise nature of these expressions, their relation to one another and to the little phrase sandwiched among them - "for all the earth is mine" (כִּי-לִי כָּל-הָאָרֶץ, v.5c). Whether the idea of Israel's function as royal priests and a holy nation on YHWH's earth can be interpreted as her having a specific mission to other nations remains inconclusive.¹⁵⁰ Even two recent works which deal extensively on this subject have

¹⁴⁸ See also Wright, *Mission of God*, pp.254-255; John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology Volume 2: Israel's Faith* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), pp.182-228.

¹⁴⁹ Durham, *Exodus*, pp.259-260. He comments, "Though many helpful observations may be harvested from the critical work of more than a century, the sum total of that work is a clear assertion that no literary solution to this complex narrative has been found, with more than a hint that none is likely to be found. Far too much has been done with and to this material on its way to the form in which we know it for any solution to be any longer a realistic possibility." See also e.g. Childs, *Exodus*, pp.360-361, 366-368; William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant & Creation: An Old Testament Covenant Theology* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1984), pp.84-90; T. Desmond Alexander, "The Composition of the Sinai Narrative in Exodus xix 1 – xxiv 11," in *VT* xlix 1 (1999): pp.1-20.

¹⁵⁰ E.g. those who think Israel has a specific mission to other nations are Martin Noth, *Exodus* (London: SCM Press, 1962), p.157; Alan Cole, *Exodus* (Leicester: IVP, 1973), p.145; Childs, *Exodus*, pp.366-367; Fretheim, *Exodus*, pp.212-213. However, Umberto Cassuto does not speak of Israel's status as priest and holy nation in relation to other nations, in, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem:

differing views on this.¹⁵¹ Jo Bailey Wells' focus on Israel's ultimate call to be a holy nation allows the view of Israel's role of representing and even mediating YHWH's presence to the world.¹⁵² John A. Davies, with his focus on Israel's priesthood, thinks rather that the Sinai pericope has no direct reference to Israel's responsibilities towards other nations. For him, the concepts of Israel as YHWH's possession, kingdom of priests, and a holy nation speak only of Israel's relation to YHWH, in which she is granted direct access to the divine presence.¹⁵³ In my view, the former is likelier. We can broadly say that the central idea in Exodus 19:5-6 not only explicates the nature of Israel's relation to YHWH in terms of her election but also to an extent her relation to the world in terms of the resultant distinctiveness as a holy nation as long as she keeps faith with YHWH.¹⁵⁴ The expression "for all the earth is mine" (כָּל-הָאָרֶץ בִּי-לִי, v.5c) serves as an important backdrop for YHWH's election of Israel and connects the ideas of YHWH's ownership of the nations in general and Israel in particular.¹⁵⁵ Hence, as Fretheim argues, Israel at Sinai was "commissioned to be God's people on behalf of the earth which is God's."¹⁵⁶ Leviticus 11:44-45 reinforces Israel's consciousness of her uniqueness as the people of YHWH by demanding a moral and ritual distinctiveness (cf. Lev. 19:2). Deuteronomy picks up the idea of Israel's distinctiveness and expresses it in clear terms in relation to YHWH's universal power in creation and rule in history (Deut. 4:32-35; 7:6; 10:14-15).¹⁵⁷ Furthermore Deuteronomy gives added impetus to motivate Israel toward obedience to the Torah by pointing out that she would become a visible example of YHWH's nearness, wisdom, and just social structures (Deut. 4:6-8; 26:19; 28:9-10).¹⁵⁸

Hebrew University Press, 1951), p.227. G. Henton Davies remains neutral, allowing for both interpretations in, *Exodus: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1967), p.156.

¹⁵¹ Jo Bailey Wells in *God's Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) and John A. Davis in *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19:6* (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

¹⁵² Wells, *God's Holy People*, pp.47-57.

¹⁵³ Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, pp.61-102. His view is closer to Dumbrell's, who sees in these verses a passive nature of Israel's service to the nations. See Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, pp.89-90.

¹⁵⁴ Wells, *God's Holy People*, pp.44-57.

¹⁵⁵ Davis, *A Royal Priesthood*, p.59.

¹⁵⁶ Fretheim, *Exodus*, p.212. See also Durham, *Exodus*, p.263.

¹⁵⁷ See Wright, *Mission of God*, p.238.

¹⁵⁸ Wright, *Mission of God*, p.227.

In Joshua-Kings, however, readers are informed that throughout Israel's history she often had to grapple with the dichotomy between living like the other nations and differently from them. As long as Israel lives differently by maintaining her distinctiveness and fulfilling her role as YHWH's worldwide witness, there exists inevitably a degree of tension between her and the surrounding nations. That tension arises from the fact that Israel's witness of YHWH's supremacy to the other nations is always an uncompromising polemic against ideologies which were set against the rule of YHWH.¹⁵⁹ One of the best illustrations of such polemical effect of Israel's presence in the world can be seen in David's response to Goliath: "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands ... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (1 Sam. 17:46). Here, not only has David saved Israel from the Philistines but more importantly he "glorifies Yahweh in the eyes of the world" and calls Israel and the nations "to fresh faith in Yahweh."¹⁶⁰ In fact the positive outcome of Israel's contention with the other nations is boldly envisaged in the prayers of Solomon and Hezekiah respectively: "the foreigner has come because of your name" (1 Kgs. 8:41-43), and "that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, YHWH, are God" (2 Kgs. 19:19). In this way, YHWH's commission to Abraham to become a channel of blessing to other nations finds an echo in the story of Israel. But more often than not, Joshua-Kings criticise Israel for living in accordance with the ways of the other nations rather than living up to YHWH's expectation. Consequently, as a Yahwistic nation, Israel becomes characterised by covenant rebellion and eventually succumbs to foreign invasive forces as part of YHWH's covenantal curses on her (cf. Deut. 28:25). In such times Israel found herself not only having to contend with the other nations (for the wrong reason!) but also having to contend with YHWH, or more accurately, coping with YHWH contending against her. Hence, according to the primary history of Genesis-Kings, Israel did not fare well. Israel's disobedience eventually ushers in the final destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. which bring YHWH's covenant partner to her knees and leaves her hope of restoration bleakly uncertain (cf. 2 Kgs. 25:27-30).

Therefore, how does the Song help the readers understand Israel's election and her relation to the world in the context of Genesis-Kings? More precisely, does the

¹⁵⁹ McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, pp.19-29.

¹⁶⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), p.132.

Song bring to our reading of Genesis-Kings insights regarding the future of Israel? If yes, in what ways? I suggest that the Song enhances our reading with added perspectives regarding Israel's election, other nations' role in relation to her, and YHWH's vindication and restoration of her.

4.1 Israel's primeval history

The Song shows us that Israel's function in the world has been a matter of YHWH's choice of her from the ancient times (Deut. 32:8-9). It provides the readers with a reference point to make sense of the Abrahamic covenant, in that, albeit in quite different terms, it makes a connection between the choice of Israel and the destinies of the nations. Furthermore, the Song's expressions of YHWH's providential care and eventual restoration of Israel reinforce the idea that Israel is not elected to be YHWH's treasured possession because of her quality (Deut. 7:7-8) but purely out of divine grace and mercy. In this light, it also reiterates the importance of understanding Israel's strategic function in YHWH's world. It helps us re-focus on the fact that Israel's missional endeavour to the world, to use Christopher Wright's terminology, is essentially YHWH's missional act of justice and righteousness, as well as grace and mercy to the other nations.¹⁶¹ It is YHWH's global outreach to the world initiated from the beginning which he himself will also bring into completion at the end (cf. Rev. 14:6). The Song's depiction of Israel's primeval past also shows us the supremacy of YHWH's rule over the other gods and creation. In this way, the Song helps us see that all gods and all the histories of the nations are under YHWH's control. This in turn gives us a way of understanding that the chaos and upheavals in the creation order wrought by dark forces are not due to YHWH losing control but his appointed way of bringing the whole creation into submission and reverence for him. Hence the Song shows us that all nations are under YHWH's judgement, and we can infer from it that Israel as YHWH's allotment is instrumental in the outworking of this purpose in creation.

4.2 Other nations as witnesses and the divine deliberation

The Song also shows us that other nations can be chosen to be spectators and witnesses, not only of Israel's covenantal living (as in Deut. 4:6-8) but also her

¹⁶¹ Cf. Introduction above, pp.3-4.

catastrophic history brought about by covenantal rebellion and YHWH's judgement on her as a result (Deut. 32:19-27). In such times, other nations would recognise that Israel's dire straits are not due to any immoral act on YHWH's part but to the need for YHWH to demonstrate his justice and righteousness to Israel and the world (Deut. 32:4). Concerning this, the Song allows us to pry into the profound mystery of divine deliberation, revealing to us YHWH's heart and mind in this matter (Deut. 32:26-27).¹⁶² Hearers are made to feel that YHWH's decision to address Israel's apostasy is not something that comes easily. The Song gives us glimpses of the fact that YHWH is not detached from the entire situation but is personally engaged in it, and that he feels the effect of Israel's sin (cf. Deut. 32:19-21a, 22) to an extent that he even has to debate within himself and weigh the consequences of his judgement on Israel in relation to his love for her and his concern for his own integrity as the righteous, supreme, and sovereign God in relation to the watching world (cf. Deut. 32:4, 26-27, 39). To be sure, the Song is not the only place in which we are told of YHWH's deliberation. It also appears, for example, in the flood narrative in which the disclosure of YHWH's deep thoughts at the beginning of the narrative shows us that humanity's depraved condition is truly an issue for YHWH (Gen.6:5-6) and that he "feels sorry" (יְהוָה וַיִּנְחַם, Gen. 6:6), "grieved" (וַיִּתְעַצֵּב, Gen.6:6), and actually has to struggle within himself to bring about the judgement. A somewhat similar expression of divine struggle also appears in Hosea 11:8 in which we are told that YHWH's heart is "turned within" him (נִתְפַּךְ עָלַי לִבִּי) in a dilemma between executing judgement and showing mercy. However, hearers need not interpret these descriptions of divine struggle as expressions of divine weakness and indecisiveness. Rather, the anthropomorphic language serves to communicate one aspect of the way in which YHWH is involved in the world, as in the case of the Song, defending his own reputation as a necessary testimony to the world by taking issue with Israel's transgression against his covenant and holiness. In this light, we may also say that the Song is able to make the hearers feel the effect of YHWH's deliberation with regards to their own sins in their respective situations. The idea of YHWH's deliberation is also echoed at the end of Kings (2 Kgs 25). Readers who read about the total devastation of YHWH's covenantal people, Jerusalem and its temple cannot but

¹⁶² See more details of Deut. 32:26-27 in Chapter Two above, pp.99-101.

remember how YHWH might have 'struggled' in this dilemma between destroying his people and remaining faithful to them.

4.3 *YHWH's vindication and Israel's future hope*

The Song's third important contribution to our reading of Genesis-Kings with regards to Israel's relation to other nations is the idea of YHWH vindicating her against her enemies and giving her the prospect of hope (Deut. 32:34-43). This is particularly significant in view of how Genesis-Kings ends the primary history of Israel on an unsettling note. It is not difficult for the readers to note a glaring difference between the end of Kings and that of the Song. Whilst Kings has no definite expression of Israel's hope of restoration, overcoming her enemies, and returning to the land, the Song speaks of YHWH vindicating Israel against the enemies, and the hope of her restoration to her land. We have seen above that there are different views on the attitude of the Deuteronomistic History to future hope for Israel. But the Book of Kings in particular seems to offer little in this regard. 1 Kings 8:46-53 leaves open the hope of some kind of betterment, but it is not clear that a restoration to the land is in view. Wolff conceded that while there is a tint of hope of Israel's future beyond the exile in 1 Kings 8, Dtr did not link his idea of repentance with any specific hope in his "open-ended view of history."¹⁶³ And McConville argued, on the basis of a study of שׁוּב in the two passages that while Deuteronomy 30:1-10 is prepared to anticipate YHWH's restoration of his people from exiles to the land, 1 Kings 8:46-53 is content with its focus on the hope that YHWH will not abandon his people in exile.¹⁶⁴

The distinction between these two passages is significant for our reflection on the Song's function in our reading of Kings, and even of Deuteronomy 30. As the readers come to end of the Kings narrative and are confronted with its largely pessimistic view of the dynastic failure, the reality of exile, and the uncertainty of the future, the Song is able to inspire in them a confidence that there remains hope for the people of YHWH. It assures them that despite the destruction, exile, and loss of land

¹⁶³ Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historical Work," pp.72, 77.

¹⁶⁴ McConville, "1 Kings 8:46-53 and the Deuteronomic Hope," pp.367, 369. See a more detailed discussion on the subject of hope in Jeremiah in J.G. McConville, *Judgement and Promise: An Interpretation of the Book of Jeremiah* (Leicester: Apollos, 1993), pp.79-109.

YHWH will vindicate them against their enemies and restore his people to the land at the end (Deut. 32:34-43). Just as YHWH's dealing with his people is mapped out on the world stage, the readers are assured that YHWH's vindication against their enemies will also be made public. At that time, other nations will come to recognise the incomparability of YHWH and his enduring faithfulness to his people. In this sense, the Song may even be understood as a graphic dramatisation of Deuteronomy 30:7 of the way in which YHWH will inflict the covenantal curses on those who persecute his people (Deut. 32:34-42). Interestingly, the Song also uses the word שׁוֹב but in the sense that YHWH "will return vengeance" to the enemies (יָשִׁיב לְצָרָיו נִקְמָה, Deut. 32:43). The Song's use of שׁוֹב clearly has a different focus from that of 1 Kings 8 and Deuteronomy 30 but it nonetheless may be suggestive of an important theological idea which is relevant to the distressing situation of the exiled: if the heart of the people returns to YHWH, YHWH will ensure that vengeance will be returned to their enemies and fortunes to his people. In this light, Wolff may be right to insist on the importance of repentance as a thematic compass to reading the Deuteronomistic History. Yet, the necessity for repentance must also be understood within the context of the reality of YHWH's mercy for his people in that while their repentance becomes a pre-requisite for gaining YHWH's mercy, the mercy of YHWH is the bedrock and motivation of their turning back to him. The Song lays considerable emphasis on the latter. It focuses mainly on the necessity of divine action as the only resolution for human predicament, as in this case, YHWH will act on behalf of his people when he sees that they no longer have the power even to save themselves (כִּי יִרְאֶה כִּי־אֲזַלְתָּ יָד, v.36). This however does not mean a negation of the need for repentance on the part of the people. In this respect, therefore, it informs the readers that at the end of their turmoil, distress, and helplessness, there will be divine compassion (יִתְנַחֵם, v.36). It shows them that just as YHWH remains just and righteous in his execution of judgement on them; he will also remain faithful and committed to his people. The idea of divine deliberation is again to the fore here and the readers are made conscious of YHWH's heart and mind in the mysterious outworking of his purpose (cf. Deut. 29:28 [ET 29:29]). As they grapple with the effects of their sins they are also invited to put their faith on YHWH's goodness and great power even in their adverse situation. In this way the Song goes full cycle and

leads them back to where they started –YHWH’s grace in election and providential care for them (Deut. 32:8-9, 12-14; cf. Gen. 12:1-3).

5. Conclusion

The Song expresses the heart of the Torah. The variety of the Pentateuchal laws shows that the Torah must always adapt to new situations and the Song’s emphasis on the central command, loyalty to YHWH alone, will always take on new forms. In view of this, the Song provides a way of thinking about how all the Pentateuchal laws can be regarded as authoritative in spite of their differences. It tells its readers that it is not the surface law that is important but the source from which it comes. It is the fact that it is YHWH who is communicating to them and the fundamental requirement is always the First Commandment, “Love YHWH your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5). While this ‘law-crystallising’ function of the Song may be paradoxical because the Song does not actually mention the Torah, it nonetheless has the effect of not absolutising any specific law yet re-affirming the need to hear and obey YHWH’s word as mediated through Moses. In this sense the Song stands alongside what Deuteronomy calls “this law” (הַחֹרֶךְ הַזֶּה, Deut. 31:9-13, 24-26), which probably refers to a form of Deuteronomy that was read every seven years. When the Song is read together with “this law,” it validates all the laws of Moses yet it also shows that all laws are subordinate to the essential command to worship YHWH alone.

The Song also resonates with the broader perspective of Genesis-Kings in that it does not specify Jerusalem as the only worship place. In fact the Song goes further to reinforce this stance by keeping mute about the worship site but focuses on the YHWH-Israel covenantal relationship to help the readers understand that ultimately it is not the place of worship but loyalty to YHWH expressed in wholehearted worship that counts. This idea resonates in an even more significant way at the end of Kings when the readers are made to realise that the Jerusalem Temple had not prevented the destruction of Judah and the exile of its people. Therefore, what became arguably the most important reminder for the exiled readers was the Song’s emphasis on loyalty (both loyalty to YHWH and YHWH’s loyalty to his people) which played a crucial role in bringing them back to the fundamental need for cultivating an obedient heart

for YHWH, who promised to “circumcise their heart” in the future to renew and strengthen their love for him (cf. Deut.30:6).

Not only does the Song convey the essence of the Torah and advocate true Yahwistic worship, we have also seen that it provides important perspectives to our understanding of Israel’s relation to the other nations. The Song reinforces the centrality of Israel’s involvement in YHWH’s outworking of his purposes in creation all the way back in primeval times. The assignment of “inheritance” to the nations, and Israel to YHWH (Deut. 32:8-9), resonates with the choice of Abraham’s descendents to bring blessing to “all the families of the earth” (Gen.11:3). This also expresses her responsibility to manifest the quality of YHWH to the world by their covenantal living, failing which she will face divine judgement under covenantal stipulations. While Israel’s covenantal life was a testimony concerning YHWH’s character to the other nations, the Song points out that even YHWH’s judgement on her covenantal rebellion can also become in itself a witness to divine justice and righteousness to the world. Other nations used as instruments of divine wrath against Israel would then in turn have to face their own destiny as rebels against YHWH.

In this sense, the Song gives assurance to the readers of Genesis-Kings of the reality of both hope and vengeance. It speaks of the fact that YHWH is the controller of history and nations, and at the end he will express his justice, supremacy, and faithfulness to his people in concrete ways – in vindicating Israel against her cruel enemies and restoring her fortunes before them. Yet the Song also informs the readers that all these do not come easily with YHWH in the sense that he too feels the effect of Israel’s sin and the cruelty of her enemies. The glimpse of YHWH’s inner debate within his own mind (Deut. 32:26-27; cf. Deut. 29:28 [ET 29:29]) helps the readers understand that just as the people grappled with their desolation (2 Kgs 25), YHWH is also, in a sense, struggling with them, and working out the future of his people. In this way the Song draws the readers to a deeper awareness of YHWH’s intimate involvement with his people. I have argued that readers who reach the end of the narrative in Kings can still hear the promise of future restoration echoing from the Song. In relation to this aspect of the Song’s function is also the fact that the Song, as a hermeneutical lens, introduces a certain balance into our reading of Genesis-Kings, enabling us to reassess our interpretation of the data. In more concrete terms, as we

see that on one hand the Song may confirm themes of Genesis-Kings, for example, the central theme of obedience and worship. But on the other hand, we also see that it may critique a particular reading of the materials, for example, readers who share with Hannah's overt optimism for human kingship (1 Sam. 2:10) will soon realise that the Song does not express the same optimism. Instead, the Song suppresses the urge to elevate human kingship by pointing the readers directly to the superiority of the divine king to whom ultimate allegiance is owed. This, I believe, is a crucial interpretive compass by which we may understand the law of the Israelite kings, particularly, the limitations placed on them (cf. Deut. 17:14-20). In this light, we see the significant function of the Song within the corpus because of its ability to interact with different materials in it. To readers who promote the importance of monarchical kingship, the Song emphasises the idea that all human leadership is subservient to the ultimate rule of YHWH. To those who see an absence of hope in the exile, the Song highlights YHWH's faithfulness and supreme power as the basis for the people's future vindication and restoration.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study has been to investigate how the Song functions theologically and hermeneutically in its contexts in Deuteronomy and Genesis-Kings. My contention is that whilst the Song in itself has been the subject of numerous studies which mainly focus on its dating and rhetorical characteristics, it has not been sufficiently examined within its contexts. The study takes a cue from the argument of Terry Giles and William Doan that the Song forges a symbiotic relationship with Deuteronomy. I have also extended the examination of the Song's function to its role in Genesis-Kings.

I ask the question: what difference does the Song make to our reading of Deuteronomy and Genesis-Kings? Beginning with a survey of scholarly opinions, even from the most recent monograph that deals substantially with the Song's provenance,¹ Chapter One established that scholars have generally noted the prophetic and didactic nature of the Song. In the light of this, I have proposed that examining the Song in reference to its contexts might yield better dividends. This led me to consider the work of James Watts, Steven Weitzman, Brian Britt, and Mark Leuchter, who have tried to elucidate the Song's function within its immediate narrative context. However, while their contributions have reinforced the Song's narrative importance, they remain problematic at some points. For example, contra Watts, I have argued that reading the Song as a "summary of Deuteronomic themes" does not allow for important Deuteronomic themes that are absent in the Song. I have also differed from him concerning the Song's statement of hope which he thinks is obscured and muted. As my study shows, the Song is in fact adamant about YHWH's acts of vengeance precisely because it has in view Israel's restoration hope, which, as pointed out in Chapter Four, becomes an important notion to the exiles in a foreign land.

¹ Paul Sanders' *The Provenance of Deuteronomy* 32 in 1996 has been to date the latest monograph that deals with the Song at great length.

Furthermore, Watts' view that the Song and the Blessing of Moses create a "harsh juxtaposition" to project the "good and bad of Israel's history" has also fallen short of an understanding that both poetic texts were inserted towards the end of Deuteronomy to highlight YHWH's greatness by underscoring his power and faithfulness to Israel. The assurance of YHWH's greatness is necessary in view of the nation's political and religious upheaval, as Joshua-Kings depicts. This assurance serves to inspire faith and underline the need for constant loyalty towards him.

Weitzman is closer to a true depiction of the Song as Moses' final teaching and witness against Israel, but his view of the incoherence between the Song's "hopeful conclusion" and Deuteronomy 31:16-22 is questionable. It is this discordance that alerts the reader to the need for a wider study of the Song's function. I have proposed instead that the Song's "hopeful conclusion," which emphasises YHWH's vindication and vengeance, has in fact upheld the overall missiological significance of Deuteronomy. The probable reason why Deuteronomy 31:16-22 only highlights the Song's "accusatory strain" was in order to dramatise Israel's failure in living up to its vocation as a witness to YHWH's righteousness to the world, a mission which YHWH himself will undertake at the end.

Britt looks at how Deuteronomy 31-32, including the Song, functions as a textual memorial within Deuteronomy 31-34 in which the emphasis is on the Torah. Whilst Britt rightly notes the Song's involvement in emphasising the importance of the Torah, he has not elaborated how the Song actually works as a textual memorial or in what way it emphasises the Torah. The last review concerns Leuchter's understanding of how the Song has been hermeneutically manipulated to serve as a propagandistic appeal for Josiah by way of criticising his predecessors, namely, Saul, Solomon, and Jeroboam. I have contended that Leuchter's view runs into difficulty because the Song does not register an interest in human monarchy, and that his view does not arise from the Song's explicit content but rather from a questionable historical hypothesis. Therefore, Chapter One highlights that the scholarly contribution as a whole thus far has not satisfactorily addressed the dynamic relationship between the Song and Deuteronomy, let alone the Song's relation to Genesis-Kings. So as a necessary step to examine the Song's synchronic relation to its contexts, I undertake a literary and theological analysis of the Song in Chapter

Two which shows the way in which the Song uses pertinent ideas such as creation, election, YHWH's supremacy, sovereignty, Israel's salvation history, foreign worship and apostasy to bear on the issue of Israel's disloyalty and violation of the central command. The Song's emphases of YHWH's power and faithfulness, expressed through graphic imagery and emotive language, aim to elicit repentance, while at the same time to instil in the readers a sense of hope of divine vindication and restoration.

With these in perspective, Chapter Three describes how the Song relates to its context in Deuteronomy. The chapter begins with a review of current issues in the study of Deuteronomy and shows that the old consensus idea of Deuteronomy as a programme to demythologise the mode of YHWH's presence has been called into question by newer exegesis. In particular, the Deuteronomic idiom "to put his name there" (לְשׂוֹם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם or לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם) was shown to be a loan adaptation of the Akkadian idiom "to place the name" (*šuma šakānu*) associated with the installation of a victory stele to announce the ownership of the new suzerain. Deuteronomy's adaptation of this idiom hence was not to militate against YHWH's immanence but to express the notion of his sovereignty and ownership over Israel and her land. In line with this, I have argued that the Song does not resonate with notions of demythologisation or anti-anthropomorphism, nor is it concerned with a distinction between divine transcendence and immanence. Rather, it advocates the idea of YHWH's corporeality and shows that the mode of divine presence in fact has not been corrected. Therefore, if Deuteronomy were to be a corrective to a theology of divine presence, incorporating the Song as part of the book in its final form would be self-contradictory. The review then examines how the consensus view of Deuteronomy as a document legislating for cult centralisation at the sole worship site in Jerusalem has also been challenged. Several scholars have shown that Deuteronomy in fact suggests a number of places as prominent worship sites, with Mount Ebal appearing to be the first location in which YHWH "places his name." Furthermore, the idea that Deuteronomy bolsters Josiah's regime has also been shown to be at odds with its own constitutional law which curbs the king's political and financial power (Deut. 16:18-18:22). In my view the contradiction becomes even more conspicuous when the Song's silence on cult centralisation, worship place, and kingship are taken into consideration. This phenomenon suggests that Deuteronomy's

main focus is not cult centralisation, but YHWH's supreme rule and demand for Israel's loyalty. The chapter then moves on to explore how Deuteronomy impresses upon the readers its overriding concern for Israel's distinctiveness, undergirded by two fundamental principles which Israel must adhere to: the purity of worship and centrality of the Torah. The final section of this chapter then shows how these principles resonate in the Song. We have seen that the Song, unlike Deuteronomy, is neither explicit about the Torah nor interested in the idea of centralisation. It even has thematic differences with Deuteronomy. Yet its overall outlook affirms Deuteronomy's call for loyalty to YHWH and worship of him alone. In this way, both Deuteronomy and the Song share the focus of upholding the First Commandment from which all other Commandments and covenantal stipulations derive their meanings. Therefore, I argue that the Song expresses the heart of Deuteronomy. It does it by fusing its thematic affinities and differences to bear on the Deuteronomic demand for covenantal loyalty and worship, and showing how these ideas of loyalty and worship must translate into a quality of character in Israel that befits the people of YHWH. The significance of the Song to Deuteronomy, hence, cannot be overemphasised. That the Song plays a central role of emphasising the necessity of obedience is suggested by the idea that it is to be taught to the Israelites (Deut. 31:19, 22) in order that it may become an important channel for YHWH's word to be "very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it" (Deut. 30:14).

In the light of the Song's fundamental emphasis on loyalty, finally, Chapter Four looks at how it connects with Genesis-Kings with reference to the themes of obedience and worship. In connection with the Pentateuch, I agree with Bernard Levinson that the Torah has undergone re-interpretation in order to address new contexts and challenges. This re-contextualisation of the laws has been particularly illustrated in Deuteronomy's relation to the Book of the Covenant. Despite the differences, the Song is able to invite the readers to look beneath the surface to see the foundational principle of loyalty to YHWH. As for the subject of worship, I have argued that in the final form of the Pentateuch, the importance of particular places of worship is relativised. The result is an emphasis on the 'heart' of worship rather than the 'place.' This idea resonates well with the Song's primary concern in the sense that what counts ultimately is undivided allegiance to YHWH, regardless of whether Yahwistic worship was confined to the land or beyond it. Hence, the Song in general

affirms this Pentateuchal perspective but crystallises the notion of true worship in particular for exilic readers who have got to make sense of their predicament in a foreign land. In the same chapter I have also pointed out that the demand for loyalty is also pertinent in Joshua-Kings, within which making sense of the thematic multiplicity remains a difficult but essential task. But I believe this is where the Song can help the readers. The Song's focus on loyalty to YHWH in reality becomes a hermeneutical compass by which interrelated themes within the corpus can be brought to bear on the significance of obeying the First Command. In this way, the scholarly perception of the unity of Joshua-Kings, or "the Deuteronomistic History," justifies the question as to how the Song helps us read the narrative as a whole.

If the Song is understood to be a prophetic criticism of Israel's disloyalty, ingratitude, and failure to be a witnessing nation, then Chapter Four would be incomplete without a reflection on the Song's "hopeful conclusion," with respect to her election and corresponding relation to other nations. No passage in the Old Testament, except for the Song, has traced YHWH's choice of Israel back into the primeval times. In doing so, moreover, the Song reminds its readers of YHWH's sovereignty over all creation. The idea of divine sovereignty becomes significant especially towards the end of Kings, in which readers are made aware that Israel's devastation was not because YHWH had lost control over history but because of the unrighteousness of his people. Allied to the idea of Israel's election is the question of the role of the other nations. The Song's perspective on Israel's military defeat by an unnamed enemy affirms generally that any nations can be used as YHWH's instruments of wrath against Israel's covenantal rebellion. These nations, through the process of being YHWH's instruments, become witnesses themselves to and of YHWH's justice and righteousness. In this sense, we might say that the Song opens up an idea which suggests a kind of levelling between Israel and other nations in that they were all subject to the same standard of YHWH's justice (cf. Deut. 32:28-34).

However, the story of the YHWH-Israel relationship does not stop here but goes full circle towards the end of the Song. Readers of Genesis-Kings can take from the Song that Israel's destruction does not represent the final destiny for the people of YHWH. Rather, it paves the way for her repentance, as well as for YHWH's circumcision of her heart which he promises to bring about in the future (Deut. 32:36;

cf. 30:6). The “hopeful conclusion” of the Song shows readers that after disloyalty, injustice, and unrighteousness have been dealt with, there will be compassion, hope, and restoration for Israel at the end. The Song also explains why YHWH would finally vindicate and restore Israel’s fortunes. In a striking way it attributes the reversal of YHWH’s action to his concern for his own honour as a faithful and superior God (Deut. 32:26-27). The Song’s depiction of this divine deliberation remains vitally important here because it suggests that even in Israel’s darkest history, as in the closing narrative of Kings, YHWH has not abandoned his people, and that a return to her own land lies within his purpose.

Therefore, the Song makes important contributions to our reading of Deuteronomy and Genesis-Kings in their final form. As an interpretative compass, it affirms and critiques our reading of the materials, and even supplies significant viewpoints that give us a sense of beginning and closure to the Primary History of the people of YHWH in terms of Israel’s primeval past and future hope respectively. In this sense, the Song is indispensable to a reading of Genesis-Kings. Furthermore, the Song’s metaphorical depictions of the person of YHWH also supply the readers, in the words of Juliana Claassens, with “a rich resource for imagining God.”² In her excellent treatment of the function of metaphors in the Song, Claassens argues that although some of the metaphors used to describe YHWH seem to contradict each other, they are intrinsically connected for rhetorical effect and are brought to their fullest expression of YHWH in the Song’s summary statement in verse 39.³ One of the functions of the contrasting depictions of YHWH’s killing and giving life, wounding and healing is to point the readers towards the notion of YHWH’s freedom in that YHWH is free to be who he is.⁴

This, I believe, is a significant contribution of the Song to our understanding of YHWH as a free and sovereign deity who chooses Israel from the beginning, calls them to worship him alone, chooses to punish them and expel them from the land, but who also finally chooses to honour them before the world. The idea of YHWH’s freedom in executing his purpose for the world should warn readers against defining

² L. Juliana M. Claassens, “‘I Kill and I Give Life’: Contrasting depictions for God in Deuteronomy 32,” in *OTE* 18/1 (2005): pp.35-46.

³ Claassens, “‘I Kill and I Give Life’: Contrasting depictions for God in Deuteronomy 32,” p.35.

⁴ Claassens, “‘I Kill and I Give Life’: Contrasting depictions for God in Deuteronomy 32,” p.43.

him in narrow categories simply because the outworking of the divine purpose remains unfathomable to human mind (Deut. 29:29). In the light of this, therefore, the Song is able to invite the readers to put their trust in YHWH despite the virtually hopeless situation, understanding that all events eventually come from the hand of the just and righteous God of Israel who destroys but will also ultimately restore.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ackroyd, Peter R. *Exile and Restoration*. London: SCM, 1968.
- Albright, William F. "Some remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy XXXII," *VT* 9 (1959): pp.339-346.
- Alday, S. Carillo. *El Cántico de Moisés (Dt 32)*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto "Francisco Suárez," 1970.
- Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch (2nd Edition)*. UK: Paternoster, 2002.
- _____. "The Composition of the Sinai Narrative in Exodus xix 1 – xxiv 11," in *VT* xlix 1 (1999): pp.1-20.
- Allen, David Mark, 'Deuteronomic Re-presentation in a Word of Exhortation: An Assessment of the Paraenetic Function of Deuteronomy in the letter to the Hebrews.' Ph.D Diss., University of Edinburgh, 2007.
- Allen, Leslie C. "Images of Israel: The People of God in the Prophets," in Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., Robert K. Johnston, Robert P. Meye (eds.) *Studies in Old Testament Theology: Historical and Contemporary Images of God and God's People*. Eds. Dallas: Word, 1992.
- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. USA: Basics, 1985.
- Armerding, Carl E. *The Old Testament and Criticism*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997.
- Auld, A.G. (ed.). *Understanding Poets and Prophets*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1993.
- Austin, John Langshaw. *How to Do Things with Words*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Baltzer, Klaus. *Deutero-Isaiah* (trans. Margaret Kohl). Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2001.
- Barker, Paul. 'Faithless Israel, Faithful Yahweh in Deuteronomy.' Ph.D Diss., University of Bristol, 1995.
- Bartholomew, Craig. "Reading the Old Testament in Postmodern Times." *TynBul* 49.1 (1998): pp.91-114.

- Barr, James. *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- _____. *The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Becking, Bob. "The Gods, in Whom They Trusted ... Assyrian Evidence for Iconic Polytheism in Ancient Israel?" in Bob Becking, Meindert Dijkstra, Marjo Korpel, and Karel Vriezen (eds.) *Only One God?: Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- _____. "Only One God: On Possible Implications for Biblical Theology," in Bob Becking, Meindert Dijkstra, Marjo Korpel, and Karel Vriezen (eds.) *Only One God?: Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Beckwith, R. T. "A Modern Theory of the Old Testament Canon," in *VT* 41, 4 (1991): pp.385-395.
- Bentzen, Aage. *Introduction to the Old Testament Vol II*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Gads, 1948.
- Bergey, Ronald. "The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-43) and Isaian Prophecies: A Case of Early Intertextuality?" in *JSOT* 28.1 (2003): pp.33-54.
- Birch Bruce C., Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim, David L. Petersen. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *A History of Prophecy in Israel*. Louisville: Westminster, 1996.
- Block, Daniel I. *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology*. Winona Lake: The Evangelical Theological Society, 1998.
- _____. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- _____. "Recovering the Voice of Moses: The Genesis of Deuteronomy," in *JETS* 44/3 (Sept 2001): pp.385-408.
- Boston, James R. 'The Song of Moses: Deuteronomy 32:1-43.' Ph.D Diss., Union Theological Seminary (USA) 1966).
- _____. "The Wisdom Influence upon the Song of Moses," in *JBL* 87 (1968): pp.198-202.
- Braulik, Georg, OSB. *The Theology of Deuteronomy*. Dallas: BIBAL, 1994.
- Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1996.

- Briggs, Richard S. *Words in Action: Speech Acts Theory and Biblical Interpretation*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001.
- _____. *Reading the Bible Wisely*. London: SPCK, 2003.
- _____. *One God Among Many?* Cambridge: Grove Books, 2006.
- Bright, John. *The Authority of the Old Testament*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997.
- Britt, Brian. "Deuteronomy 31-32 as a Textual Memorial," in *BibInt* 8, 3 (2000): pp.358-374.
- Broyles, Craig C. *Interpreting the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
- Brown, Raymond. *The Message of Deuteronomy*. Leicester: IVP, 1993.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *First and Second Samuel*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990.
- _____. *Deuteronomy*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.
- _____. *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002.
- _____. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.
- Brueggemann, Walter and Hans Walter Wolff. *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975.
- Budd, Philip J. *Numbers*. Waco: WORD, 1984.
- Budde, Karl. *Das Lied Mose's: Deut 32 erläutert und übersetzt*; Tübingen, 1920.
- Bush, Frederic W. "Images of Israel: The People of God in the Torah," in Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., Robert K. Johnston, Robert P. Meye (eds.) *Studies in Old Testament Theology: Historical and Contemporary Images of God and God's People*. Dallas: Word, 1992.
- Campbell, Antony F., SJ. "Martin Noth and the Deuteronomistic History," in Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham (eds.) *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, pp.31-62.
- Campbell, Antony F., SJ, Mark A. O'Brien, OP. *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History: Origin, Upgrades, Present Texts*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.
- _____. *Rethinking the Pentateuch*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

- Cairns, Ian. *Deuteronomy: Word and Presence*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1992.
- Cassuto, Umberto. "The Song of Moses (Deut chapter xxxii 1-43)," in *BOS* Vol 1. Jerusalem: Magnes Press (1973): pp.41-46.
- _____. *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* [trans. Israel Abrahams]. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1974.
- _____. *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1951.
- Childs, Brevard S. *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*. London: SCM Press, 1960.
- _____. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.
- _____. *Exodus*. London: SCM Press, 1974.
- Chisholm Jr., Robert B. *Handbook on the Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Christensen, Duane L. *Deuteronomy 1-11*. Texas: WORD, 1991.
- _____. *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002.
- _____. (ed.) *A Song of Power and The Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993.
- Claassens, L. Juliana M. "'I Kill and I Give Life': Contrasting depictions for God in Deuteronomy 32," in *OTE* 18/1 (2005): pp.35-46.
- Clements, Ronald E. *God and Temple: The Idea of the Divine Presence in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965.
- _____. *God's Chosen People: A Theological Interpretation of the Book of Deuteronomy*. London: SCM, 1968.
- _____. *Deuteronomy*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1989.
- _____. *Old Testament Prophecy: From Oracles to Canon*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- _____. "The Book of Deuteronomy" in *IB* Vol 2. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.
- _____. "A Dialogue with Gordon McConville on Deuteronomy: The Origins of Deuteronomy: What are the clues?" in *SJT* (2003): pp.508-516.

- Clines, David J.A. "Images of Yahweh: God in the Pentateuch," in Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., Robert K. Johnston, Robert P. Meye (eds.) *Studies in Old Testament Theology: Historical and Contemporary Images of God and God's People*. Dallas: Word, 1992.
- _____. *The Theme of the Pentateuch*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1997.
- Coggins, Richard. "What does 'Deuteronomistic' Mean?" in Linda S. Schearing, Steven L. McKenzie (eds.) *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, pp.22-35.
- Cohen, Harold R. *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the light of Akkadian and Ugaritic*. Missoula: Scholar Press, 1978.
- Cole, Alan. *Exodus*. Leicester: IVP, 1973.
- Cornill, Carl H. *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*. Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1891.
- Cotterell, Peter & Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*. London: SPCK, 1989.
- Craigie, P.C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Cross, Frank Moore. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. USA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- _____. "The Priestly Houses of Early Israel," in John T. Strong, Steven S. Tuell (eds.) *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005, pp.35-55.
- Cross, Frank Moore and David N. Freedman. *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of the Epigraphic Evidence*. New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1952.
- Crowe, Brandon D. "The Song of Moses and Divine Begetting in Matt 1:20," in *Bib* Vol. 90 (2009): pp.47-58. Also at <http://www.bsw.org/?l=7190>
- Crüsemann, Frank. *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* (trans. Allan Mahnke). Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
- Davies, G. Henton. *Exodus: Introduction and Commentary*. London: SCM Press, 1967.
- Davies, John A. *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19:6*. London: T&T Clark, 2004.
- Day, John. "Pre-Deuteronomic Allusions to the Covenant in Hosea and Psalm LXXVII." *VT* 36, 1 (1986): pp.1-12.

- Dietrich, Walter. "Martin Noth and the Future of the Deuteronomistic History," in Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham (eds.) *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, pp.153-175.
- Dijkstra, Meindert. "El, the God of Israel – Israel, the People of YHWH: On the Origins of Ancient Israelite Yahwism," in Bob Becking, Meindert Dijkstra, Marjo Korpel, and Karel Vriezen (eds.) *Only One God?: Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Dillard, Raymond B and Tremper Longman III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Leicester: Apollos, 1995.
- Dockery, David S. *Biblical Interpretation: Then and Now*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Driver, Samuel R. *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1929.
- _____. *Deuteronomy*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978.
- Dumbrell, William J. *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997.
- _____. *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament* (2nd Edition). Leicester: Apollos, 2002.
- Durham, John I. *Exodus*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987.
- Dyrness, William. *Themes in Old Testament Theology*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998.
- Eakin, Frank E. "Yahwism and Baalism before the Exile," in *JBL* 84 (1965): pp.407-414.
- Eichrodt, Walther. *The Theology of the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961.
- Eissfeldt, Otto. *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1-43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes*; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958.
- Ellison, H. L. *The Message of the Old Testament*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994.
- Elnes, E.E., 'Discerning the difference: the distinctiveness of Yahweh and Israel in the book of Deuteronomy.' Ph.D Diss. Princeton theological seminary, 1997.
- Eslinger, Lyle. "Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category." *VT* 42, 1 (1992): 47-58.

- Evans, Mary J. *1 and 2 Samuel*. Peabody: Paternoster, 2000.
- Fisch, Harold. *Poetry with a Purpose: Biblical Poetics and Interpretation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Fleishman, Joseph. "Legal Innovation in Deuteronomy XXI 18-20," in *VT* LIII, 3 (2003): pp.311-327.
- Fohrer, G. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: SPCK, 1976.
- Fokkelman, J.P., *Major Poems of the Hebrew Bible at the Interface of Hermeneutics and Structural Analysis Vol I*. The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1998.
- Fowl, Stephen E. *Engaging Scripture*. Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1998.
- Friedrich Giesebrecht. *Die alttestamentliche Schätzung des Gottestnamens und ihre religionsgeschichtliche Grundlage*. Königsberg: Verlag von Thomas & Oppermann, 1901.
- Fretheim, Terrence E. *Deuteronomistic History*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1983.
- _____. *Exodus*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991.
- Friedman, Richard E. *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: the formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly works*. Chicago: Scholars Press, 1981.
- _____. "From Egypt to Egypt: Dtr¹ and Dtr²," in Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (eds.) *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Point in Biblical Faith*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981, pp.167-192.
- _____. "Torah (Pentateuch)," in David N. Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 2*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Garrett, Duane A. *Hosea, Joel*. USA: Broadman & Holman, 1997.
- Geller, Stephen A. "The Dynamics of Parallel Verse: A Poetic Analysis of Deut. 32:6-12," in *Harvard Theological Review* 75 (1982) 35-56.
- Gerstenberger, Erhard S. *Leviticus*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1996.
- Gibson, John C.L. *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament*. London: SPCK, 1998.
- Giles, Terry and William J. Doan. *Twice Used Songs: Performance Criticism of the Songs of Ancient Israel*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009.

- Gnuse, Robert Karl. *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.
- Goldingay, John. *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995.
- _____. *The Message of Isaiah 40-55: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. London: T&T Clark, 2005.
- _____. *Old Testament Theology Vol. 2: Israel's Faith*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme L. *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*. Leicester: IVP, 1991.
- Gordon, Robert P. "Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School: A Review," in *TB* 25 (1974): pp.113-120.
- _____. *1 & 2 Samuel*. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986.
- Gowan, Donald E. *Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death & Resurrection of Israel*. Louisville: Westminster, 1998.
- Grisanti, Michael A. "Was Israel unable to respond to God? A Study of Deuteronomy 29:2-4," in *BS* 163 (2006): pp.176-96.
- Hafemann, Scott J. "Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect," in Scott J. Hafemann (ed.), *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002.
- Halpern, Baruch. "Sacred History and Ideology: Chronicles' Thematic Structure," in Richard Friedman (ed.) *The Creation of Sacred Literature: Composition and Redaction of the Biblical Text*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981.
- _____. "The Centralization Formula in Deuteronomy," in *VT* XXXI, 1 (1981): pp.20-38.
- _____. *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.
- Handy, Lowell K. *Among the Host of Heaven: The Syro-Palestinian Pantheon as Bureaucracy*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994.
- Hartley, John E. *Leviticus*. Dallas: Word, 1992.
- Heiser, Michael S. "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God," in *BS* 158 (2001): pp.52-74.

- Hengel, Martin. *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of its Canon*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002.
- Henry, Matthew. *Commentary on the Bible*.
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhcl1.Deu.xxxiii.html>.
- Hess, Richard. "Early Israel in Canaan: A Survey of Recent Evidence and Interpretations," in V. Philips Long (ed.) *Israel's Past in Present Research: Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999.
- Hidal, Sten. "Some Reflections on Deuteronomy 32," *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 11(1977/78): pp.15-19.
- Hoffman, Yair. "A North Israelite Typological Myth and a Judean Historical Tradition: The Exodus in Hosea and Amos." *VT* 39, 2 (1989): pp.169-182.
- Hoffmeier, James K. *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford Press, 2005.
- Holter, Knut. *Deuteronomy 4 and the Second Commandment*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003.
- Houston, Walter. *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1993.
- _____. "What did the Prophets think they were doing?: Speech Acts and Prophetic Discourse in the Old Testament," in *BI* 1, 2 (1993): pp.167-188.
- Houtman, Cornelis. *Exodus Vol. 3: Chapters 20-40* (trans. Sierd Woudstra). Leuven: Bondgenotenlaan Peeters, 2000.
- Hubbard, Jr., Robert L. "Doing Old Testament Theology Today," in Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., Robert K. Johnston, Robert P. Meye (eds.) *Studies in Old Testament Theology: Historical and Contemporary Images of God and God's People*. Dallas: Word, 1992.
- Huffman, Herbert B. "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," in *JBL* 78 (1959): pp.285-295.
- Jacob, Benno. *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* (trans. Walter Jacob). New Jersey: Hoboken, 1992.
- Janzen, J. Gerald. "The Yoke that Gives Rest," in *Int* Vol XLI (1987): 256-281.
- _____. "On the Most Important Word in the Shema (Deuteronomy VI 4-5)," in *VT* XXXVII, 3 (1987): pp.280-300.

- _____. "The Root pr' in Judges V 2 and Deuteronomy XXXII 42," in *VT* XXXIX, 4 (1989): 393-406.
- Jobling, David. *Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry: 1 Samuel*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Joosten, Jan. "A Note on the Text of Deuteronomy xxxii 8," in *VT* 57 (2007): pp.548-555.
- Kaiser, Walter C. & Moises Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Kaiser, Jr., Walter C. *The Christian and the "Old" Testament*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1998.
- Kamphausen, A.H.H. *Das Lied Moses Deut 32, 1-43*; Leipzig 1862.
- Kaufmann, Yehezkel. *The Religion of Israel from its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Keiser, Thomas A., "The Song of Moses a Basis for Isaiah's Prophecy," in *VT* LV, 4 (2005), pp.486-500.
- Kennedy, George A. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Kim, Hyun Chul Paul. "Recent Scholarship on Isaiah 1-39," in Alan J. Hauser (ed.) *Recent Research on the Major Prophets*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008, pp.118-141.
- Knierim, Rolf P. *The Task of the Old Testament Theology: Method and Cases*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Knight, George A. F. *The Song of Moses: A Theological Quarry*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- _____. *A Christian Theology of the Old Testament*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998.
- Knobel, A. *Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua erklärt (KEH)*; Leipzig, 1861.
- Knoppers, Gary N. "Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History: The Case of Kings," in *CBQ* 63 (2001): pp.393-415.
- Knowles, Michael P. "The Rock, His Work is Perfect": Unusual Imagery for God in Deuteronomy XXXII," in *VT* XXXIX, 3 (1989): 307-322.
- Kooij, A. Van Der, "The ending of the Song of Moses: on the pre-masoretic version of Deut 32:43," in Garcia Martinez, F. (ed.) *Deuteronomy*, pp.93-100.

- Labuschagne, Casper J. *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament*. Leiden: BRILL, 1966.
- _____. "The Song of Moses: Its Framework and Structure," in I.H. Eybers (ed.) *De Fructu Oris Sui: Essays in honour of A. van Selms*. Leiden: BRILL, 1971.
- _____. *The Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 - Logotechnical Analysis*, in www.labuschagne.nl/2b.deut32.pdf.
- Lasor, William S., David A. Hubbard, Frederic W. Bush. *Old Testament Survey*. Grand Rapids, 1996.
- Lapsle, Jacqueline E. "Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy," in *CBQ* 65 (2003): pp.350-369.
- Lemche, N.P. *The Canaanites and Their Land*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991.
- Leuchter, Mark. "Why is the Song of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy?" in *VT* 57 (2007): pp.295-317.
- _____. "The Manumission Laws in Leviticus and Deuteronomy: The Jeremiah Connection," in *JBL* 127/4 (2008): pp.635-653.
- Leveen, Adriane. *Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Levenson, Jon D. "Who Inserted the Book of the Torah?" in *HTR* 68 (1975): pp.203-233.
- _____. "From Temple to Synagogue: 1 Kings 8," in Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (eds.) *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Point in Biblical Faith*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981, pp.143-166.
- Levin, C. *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985; quoted in Cornelis Houtman. *Exodus Vol. 3: Chapters 20-40* (trans. Sierd Woudstra). Leuven: Bondgenotenlaan Peeters, 2000.
- Levinson, Bernard M. *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- _____. "The Hermeneutics of Tradition in Deuteronomy: A Reply to J.G. McConville." *JBL* 119/2 (2000): 287-309.
- _____. "The Reconceptualisation of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah," in *VT* LI, 4 (2001): pp.511-534.

- L'Heureux, Conrad E. *Rank among the Canaanite gods: El, Baal, and the Rephaim*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979.
- Linder, J. "Das Lied des Moses Dt 32," in *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 48, 1924.
- Lohfink, Norbert. "Culture Shock and Theology: A Discussion of Theology as a Cultural and Social Phenomenon Based on the Example of a Deuteronomic Law," in *BTB* 7 (1977): pp.12-22.
- _____. *Great Themes from the Old Testament* (trans. Ronald Walls). Illinois: T&T Clark, 1989.
- _____. "Distribution of the Functions of Power: The Laws concerning Public Offices in Deuteronomy," in Christensen, Duane L. (ed.) *A Song of Power and the Power of Songs*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993.
- _____. *Theology of the Pentateuch: Themes of the Priestly Narrative and Deuteronomy*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
- Long, V. Philips. *The Art of Biblical History*. Leicester: Apollos, 1994.
- Lust, J., "For I lift up m hand to heaven and swear: Deut 32:40," in Garcia Martinez, F. (ed.) *Deuteronomy*, pp.155-164.
- Luyten, Jos. "Primeval and eschatological overtones in the Song of Moses (Dt 32, 1-43)," in Norbert Lohfink (ed.) *Das Derteronomium*. Leuven: University Press, 1985, pp. 341-347.
- Maier, Gerhard. *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Illinois: Crossway, 1994.
- Manley, G. T. *The Book of the Law*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957.
- Mann, Thomas. *Deuteronomy*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.
- Mayes, A.D.H. *Deuteronomy*. NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.
- _____. "Deuteronomy 4 and the Literary Criticism of Deuteronomy." *JBL* 100/1 (1981): 23-51.
- _____. "On Describing the Purpose of Deuteronomy." *JSOT* 58 (1993): 13-33.
- _____. "Deuteronomy Ideology and the Theology of the Old Testament," *JSOT* 82 (1999): pp.57-82.
- Mays, James Luther. *Hosea*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969.

- _____. "Justice: Perspectives from the Prophetic Tradition," in John T. Strong, Steven S. Tuell (eds.) *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005, pp.57-71.
- MacDonald, Nathan. *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003.
- _____. "The Literary Criticism and Rhetorical Logic of Deuteronomy I – IV," in *VT LV*, 2 (2006): pp.203-242.
- McBride, Samuel D. 'The Deuteronomic Name Theology.' Ph.D Diss., Harvard University, 1969.
- _____. "Polity of the Covenant People: The Book of Deuteronomy." *Int*, Vol XLI (1987): 229-255.
- _____. "The Essence of Orthodoxy: Deuteronomy 5:6-10 and Exodus 20:2-6," in *Int* (2006): pp.133-150.
- McCarter, P. Kyle, Jr. "The Books of Samuel," in Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham (eds.) *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, pp.260-280.
- McCarthy, Dennis J. "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," in *JBL* 84 (1965): pp.131-138.
- _____. *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament*. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981.
- McConville, J. Gordon. *Deuteronomy*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002.
- _____. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Prophets*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002.
- _____. *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1993.
- _____. "God's 'Name' and God's 'Glory,'" in *TynBul* 30 (1979): pp.149-163.
- _____. *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1984.
- _____. "The Old Testament Books in Modern Scholarship," in *Them* 22-3 (1997): pp.3-13.
- _____. "Deuteronomy's Unification of Passover and Massô: A Response to Bernard M. Levinson." *JBL* 119/1 (2000): pp.47-58.

- _____. "1 Kings 8:46-53 and the Deuteronomistic Hope," in Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (eds.) *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), pp.358-369.
- _____. "The Book of Deuteronomy," in T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove: Illinois, 2003, pp.182-193.
- _____. "A Dialogue with Gordon McConville: A Response from Gordon McConville," in *SJT* (2003): pp.525-531.
- _____. *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology: Genesis to Kings*. London: T&T Clark, 2006.
- _____. "'Fellow Citizens': Israel and Humanity in Leviticus," in J. Gordon McConville and Karl Möller (eds.) *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*. New York: T&T Clark, 2007, pp.10-32.
- McConville, J. Gordon and J.G. Millar. *Time and Place in Deuteronomy*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1994.
- McKeating, H. "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses'?" *JSOT* 61 (1994): pp.97-109.
- McKenzie, Steven L. "Deuteronomistic History," in David N. Freedmen (ed.) *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol 6*. New York: Doubleday, 1992, pp.160-168.
- _____. "The Books of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History," in Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham (eds.) *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, pp.281-307.
- Melugin, Roy F. "Isaiah 40-66 in Recent Research: The 'Unity' Movement," in Alan J. Hauser (ed.) *Recent Research on the Major Prophets*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008, pp.142-194.
- Mendenhall, George E. *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955.
- Mendenhall, George E. "Samuel's 'Broken rib': Deuteronomy 32," in D.L. Christensen (ed.) *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993, pp.169-180.
- Merrill, Eugene H. "A Theology of the Pentateuch," in Roy B. Zuck, Eugene H. Merrill, Darrell L. Bock (eds.) *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody, 1991.

- _____. *Deuteronomy*. USA: Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- Mettinger, Tryggve N.D. *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies*. ConBOT 18; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982.
- Meyer, R. "Die Bedeutung von Deuteronomium 32, 8f. 43 (4Q) für die Auslegung des Moseliedes," in A. Kuschke (ed.), *Verbannung und Heimkehr: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie Israels im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr., Fs. W. Rudolph*. Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1961, pp.197-209; cited in Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32*, pp.24-25.
- Meynet, Roland. *Rhetorical Analysis: An Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric*. Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1998.
- Milgrom, Jacob. "The Alleged Demythologisation and Secularisation in Deuteronomy," in *ISJ* Vol. 23 (1973): pp.156-161.
- Miller, Cynthia L. "A Linguistic Approach to Ellipsis in Biblical Poetry." *BR* 13.2 (2003): 251-270.
- Millar, J. Gary. *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy*. Leicester: Apollos, 1998.
- _____. "A Faithful God Who Does No Wrong': History, Theology, and Reliability in Deuteronomy," in Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman (eds.) *The Trustworthiness of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Miller, Patrick D. *Deuteronomy, Interpretation*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990.
- _____. "Deuteronomy and Psalms: Evoking a Biblical Conversion." *JBL* 118/1 (1999): 3-18.
- _____. *The Religion of Ancient Israel*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2000.
- Miller, Patrick D. "Constitution or Instruction? The Purpose of Deuteronomy," in John T. Strong, Steven S. Tuell (eds.) *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005, pp.125-141.
- Mills, Mary. *Joshua to Kings: History, Story, Theology*. London: T&T Clark, 2006.
- Moberly, R. Walter L. *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.
- _____. "A Dialogue with Gordon McConville: Theological interpretation of an OT book: a response to Gordon McConville's Deuteronomy" in *SJT* (2003): pp.516-525.

- Moor, Johannes C de. *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism*. Leuven: Peeters, 1990.
- Moore, Michael S. "To King or not to King: A Canonical-Historical Approach to Ruth." *BR* 11.1 (2001): pp.27-41.
- Moran, William L. "Some remarks on the Song of Moses," *Bib* 43 (1962): pp.317-327.
- _____. "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963): pp.77-87.
- Muilenburg, James. "The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle וַי in the Old Testament" in *HUCA* 32, 1961.
- Mullen, E. Theodore. *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature*. Chicago: Scholars Press, 1980.
- Nelson, Richard D. *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981.
- _____. *The Historical Books*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- _____. *Deuteronomy*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002.
- Nicholson, Ernest W. "The Centralisation of the Cult in Deuteronomy," in *VT* 13 (1963): pp.380-389.
- _____. *Deuteronomy and Tradition*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967.
- _____. "Covenant in a Century of Study since Wellhausen," in Christensen, Duane L. (ed.) *A Song of Power and The Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993.
- Niditch, Susan. *Oral World and Written Word*. Louisville: Westminster, 1996.
- Nigosian, Solomon Alexander. "The Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1-43)," in *Open Dissertations and Theses*. Paper 3039 (1975).
<http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/opendissertations/3039>.
- _____. "Linguistic patterns in Deuteronomy 32," *Bib* 78 (1997): pp.206-224.
- _____. "The Song of Moses (Dt 32): A Structural Analysis," in *ETL* 72 (1996): pp.5-22.
- Noll, K.L. "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate? (A Thought Experiment)," in *JSOT* 31.3 (2007): pp.311-345.
- Noth, Martin. *Exodus*. London: SCM Press, 1962.

- _____. *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (trans. Bernhard W. Anderson). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
- _____. *The Deuteronomistic History*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981.
- O'Brien, Mark A. "Judges and the Deuteronomistic History," in Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham (eds.) *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, pp.235-259.
- _____. "Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22: Meeting the Challenge in Towns and Nations," in *JSOT* Vol 33.2 (2008): pp.155-172.
- S. Oetti, *Das Deuteronomium und die Bücher Josua und Richter* (KK.AT); München 1893.
- O'Kane, Martin. "Isaiah: A Prophet in the Footsteps of Moses," *JSOT* 69 (1996): pp.29-51.
- Olson, Dennis T. *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
- Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1991.
- Oswald, Wolfgang. *Staatstheorie im Alten Israel: der politische Diskurs im Pentateuch und in den Geschichtsbüchern des Alten Testaments*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009.
- Oswalt, John N. "Canonical Criticism: A Review from a Conservative Viewpoint." *JETS* 30/3 (1987): pp.317-325.
- Pakkala, Juha., *Intolerant Monolatry in the Deuteronomistic History*, Göttingen: Finnish Exegetical Society, 1999.
- Peckham, Brian. *The Composition of the Deuteronomistic History*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985.
- _____. *History and Prophecy: The Development of Late Judean Literary Traditions*. New York: Doubleway, 1993.
- _____. "The Significance of the Book of Joshua in Noth's Theory of the Deuteronomistic History," in Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham (eds.) *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, pp.213-234.
- Peels, Hendrik G.L. *The vengeance of God: The Meaning of the Root NQM and the Function of the NQM-texts in the context of Divine Revelation in the Old Testament*. Leiden: BRILL, 1995.
- Petersen, David L. and Kent H. Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

- Peterson, David L. "Politics in Genesis 12-36," in John T. Strong, Steven S. Tuell (eds.) *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005, pp.75-88.
- Person, Raymond F. *The Deuteronomistic School: History, Social Setting, and Literature.* Atlanta: SBL, 2002.
- Pfeiffer, Robert H. *Introduction to the Old Testament.* New York: Harper, 1948.
- Philips, Anthony. *Deuteronomy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Pitkänen, Pekka M.A. 'Central Sanctuary and Centralisation of Worship in Ancient Israel from the Settlement to the building of Solomon's Temple: A Historical and Theological Study of the Biblical Evidence in its Archaeological and Ancient Near Eastern Context.' Ph.D Diss., Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, 2000.
- _____. "Memory, Witnesses and Genocide in the Book of Joshua," in J. Gordon McConville and Karl Möller (eds.) *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham.* New York: T&T Clark, 2007, pp.267-282.
- Polzin, Robert. *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.
- Provan, Iain. *1 and 2 Kings.* Peabody: Hendrickson Press, 1995.
- Preuss, Horst Dietrich. *Deuteronomium.* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982.
- Provan, Iain, V. Philips Long, Tremper Longman III. *A Biblical History of Israel.* Louisville: Westminster, 2003.
- Rad, Gerhard von. *Studies in Deuteronomy.* London: SCM, 1953.
- _____. *Old Testament Theology Volume I & II.* New York: Harper & Row, 1962.
- _____. *Das fünfte Buch Mose Deuteronomium übersetzt und erklärt.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964.
- _____. *Deuteronomy.* Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1966.
- _____. *The Problem of Hexateuch and other Essays.* London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966.
- _____. *Holy War in Ancient Israel.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

- Rashbam, *Rashbam's Commentary on Deuteronomy: An Annotated Translation* (ed. and trans. Martin I. Lockshin). Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2004.
- Reichert, Andreas. "The Song of Moses (Dt 32) and the Quest for Early Deuteronomistic Psalmody," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A*. Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986.
- Reimer, David J. "Concerning Return to Egypt: Deuteronomy XVII 16 and XXVIII 68 Reconsidered," in John A. Emerton (ed.) *Studies in the Pentateuch*. Leiden: BRILL, 1990, pp.217-229.
- _____. "צַדִּיק," in Willem A. VanGemeren (ed.) *NIDOTTE* Vol. 3. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997, pp.744-769.
- Rendtorff, Rolf. "The Composition of the Book of Isaiah," in Rolf Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology: Overtures to an Old Testament* (trans. and ed. M. Kohl). London: T&T Clark, 1994.
- Revell, E. J. "The Repetition of Introductions to Speech as a feature of Biblical Hebrew," *VT* XLVII, 1 (1997): pp.91-110.
- Richter, Sandra L. *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: l'šakkēn š'mô šām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002.
- _____. "Deuteronomistic History," in Bill T. Arnold and Hugh G.M. Williamson (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*. Leicester: IVP, 2005: pp.219-230.
- _____. "The Place of the Name in Deuteronomy," in *VT* 57 (2007): pp.342-366.
- Roberts, J.J.M. "Isaiah in Old Testament Theology," in *Int* Vol XXXVI (1982): pp.130-150.
- Robertson, David A. *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry*. Missoula: SBL, 1972.
- Robinson, H. Wheeler. "The Council of Yahweh," in *JTS* XLV (1944): pp.151-157.
- Rodd, Cyril S. *Glimpses of a Strange Land: Studies in OT Ethics*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001.
- Rofé, Alexander. *Deuteronomy: Issues and Interpretation*. London: T&T Clark, 2002.
- Rogerson, J.W. and Judith M. Lieu. *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*. New York: Oxford Press, 2006.

- Römer, Thomas. "The Book of Deuteronomy," in Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham (eds.) *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, pp.178-212.
- _____. "Deuteronomy in Search of Origins," in Gary N. Knoppers, J. Gordon McConville (eds.) *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000: pp.112-138.
- Rowley, Harold H. *The Faith of Israel*. London: SCM, 1956.
- _____. *The Growth of the Old Testament*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
- Sailhamer, John H. *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- _____. "The Mosaic Law and the Theology of the Pentateuch," *WTJ* 53 (1991): pp.241-261.
- _____. "The Canonical Approach to the OT: Its Effect on Understanding Prophecy," in *JETS* 30 (Sept 1987): pp.307-315.
- Sanders, Paul. *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32*. Leiden: Brill, 1996.
- Satterthwaite, Philip and Gordon McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament Vol 2: The Histories*. London: SPCK, 2007.
- Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation Commentary*. Philadelphia: JPS, 1989.
- Ska, Jean-Louis. *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*. Winona Lake/Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Skehan, Patrick. "The Structure of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy (32:1-43)," in *CBQ* 13.02 (1951): pp.153-163.
- _____. "Biblical Theology and the Composition of the Hebrew Bible," in Scott J. Hafemann (ed.) *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002.
- _____. *The Pentateuch as Narrative*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Schmidt, Werner H. *Old Testament Introduction* (trans. Matthew J. O'Connell). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- Schultz, Richard. "What is "Canonical" about a Canonical Biblical Theology," in Scott J. Hafemann (ed.) *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2002.

- Scobie, Charles H.H. *The Ways of Our God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Seitz, Christopher R. *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Seters, John Van. *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- _____. "Cultic Laws in the Covenant Code and their Relationship to Deuteronomy and the Holiness Code," in Marc Vervenne (ed.) *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1996), pp.319-345.
- Sheriffs, Deryck. *The Friendship of the Lord*. England: Paternoster, 1996.
- Smend, Rudolf. *Lehrbuch der Alttestamentlichen Religions-Geschichte*. Freiburg: J.C.B. Mohr, 1893.
- Smith, George A. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Sonnet, Jean-Pierre. *The Book Within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Stade, Bernhard *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*. Berlin: G. Grote, 1887.
- Steck, Odil Hannes, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Guide to the Methodology* (trans. James D. Nogalski). Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998.
- Stevens, David E. "Does Deuteronomy 32:8 refer to 'Sons of God' or 'Sons of Israel'," in *BS* 154 (1997): pp.131-41.
- Stott, Katherine. "Finding the Lost Book of the Law: Re-reading the Story of 'The Book of the Law' (Deuteronomy-2 Kings) in Light of Classical Literature," in *JSOT* Vol. 30.2 (2005): pp.153-169.
- Strong, John T. "Israel as a Testimony to YHWH'S Power: The Priests' Definition of Israel," in John T. Strong, Steven S. Tuell (eds.) *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
- Sweeney, Marvin A. "Re-conceiving the Paradigms of Old Testament Theology in the Post-Shoah Period." *BI* 6, 2 (1998): pp.142-161.
- _____. *I & II Kings*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2007.

- _____. "The Book of Isaiah in Recent Research," in Alan J. Hauser (ed.) *Recent Research on the Major Prophets*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008, pp.78-92.
- Talstra, Eep. "Deuteronomy 9 and 10: Synchronic and Diachronic Observations," in Johannes C. de Moor (ed.) *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Tasker, David R. *Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the Hebrew Scriptures about the Fatherhood of God*. New York: Peter Lang, 2004.
- Terrien, Samuel L. *The Elusive Presence: Towards a New Biblical Theology*. USA: Harper & Row, 1978.
- _____. "Presence in Absence," in Ben Ollenburger (ed.) *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004, pp.198-202.
- Thiessen, Matthew. "The Form and Function of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-43)," in *JBL* 123/3 (2004), pp.401-424.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Thompson, John A. *Deuteronomy*. Leicester: IVP, 1974.
- Tigay, Jeffery H. *Deuteronomy = [Devarim]: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation/ Commentary*. Philadelphia: JPS, 1996.
- Trible, Phyllis. *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method and the Book of Jonah*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.
- Tsvat, Matitiah. "God and the Gods in Assembly" in *HUCA* 40 (1969): pp. 123-137.
- _____. "Cultic Laws in the Covenant Code (Exodus 20:22-23:33) and their Relationship to Deuteronomy and the Holiness Code," in Marc Vervenne (ed.) *Studies in the Book of Exodus*. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1996.
- Vangemeren, Willem A. *Interpreting the Prophetic Word*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- Vaux, Roland de. *Ancient Israel*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961.
- _____. "Le lieu que Yahvé a choisi pour y établir son nom," in *Das ferne und nahe Wort, Festschrift L. Rost*. (ed. F. Mass). Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967.
- _____. *The Early History of Israel: To the Period of the Judges* (trans. David Smith). London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978.

- Vogt, Peter T. *Deuteronomistic Theology and the Significance of Torah*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- _____. "Social Justice and the Vision of Deuteronomy," in *JETS* 51/1 (2008): pp.35-44.
- Vos, Geerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948.
- Wallace, Ronald S. *On the Interpretation and Use of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Ward, James M. *Thus Says The Lord: The Message of the Prophets*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.
- Watson, Francis. *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- _____. "Gospel and Scripture: Rethinking Canonical Unity," in *TB* 52.2 (2001): 161-182.
- Watson, Wilfred G.E. *Classical Hebrew Poetry*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984.
- Watts, James W. *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.
- Watts, John D.W. "Images of Yahweh: God in the Prophets," in Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., Robert K. Johnston, Robert P. Meye (eds) *Studies in Old Testament Theology: Historical and Contemporary Images of God and God's People*. Dallas: Word, 1992.
- Weitzman, Steven. *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Wellhausen, Julius. *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994.
- Wells, Jo Bailey. *God's Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- Wenham, Gordon J. 'The Structure and Date of Deuteronomy.' Ph.D Diss., University of London, 1969.
- _____. "Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary," in *TynBul* 22 (1971): pp.103-118.
- _____. *Genesis 1-15*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987.
- _____. *Genesis 16-50*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994.

- _____. *Story As Torah: Reading the OT Ethically*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.
- _____. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2003.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*. Oxford: Oxford Press, 1972.
- _____. *Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1991.
- _____. "Deuteronomy: The Present State of Inquiry," in Christensen, Duane L. (ed.) *A Song of Power and The Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993.
- _____. "Cult Centralisation in Israel in the Light of a Neo-Babylonian Analogy," in *JNES* 23 (1964): pp.202-212.
- Westermann, Claus, *Genesis 12-36* (trans. John J. Scullion). Minneapolis: Augsburg House, 1985.
- Wette, Wilhelm M.L. de. *Dissertatio critica qua a prioribus Deuteronomium pentateuchi libris diversum, alius cuiusdam recentiori auctoris opus esse monstratur*. Halle, 1805.
- Wevers, John W. *LXX: Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy*. Atlanta: Scholarly Press, 1995.
- Wiebe, J.M., "The Form, Setting and Meaning of the Song of Moses," in *StudBT* 17 (1989): pp.119-163.
- Wilson, Ian. *Out of the Mist of the Fire: Divine Presence in Deuteronomy*. SBL; Atlanta: SBL, 1995.
- Wilson, Robert R. "Deuteronomy, Ethnicity, and Reform: Reflections on the Social Setting of the Book of Deuteronomy," in John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell (eds.) *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005, pp.107-123.
- Wolff, Hans Walter. "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historical Work," in Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (eds.) *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), pp.62-78.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *God's People In God's Land*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- _____. *Deuteronomy*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996.

- _____. *Old Testament Ethics For the People of God*. Leicester: IVP, 2004.
- _____. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Nottingham: IVP, 2006.
- Wright, G. Ernest. *The Challenge of Israel's Faith*. Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1944.
- _____. *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*. London: SCM, 1957.
- _____. *The Old Testament and Theology*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
- _____. *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital*. SBL; London: SCM, 1960.
- _____. "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32," in Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (eds.) *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*. London: SCM, 1962, pp.26-67.
- Würthwein, Ernst. *The Text of the Old Testament* (trans. Erroll F. Rhodes). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.
- Young, Ian. *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993.
- Zeiss, Andrea. *Presence of God in Deuteronomy*. Ph.D Diss., University of Gloucestershire, 2009.