

SUMMARIES

MAIN THEMES IN MODERN RESEARCH ON DEUTERONOMY

Eckhart Otto

The changes in Pentateuch research have an impact on the thesis of a Deuteronomistic History (Deut. – 2 Kings) as well, thus raising again the issue of the literary contexts of Deuteronomy. Going through the recent Deuteronomy research, the article shows the process of regaining the Deuteronomy research as part of Pentateuch research, and argues for the post-deuteronomistic Deuteronomy within the Pentateuch. From this end point, the history of literature of Deuteronomy as a whole needs to be reassessed. In particular the question of the deuteronomistic form of Deuteronomy and the book of Joshua needs new answers.

TREATIES AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Theo J.J. Krispijn

The concept of a formal, legal ‘contract’ was particularly well established in Mesopotamia. The treaty, a kind of contract on an international level, is attested in almost every period of Mesopotamian and Anatolian history. There is a close resemblance between these Mesopotamian treaties and the book of Deuteronomy. This article surveys the main treaties from as far back as the Old Sumerian Period, including the “stele of the vultures” of Eannatum van Lagaš (± 2500 BC), the treaty between Ebla and Abarsal (± 2400 BC) and the treaty between Naram-Sin of Akkad and an Iranian king (± 2350 BC). The treaties of the Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian period include those of Nērebtum – Šadlaš, Kaneš, Šubat-Enlil and Mari (2000-1600 BC), and those of the Middle Babylonian Period cover Alalaḫ and the Hittite treaties (1500-1100 BC). Then there are the vassal and succession treaties from the Neo-Assyrian period from Adadnerari (Sfireh) and of Esarhaddon (900-650 BC). Selected passages are translated to show the contents of these documents, and special attention is given to the terminology of the treaties. Some general remarks are made comparing Near Eastern treaties with the biblical covenant, in particular about the ceremonies accompanying the oaths that were sworn, the apodictic style of the formulations, the historical introduction, the position adopted

by the king towards his vassal and the regulations on the passage of foreign citizens.

A NEW EXISTANCE: GIVEN IDENTITY, GIVEN LAND
Deuteronomy – Joshua as Twin Books

Adri J.O. van der Wal

The books of Deuteronomy and Joshua show many parallels in content and structure. This can be interpreted as an indication that these books should not only be read in a sequence, but also side by side. In this way these books function as a hinge connecting the Torah and the Former Prophets. Special attention is given to the roles of Moses and Joshua.

TEXTS, NOT IMAGES

Paul Sanders

On the one hand, the book of Deuteronomy strongly condemns the veneration of cult statues and all other embodiments of deities, including the aniconic standing stones (4:1-40; 5:8-10; 9:1-29; 16:21-22, etc). On the other hand, the book reveres cultic objects that record the words of God and Moses, such as the two stone tablets with the Decalogue (4:13; 5:6-22; 9:9-11, 15, 17-18; 10:1-5), the scroll on which Moses wrote his long speech to the people (31:9-13, 24-26), the copy for the king (17:18), the stones on Mount Ebal (27:1-8), and the texts worn on arms and forehead or written on doorposts and gates (6:8-9; 11:18-20). It is not coincidental that the recommendation of the tablets with the Decalogue occurs in the same part of the book as the condemnation of the cultic images. The cultic statues and standing stones may give the impression that the gods are close, but for the authors of Deuteronomy such lifeless, man-made representations show that the gods are dead and powerless. The ban on making images of YHWH is due to the idea that this God is completely different: powerful, active, close, caring, offended when people reject Him, and compassionate when they need Him. The uniqueness of YHWH and His wish that His people love and fear Him can only be expressed in words. This is the reason why Deuteronomy accompanies the ban on cultic images with the promotion of religious texts.

GARDEN OR VINEYARD?
Deuteronomy 11:10-17 in context

Klaas A.D. Smelik

In Deuteronomy 11:10-17 a distinction is made between Egypt and *Eretz Israel*. Egypt is compared to an irrigated garden, but in Israel the farmers are dependent of the rainfall. Because Israel's God is taking care of this rainfall, there is no problem – unless his people start to venerate other gods. In that case, rainfall will cease and a period of drought will follow. This passage in Deuteronomy 11 is connected to the story of Naboth in 1 Kings 21 by using the same Hebrew expression גן הירק, 'garden of vegetables'. King Ahab wants to turn Naboth's vineyard into a garden. Since the vineyard is one of the symbols for the LORD's chosen people, the garden stands for Egypt. Ahab wants to turn Israel into a Pharaonic empire where the king and not the Torah is law. The consequences of this change become clear in the sequel of the story: by the king's command an innocent man is stoned to death.

MOSES' DEATH AS AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE
Deuteronomy 34:5

Karel A. Deurloo

Next to Joshua and Caleb, who are the only two witnesses of both the exodus and the entrance into the promised land, Moses is the only one of the disobedient generation of the exodus who is still alive after the crossing of the river Zered (Deut. 2:13ff.): He has to lead his people in the whole period of the Torah until they reach the river Jordan. Because of his disobedience (Num. 22:2-13), he is not allowed to pass the Jordan. He is permitted only to see the land that plays a central role in the Torah. He ends his life with an act of ultimate obedience towards the command of God: 'Ascend the mountain ... see the land ... and die ...' (Deut. 32:49-50; 34:1ff.). Moses dies at God's command (34:5). His grave cannot be found. Moses can only be found in the 'Words' of Deuteronomy 34:10-12, which can be read as an epitaph.

DEUTERONOMY OR DEVARIM

Niek A. van Uchelen

The traditional Hebrew name *Devarim* has, more than the Greek *Deuteronomy*, good credentials in the Hebrew text of the book. In the first five verses of *Devarim* the stem דבר takes a prominent place (Deut. 1:1, 3; cf. 31:1). In medieval exegesis

this textual circumstance has given apt occasion to surprising views. On the one hand they reveal the exegetical sharpness of Rashi and the panoramic outlooks of the Chasidey Askenaz on the other.

TO A LAND BETTER THAN CANAAN
Deuteronomy 34:1-8 in Children's and Family's Bibles

Cees Houtman

This article contains a commentary on Deuteronomy 34:1-8, followed by an extensive survey of the way this pericope is retold in Dutch children's Bibles and other forms of popular rewritten Bible of the last two centuries. The sober biblical account is often turned into a dramatic history in which the storytellers give expression to their own ideas about the belief in God and about moral standards.

THE END OF MOSES' LIFE PICTURED
Deuteronomy 34:1-8 in Drawings and Others Representations

Cees Houtman

Continuing on the theme of the previous article a survey is given of the way the end of Moses is pictured in popular literature, from the Middle Ages until modern times. Special attention is given to the themes of Moses seeing the promised land, Moses' funeral, and the people mourning his death.