

DEUTERONOMY AND THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY*

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For nearly a century it has been almost axiomatic to hold that Deuteronomy demands centralization of all worship at a single sanctuary, and therefore that its composition must be associated with Josiah's attempt to limit all worship to Jerusalem. From time to time this view has been challenged. A. C. Welch, for instance, showed that 'the place which the LORD will choose' need not refer to a single sanctuary, but could, if other grounds warranted it, refer to a group of approved Yahweh shrines.¹ Welch also pointed out that the command to offer sacrifice on Mount Ebal (explicit in Dt. 27 and implicit in chapter 11) is very odd if Deuteronomy is a programme to limit all worship to Jerusalem.

Recently J. N. M. Wijngaards has argued that Deuteronomy does not envisage centralization of worship at Jerusalem but a series of sanctuaries serving in turn as the amphictyonic shrine.² Deuteronomy 5-28 is essentially a liturgy for a ceremonial procession from Succoth to Shechem re-enacting the crossing of the Jordan and the conquest of Canaan. The grounds for this novel interpretation are threefold. First, Deuteronomy constantly mentions that Israel is about to cross over the Jordan and take possession of the land.³ Second, the end point of the conquest is Mount Ebal, where a great covenant ceremony is held (Dt. 27). Third, Hosea 6:7-10 is said to reflect this cultic procession across the Jordan in amphictyonic times.⁴

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¹ *The Code of Deuteronomy*, J. Clarke, London (1924) and *Deuteronomy: the Framework to the Code*, OUP, London (1932). Independently T. Oestreicher came to similar conclusions in *Das deuteronomische Grundgesetz*, Gütersloh (1923).

² *The Dramatization of Salvific History in the Deuteronomic Schools* (*Oudtestamentische Studiën* 16) E. J. Brill, Leiden (1969) 23ff.

³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9ff.

Wijngaards believes that this ritual crossing of the Jordan was later transferred to Gilgal. Hence Deuteronomy 5–28 should be dated to a period before this change of scene, sometime between 1250 and 1050 BC.⁵

Wijngaards' view rests on a number of important observations which traditional criticism takes too little account of, but it does raise new questions of its own. First, why should chapters 5–28 be supposed to give the key to Deuteronomy's origins? Classical Wellhausen criticism regarded chapters 12–26 as the core of the book with later expansions in chapters 1–4, 5–11, 27 and 28–30.⁶ Subsequently it was argued that the core of Deuteronomy is to be found in chapters 5–26, 28, but that chapter 27 is a later insertion.⁷ Recent form- and redaction-critical studies have shown that chapter 27 is carefully integrated into the over-all structure of the book.⁸ But in this case it becomes somewhat difficult to suppose that Deuteronomy 5–28 is necessarily the core of the book. Could chapter 27 not have been added at the same time as chapters 1–4, 29ff.? The second main weakness in Wijngaards' theory is the postulation of a recurring ceremonial re-enactment of the crossing of the Jordan and the conquest of Canaan. It is very dubious whether Hosea 6:7–10 can be taken as a reference to such a custom. The exact sin being condemned is obscure, but one plausible suggestion is that it refers to abuses connected with the cities of refuge.⁹ However, in spite of these reservations Wijngaards is to be thanked for again drawing scholarly attention to the presence of Shechem traditions in the book of Deuteronomy and for attempting to find a period in which they could have been incorporated into the book.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 109ff.

⁶ J. Wellhausen in *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des alten Testaments*,³ G. Reimer, Berlin (1889) 192ff.

⁷ E. W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition*, Blackwell, Oxford (1967) 22 is one of a number of scholars who have held this view.

⁸ See M. G. Kline, *WTJ* 23 (1960–1) 1–15; D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome (1963) 109ff.; N. Lohfink, *Das Hauptgebot Eine Untersuchung literarischer Einleitungsfragen zu Deuteronomium 5–11*, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome (1963) 111f., 234.

⁹ Six cities of refuge are named in Joshua 20 including Ramoth-Gilead and Shechem. When a homicide fled to a city of refuge, the elders of the city had to decide whether it was a case of murder or manslaughter. Murderers had to be executed, but manslaughterers were allowed to live in the city. According to A. C. J. Phillips, *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law*, Blackwell, Oxford (1971) 101, Hosea's complaint is that (Ramoth) Gilead is actually harbouring murderers, while manslaughterers are being killed before they reach Shechem.

To avoid the objections outlined above, it is necessary to concentrate attention on the present book of Deuteronomy. This is not to prejudge the question of the origin of the different traditions contained in the book. But modern investigation has shown that all parts of the book are a carefully integrated whole; therefore if we are to discover how the final redactor understood his material, we must examine all texts bearing on the question of the central sanctuary and attempt to relate them to the commands to build an altar and sacrifice on Mount Ebal. If this redactor's views can be discovered, they may, as Wijngaards has argued, shed light on the date of composition of Deuteronomy. To this end, the history of the central sanctuary, so far as it can be discerned from the historical books of the Old Testament, will be reviewed. Then, secondly, the individual texts in Deuteronomy bearing on the Ark and the central sanctuary will be examined. Finally, an attempt will be made to answer the question: at what stage in Israel's history is it reasonable to suppose a redactor could have combined these traditions to form our book of Deuteronomy?

I. HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY¹⁰

It is disputed whether the first Israelite sanctuary was at Qadesh,¹¹ and it is certainly irrelevant to a discussion of the final redaction of Deuteronomy.¹² The Ark was probably the centre of worship for the tribes before the settlement.¹³ In Canaan it was clearly a focus of Israelite worship. According to Noth the Ark was the centre of Israelite worship. 'It was the common cult object which united the association of the twelve tribes of Israel.'¹⁴ Noth believes that the centre to which the Ark was first attached was Shechem; afterwards it was transferred to Bethel, then Gilgal, then Shiloh and finally Jerusalem. The theory that Shechem was the first central Israelite

¹⁰ Cf. the discussion by W. H. Irwin 'Le Sanctuaire central israélite avant l'établissement de la monarchie' *RB* 72 (1965) 161-184.

¹¹ Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, Burns and Oates, London (1966) 184.

¹² Qadesh is mentioned in Dt. 1:2, 19, 46; 2:14; 9:23, and it might be argued that some of the traditions in Dt. 1 and 2 belonged to the sanctuary of Qadesh. But as far as the final editor of Dt. is concerned, Qadesh is just a stopping place in the wilderness.

¹³ R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London (1961) 298.

¹⁴ M. Noth, *History of Israel*,² A. & C. Black, London (1960) 91.

sanctuary rests mainly on Joshua 24. If this does describe the founding of the Israelite amphictyony,¹⁵ it would seem reasonable to suppose that Shechem was the first 'amphictyonic' shrine. But if Schmitt is right in supposing that Joshua 24 is really describing the renewal or a modification of the covenant, it is possible that Shechem was not the central sanctuary.¹⁶ The possibility must be considered that Joshua may have had special motives for relinquishing his leadership at Shechem. It is relevant to recall the case of Rehoboam. Long after Jerusalem had been established as the central sanctuary Rehoboam went to Shechem to be made king. Why Rehoboam should have chosen Shechem in preference to any other sanctuary is not stated. Nevertheless, very significant patriarchal traditions are connected with Shechem. According to Genesis 12:6f. ('J') it was at Shechem that God first promised Abraham that his seed should possess the land. Again it was at Shechem that God appeared to Jacob after his return to Canaan (Gn. 35:1-4 'E'), and where Jacob bought a plot of ground (Gn. 33:19 'E'). It is possible that Rehoboam went to Shechem to reaffirm his fidelity to the covenant in an action analogous to the Babylonian *mēsharum*-act, because Shechem was the place with which these traditions of inheriting the land were associated.¹⁷ The *mēsharum*-act was intended as an assertion of the ruler's claim to authority. If these motives were

¹⁵ The theory that early Israel was an amphictyony, a league of tribes bound together by oath, first expounded in detail by M. Noth, *Das System der 12 Stämme Israels*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart (1930), has commanded almost universal support until recently. Details of the theory have lately been questioned. G. Fohrer in *TLZ* 91 (1966) 801ff. argues that the unity of early Israel was that of the nomadic tribal clan and that the covenant was of very little importance in Israel's history. A similar position is taken by C. F. Whitley in *JNES* 22 (1963) 37-48. On the other hand, G. Schmitt, *Der Landtag von Sichem*, Calwer Verlag, Stuttgart (1964), 89ff., argues that Jos. 24 gives no hint that the tribes originally had different origins. R. de Vaux in J. P. Hyatt ed., *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, Carey Kingsgate Press, London (1966) 22f. insists that יהודה implies consanguinity. D. B. Rahtjen in *JNES* 24 (1965) 110-114, shows that the Philistine pentapolis was closer in structure to a Greek amphictyony than was the Hebrew league. It seems to me that 'amphictyony' is a somewhat misleading description of the Israelite league, but I shall continue to use the term as a convenient designation of the constitution of Israel before the rise of the monarchy. That the Ark, the covenant and holy war were of fundamental importance in this era is shown by some of the early poetry, e.g. Ex. 15; Nu. 10:35f.; Jdg. 5.

¹⁶ G. Schmitt, *op. cit.*, 80ff.; cf. V. Maag 'Sichembund und Vätergötter' *VTS* 16 (1967) 215f., who regards Jos. 24 as the foundation of the amphictyony, yet minimizes pre-existing differences between the tribes.

¹⁷ See D. J. Wiseman, *JSS* 7 (1962) 161-172.

behind Rehoboam's action, it is possible that similar ideas inspired Joshua or at any rate the authors of Joshua 8:30–35 and 24. Joshua is portrayed consistently as the conqueror, the one through whom the promise to the fathers was fulfilled. It would be natural to suppose that he would have wished to visit the place where the promise had first been made, when it had been fulfilled. Thus the traditions in Joshua 8:30ff. and Joshua 24 are not conclusive proof that the first central sanctuary was located at Shechem.

The theory that Bethel was once the central sanctuary rests on Judges 19ff. But apart from a mention that 'the ark of the covenant of God was there (*i.e.* at Bethel) in those days' (Jdg. 20:27), it does not seem that any special significance is attached to Bethel in these stories. The phrase 'in those days' is vague.¹⁸ It may be that the Ark had been temporarily brought from Shiloh to Bethel, a sanctuary much nearer to Gibeah, so that God could be consulted in the holy war (*cf.* 1 Sa. 4 and 2 Sa. 11:11). The hypothesis that Gilgal was for a time the central sanctuary is based on the actions of Samuel and Saul there, and the so-called aetiological legends of Joshua 4ff. However, in the days of Samuel and Saul the Ark was still, as far as we know, at Kiriath-Jearim. It seems dubious historical method to say that the Joshua stories refer to a central sanctuary that was used before Samuel, when there is no explicit evidence for it.

Only in the case of Shiloh can a good case be made for it having been the central sanctuary of all Israel. According to the book of Joshua Shiloh was a meeting-place of the tribes, where the tent of reunion was set up (Jos. 18:1). Annual pilgrimages were made there (Jdg. 21:19–21; 1 Sa. 1:3). There was a house of God, a *hēkāl*, where the Ark was kept (1 Sa. 1:9; 3:3).¹⁹

¹⁸ Often, five times, in Judges it refers to the days of the Judges, when no king reigned. On any view this is too long a period in this verse. Once rsv translates it 'one day' (Ex. 2:11).

¹⁹ Fuller discussion in R. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, 304. Recent excavations have shown that the Iron I deposits at Shiloh are much less than for other periods and that the destruction layers previously associated with this level actually date from the time of the Assyrian conquest. This suggests that the settlement associated with the early sanctuary was quite small. The biblical texts do not say specifically that Shiloh was sacked by the Philistines. The early Psalm 78 speaks simply of Yahweh abandoning Shiloh and of the suffering attendant upon the Philistine campaign. Jeremiah could be referring to the sacking of Shiloh by the Assyrians, and saying that just as the Ark's stay there did not guarantee Shiloh's subsequent security, so in his day its presence in Jerusalem did not guarantee Jerusalem. M. L. Buhl

Later writers refer to the destruction of Shiloh, but not to the destruction of other sanctuaries (Je. 7:12, 14; Ps. 78:60). If Shechem had been the central sanctuary, its destruction (Jdg. 9) might well have been mentioned too. Finally, the importance of Shiloh is all the more striking when it is remembered that no patriarchal traditions are connected with it.

When David captured Jerusalem and moved the Ark there, it became the religious as well as the political capital of his kingdom. The prestige of Jerusalem as a religious centre was no doubt enhanced by the erection of Solomon's temple. Throughout the monarchy period, as the author of Kings makes clear, worship continued apparently quite legally at shrines outside Jerusalem. This had also been the case in the days of Samuel and the judges. These shrines were permissible so long as they were not intended to be substitutes for Jerusalem, the central sanctuary. But when Jeroboam and his successors in an attempt to ensure the stability of their political power set up rival shrines at Bethel and Dan, they were opposed by prophets from north and south. However 1 Kings 13:1ff. may have been elaborated by deuteronomistic editors, its origin, it is generally agreed, represents an early prophetic protest against forsaking the central sanctuary of Jerusalem, home of the amphictyonic traditions and institutions.²⁰ Similarly Amos inveighs against all the northern sanctuaries. He says that the people should seek Yahweh and not Bethel (5:4f.). In so far as he predicts that all the sanctuaries will be destroyed and that only Jerusalem will be rebuilt (9:11), it is likely that by 'seeking Yahweh' Amos meant that the northerners should again return to true Yahwism and demonstrate it by worshipping at Jerusalem. Similarly Hosea attacks many northern shrines, but is silent about Jerusalem. The book actually contains some positive statements about Jerusalem (2:2; 3:5), and though these are

and S. Holm-Nielsen, *Shiloh: The Danish Excavations at Tall Sāilūn, Palestine, in 1926, 29, 32, and 63*, National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen (1969), 58ff. But see R. North's caution in interpreting the results of the recent excavation, *Orientalia* 40 (1971) 295-296, and Y. Shiloh's views, *IEJ* 21 (1971) 67-69.

²⁰ See N. H. Snaith, *IB* III, 120; J. Gray, *1 and 2 Kings*,² SCM Press, London (1970) 318ff.; M. Noth, *Könige* (I. 1-16), Neukirchener Verlag (1968) 291ff.; S. Asami, *The Central Sanctuary in Israel in the 9th Century B.C.* (Harvard Th.D. thesis 1964) 308ff. points out that this story has many linguistic affinities with the Elijah-Elisha cycles, and suggests that they both come from a 9th-century northern source. I am also indebted to Asami (pp. 148ff.) for his observations about Amos and Hosea.

generally credited to the Hosea school, it is unlikely that they would have been added if Hosea really disapproved of Jerusalem or envisaged some other shrine as the central sanctuary.²¹ 2 Chronicles 30:11 says that even after two centuries of schism there were still some in the north who recognized the claims of Jerusalem, though this may simply reflect the Chronicler's concern to stress the importance of the Jerusalem cult.

It was Hezekiah who first tried to centralize all worship in Jerusalem and make the temple the sole sanctuary.²² His policy failed, and Josiah reintroduced it. However, after Josiah's death worship again flourished at the high places. It was not until after the exile that Jerusalem seems to have become the sole Jewish sanctuary in Palestine.

II. DEUTERONOMY AND THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY

We must now summarize what Deuteronomy has to say about the Ark, the central sanctuary and worship elsewhere. The Ark is not mentioned very often in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 10:1-5 recalls how it was made to hold the two tables of the covenant. Von Rad regards this as an attempt to demythologize the Ark, which in earlier tradition was regarded as the throne of God.²³ But as treaty documents were customarily stored near the image of the god, this interpretation would seem to read too much into the text.²⁴ Deuteronomy 10:8 suggests that the Ark was considered by the redactor to be the place where Yahweh made His presence known, for it puts 'carrying the ark' in parallel with 'standing before the LORD'.²⁵ Similar ideas are present in Deuteronomy 31. The text of Deuteronomy is to be laid up beside the Ark (verse 26). Verse 15 reports a theophany at the tent of meeting. It is not

²¹ Asami, 187ff.

²² It has been claimed that Hezekiah's attempt at centralization is the invention of the Deuteronomist. This is now generally rejected. See J. Gray, *op. cit.*, 670; R. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, 336; J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, SCM Press, London (1960) 265f.

²³ G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, SCM Press, London (1953) 40. R. E. Clements, *God and Temple*, Blackwell, Oxford (1965) 95f., follows von Rad at this point, but also holds that this was the earliest understanding of the Ark's significance, p. 35.

²⁴ R. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, 301.

²⁵ If this verse is to be ascribed to the final redactor, and is not a stray gloss as verses 6, 7 appear to be.

said that the Ark is kept in the tent, though it seems likely that this is what the redactor understood.²⁶ Deuteronomy 23:14 orders purity in the holy war 'because the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp'. As the Ark was used in the holy war,²⁷ it may be that we have here another reference to the Ark. Finally assuming for the moment that 'the place which the LORD your God shall choose' is the central sanctuary, we have a number of other texts identifying the Ark with the place of God's self-manifestation.

What does Deuteronomy mean by 'the place which the LORD your God shall choose'? Is it one place or a number of places, as Welch argued? The phrases, 'in one [any] of your tribes', and 'from all your tribes', are not decisive by themselves. If there was no central sanctuary in the early period, as Wellhausen and Welch believed, they could be interpreted in a distributive sense.²⁸ However, the general agreement that Shiloh and perhaps other centres were for a time the centre of worship of all Israel makes Welch's interpretation less likely. Further, many of the passages seem to imply that a central sanctuary is intended. In chapter 12 the main emphasis is that Israel must not use the numerous Canaanite cult centres for her worship. Israel must destroy all these high places and bring her burnt-offerings, sacrifices, tithes, and firstlings to 'the place' (12:6, 11). It is not clear in these verses whether a single sanctuary is meant or whether a multiplicity of Yahweh sanctuaries is intended. Verses 15ff., however, make it clear that at least the number of Yahweh sanctuaries must be fairly small. When the Israelite who lives a long way from the sanctuary wants to eat meat, he does not have to take the animal to 'the place', but he may kill it in his own town.²⁹ More explicit directions are given about tithing in Deuteronomy 14:22–29. It is again foreseen that the Israelite may be living far from the sanctuary, and he is therefore allowed to turn his tithe into cash

²⁶ R. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, 302 for full discussion.

²⁷ Nu. 10:35f.; 1 Sa. 4–6.

²⁸ See Dt. 13:13; 17:2; 18:6; 19:5, 11; 23:17, where **אֵינָם** is best translated 'any'. See T. Oestreicher, *ZAW* 43 (1925) 246–249; A. C. Welch, *JBL* 48 (1929) 296.

²⁹ It should be noted that this is not necessarily a provision introduced as the result of Josiah's reform. Of the other references in *BDB* 257a to show that **זָבַח** can be used to mean 'slaughter' as well as 'sacrifice' only 1 Sa. 28:24 and 1 Ki. 19:21 seem plausible. Both are pre-Josiah.

and bring that to 'the place'. Deuteronomy 15:19–23 specifies that the firstlings must be eaten at the sanctuary, but blemished ones should be eaten at home. Deuteronomy 16 contains the instructions about celebrating the three national feasts of passover, weeks and tabernacles. The references to the bondage in Egypt clearly indicate that these are the national festivals, so it is most natural to infer that they were supposed to be celebrated in the central sanctuary. However, Deuteronomy 16:1–8 provided Welch with one of the strongest arguments for supposing that the author intended passover to be celebrated at the local sanctuaries. Verse 6 states that the passover sacrifice must be offered in the evening, verse 7 that next morning they shall turn and go to their tents. Verse 8 says that for six days they are to eat unleavened bread and on the seventh there is to be a solemn assembly to the LORD your God. Welch argued that it was quite unreasonable for the writer to demand that the Israelites come up to Jerusalem twice in a week. The writer must have intended the feast to be celebrated at the local sanctuaries. The more usual explanation of this law is that the author of Deuteronomy has combined the feasts of unleavened bread and passover.³⁰ It is perfectly possible that unleavened bread and passover were once independent, but this does not account for the redactor's understanding of the law in its present form. If the traditional interpretation of the text is accepted, it must be supposed that two visits to Jerusalem in about ten days are required. For a Galilaean this would total some 240 miles.³¹ We are thus faced with a dilemma: either the law is almost unfulfillable or it presupposes celebration of the feast at local sanctuaries. Kraus³² and Kline, however, take the phrase 'to your tents' more or less literally. It 'would here refer to the pilgrims' temporary quarters in the holy city'.³³ This would seem to be the best solution to the

³⁰ R. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, 485ff.; G. von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, SCM Press, London (1966) 111ff. But H.-J. Kraus 'Zur Geschichte des Passah-Massot-Festes im AT' *EvTh* 18 (1958) 47–67 argues that in fact the two feasts were combined in the amphictyonic period, when Passover-Massot was celebrated by all Israel at Gilgal.

³¹ Dt. 1:2 allows eleven days for the journey from Horeb to Qadesh-Barnea. If Horeb is to be located in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula (see Aharoni, *op. cit.*, 182ff.) it would appear that pilgrims might average fifteen miles a day. Perhaps higher speeds might be possible in the easier terrain of Palestine.

³² H.-J. Kraus, *loc. cit.*, 59.

³³ M. G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids (1963) 93. 'Tents' (תֵּנִים) often does mean 'homes' in the OT (e.g. 1 Ki. 8:66; 12:16). But in

problem, and allows us to understand the law in terms of the central sanctuary. The laws about the supreme court in Deuteronomy 17:8–13 evidently imply that there is only one chosen place. This is reinforced by a comparison with Deuteronomy 1:17, where Moses is the supreme judge. A similar conclusion is demanded by Deuteronomy 18:6–8 on the rights of the Levites to officiate at the central sanctuary. 'The place' is mentioned in Deuteronomy 26, whose demands are just as applicable to the central sanctuary as to local ones. Deuteronomy 31:10f. mentions a special assembly every seven years at the feast of booths. As in 16:15 this must be celebrated at the place which the Lord will choose. There is therefore very good reason for supposing that when the author of Deuteronomy spoke of 'the place which the LORD your God shall choose' he intended to refer to the central sanctuary of all Israel.

Several times the phrase mentioning the central sanctuary is expanded by the addition of the phrase 'to put his name there' (לְשֵׁם אֱת שְׁמוֹ שָׁם),³⁴ or 'to make his name dwell there' (לְשֵׁם וְשָׁם שָׁם).³⁵ The precise significance of these phrases is elusive. According to von Rad Deuteronomy means by these phrases not Yahweh Himself but His substitute, His name, dwells in the sanctuary. Von Rad holds that Deuteronomy is here demythologizing the older concept that Yahweh was present on earth; instead it is insisting that Yahweh dwells in heaven and His name on earth.³⁶ However, de Vaux has shown that this is too sharp an antithesis.³⁷ Deuteronomy can say that Yahweh is among His people (23:15), and that Israel must appear and rejoice before the LORD (16:11, 16; cf. 26:10,

Dt. its basic meaning 'tent' is normal (cf. 1:27; 5:30; 11:6). Dt. 33:18f. provides an illuminating comparison with this passage. 'Going out' stands in parallel with 'your tents', in a context of a call to worship on their mountain (verse 19). It is not clear whether pilgrims would have found rooms near the sanctuary, or whether a camp was set up. Two considerations favour the latter. The Passover was probably of nomadic origin (R. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, 489). In using tents, its original character would be preserved to some extent. Secondly, the Samaritans still erect tents during their celebration of the Passover (L. G. Farmer, *We Saw the Holy City*,³ Epworth Press, London (1953) 199). Nor is it clear why tents are only mentioned in connection with Passover. Possibly because it was the only one of the three feasts that fell within the rainy season.

³⁴ Dt. 12:5, 21; 14:24.

³⁵ Dt. 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2.

³⁶ G. von Rad, *Studies*, 38f.

³⁷ R. de Vaux "Le lieu que Yahvé a choisi pour y établir son nom" in F. Maas ed., *Das ferne und nahe Wort, Festschrift L. Rost*, W. de Gruyter, Berlin (1967) 219–228.

13). In Deuteronomy 26 the sanctuary is described as the place where Yahweh's name dwells, yet the Israelite worships and speaks 'before the LORD', concluding his worship with a prayer asking God to look down 'from heaven his holy habitation'. It seems that Deuteronomy regards God as present in heaven and in His sanctuary. A further passage indicates that Yahweh's name is conceived of dwelling in His sanctuary in much the same way as the names of Canaanite gods dwelt in theirs. In 12:3 the Israelites are commanded to 'hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their *name* out of that *place*'. And in 12:5 they are told to 'seek the *place* which the LORD your God shall choose to put his *name* there'. De Vaux has suggested that the origin of the phrase is legal rather than cultic. He compares the phrase (*šakan šumšu*) which occurs in the Amarna letters. 'Behold, the king has set his name in the land of Jerusalem; so he cannot abandon the lands of Jerusalem.'³⁸ 'The phrase is an affirmation of ownership, the equivalent of taking possession.'³⁹ But the phrase also occurs in other texts dealing with conquests, and is often associated with the erection of a stele or other victory monument.⁴⁰ An inscription of Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria reads: 'Thus I placed my great name and my (victory) stele in the land of Lebanon on the shore of the Great Sea.'⁴¹ Likewise Yahdunlim of Mari describes himself as 'one who erects stelae, mentioning (his) name' (*mu-re-ti na-re-e na-bi šu-mi* 1:22). Later in the same inscription in the context of reducing his enemies to vassalship, he says 'he established his name' (*šu-mi-šu iš-ta-ka-an* 2:20).⁴² Shalmaneser III on his expeditions to the West also erected stelae probably near the sanctuaries on Mounts Carmel and Lebanon.⁴³ More recently it has been pointed out that this phraseology is often associated with the inscribing of a name on the foundation stones of sanctuaries. The inscription of the

³⁸ EA 287:60-3; cf. EA 288:5-7 in *ANET* 488.

³⁹ *RB* 63 (1966) 449. His suggestion in *Festschrift L. Rost* 221 that the phrase may have been peculiar to Jerusalem cannot be sustained in the light of the other evidence presented here.

⁴⁰ I am indebted to W. L. Moran for first pointing this out to me.

⁴¹ R. Borger, *Einleitung in die assyrischen Königsinschriften I*, Brill, Leiden (1961) 14f., rev. iv. 12-18; quoted by A. Malamat in *Studies in Honor of B. Landsberger*, University of Chicago Press (1965) 371.

⁴² Published by G. Dossin, *Syria* 32 (1955) 1ff.; new translation by A. L. Oppenheim in *ANET*³ 556f.

⁴³ A. Malamat, *loc. cit.*, 372.

name was essential to the validity of a temple.⁴⁴ If this is the background to the Hebrew phrase, we could regard 'to make his name dwell there' as the etymological equivalent of Akkadian (*šakānum šumam*) and 'to put his name there' as the semantic equivalent. The phrases in Deuteronomy would then specify that the sanctuary in question belongs to Yahweh. Perhaps there may be slight overtones of conquest in the phraseology.

Does the author of Deuteronomy intend 'the place' to be the *sole* sanctuary, as opposed to the central sanctuary, of all Israel? The evidence on this is somewhat ambiguous. Deuteronomy 16:21 forbids the erection of an Asherah beside the altar of the LORD your God. This is taken by Driver and von Rad to be a pre-centralization law.⁴⁵ But their reasons are not conclusive. The interpretation of this law depends on the historical context to which the commentator assigns it. Much more important for understanding the redactor's attitude to the central sanctuary is Deuteronomy 27. Here it is commanded that an altar is to be erected on Mount Ebal⁴⁶ and that burnt offerings and peace offerings are to be offered there. In addition, the text of the law is to be inscribed here, which is appropriate in a sanctuary. If it be supposed that Deuteronomy allows only one sanctuary and not just a central sanctuary, Deuteronomy 27 indicates that it was located near Shechem. If Noth is right in supposing that Shechem was at one time the central sanctuary, it could well be argued that Deuteronomy was written to establish or authenticate the sanctuary there. Deuteronomy 27 would be powerful evidence for believing that the first 'amphictyonic' shrine was there. This would suggest that Deuteronomy is very early indeed, and this is the conclusion that Wijngaards has drawn.⁴⁷

Though Wijngaards is right to emphasize the importance of Shechem in Deuteronomy it is not obvious that the redactor of Deuteronomy located the central sanctuary there. Against

⁴⁴ Cf. S. D. McBride Jr. *The Deuteronomistic Name Theology* (Harvard PhD Thesis, 1969) 93f.

⁴⁵ S. R. Driver, *Deuteronomy*,³ T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh (1902) 203; G. von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, 115. Driver compares this law with Ex. 20:24, and von Rad says it presupposes a multiplicity of cult centres.

⁴⁶ The Samaritan version has Mount Gerizim at this point. Alteration of Ebal to Gerizim by the Samaritans is as intelligible as alteration of Gerizim by their opponents. It is difficult to know which text is original. At any rate, the point is immaterial to the argument.

⁴⁷ See above.

the view that Shechem was intended to be the central sanctuary may be cited the failure in Deuteronomy to call it 'the place'. Neither the Ark⁴⁸ nor the tent of meeting is mentioned in connection with it. The altar erected is of an old-fashioned type (*cf.* Ex. 20:24f.). It seems unlikely that an altar of unhewn stones was intended to be the altar of the central sanctuary. Elsewhere, in Deuteronomy 23:19, the house of the LORD is mentioned. This would suggest that Deuteronomy envisages more than a primitive altar at the central sanctuary. On the other hand it is possible that inscribing the law on stones (27:2ff.) is the deuteronomistic equivalent of erecting a victory stele. As we have seen, the phrase 'to place the name' is often associated with the erection of a stele. It could then be argued that Deuteronomy 27 is specifying not only where the covenant is to be renewed, but the location of the place which the LORD shall choose to make His name to dwell there. The arguments are finely balanced. It could be that Deuteronomy 27 specifies the sole sanctuary for Israel is to be on Mount Ebal, or it could be that the central sanctuary is located somewhere else and only a special ceremony on Mount Ebal is envisaged. Two considerations lead me to prefer the second alternative. Long after Jerusalem had become the central sanctuary for all Israel, Rehoboam went to Shechem to be made king. Secondly, the editor of Joshua evidently supposed that in the early days the central sanctuary was at Shiloh (Jos. 18:1; 22:12) yet allowed Joshua to go to Shechem to renew the covenant (Jos. 24:1ff.).⁴⁹

Undoubtedly Deuteronomy 27 is the clearest clue to the provenance of Deuteronomy in the whole book. But its presence conflicts with the idea that Deuteronomy was written to centralize worship at Jerusalem. By centralization is meant the attempt to limit *all* worship to *one* sanctuary, the policy of Hezekiah and Josiah. Deuteronomy 27 clearly prescribes that sacrifice be offered on Mount Ebal and ascribes this command to Moses. This makes it implausible to regard Deuteronomy as the programme for Josiah's reformation.

A source-critical analysis of 2 Kings 22–23 confirms this conclusion. Modern commentators agree that the account of the

⁴⁸ Jos. 8:33 states that the Ark was there for the ceremony commanded in Dt. 27.

⁴⁹ In 'The Deuteronomistic Theology of the Book of Joshua' *JBL* 90 (1971) 140–148 I have pointed out the close affinity of Joshua with Deuteronomy which makes it likely that the same man or school was responsible for editing both works.

discovery of the law-book and the celebration of the Passover (2 Ki. 22:3-20; 23:1-3, 21-23) and the list of reforms (2 Ki. 23:4-20) come from at least two different sources.⁵⁰ It is therefore dubious whether the law-book actually prompted Josiah's centralization measures. The Chronicler could be correct in placing them several years before the discovery of the law-book. It is also worthy of note that, according to Kings, Hezekiah took steps to centralize worship at Jerusalem without any prompting from a law-book.

III. THE PLACE OF ORIGIN OF DEUTERONOMY

More positively, Deuteronomy 27 gives some guidance about the possible origin of the book. It could be a northern document. It could be a southern document, but then it must date from a time prior to the desertion of the northern tribes from the Davidic house. A third possibility must also be considered; that at some time northern traditions were incorporated into the Jerusalem covenant document.

Deuteronomy 27 is the strongest argument in favour of a northern provenance of Deuteronomy. We must therefore consider the validity of this argument carefully. If Deuteronomy is a northern document, it must either derive from circles that were faithful to the official royal cult or from a sectarian group. Since the approved central sanctuaries of the northern kingdom were at Bethel and Dan, it seems unlikely that a document advocating worship on Mount Ebal can be the work of devotees of the official cult of the northern kingdom. On the other hand, it is difficult to ascribe Deuteronomy to northern sectarians, since those circles in the North which valued the old traditions of Israel and opposed the official cultus looked to Jerusalem as the true centre of worship.⁵¹ A further difficulty with supposing that Deuteronomy was written in the North in the 9th and 8th centuries BC is archaeological. Shechem went into a decline after the division of the monarchy,⁵² and there is no proof that a significant sanctuary remained there.

⁵⁰ E.g. J. Gray *ad loc.*; N. Lohfink, *Biblica* 44 (1963) 261ff.

⁵¹ See above, pp. 108f.

⁵² G. E. Wright, *Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City*, Duckworth, London (1965) 144ff.

The argument for a northern origin of Deuteronomy *in this era* is therefore at best an argument from silence.

Over against this negative evidence must be set the clear positive witness of 2 Kings 22f. that some form of Deuteronomy was known and used in the Jerusalem cult a long time before Josiah's day. In a meticulous study of 2 Kings 22:3–20; 23:1–3, 21–23, N. Lohfink arrived at the following conclusions.⁵³ First, this account of the discovery of the law-book must have been written by a royal apologist before the death of Josiah. The account is really written to demonstrate Josiah's devotion to Yahweh, not to explain the origin of the law-book. Second, the term 'book of the law' is a technical term for a covenant document, that is the liturgy of a ceremony in which the covenant obligations are read out to the people and accepted by them. Third, the account assumes that the book in question was old. Since the royal officials had a number of ways open to them to verify its authenticity, presumably they were satisfied that it was old. Fourth, since the covenant documents were kept with the Ark, some earlier form of this document was presumably brought to Jerusalem when the Ark was. Fifth, since Deuteronomy with its covenant-treaty form would serve admirably as a covenant document, it seems likely that it was some form of Deuteronomy that was discovered in Josiah's time. This makes it likely that the origins of Deuteronomy are to be sought in the amphictyonic period and that it was subsequently transmitted, preserved, and developed in Jerusalem.

The possibility that the Shechem traditions were inserted into Deuteronomy after the secession of the northern tribes has more difficulties than either of the other two. The objections to the first theory apply to it as well. In addition, if the north Israelite traditions are eliminated from Deuteronomy, that is 11:29–30; 27, the book loses a vital part of the covenant form, namely a document clause. Furthermore, it is difficult to conceive of a time when such northern traditions could have been incorporated into the Jerusalem covenant document. For if we suppose Deuteronomy 27 to be an insertion, it must have been inserted before the redaction of the deuteronomistic

⁵³ N. Lohfink, *Biblica* 44 (1963) 261–288, 461–498.

history, since, as Noth has observed,⁵⁴ it is presupposed in Joshua 8:30–35. Secondly, its insertion cannot be ascribed to the deuteronomistic historian. The message of the deuteronomistic redactor of Kings and possibly an earlier pre-exilic compiler is clear: all sanctuaries outside Jerusalem were sinful. The northern kingdom's refusal to worship at Jerusalem is the real cause of their downfall according to 2 Kings 17. Similarly the kings of Judah are judged by the vigour with which they took action against the high places. Thus it is most unlikely that a tradition that Moses ordered the erection of a shrine on Mount Ebal should have been inserted into Deuteronomy at this period. Nor is it likely to have been inserted in the immediately preceding reigns. Since Josiah and Hezekiah were both dedicated to the destruction of northern shrines, it seems unlikely that they would have approved the insertion of a passage into the Jerusalem covenant document legitimizing by an appeal to Moses one of the northern sanctuaries.⁵⁵ Presumably a similar antipathy to northern shrines was current in Jerusalem circles even before the fall of Samaria. In short, there is no period after the division of the monarchy in which it is likely that a southern redactor would have wanted to insert northern traditions in the book of Deuteronomy.

If, however, we suppose that Deuteronomy was a southern document and that its composition antedates the division of the kingdom, none of these problems arise. We know that Rehoboam went to Shechem to be made king, though his capital was at Jerusalem. It was customary in Israel to renew the covenant at the accession of a new king, an act perhaps parallel to the Babylonian *mēšharum*-act. It has been argued that though Deuteronomy probably locates the central sanctuary elsewhere, it prescribes that one of the first duties of Israel on entering the Promised Land is to renew the covenant and offer sacrifice near Shechem. Thus Deuteronomy would be quite suitable for use as the document in such a ceremony, if it was written some time during the united monarchy period or earlier. To judge from 2 Kings 22f. it continued in use in Jerusalem until shortly before the fall of the city.

⁵⁴ *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I*,² Kohlhammer, Stuttgart (1957) 42.

⁵⁵ In Manasseh's reign the document seems to have been lost, see 2 Ki. 22.