

Moshe WEINFELD, *Deuteronomy I-II* (Anchor Bible 5, Doubleday; New York 1991) xiv, 458 pp.

This is the first part of a two-volume Commentary. The author is an Israeli scholar, Professor of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an acknowledged expert on the Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomistic School.

He has published numerous studies on Deuteronomy and related subjects. The bibliographical list has 56 entries under his name. Most of them are short studies in English, four are books, two are book-reviews; eighteen entries are in Hebrew. The Commentary continuously cites these entries. See for example pp. 2. 5 (2x). 6. 7 (2x). 8. 9 (2x). 10. 11. 13. 17. 20. 27. 34. 35. 37 (2x). 38. 40. 45. 46. 47. 49 (2x). 51. 53 (2x). 55. 56. 57. 58. 59 (2x). 60 (2x). 62 (2x). 63. 64 (3x). 68. 69 (2x). 70. 74 (3x). 75 (2x). 76. 78. 80. 82 (2x). 134 (5x). 138 (4x). 266 (4x). 327 (5x). It also cites some of his studies not mentioned in the bibliographical list. See for example p.6 note 4 and p.61 note 26.

The Commentary has been divided into two volumes basically because of its length. This first volume contains an introduction to the whole work and a commentary on chapters 1-11. It ends with a list of sources (Sigla, Ancient Near Eastern documents, Rabbinic literature, Commentators, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha). The second volume will contain a shorter introduction to

the whole work, a commentary on chapters 12-36 and an index to the whole work. The dividing line between chapters 11 and 12 is justified by the fact that the first section stands out by itself as narrative, while chapter 12 begins a predominantly legal and legislative text.

The introduction provides the usual information about literary-critical, legal, historical and theological matters. The information about text and versions will be given in the shorter introduction to the second volume since the research on the Qumran texts of Deuteronomy is still in progress. However, all available studies on Qumran have been taken into consideration during the preparation of this volume.

The commentary itself has four constant elements (Translation, Textual Notes, Notes, Comment), and two occasional ones (Introductory Remarks, Excursus).

The Translation of Deuteronomy is the author's own. So is the translation of some other biblical texts quoted in the volume.

The Textual Notes justify the translation. See 1,1 where *mōl* is accepted as a variant of *mūl* to justify the English translation "near" instead of the masoretic "facing". The masoretic reading is kept by AV, RSV, BJ, etc.

The Notes explain the text. See 1,1 where the possible geographic locations of 'Arabah are mentioned and the particular location of the name in this context is pointed out.

The Comment serves various purposes. It may discuss some problems besetting a whole section or an important part of a text (see 1,1-5), it may deal with the tradition underlying a biblical story (see 1,9-18); quite often it compares a text with parallel narratives (see 1,19-28), etc. In some cases no Comment is added after the Notes (see pp. 133. 235. 319. 327).

An occasional Introductory Remark (see p. 130; sometimes simply called Introduction, see p. 233) indicates the various elements or sections of a longish literary unit.

A single Excursus appended to a Comment studies the Judiciary in the Ancient Near East (see p. 140).

And six pictures, together with two rudimental maps, inserted between pp. 272 and 273 add a concrete and realistic touch to the literary composition.

The author makes a significant contribution to the biblical research by the great amount of pertinent information offered in the volume. He has tapped all possible sources. Starting with the biblical and extra-biblical parallels, and making use of the learned commentaries of all periods and tendencies (especially the most recent exegetical studies), he has cradled the Deuteronomic text in its literary and historical context.

Sometimes he aligns himself with the commonly accepted views and strengthens them with his own observations. Thus he places the origins of Deuteronomy in the North-

ern Kingdom, and confirms this common view with a lengthy comparison between the Deuteronomic purification of the cult and the polemic of Hosea against Israel's cultic practices (see pp. 44-50). In this context he mentions that the Deuteronomic description of the settlement of Judah (Jos 15) reflects the time of Josiah (see p.54). This is partly true with reference to the list of Judean cities (Jos 15,21-63; some of them were not taken before the monarchic period; actually Gaza was taken only at the time of Herod the Great), but hardly applies to the description of the tribal boundary (Jos 15,1-12; it includes the coastal region which was not under Judean control in the monarchic period). One could add that perhaps the northern connection was more a paradigm than a source of the Deuteronomic tradition. The Northern Kingdom was the first to feel the impact of the alien cults, and reacted accordingly. The Southern Kingdom felt the same impact at a later date and adopted the same measures.

At times he volunteers some precious insights of his own, as when he points out that the decalogue is more a creed than an epitome of Israel's morality (see p. 250), and technically contains words more than commands (see pp. 249. 287). In fact, the divine clauses are motivated more by God's intervention in Israel's history (especially the liberation from the Egyptian bondage, Ex 20,2; Dt 5,6) than by his supreme sovereignty.

It is common form to compare

the biblical covenants with the apparently bilateral Hittite treaties by which the overlord ensures the loyalty of the vassal kings and dictates his stipulations. The author extends the comparison to the Assyrian treaties. He detects a special similarity between the treaties (actually fealty oaths) by which the retiring Esarhaddon imposes Ashurbanipal, his successor, on the vassal kings and the biblical covenant in the land of Moab where Moses nominates Joshua as his successor (Dt 3,23-29; 31,1-8). He feels that the old biblical covenants depend on the Hittite model, while the Deuteronomic tradition depends at the same time on the Hittite and the Assyrian models (pp. 6-9). The similarities are certainly striking, but dependence is not necessarily called for. A simple parallelism may adequately explain the

contact between the various patterns.

The relative chronology of the priestly and Deuteronomic schools is discussed at great length and the precedence of the former is upheld (see pp. 25-37): a common and well-founded view. The classic problem of the four Pentateuchal sources or traditions is not addressed as such. Deuteronomy is studied as an autonomous whole.

Surprisingly (in view of Dt 32,8) one reads that "the Urim and Tummim are not mentioned at all in Deuteronomy" (pp. 45-46). Maybe an explanation is forthcoming in the second volume.

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