THE SONG OF MOSES (DEUT. 32:1-43)

By

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A Thesis
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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: The Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1-43) purports to be the words of Moses; but biblical scholars commonly reject Mosaic provenance. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to establish the date of the Song based on a philological analysis and a textual understanding of the passage.
ABSTRACT

The Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1-43) has been variously dated in the critical literature of the past 160 years. Scholars have proposed dates ranging from pre-monarchial Israel to the post-Exilic community. The effort of the present thesis is to present a critical review of the arguments on dating and, more important, to make a positive, concrete proposal for dating the Song. This proposal is based, first, on a new philological analysis; second, on the converging evidence of other analyses (genre, structure, style, and historical allusions). The conclusion is that the date of the Song's original composition is the late ninth century B.C.

The sequence of treatment is as follows: a review of the history of research on dating; presentation of text and translation with supporting notes; philological analysis (including consideration of some stylistic as well as linguistic traits); analysis of rhetorical and strophic structure and so, finally, of the sense of the Song, in particular of those elements of the sense which are indicative of the date of composition.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The genesis of this dissertation goes back to the year 1972, when my interest in this topic was stimulated by Professor Peter Craigie, to whom I desire to express my sincere thanks for his help and acute suggestions. My gratitude goes also to Dr. Ray Hobbs for his assistance during the interim period of supervisory vacuum.

It would be unprofitable to apologize for the shortcomings of this thesis, which experts are apt to detect all too easily. And while any errors and demerits must be solely my own responsibility, yet I wish to record my deep indebtedness to my two supervising professors: to Professor Ben Meyer for his unfailing courtesy and valuable literary advice; and to Professor Al Baumgarten for granting me the benefit of his discerning criticism and insights.

The following pages will indicate how much I depend on the works of other scholars. Their contribution is appreciated and accordingly acknowledged in the footnotes.

This opportunity cannot be passed without expressing my special thanks to the following: to Mr. Pat Trant, who so kindly read the entire manuscript and made suggestions for its improvements; to Debbie van Eeken, for her expert typing; and to my wife for her constant encouragement.

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<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJS</td>
<td>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Biblical Archaeologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASOR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWANT</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZ</td>
<td>Biblische Zeitschrift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAD</td>
<td>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBSC</td>
<td>The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJL</td>
<td>Canadian Journal of Linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EJ</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia Judaica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGrH</td>
<td>F. Jacoby, Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker, (Leiden, 1923-1958). Fürh is cited by author number and fragment number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUCA</td>
<td>Hebrew Union College Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>The Interpreter's Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>The International Critical Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID/IDB</td>
<td>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEJ</td>
<td>Israel Exploration Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature and Exegesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JNES</td>
<td>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSS</td>
<td>Journal of Semitic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JThC</td>
<td>Journal of Theology and the Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAI</td>
<td>Kanaänische und Aramäische Inschriften, by H. Donner and W. Rollig (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1962-64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>Kleine Schriften, by O. Eissfeldt (Tubingen, Mohr, 1962-68)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>The Massoretic Text of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>Revue Biblique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REJ</td>
<td>Revue des Etudes Juives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHR</td>
<td>Revue d'histoire des religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSPT</td>
<td>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>The Revised Standard Version of the Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP</td>
<td>Revue de théologie et philosophie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>The Samaritan Text of the Pentateuch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBL</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJT</td>
<td>Scottish Journal of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOSF</td>
<td>Studia Orientalia, Helsinki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPCK</td>
<td>Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(vii)
TLZ  Theologische Literaturzeitung
UT  Ugaritic Text
VT(S)  Vetus Testamentum (Supplement)
WMANT  Wissenschaftliche Monographen zum Alten und Neuen Testamentum
ZAW  Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZThK  Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche
IVQ  Fragments from cave 4, Qumran
INTRODUCTION

The Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1-43) has had a particular fascination for biblical critics over the past two centuries. Its authorship, date, structure, and theology have been a matter of dispute since the moment at which Mosaic authorship was first challenged.¹

For biblical studies in the modern, historical-critical mode, the question of dating is crucial. Thus, the light that the Song throws on the history of Israel's faith obviously depends on our exact dating of its first composition. Our purpose is to contribute to this end. Our main effort is to determine critically in what era the Song came into being. We leave it to others to explore the impact which this dating must have on the reconstruction of the history of Israel's faith.

We will adopt the following sequence in treating the question of the date of the Song:

Chapter One: The History of Research - In this chapter we will survey the results of research on the dating of the Song since the rise of modern biblical criticism.

¹The first person to challenge the Mosaic authorship was W.M.L. de Wette, Kritik der Israelitischen Geschichte, (1807), pp. 393ff.
Chapter Two: Text and Translation - A textual analysis is the prerequisite for a philological discussion. Hence, a translation of Deut. 32:1-43 with a critical philological commentary justifying the translation is made in this chapter. Any textual problems, or any divergencies in the Versions, along with differences of scholarly opinions are noted.

Chapter Three: Philological Evidence for Dating the Song - The philological features in the Song are investigated in this chapter as a criteria for dating. The method involves the analysis of the four following linguistic elements: (1) Syntax and Morphology; (2) Parallelism and Assonance; (3) Metrical Structure; (4) Terminology. Each linguistic element is explained before an analysis of the Song is made. As a general rule we will follow Robertson's differentiation of two stages in poetic Hebrew: early (10th century or earlier) and late or standard (8th century or later). Consequently, the presence of linguistic features in the Song that are typical of either an early or late poetic Hebrew will constitute an evidence of an early or late date respectively. If, however, the evidence indicate a mixture of both early and late patterns then the question of either archaizing or the period of transition (10th-8th century B.C.) is considered and a solution offered.

Chapter Four: The Song of Moses: Structure, Sense, and Dating - In this chapter we consider, in turn, past scholarship on strophic and rhetor-
ical structure and offer an analysis of our own on structure as a guide to sense. We thus seek to spell out the religious sense of the Song as an object of interest in itself, to be sure, but also as, once again, a guide to dating. The thesis concludes with a swift survey of some of the questions arising from our dating of the Song.

Table of Transcription

The analysis throughout this study is governed, for the sake of consistency, by Weingreen's table of transcription, which is reproduced here for purposes of convenience:

Table 1

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<thead>
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<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>English</th>
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<td>a</td>
<td>פ</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מ</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>ל</td>
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<td>ג</td>
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<td>ד</td>
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<td>ה</td>
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<tr>
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<td>k</td>
<td>ש</td>
<td>s</td>
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</table>

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Jews identify Deuteronomy 32, a passage from the Torah that is read once a year in the Synagogue on a Sabbath, by the word ha'azinu, which introduces the chapter. Biblical students, however, call it the "Song of Moses" because from very early times tradition associated the poem in Deut. 32:1-43 with Moses. Two statements preceding and one immediately following the poem are cited to justify the traditional association.

Now therefore write this song, and teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. 
(Deut. 31:19)

Then Moses spoke the words of this song until they were finished, in the ears of all the assembly of Israel. 
(Deut. 31:30)

Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people... 
(Deut. 32:44)

The early tradition ascribing authorship of Deut. 32:1-43 to Moses and its origin to the Mosaic period was universally accepted.
until 1807 when it was challenged by W. M. L. de Wette. He argued that the Song could not be attributed to the Mosaic period since it referred to events which occurred long after the death of Moses when the ten tribes of Israel were already in exile (cf. vv. 7, 13-14, 21, 26). He also rejected the possibility that Moses was anticipating events; in de Wette's view, Moses could never have envisioned such a sad destiny for his people.

W. de Wette's challenge resulted in an awakening of historical consciousness. For almost two centuries now, the energies of numerous biblical researchers have focused on the date of origin of the Song in Deut. 32:1-43. Every conceivable period in the history of Israel has been proposed, as the following table indicates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Biblical Critic</th>
<th>Proposed Date of Song</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>W.M.L. de Wette</td>
<td>Late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>H. Ewald</td>
<td>7th B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>A. Knobel</td>
<td>8th B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>A. Kamphausen</td>
<td>Late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>C.F. Keil &amp; F. Delitzasch</td>
<td>Mosaic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>A. Keunen</td>
<td>7th B.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2For the works of these critics, consult the bibliography.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Biblical Critic</th>
<th>Proposed Date of Song</th>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>C.H. Cornill</td>
<td>Exilic</td>
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<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>A. Westphal</td>
<td>6th B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>A. Klostermann</td>
<td>Late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>D.S. Cattli</td>
<td>6th B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>S. R. Driver</td>
<td>7th B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>D. C. Steuernagel</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>A. Bertholet</td>
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<td>1903</td>
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<td>1905</td>
<td>J. E. McFadyen</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>H. W. Robinson</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>W. G. Jordan</td>
<td>Exilic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
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<td>Persian Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>E. König</td>
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<td>1918</td>
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<td>1920</td>
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<td>1951</td>
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<td>11th B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Biblical Critic</td>
<td>Proposed Date of Song</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
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<td>G. E. Wright</td>
<td>9th B.C.</td>
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<td>D. A. Robertson</td>
<td>11-10th B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>J. R. Boston</td>
<td>Hezekiah's period</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The record shows that for over a century after they abandoned the traditional Mosaic date for the Song, biblical scholars favoured a late date, the 8th century B.C., or thereafter. However, just prior to World War II (especially after U. Cassuto's study in 1935) a shift occurred in favour of an early period, the 10th century B.C., or earlier. The debate continued with a mounting accumulation of data. No one who wishes to study critically the Song of Moses today, can limit his attention to the bare text; he must reckon with the critical propositions suggested by biblical scholars in the last two centuries or so.

These critical propositions for dating the Song comprise three types: the historical, which searches for any historical references or allusions that may possibly provide a clue
for dating the Song: the form-critical, which seeks to date the
Song by determining and locating its Gattung in literary history; and
the philological, which examines linguistic clues for dating the Song.

The following, therefore, summarizes the results of the most
significant scholarly inquiries identified by the three types. No
attempt is made at this point to assess these scholarly results but
to highlight the issues arising from the Song of Moses so that they
may be appreciated in a wider perspective.

Historical References

The Song of Moses contains no explicit historical references.
Nevertheless, almost every conceivable period in the history of
Israel (from Mosaic to post-Exilic) has been proposed as the period
of origin by at least one biblical critic only to be refuted with a
counter proposal by another. These various opinions are not
founded upon conclusive references to historical events or persons,
but simply based on speculation about the date of a period in history
when Israel was ungrateful and God threatened to punish Israel. The
dating of the poem hinges upon a single vague reference to "no-people"
in vs. 21. The passage reads as follows:

They stir me to jealousy with a no-god,
They provoke me with their vanities;
So I shall stir them to jealousy with a no-people,
With a foolish nation I shall provoke them.
The context suggests that because Israel provokes the jealousy of God with a no-god and vexes him with their vanities, so does God also express his intent to provoke Israel's jealousy with a "no-people" and to vex them with a foolish nation. Thus, the identification of the "no-people" has become the historical key to the date of the Song.

A survey of the various theories maintained by biblical scholars concerned with establishing the identity of the "no-people" reveals ten contenders:

1. The Syrians
2. The Assyrians
3. The Chaldeans
4. The Scythians
5. The Babylonians
6. The Edomites and Ammonites
7. Any Nation
8. The Canaanites
9. The Moabites and Ammonites
10. The Philistines

Like the previous list, this list may be divided into two groups: late (8th cent. B.C. or later) and early (10th cent. B.C. or earlier). The first five theories represent the suggestions of those biblical critics who identified the "no-people" with one of the
nations that came in contact with Israel around the 8th century B.C. or thereafter. The remaining five theories represent the views of those biblical critics who maintained that the reference to the "no-people" alluded to one of the nations, who came in contact with Israel prior to the 10th century B.C. In both groups however, these theories are listed, more or less, from the least to the most favoured view. Thus, the tendency of biblical critics prior to World War II was to favour the Babylonians. Since then, however, the preference has gradually shifted to the Philistines. A justification or rationale for each view follows.

1. The Syrians

Among those who attribute historical significance to the expression "no-people," A. Knobel and A. Westphal associate the expression with the Syrians. According to the former, the author of the Song is so greatly disturbed by the terrible and depressing situation created after the great wars between Israel and the Syrians, that he sits down and writes this poem. Consequently, Knobel concludes that the date of the poem is around 780 B.C., during

3 A. Knobel, Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua, 1861, p.325.
the end of the reign of Jehoahaz and the beginning of Jeroboam II. Knobel is, however, honest enough to admit that there are no definite traces in the poem that indicate the Syrian period, except his own interpretation of the term "no-people."

Westphal holds the same view as Knobel. He states that the poem was composed during the wars with the Syrians, but he goes one step further than Knobel: he identifies the author. Basing his view on II Kgs. 14:25, he argues that the author of the Song is the prophet Jonah who predicted the victories of Jeroboam over the Syrians.

2. The Assyrians

H. Ewald identifies the Assyrians as the people referred to by the expression "no-people." He maintains that the reference to God's punishment in vv. 19-25 points to the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C., so he places the date of the Song during the period of the monarchy, not earlier nor later than the 7th century B.C., under the regime of Esarhaddon (681-669 B.C.). Moreover, because the poem makes no mention of Judea, he concludes that the author of the poem lived in the northern kingdom and probably belonged to the Ten Tribes.

A somewhat similar but obviously more cautious approach is taken by A. Kamphausen. Making exhaustive reference to all the material available up to his time, he discusses various questions at length. Finally, like everyone else, in his search for evidence to support his choice of a date for the origin of the Song, he refers to the "no-people", but, instead of identifying it with one group, like his predecessors, he cautiously suggests the possibility of two groups: either the Assyrians or the Chaldeans. He considers both groups to be notorious for their cruelty and to have extended their dominion over vast territories. Therefore, either one may be considered a possibility.

3. The Chaldeans

In his general work on the Hexateuch, A. Keunen briefly discusses the date and authorship of the Song. In analysing the style of the poem he rejects all previous views and concludes that "no-people" refers to the Chaldeans. As for the author of the poem, he considers him to be a Judean, contemporary with the prophet Jeremiah, who wrote this poem during the Chaldean age, possibly around 630 B.C.

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6 A. Kamphausen, Das Lied Moses, 1862.
7 A. Keunen, The Hexateuch, 1886.
This view is also accepted by D. C. Steuernagel, A. Bertholet, and H. W. Robinson. Bertholet, however, slightly modifies Keunen's view. Though he agrees that the expression "no-people" refers to the Chaldeans, his analysis of the poem leads him to ascribe it to the Exile (6th century B.C.) instead of the 7th century B.C. as Keunen suggests.

4. The Scythians

A shift of emphasis marks the work of S.R.Driver. Instead of questioning the identity of the "no-people," he searches first for the underlying thought of the entire poem. His contention is that the basic thought of the poem is the rescue of the people, by an act of God, at the moment when annihilation seems imminent. Next, he searches for the historical period that fits such a description. His answer is 630 B.C., the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which corresponds with Keunen's choice. However, he strongly disagrees with Keunen and all those who identify the "no-people" as the Chaldeans, Assyrians or Syrians.

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In Driver’s view the term “people” would designate a group which has attained a certain degree of civilization and some definite political and moral patterns; the term “no-people” would designate a group lacking such patterns. Driver identifies the "irregular, loosely organized bands" of the Philistines, the Midianites, or the Arameans and the "uncivilized horde" of the Scythians as typical examples of the latter group. Driver concludes that the Scythians, who were active at that time, would therefore answer best to the "no-people" description.

5. The Babylonians

Following along the same lines as Driver, a number of scholars focused their attention on the description in vv.26-42 in order to document their evidence for identifying the “no-people.” First they tried to match the description in vv.26-42 with an appropriate historical period, which in turn would help them to tell who the “no-people” were. For instance, after briefly surveying a number of views on this descriptive passage in the Song, J. E. McFadyen makes the following statement:

It is difficult to say whether the enemy from whom in vv.34-43 the singer hopes to be divinely delivered are the Assyrians or the Babylonians; on the whole, probably the latter. In that case, the poem would be Exilic.\(^\text{12}\)

\(^{12}\text{J.E. McFadyen, Introduction to the Old Testament, 1905, p. 50.}\)
A.J. Levy's dogmatic conclusions contrast sharply with McDade's rather vague speculation. Levy argues that the Hebrew community living in exile in Babylonia, Elam, and the other neighbouring countries was formed of three main groups: the Nationalists, the Reformers, and the Assimilators. The author of the Song belonged to the Nationalist group, was contemporary with Deutero-Isaiah, and resided in Babylonia. He wrote the poem during the persecutions of Bel-Sar-usur of Babylonia around 545 B.C., hinting at the fall of the foe, Babylonia.

6. The Edomites and Ammonites

Another interpretation of the same descriptive passages in vv.26-42 is suggested by G. F. Kent whose short discussion of the Song is a part of an overall comparative study of various hymns and songs in the Old Testament. Citing vv.39 and 43 in evidence, Kent maintains that the author of the Song lived very nearly, if not contemporaneously, with the author of Isaiah 40-55.

Kent further contends that though vv.2-33 may refer to the Assyrian invasion, it is far more closely associated with the period of the Babylonian exile. As further evidence, he cites vv.40-42

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and states:

The hope that Jehovah will soon rise in judgment finds its closest analogies in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, so that the psalm is to be dated in the first half of the Persian period.\(^{15}\)

Kent's conclusions would lead one to assume that he would identify the Babylonians as the "no-people", but that is not the case. His choice are the Edomites and the Ammonites, "who improved the hours of Judah's humiliations to pay off old scores."\(^{16}\)

2. Any Nation

Evidence that the traditional view of Mosaic authorship had not been completely abandoned at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century is embodied in the defensive arguments of C.F. Keil and K. Delitzsch,\(^{17}\) and J. Reider.\(^{18}\) Keil and Delitzsch consider the Song to contain "all the marks of a prophetic testimony from the mouth of Moses."\(^{19}\) Furthermore, they firmly assert that, "throughout the whole we find no allusions to peculiar circumstances of historical events belonging to a later age... the

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 261.
\(^{16}\) Ibid.
\(^{18}\) J. Reider, Deuteronomy with Commentary, 1937, pp. 296-321.
whole circle of ideas, figures, and words in the ode points decidedly to Moses as the author. 20

As to the identity of the "no-people," Keil and Delitzsch disagree with all those who consider the expression to imply a barbarous and inhuman people, or a horde of men that do not deserve to be called a people. Their view is that the expression denotes "a people to which the name of a people or nation is to be refused, because its political and judicial constitution is the work of man, and because it has not the true God for its head and king." 21 Which group or people fall under such a classification? "Every heathen nation," according to Keil and Delitzsch, "even though they may not be behind the Israelites so far as its outward organization is concerned." 22

Similarly, J. Reider severely criticizes those who maintain that the tenor of the poem is post-Mosaic, that its diction and phraseology imply a later period, and that the contents reflect later times and circumstances. 23 Unconvinced by all the hypotheses

20 Ibid., p. 466.
21 Ibid., p. 479.
22 Ibid.
presented by various critics he argues that the Song is of Mosaic origin and that it "contains no definite allusions to historical events by which its exact or even approximate age can be gauged." According to him vv.7-12 do not look back to the Mosaic age as to a distant past, but are more accurately described as an allusion to the patriarchal age in accordance with Jewish tradition (cf. Rashi on 32:7). Similarly, the description of Israel's affluence and the consequent lapse into idolatry and ruin, from which it is ultimately saved by God in vv.13ff., is not only the product of the literary prophets but a universal religious motive common to the early parts of Scriptures. As to the expression "no-people," Reider has this to say:

It is quite probable that the author had no particular people in mind and simply used this designation for any possible future enemy of Israel - Philistines, Midianites, Arameans, etc. 25

Thus, according to Reider, the Song of Moses is of Mosaic origin, not because of the historical allusions but because "the entire song is couched in a plastic and immaculate Hebrew style weighted with archaic forms and rare expressions such as are found in some of the earliest poetic productions of the Hebrews." 26

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24 Ibid., p.297.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
for the sake of argument, we accept the objection that the poem in
its present form represents a later period than the Mosaic period,
Reider would conclude that such "supposedly late elements
were super-imposed on the original song of Moses by a later editor
or annotator." 27

8. The Canaanites.

U. Cassuto identifies the "no-people" with the Canaanites in
a brief article. 28 He dismisses the Syrians, Assyrians and Babylonians,
and claims that the events behind the Song are the same as those
behind Judges 5.

9. The Moabites and Ammonites

In a similar short article, M. Frank, 29 who also argues for
an early date, contends that the enemies alluded to in the Song are
not the Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and so on, but the Moabites
and the Ammonites of the period of the Judges, presumably around
the 13th century B.C.

27 Ibid., p.297.

28 U. Cassuto, "La Cantica di Mosè (Deut. 32)," In Atti del XIX
Congresso Internazionale degli Orientalisti Roma, 23-29 Settembre 1935,
Roma 1938, pp.480-484.

29 M. Frank, "The Date of Moses' Song"(Hebr.), Tebriz, 18(1946-47),
pp.129-138.
10. The Philistines

One of the most recent and important historical works relating to early dating of the Song is the monograph of O. Eissfeldt. He compares the Song with Ps. 78 and his contention is that both derive ultimately from the same Davidic-Philistine events in the 11th century B.C.

First, however, Eissfeldt summarizes under three categories the arguments of those critics who postulate a late date for the Song:

(1) The Song has affinities in style and vocabulary with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah.

(2) The highly religio-ethical concerns of the Song indicate a special relationship with prophecy.

(3) The high conception of God also indicates a special relationship with prophecy.

Eissfeldt rebuts each argument in turn:

(1) Where there are instances of literary dependence it is difficult to establish the direction of influence. Thus, it is just as easy to argue that the Song is older than Jeremiah as it is to argue

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the other way around. Furthermore, the possibility exists that either both sources may have been influenced by a third and unknown source, or, that both derived from a common tradition.

(2) There is no justification for assuming that the prophets were the originators of Israel's religio-ethical concerns; such concerns originate in the time of Moses.

(3) The concept of the sole lordship of God, which is expressed in the Song, need not be ascribed to the influence of the great prophets but may also be regarded as a religious polemic current at the time of Israel's struggle for a territory among other people.

Eissfeldt's argument for the date of the poem is based on his attempt to identify the "no-people" of vs. 21 with the Philistines. He quotes a phrase in Sir. 50:25f. which seems to name the Samaritans as a "no-people":

With two nations my soul is vexed,
And the third is no nation;
Those who live on Mount Seir, and the Philistines,
And the foolish people that dwell in Shechem.

However, he rejects any association between the epithets no-nation and no-people and the established peoples of the Semitic world, such as the Syrians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans. Consequently, he considers the "no-people" of Deut. 32:21 to refer to the Philistines, who were "uncircumcised," non-Semitic people with very strange customs.
He bases this assumption on the similarities between the Song and Ps. 78.

Both poems rehearse the mighty acts of God as a background to the story of Israel's rebellion and faithlessness. In both instances God uses an enemy to punish Israel, and in both cases the explanation of the punishment is the occasion for the composition of the poem. The historical reference in the Song and Ps. 78 does not have the same affinity in each.

The historical reference in Ps. 78 is explicit; because they did not keep God's covenant, the Ephraimites were defeated; God abandoned the tabernacle at Shiloh and delivered "his power" into captivity. To Eissfeldt this is all very clear. The psalm tells of a Philistine victory and the capture of the Ark as narrated in I Sam. 4.

The historical reference in the Song, on the other hand, is to "no-people" and it is vague. Nevertheless, Eissfeldt assumes that the reference in Deut. 32:21 echoes the same incident as Ps. 78 and therefore refers to the Philistines of the period of the Judges, especially the period between the catastrophic loss of the Ark and Saul's first victories. He proposes 1070 B.C. and 1020 B.C. as termini post and ante quem.

Thus, Eissfeldt concludes that the poem derives from a source among the central tribes (Ephraimite or Benjaminite) in the 11th century.
B.C. and is then appropriated by the "Elohist" in the mid-9th century B.C. to become part of his work.

Eissfeldt's extensive effort to establish an early pre-monarchial date by identifying the "no-people" in vs. 21 is the last and most recent application of the historical approach for dating the Song. The next step, therefore, is to trace the results of the form-critical method.

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**Form-Critical Analysis**

The determination of the literary type of the Song of Moses has sometimes been a factor in the dating of it. It is relatively rare, however, that this factor has been isolated as a distinct and decisive argument for dating.

Some, having noticed that the Song has a didactic tone, have correlated it with sapiential literature and roughly characterized this literary movement as late. But, as G.E. Wright has commented, dating

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"on the ground of a supposed influence from a (datable?) 'age of wise-
men' must be abandoned as without merit."

Those who have seen the poem as "a mixture of elements"
(Bentzen33), or as a Misschgedicht (Gunkel-Begrich,34 A. Weiser,35
and others36) likewise tended to suppose that this places the Song at
an advanced 'age of literary evolution and typically preferred, there-
fore, a late date.37

The "messianic poem" which H. Wald38 proposed the Song to be
had to have emerged in the 7th century B.C., no earlier and no later.
Theme andGattung were a twin birth. A. Kamphausen, however, failed

32G.E. Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of
Deuteronomy 32", in B.W. Anderson & W. Harrelson (eds.), Israel's

33A. Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament, vol. 1(1948),
pp. 160, 208.

34H. Gunkel - J. Begrich, Einleitung in die Psalmen: Die Gattungen
der religiösen Lyrik Israels, 1933, pp. 324, 326, 330.

35A. Weiser, Einleitung in das Alt Testament, 1939 (1st edit.),
p. 91. In the 5th edit. (1963), he suggests that Moses may possibly
be the author of the Song; cf. p. 110 n. 1.

36G. von Rad, Das fünfte Buch Moses, Deuteronomium, ATD, 1964,
pp. 139ff.; (see also Eng. trs. Deuteronomy: A Commentary, 1966, pp. 192-
201; C.J. Labuschagne, "The Song of Moses: Its Framework and Structure",
in De Fructu Oris Sui: Essays in Honour of Adriamus Van Selms, 1971,
pp. 85-98.

37"Late" means 8th-century B.C. or later. There are, however,
exceptions to this rule, as we shall see.

38H. Wald, op. cit., pp. 41-65.
to catch the contagion of Ewald’s certitude. Though he agreed that the Song was messianic in theme and type, he dated it a century earlier. For Kamphausen, Deut. 32 became the pattern (Muster) and model (Vorbild) for all the prophets (though he acknowledged that Jeremiah, for example, might have drawn, like the Song itself, on an earlier source).

In the late nineteenth century C.H. Cornill maintained that the Song was a Trostlied für Israel. Cornill, who originated the oft-cited description of the poem as "ein Compendium des prophetischen Theologie, durch und durch voll Reminiscenzen an ältere Propheten," seems to have considered the Gattung "Comfort Song" to be late. It appeared in history at the moment of Israel’s supreme trauma, the Exile. A. Westphal offered, so far as the question of literary type is concerned, no more than a variation on Cornill’s theme: the Song was "une sombre élégie, qui ne parle enfin d’espoirance que pour consoler du présent, et ramener le coeur du peuple vers le Dieu qui l’afflige." But his dating of this literary type is much more flexible than Cornill’s.

41Ibid., p. 71.
43Ibid., p. 58.
and, in fact, Westphal shares A. Knobel's view that the Song was composed during the wars with the Syrians. (Its author, Westphal thinks, is none other than the prophet Jonah.)

P. Winter proposed that, as it stands, the Song is an editorial synthesis of two forms: the Preislied, which derived from ancient tribal history, and the Scheltdied which mirrored the crisis prior to the fall of Jerusalem. (His conjecture on the first of these literary forms was anticipated by C. Steuernagel and followed by J. Steimann.)

Sometimes the related questions of form, theme, and dating are all but inextricably intertwined. E. Sellin settled on a terminus post quem for the Song of Moses in the 8th century B.C., for the text was an "Eschatological Song". (Later, he proposed a date in the 5th century B.C. on grounds other than the determination of literary form.)

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44 K. Marti, Deuteronomium, 1922, p. 318 and K.F. Kraemer, Deuteronomium, 1955, pp. 553ff., support the view that the Song is a Comfort Song.


49 E. Sellin, "Wann wurde das Moselied Dtn. 32 gedichtet?", ZAW, 43(1925), pp. 161-173.
The identification of the literary form known as the Lawsuit Covenant or Rîb⁵⁰ goes back to H. Gressman's study of Deutero-Isaiah in 1914,⁵¹ followed by a similar study by L. Köhler in 1923⁵² and later by J. Be grich in 1938.⁵³ It remained for H. Gunkel and J. Be grich⁵⁴ to elaborate the form under the title Gerichtsrede and to describe it in detail in relationship to the form-criticism of prophecy.

The first critic to associate the Rîb or Lawsuit pattern with the Song was H. Huffman.⁵⁵ He distinguished two basic types of Lawsuit: in the one YHWH is the judge and the foreign gods are the defendants; in the other YHWH is the plaintiff, Israel is the defendant, and heaven and earth are judges. Passages such as Deut. 32, Isa. 1:2-20, Mic. 6:1-8, Jerm. 2:4-13, and Ps. 50 illustrate the latter type.

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⁵²L. Köhler, "Deuterojesja stilkritisch untersucht", BZAW 37(1923), pp. 116-120.

⁵³J. Be grich, "Studien zu Deuterojesja", BWANT 77(1938), pp. 19-42.


In all such illustrations the appeal to natural elements such as heaven, earth, mountains, and hills is the characteristic feature of the literary type. Huffman did not attempt to date the Song from a dating of the literary type R'h.

In 1962, J. Harvey discussed the question of the R'h pattern in the light of extra-biblical parallels and identified the primary literary form of the Song of Moses as the R'h. Like Huffman, he distinguished two types of Lawsuit, but his types bore little relationship to the two types identified by Huffman. Harvey identified a "R'h of condemnation" and a "R'h of warning". He cites Deut. 32:1-25; Jerm. 2:2-37; Ps. 50 as examples of the former and Isa. 1:2-3, 10-20; Mic. 6:1-8 to illustrate the latter, and his analysis further breaks down each type of Lawsuit into five stages:

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<tr>
<th>Rib of condemnation</th>
<th>Rib of warning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Introduction (appeal to listen, appeal to heaven and earth)</td>
<td>id</td>
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56 Citing an Akkadian text as evidence, this view is also supported by W.L. Moran, "Some Remarks on the Song of Moses", Biblica 43.3(1962), pp. 317-320.


58 J. Harvey, op. cit., p. 178.
Rib of condemnation

II Interrogation (and the first implicit accusation)

III Indictment (accusation for breaking the covenant; recalling of YHWH's benevolence and Israel's ingratitude)

IV Reference to the futility (vanity) of the ritual compensations (or strange cults)

V Declaration of guilt and threat of total destruction

Rib of warning

Id

Id

Id

Warning, determining the change of conduct required by YHWH

Harvey related these five stages of the Rib of condemnation to specific passages in the Song in order to demonstrate his thesis:

I Deut. 32:1-2

II Deut. 32:16

III Deut. 32:7-14, 15-18

IV Deut. 32:16-17

V Deut. 32:19-25.

He made no attempt to classify the literary form of the remaining verses of the Song (vv. 26-43), nor did he actually define the overall Gattung or date of the Song. 59

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59 Harvey's article discusses at length the origin of the Rib as a literary form. He maintains that it originated in the sphere of "international relationships". A similar conclusion is also arrived by J. Limburg, op. cit., pp. 219-304. There are, however, a number of different views with respect to where the Lawsuit form originated: (a) in the sphere of the court at the gate, so H.J. Boecker, "Redefor men des Rechtslebens im Alten Testament, WMANT, 14, pp. 91ff.; (b) in the sphere of the cult, so E. Würtzlin, op. cit., pp. 1-16; (c) in the conception of God's heavenly assembly acting as a court, so G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 46.
According to G.E. Wright, the primary framework of the Song was the ᵉᵣᵣᵇ or "Divine Lawsuit" against Israel, as illustrated in Deut. 32:1, 3-29. The remaining verses, Deut. 32:2, 30-43, reflected an expansion of the original form according to the themes drawn from the Holy War traditions. This provided a resolution to the tension created by the broken covenant. 60

His analysis of the form of the Covenant Lawsuit (vv. 1, 3-29) differed somewhat from Harvey's, though there were still five basic elements: 61

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<td>V</td>
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60 G.E. Wright, op. cit., pp. 54-58.

61 G.E. Wright, op. cit., pp. 52ff.

62 Wright discusses at length the initial appeal to the heavens and earth. Contrary to Gunkel and Huffmon, he stresses that they are not to be seen as judges or jury in the proceedings but simply as witnesses; cf. G.E. Wright, op. cit., pp. 44-49.
Wright's assumptions that the form of the Song is the Rib and that the poet has elaborated upon hymnic themes drawn from Holy War traditions led him to various conclusions on dating.\textsuperscript{63} He finally dated the Song, however, to the 9th century B.C.\textsuperscript{64} The correlation between genre and date was mediated by an argument bearing on the history of prophecy in Israel -- one of the original contributions of the article.

Similarly, the sophistication involved in "subtly and effectively" inverting "an old literary form" (viz. the covenant lawsuit) led W.L. Moran to consider a date before the 9th century B.C. to be improbable.\textsuperscript{65}

\textbf{Philological Evidences}

It is surprising that though scholarly research on the Song has engaged the attention of so many biblical critics, little attention has been devoted to an examination of its philological elements. Historical and form-critical analysis dominates research of the Song to the exclusion of philological analysis in the ratio of about 8 to 1. But four studies do employ linguistic characteristics as primary criteria

\textsuperscript{63}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 66-67.

\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{65}W.L. Moran, "Deuteronomy" in \textit{A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture} (eds. Fuller, Johnston, Kearns), p. 275.
for dating the Song. They are by S.R. Driver (1895), W.F. Albright (1959), D.A. Robertson (1966), and J.R. Boston (1966). We will treat their contributions under three headings: comparative terms, style, and grammar.

1. Comparative Terms

The works of Driver and Boston depend on a comparison of terms and expressions in the Song that are related to terms and expressions in other, datable, literature. In Driver's analysis, five terms and five verses betray affinities to wisdom literature. Five other terms have "an Aramaic tinge." Eighteen words or expressions occur chiefly in writings not earlier than the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Based on these linguistic characteristics, Driver concludes that the Song may be dated in the 7th century B.C.

Boston, too illustrates the influence of wisdom literature upon

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the Song. He indicates that seventeen terms in the Song demonstrate linguistic affinities to wisdom literature and that the greatest number of linguistic parallels are to Proverbs 1-9 and Job. This evidence affirms his overall conclusion that the Song belongs to the 7th century B.C. Though Driver's and Boston's conclusions are based primarily on an analysis of comparative terms, both researchers support their views by reference to literary style and historical allusions.

2. Style

Albright's article is meant to support Eissfeldt's dating of the Song by offering two further arguments for it. First, Albright identifies the poem as belonging to a stage in the development of Hebrew poetry intermediate between the stage characterized by a strict repetitive parallelism to one characterized by dependence on paronomasia. This change began to take place around the 10th century B.C. Second, he states that there are in the poem examples of archaic morphology which indicate to him an origin not later than the 10th century B.C. Unfortunately, he does not specify what these examples are. He simply concludes with a statement that the date chosen by Eissfeldt for the composition of the Song, around the 11th century B.C., is quite possible.

3. Grammar

Robertson's thesis is a major contribution to the study of Hebrew philology. The purpose of his work is to determine whether
any biblical poetry can be dated to the early period of Israelite history, the period from the 13th to the 10th century B.C. To do this, he develops two principles. First, he establishes the syntactical and morphological differences between early (13th-10th century B.C.) and standard (8th century B.C. and thereafter) poetic Hebrew. Next, he surveys all biblical poetry of unknown date in order to determine which poems resemble early poetry and which standard poetry.

His survey indicates that Deut. 32, among other poems, resembles early poetry in the distribution of the "prefix" and "suffix" conjugations. He notes also that Deut. 32 shows significant evidence of archaizing. Grammatical forms which represent a mixture of forms characteristic of early and standard poetic Hebrew lead him to conclude that Deut. 32 derives from a "transition" period around the 11th-10th century B.C.

**Evaluation of the Results**

The search for clues and patterns calculated to reveal the origins of the Song has intrigued and fascinated biblical scholars for almost two centuries. One goal or objective is common to most of the history associated with this search and research: the date of the Song. The concluding pages of this chapter comprise an evaluation of the degree to which the end is satisfactorily served by the means employed: the historical, the form-critical or the philological methods.
The Historical Method

A great number of the studies of the dating of the Song depend on an interpretation of a single expression in vs. 21. However, there are no less than ten different interpretations of the "no-people" expression. At first the opinions of biblical critics favoured the people associated with the period between the 8th and 6th century B.C. Then opinion shifted, and for the last fifty years biblical critics have tended to date the Song around the 11th-10th century B.C. Eissfeldt's contribution, the most extensive recent study, based on this kind of evidence, aimed at establishing a pre-monarchial date of the Song.

There is, however, one factor which compromises the application of this procedure to the dating of the Song. The Song contains no explicit historical references. This omission accounts for the variety which are not founded upon any conclusive historical references to events or persons, but are simply based on various attempts to identify the vague expression "no-people". A single obscure allusion becomes the crux for dating the Song by this method. As a result, numerous groups are proposed to identify the "no-people" expression in order to establish the date of the Song, but these suggestions are quite arbitrary and inconclusive. If the dating of the Song could be settled within reasonable chronological limits on other grounds, it might be possible to specify a more or less likely historical candidate for the
"no-people" allusion. But simply to date the Song on no other basis than that of historical allusion would seem to be methodologically hopeless. 70

The Form-Critical Method

To date the Song on the basis of determination of Gattung requires that one have a reliable history of Gattungen. This, to be sure, is not an impossibility, but it is a tall order. 71 The Gattung of the Song of Moses, moreover, does not appear to be a clear, simple, distinct instance of a literary type of which we have many comparable instances. It can hardly be surprising, then, that the effort to date on the basis of determining form or type has not been an unambiguous success.

70 Moreover, there are those who, as we have noted above (pp. 23 - 31) do not consider the "no-people" text to intend a specific historical people-and-situation. Others, like von Rad, consider the matter (regardless of intention) to be unascertainable. "All attempts to interpret the chastisements by this 'no-people' as referring to a definite historical calamity remain uncertain." Cf. G. von Rad, Deuteronomy, p. 198.

From the perspective of the mid-1970's, most of the past efforts to determine the *Gattung* of the Song of Moses have been fruitless. Those who opted for "didactic poem" were doubtless correct; but their observation was far too general to provide reliable grounds for dating. Again, it is now more justified than ever to refer to the Song as a *Mischgedicht*, but those who did so in the period prior to the 1950's were not in a position to identify the factors that went into the mixture. The breakthrough has been the identification of the *Rīb* pattern and its relevance to the Song of Moses. Of those who have written in this vein, only G.E. Wright has entered into an extensive argument relating form to dating.

Wright argued that "the only covenant known in Deuteronomy is a broken covenant"\(^ {72} \) and, hence, that the celebration of the Deuteronomic covenant must have involved "a definite *Rīb* element." The question then became: when was covenant-renewal (the *Sitz im Leben* of the substance of Deuteronomic tradition) modified by introduction of this *Rīb* element? The answer Wright considered to be most probable was: when the prophetic movement assumed what was to be its distinctive religious role in relation to the nation, by placing at the center of its message the judgement of Israel; namely, in the 9th century B.C.\(^ {73} \)

\(^{72}\)G.E. Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

\(^{73}\)Ibid., p. 64.
Wright proposed that the Song of Moses derived from this era. In *Gattung* it was "an expanded form" of the covenant lawsuit. It was only a short, if significant, step to the analysis of Moran, who made explicit the points at which the Song differed from the pure form of the *Pib*: the judgement was a "soliloquy"; the whole was located in the past and transposed into the didactic mode.  

Both Wright and, more resolutely, Moran, fixed the *terminus post quem*, in the light of factors bearing directly or indirectly on *Gattung*, as the beginning of the 9th century B.C. We take this line of argument to be cogent but, like them, qualify it as probable rather than apodictic. It should be further observed that this *terminus* still leaves the date unresolved.

The Philological Method

Though modern researchers have evinced a certain interest in attempting to date the Song by reference to historical allusions and determination of *Gattung*, they have largely ignored the philological method. Yet this is the most attractive alternative for solving the problem of how to date the Song.

The work of Driver in 1895 and that of Robertson in 1966 are separated by a period of 71 years otherwise largely barren of significant contributions to philological analysis of the Song. Thus, Boston's

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study is an extensive exegetical work with only secondary interest in linguistic analysis, and the linguistic features that he notes in the Song add little to Driver's observations. Albright's article of 1959 deals with only two linguistic observations: the stylistic stages in the development of Hebrew poetry and the evidence of certain stylistic patterns in the Song. The treatment, though suggestive, is jejune.

It would be fair to say, then, that the work of Driver and Robertson represent the only significant studies in the field. And, even at that, the scope of both investigation is limited to the application of one particular linguistic principle. Driver's analysis involves the examination of terms and expressions in the Song that have linguistic affinities to related words or phrases in other datable material. Robertson's analysis, involves the examination of grammatical patterns (syntax and morphology) in the Song that resemble either early or standard poetic Hebrew. The conclusions on dating reached by the two are different. Based on the linguistic analysis of comparative terms, Driver suggests that the Song may be dated around 603 B.C., whereas Robertson's survey of grammatical patterns leads him to propose the 11th-10th century B.C.

This difference of opinion spanning almost half a millennium might seem to discredit the method of at least one of them and perhaps even both of them. How can the issue be resolved? Are there any
linguistic principles that may be applied to the Song as an aid to determine its date more confidently?

This, then, is the challenge. The secret or mystery of the Song's origin has defied persistent and exhaustive inquiry. There are almost as many answers as there are researchers. The date of the original composition of the Song has not yielded to critical inquiry. Of the avenues of inquiry, the philological has suffered neglect and so merits fuller and more concentrated attention than it has been accorded to date. The purpose of the next two chapters, accordingly, is to take full account of the various linguistic tools that are available, and this as part of a total strategy involving the other avenues of inquiry as well, for arriving finally at as specific a date as possible for the origin of the Song.
CHAPTER II

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

The Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1-43), is a poem set within a prose narrative that illustrates the contrast between YHWH's fidelity and Israel's perfidy. As a basis for the discussion in the following chapters, a translation with critical notes is now offered based on the Hebrew text (MT text).\(^1\) Any textual divergencies,\(^2\) or philological difficulties, or differences of scholarly opinions, will all be taken into account. The MT text on the right hand side is from R. Kittel, Biblia Hebraica (7th edit.). The English translation is on the left hand side and where it differs from the Hebrew text, reasons are provided in the notes.

\(^{1}\)The MT text used is that of R. Kittel (ed.), Biblia Hebraica (7th edit.).

\(^{2}\)References to the Versions for textual divergencies are based on the following editions: for the Greek, A. Rahlfs (ed.), Septuaginta (thereafter referred as LXX); for the Latin, A.B. Fisher, I. Gribomont, H.F.D. Sparks, & W. Thiele, Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatum Versionem, vol. 1; all other Versions are from B. Walton (ed.), Biblia Sacra Polyglotta, vol. 1.
Deut. 32:1-42

English Translation

Listen 0 heavens and I shall speak,
And hear 0 earth the words of my mouth.
Let my teaching drop as (the) rain,
Let my speech flow as (the) dew,
As (the) wellings3 upon the grass
And as the showers upon the herb.
For I will proclaim the name of YHWH.
Ascribe greatness to our god!

MT Text

1 תָּקֵּעָתָם נֶקֶבָּתָם לְנוֹאָבָה
2 בִּלַּעַת בִּשְׁפַּֽ ברֶּם
3 נַכְּלָתָם נַכְּלָתָם מִֽ פַלְעַתָם

3 נַכְּלָתָם - A hapax term, the meaning and etymology of which is uncertain. The word used in the LXX is ὑβρισσός and in the Vulgate imber, both of which mean heavy "rain-storm". These translations are probably based on the Hebrew term טָרֵעָתָם = "sweep" or "whirl away" (see BDB, פַּלְעַת II, p. 973), from which comes נַכְּלָתָם, or "storm" (cf. Nah. 1:3; Job 9:17; Isa. 28:2). Biblical critics, however, differ in their explanation of the etymology and translation of the term. For instance, S.R. Driver, Deuteronomy, ICC, p. 349, who considers the term to be a hapax, translates "small rain", without explaining why he does so. Similarly, G. von Rad, Deuteronomy, p. 192, translates "gentle rain" without an explanation. On the other hand, A.J. Levy, The Song of Moses (Deut. 32), p. 61, prefers the translation "rain as fine as hair." He points out that in the post-biblical period if someone "wished to state that something was very fine, he compared it with hair." Thus, the expression נַכְּלָתָם פַּלְעַת הָאָרֶץ = "thin like a thread of hair," was very common, according to Levy. A number of other suggestions are cited by W.L. Moran, Biblica 43.3(1962), pp. 320-322. One view (Ges-Buhl) considers the term to derive from the modern Palestinian word שַחְרָא = "rain". Another view (Koehler - Baumgartner) appeals to the Arabic word شَجِر and suggests the term to mean "hund, der wassert." Moran, however, rejects all these explanations and considers the term to be related to the Akkadian term שָבָר = "to reach the water crest, to attain maximum growth," and accordingly to the Ugaritic term גֶּר = "surging" water, which is probably to be explained by the Hebrew term גֵּר = "to stretch out, extend" (Moran, p. 321). He points out, moreover, that "the correspondence between Ugar. גֶּר = רָבָּא and מָגַר = תַּל = שִׁרְמָה - רְבּיָבִים
The rock - perfect are his deeds
For all his ways are just.
A god of faithfulness and without deceit,
Righteous and upright is he.

0 perverted and crooked generation.

(vs. 2) is so striking that the possibility of גֵּרְשָׁמ being the same word as עֶגָר. גֵּרְשָׁמ certainly must be considered." This involves a metathesis, and Moran is quite aware of this difficulty, nevertheless, he proposes to emend the text on the grounds that "the rarity of the word and the not too dissimilar meaning of גֵּרְשָׁמ (גֵּרְשָׁמ) could have easily led to the corruption of the text." He therefore translates the colon, "like wellings upon the young grass." The possibility of the Ugaritic root גֵּרְשָׁמ is also noted by G.E. Wright and attributed to F.M. Cross; see G.E. Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32," in B.W. Anderson & W. Harrelson (eds.), Israel’s Prophetic Heritage, p. 27 n. 5. גֵּרְשָׁמ has also been introduced by emendation in II Sam. 1:21; see H.L. Ginsberg, "A Ugaritic Parallel to 2 Sam. 1:21," JBL, 57 (1938), pp. 209-213. Be that as it may, of all the arguments presented so far, Moran's seems to be the most attractive and is therefore adopted here.

"The Hebrew text of the first colon of vs. 5 is obscure. The difficulty and uncertainty of the clause may also be seen in the versions:

1. LXX - γῆς ὑπὲροχος οὗτος ὁ ἄνδρος μισθωμένος, which reconstructed into Hebrew would presuppose the following clause: כי יברע את הנס ויהיו (2) Targum - בְּגֵרְשָׁמ יָבֹא וְיָהַב-glórba (3) Syriac - גַּרְשָׁמ אֲנָדָם הַיָּבֹא וְיָהַב (4) Aquila - διάφέρωσιν πρὸς αὐτόν εὖς ποιήσας τὸ σύνολον (5) Symmachus - διάφέρωσιν πρὸς αὐτόν εὖς ποιήσας τὸ σύνολον

As a result of the uncertainty of the Hebrew text and the difficulties in the Versions, biblical critics have proposed a number of textual emendations. The following list as cited by S.R. Driver, ICC, pp. 351-352, represents the views of earlier critics:

(1) A. Knobel and C.F. Keal take the following colon as the subject of וַיִּלֶךְ and thus treat רָעִים לְבָנָיו as in apposition to this and parenthetically prefixed; the rendering would then be, "corruptly has dealt towards - not his children, their blemish - a twisted and crooked generation."
Will you thus repay YHWH,
O senseless and unwise people?

(2) A. Kamphausen suggests an alteration of the pointing of "כֶּֽדֶּֽי (רֹֽבֶֽי לְלַעַֽוֹת הַצָּלַֽו) and renders the clause literally: "corruptly has dealt towards him — not his children, blemishes — a twisted ..."

(3) A. Klostermann proposes the following emendation:
"כֶּדֶּֽי (רֹֽבֶֽי לְלַעַֽוֹת הַצָּלַֽו) = "his not — sons have corrupted their faithfulness towards him"

(4) A. Dillmann considers the following emendation: רֹֽבֶֽי לְלַעַֽוֹת הַצָּלַֽו i.e. "his children have dealt corruptly towards him: there is a blemish in them."

(5) Driver rejects all these suggestions, and, following Cetti's interpretation, understands "the second part as a denial of the title of Jehovah's true sons to those who, in fact, are but a "blemish" upon them, viz. the "twisted and crooked generation" of clause b." Thus, his rendering reads: "corruptly has dealt towards him — not his sons are their blemish —."

Modern critics have also attempted to resolve the difficulty. G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 192, translates the clause, "They have dealt corruptly with him — they are no longer his children because of their blemish," but does not justify or explain such a rendering. G. Eissfeldt, in Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1—43 und das Lehrgedicht Asapha Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Moses-Liedes, p. 8 n.1, suggests that since the author of the Song prefers coupled words with נִּֽבְּשָׁנִּי (e.g. vs. 6, מְכַנְּנָֽן ; vs. 17, מְכַנְּנָֽן ; vs. 21, מָֽכַֽהְוֹ), then under no circumstances should vs. 5 מְכַֽהְוֹ נִּֽבְּשָׁנִּי be altered. Thus, according to Eissfeldt, no correction is necessary if one reads the clause מְכַֽהְוֹ נִּֽבְּשָׁנִּי as in parentheses, since it is redundant. He, therefore, renders the clause as: Es betrug ihn — "Nicht-seine-Söhne" ihr Brandmal. G.E. Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32", in B.W. Anderson and W. Harrelson, Israel's Prophetic Heritage, p. 28 n. 6, abandons translating the clause by stating that "The Hebrew of the first colon of vs. 5 is obscure. Contrast RSV, Eissfeldt, E. Henschke (ZAW, 52(1934), pp. 279ff.), the commentaries, and the ancient versions. The idea is surely clear from the parallel colon and from the words "not his sons" and "blemish"; but lacking clearer indicators, caution suggests a question mark rather than the variety of conjectural emendations."

Thus, all these attempts indicate the difficulty and uncertainty of the clause. It seems, therefore, that one is either forced to abandon the attempt of translating the clause on the basis of its lack of clarity, or, to make some sense of the clause while acknowledging the difficulty. In this case, the former approach is adopted.
Is he not your father who created you,⁵
He (who) made you and established you?
Remember the ancient days!
Consider the years, (from) time immemorial⁶
Ask your father and let him declare to you,
Your elders, and let them tell you.⁷
When 'El'yôn assigned the nations as possession(s),
When he separated the sons of men,⁸

5 יְהֹוָה - Earlier critics translated this term either as
"produced" (so S.R. Driver, ICC, p. 353), or as "possessed", (so
A.J. Levy, The Song of Moses (Deut. 32), p. 81), or as "acquired",
(so P. Humbert, "Qana en Hebreu Biblique," Festschrift für Alfred
Bertholet, 1950, pp. 259-266). These renderings are now generally
abandoned. Following the explanation offered by F.K. Cross and D.N.
Freedman, JNES 14(1955), p. 249, modern critics tend to regard the
term to be related to the Ugaritic root āmu = create (Heb. āmēn; cf.
Gen. 14:19, 22; Ex. 15:16). So, for instance, G.E. Wright, op. cit.,

6 "generation by generation." However, in parallelism to דִּבְרָי (e.g. as in Exod. 3:15; Isa. 58:12) the more abstract
rendering adopted here seems preferable.

7 For the formal appeal to consult ancient tradition as a
poetical device, see, N.C. Habel, "Appeal to Ancient Tradition as a
p. 34-34.

8 יְהֹוָה - Generally accepted as an epithet for God, meaning
"the Most High, the High One, the Exalted One". Except for Gen. 14:18,
22, the term occurs only in poetry; e.g. Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14;
II Sam. 22:14 = Ps. 18:14; Ps. 21:8. For a discussion of the term
see, G.L. Dalla Vida, "El 'Elyon in Gen. 14:18-20," JBL, 63(1944),
pp. 1-9; M.H. Pope, El in the Ugaritic Texts, WJS II(1955), pp. 55-58;
R. Lack, "Les Origines de 'Elyon, le Ires-Haut, dans La Tradition
Cultuelle d'Israel", CPh, 24(1962), pp. 44-64. A. Baumgarten, The
Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia
University, 1972), pp. 218-221, demonstrates that the term is applied
He fixed the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the sons of god(s),

9 The first problem in this verse is the word יְשַׁמֵּךְ which,
according to most critics, syntactically requires the Hiph. Inf. Cstr.
ירָשָׁם (cf. parallel term in next colon יְרָשָׁם). This emendation
can now be justified on the basis of the Qumran fragment which
has been identified as Deut. 32:8 and reads (יְרָשָׁם). See P.W.
Skehan, "A Fragment of the "Song of Moses"" (Deut. 32) from Qumran,
BASOR, 136(1954), p. 12. There is still, however, a problem with the
translation of the clause. G.R. Driver, "Short Notes: Deut. 32:8," VT,
2(1952), pp. 356-357, argues that the reference in vs. 8 is to the
remote age when God first distributed peoples and nations over the
surface of the earth, so that יְרָשָׁם properly means "when He
scattered" or "sowed" them like grains of sand or seed on the earth.
Thus, the parallel verb, יְשַׁמֵּךְ, should not be considered from נָחַל
(b) "inherited, possessed," but from נָחַל (b) "sifted, passed through
a sieve." His translation is, therefore: "When the Most High sprinkled,
or "sieved" the nations (as) through a sieve..." Such an interpreta-
tion may seem interesting but not quite necessary since the context
makes good sense if יְשַׁמֵּךְ is translated in its more common meaning,
"possessed" or "inherited". An analogous instance may be found in the
father's assignment of possessions to his sons (Deut. 21:16).

The second problem is the emendation of the MT יְשַׁמֵּךְ to
יְשַׁמֵּךְ following the LXX and the IQV (see P.W. Skehan, JBL,
78(1959), p. 21, and also his earlier article in BASOR, 136(1954),
p. 12). This emendation is now generally accepted; see G.E. Wright,
pp. cit., p. 28; O. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 9; G. von Rad, op. cit.,
p. 192; W.F. Albright, "Some Remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy
Deuteronomium 32:8", ZAW 75(1963), pp. 218-223, offers an explanation
of how the reading יְשַׁמֵּךְ came into the text. According to him,
it happened in pre-Hasmonean times, where Israel is seen in Jewish
literature as the executor of God's will on earth, and the name of
Israel occurs as that of an angel.
And YHWH's portion (was) his people Jacob, His inherited lot (was) Israel.10
He found him in a desert land, And in the desolate howling wilderness.11
He encompassed him; he cared for him, He guarded him, like the prize of his eye.12
As an eagle stirs its nest, Hovers over its young,
(So) he spreads his wings, takes him, Carries him over his pinions.

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10 The LXX, followed by the Samaritan, differs. The LXX rendering is:
καὶ ἀγενέμος μὲν ἵππος Κυρίου λέει αὐτοῦ Ἰακώβ
οὐκ ἔσται καλοῦ καὶ ἀληθείας Ἰσραήλ.

which reconstructed into Hebrew would presuppose the following:
ברע י🚀 ינוי עצים ינוי עצים ינוי עצים ינוי עצים ינוי עצים ינוי עצים
ንንንንንን

The differences between the MT and the LXX (and the Samaritan) are:
(1) The term "Jacob" appears at the beginning of the second colon in the MT whereas in the LXX it appears at the end of the first colon;
(2) The word "Israel" appears in the LXX but not in the MT.

Critics are divided in their opinions. Some follow the MT; so, for instance, S.R. Driver, op. cit., p. 354; G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 28; J.R. Boston, The Song of Moses: Deuteronomy 32:1-43, p. 46. Others follow the LXX; so, for instance, A.J. Levy, op. cit., p. 50 n.10; also Hauri, Steuernagel, as cited in J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 46 n. 114.

The LXX and Samaritan reading is adopted here, because the word pattern abc:abc is preferable to the MT word pattern abc:abc.

11 The LXX and the Samaritan Versions differ. The LXX reads εν Σαφεὶ κωπαίς εν γύφῳ ἄνωστος, while the Samaritan reads:
ירבשא עס__.'/ש. The origin of the LXX reading is unclear, while the Samaritan seems to be a corruption of the MT.

Earlier commentators proposed a number of emendations (for their suggestions, see J.R. Boston, op. cit., pp. 49f.). Present critics follow the MT; so G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 28; O. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 9.

12 Following the translation of G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 29.
YHWH himself led him!

Yea, there is no foreign god like him!  
He made him mount upon the hillside,
And gave him to eat the produce of the field;
He made him suck honey from the rock,
And oil from flint-rock;
Curds of cattle, and milk of sheep,
With fat of lambs,
And Bashan-breed rams, 16 and goats,
With the choicest heads of wheat; 17
And the juice of grapes you drank (as) wine, 18
And Jacob ate and was filled. 19

16 LXX has καὶ κρίνων = MT הָנָּרָן, "and rams", at the end of the 2nd colon instead of as the 1st term of the 3rd colon. A number of critics have followed the LXX. So, for instance, S.R. Driver, op. cit., pp. 359f.; G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 193; J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 61. Others, however, follow the MT. So, for instance, O. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 10; G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 29. The adopted translation here follows the MT, since there is no necessity to change it.

17 For the term לְבָנָן, meaning "choicest", see BDB, II לְבָנָן No. 3, p. 317. For analogous instances, cf., Gen. 45:18; Num. 18:12; Isa. 34:6.

18 רֶדוֹן - Citing the following four instances as evidence, Anat 1:16-17, Text 5216, Deut. 32:14, Ps. 75:9, M. Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography II," Biblica, 45(1964), pp. 408f., suggests that the "correct" meaning of Ugaritic ḫmr (Hebrew רֶדוֹן) is "bowl" or "vatt", not "wine". He states that "the word is identical with or related to homr, "mortar, clay", which in Jer. 18:4, 6 specifically means the material from which vessels are made". His English rendering for Deut. 32:14 is "the blood of the grape you will drink by the bowl." Dahood's rendering may be a possibility for Ps. 75:9, but it somehow doesn't seem to fit the context here unless an extra preposition (א) is added. Consequently, the usual rendering of "wine" is adopted.

19 The LXX, Samaritan and IVQ-Dt. supply this extra colon
גויֵעַר כַּפָּר בְּכֹדֶשׁ see P.W. Skehan, JBL, 78(1959), p. 22.

However, both O. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 10, and G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 29 (who follows Eissfeldt), insert this missing colon in vs. 15 by performing a drastic operation. First, the 2nd colon of vs. 15 is transferred to the end of vs. 14 to replace the "missing" colon. Next, the IVQ "discovered" colon is added, followed by the 1st colon of vs. 15 of the MT. Their rendering would, therefore, be:

All this seems to be unnecessary, particularly in the light of the
And Jeshurun grew fat and kicked.
- You grew fat, you grew thick, you gorged
Then he forsook the god who made him
And acted stupidly against the rock of his salvation.
They made him jealous with strange (gods),
With abominable practices they vexed him.
They sacrificed to demons who are no-gods;
Gods whom they knew not;

support now rendered by the Qumran discovery. The rendering adopted here follows the LXX, Samaritan and IVQ-Dt.

20 לֵעָן - This term is generally considered to be a variant form of the name Israel (cf. Deut. 33:5, 26; Isa. 44:2), though the LXX does not treat the term as a proper noun, but renders it as ἡγοῦντεσ, "beloved".

21 The sudden interjection of three verbs in the 2nd masc. perf. may be seen as a poetic device of repetitive emphasis.

22 בר - Following the translation of G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 29. Cf. also same root in vv. 6, 21.

23 The change of persons from 3rd sing. to 3rd plur. is ad sententiam.

24 ת - W.F. Albright, op. cit., p. 344, suggests the insertion of מֹּלֶך or מַלְכֵּי at the end of the 1st colon, and כְּרָרָר or כַּרָרָר in the middle of the 2nd colon, because, from a metrical point of view the line (vs. 16) is a short 2 + 2 in a prevailing 3 + 3 context. G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 29, follows Albright with the first addition, but expresses some reservation about the second. Since all of this is unsupported by the Versions, and since the term מְלַי is used by itself, without Elohim, in the sense of "strange gods" (cf. Jer. 2:25; 3:13; Isa. 17:10; Hos. 8:12), it is unnecessary to make any changes.

25 מְרַע - Although the term is quite common in post-biblical Hebrew (cf. Bab. Tal. Yoma 75a; Snb. 67b), it occurs only one other time in the Old Testament, Ps. 106:37, in connection with human sacrifice. In both cases the LXX reads παλεὐν, "demons", and this rendering is generally accepted by biblical critics; cf. for instance, O. Eisfeldt, op. cit., p. 29; G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 193.
New ones who came in of late,
Whom your fathers[^26] did not dread.  
[^26] For the MT נְגוֹלָה (= your fathers) the LXX reads Πάροιας καταπληκτικάς. Some modern critics prefer to follow the LXX; so, for instance, O. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 10; W.F. Albright, op. cit., p. 30. Other earlier critics prefer the MT; so, Driver, König, Kamphausen and Bwald as cited by J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 73. It is unnecessary to emend the text since the change of persons is quite common in this poem and is to be regarded ad sententiam.

[^27] מְלַאכָּת - The precise meaning of this term is difficult to ascertain. The LXX reads τῶν καταπληκτικῶν (= knew) and some critics prefer this interpretation; so G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 30, J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 73. The context, however, requires something like what U. von Rad, op. cit., p. 193 suggests: to consider the term to mean "dread" or "fear". Rashi, who regards the term as derived from מְלַאכָּת = demon, satyr, is on a parallel track; see A. Cohen (ed.), The Soncino Chumash, p. 1162.

There is a further issue that needs to be considered. W.F. Albright, op. cit., p. 342, suggests a rearrangement of this verse and, for the most part G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 30, follows him. Albright's proposal is that the text be read as follows:

Yisbe'ul lāsh'ērīm le'Elōhā - They sacrifice to demons, not divine,
ḥārēśim mlq-qrob 'alēhēm - who are too deaf to approach,
'Elōhām le'ēyād 'ūm - Gods whom they know not,
(we-)lēyād 'ūm 'abētōhēm - (and) whom their fathers did not know.

This reconstruction involves changes in colons, presumably to make more sense of the structure and parallelism of the lines. Moreover, he emends פְּנוּשׂ to פְּנוּשׂ , and considering נֵר as a "transparent ditography" emends it to נֵרְבָּה. There is no evidence for any of this in the Versions, and since sense can be made of the text as it stands, this elaborate rearrangement is unnecessary.

[^28] מְלַאכָּת - The usual rendering of this difficult term is "forgot"; so, for instance, G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 30, J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 76, S.R. Driver, op. cit., p. 364. Driver proposes an emendation of the vocalization: to read "ψωק" (cf. Sam. ψωκ ) from פְּנוֹשׂ "to forget" (cf. BDB, פְּנוֹשׂ II, p. 674). Boston follows Driver's suggestion, while Wright does not explain his rendering.
And YHWH saw and was stirred to jealousy.
From (the) provocation of his sons and daughters; 
And he said: "I shall hide my face from them;
I shall see what will be their end.
For they are a perverse generation,
Children in whom there is no faithfulness.
They stir me to jealousy with a no-god,
They provoke me with their vanities.
So I shall stir them to jealousy with a no-people.
With a foolish nation I shall provoke them.

Following the LXX and the IVQ, which have ἠλώσως and ὄνομα respectively for עָנָם; see, P. Skehan, JBL, 78(1959), p. 22. This rendering is also adopted by G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 30.

For דבּ = faithfulness, see BDB, p. 53. Cf. also, Isa. 25:1; Pr. 13:17; 14:5.

W.F. Albright, op. cit., p. 344, renders the 1st and 3rd lines of this verse as follows:

They set up a no-god as my rival

I will set up a no-people as their rival

He owes this rendering to Shalem Paul, who indicates that qn’t in Eccl. 4:4 is translated "rivalry" by a number of recent commentators, and also compares the statement in Baba Batra (Talm. Bab.), 21: "the rivalry (qin’at) of scribes increases wisdom". Albright notes however that the verb in the 1st line is a Piel, while in the 3rd line it is a Hiph'il. In order to suit his rendering, he suggests replacing the Hiph'il vocalization with the Piel. But such a rearrangement and rendering seems unnecessary, since the KT makes good sense, as it stands, and further more, as G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 30, observes, the term נוֹם is here used in its verbal form and not in the nominal form as in Eccl. 4:4.
Indeed a fire is kindled in my nostril(s) 32
And it will burn even to the depths of Sheol.
It will consume 33 the earth and its produce,
It will set ablaze 34 the foundations of the
mountains.
I will add 35 evils upon him,
My arrows will I use up against them. 36
Ravaged by Famine, and devoured by Resheph
And (by) bitter Qebeh.
And the teeth of beasts will I send against them,
With the poison of the crawlers of the dust. 37

32 Following the translation of G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 30.
33 The LXX, Samaritan and Syriac Versions lack the conjunction waw (or waw consecutive).
34 The LXX and Samaritan Versions lack the conjunction waw.
35 שִׁפְחָה - Three different stems are possible for the derivation of this word. One possibility is to consider the term as the Hiph'il form of שִׁפְחָה, meaning "to sweep away", or "to snatch away". G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 30, apparently chooses this alternative. It should be noted, however, that no other instances of the Hiph'il form of this verb are found in the OT, and it is, therefore, difficult to see what the precise meaning would be. Another possibility is to consider the word to derive from the root שִׁפְחָה, meaning "to add". S.R. Driver, op. cit., p. 367 adopts this interpretation. This would be presumably the Hiph'il form of the verb and would have to be pointed שִׁפְחָה. The third possibility is to consider the term from the root שִׁפָּךְ, meaning "to gather", or "to heap". G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 193 and J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 87 prefer this last alternative. The verb would then be repointed שִׁפָּךְ. Since there is little basis to choose among them, the second possibility is adopted here, though all three can fit the context.
36 The change of person from 3rd sing. (in 1st colon) to 3rd plur. (in 2nd colon) is ad sententiam (cf. vs. 16).
37 This is a difficult verse and cannot be translated with certainty. The etymology of certain words and the meaning of certain
Externally, the sword will bring bereavement,
And internally, terror;
Both for the young man and the maiden,
The suckling as well as the gray-haired man.
I considered: "I shall shatter them (to pieces),
I shall extinguish their memory from among men!"

phrases remain uncertain and unclear. The Versions are of no great help either. The word "דב" and the phrases "נשים לメール" and "מערות קשת" create such difficulties that biblical critics have struggled to make some sense of this. For a detailed discussion of the divergent views, see, J.R. Boston, op. cit., pp. 88-93. "דברי" is either interpreted as a Pass. Part. of the verb התי = "to eat" (so S.R. Driver, op. cit., p. 367; 0. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 11; G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 194) or the Pass. Part. of the verb מנה = "to fight" (so, G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 30). [4] To translate ב' by "attack" obscures the metaphor of plague and pestilence as "devourers" (compare frequent reference to gods of pestilence in Akkadian as "eating; CAD, akal, p. 245). "דב" is usually considered to be related to the Arabic cognate "maza" = "to suck"; but critics are divided in rendering the term either as a noun (so G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 30; J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 93) or as a participle (so S.R. Driver, op. cit., p. 365). Since "דברי" is a participle I am inclined to retain the participle in the first colon of vs. 24 and then shift to nouns for the balance of the verse. For "Ⱁ" (= Resheph) as a well-known deity of the ancient Near East, particularly in Egypt, Phoenicia and Cyprus, see, for instance, S.R. Driver, op. cit., pp. 367ff.; G.A. Cooke, A Textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions, pp. 52-57, 159-171; M. Pope & W. Rollig, "Syriac", in Wörterbuch der Mythologie, vol. 1 (1968), pp. 219-312; A. Roë, Israelite Belief in Angels in the Pre-Exilic Period as Evidenced by Biblical Traditions, (Jerusalem: Ph.D. Dissertation in Hebrew, Hebrew University, 1969), pp. 120-154. For "דב" as demon see A. Caquot, "Sur quelques demons de l'ancien Testament", Semitica, 6 (1956), pp. 53-68; T.H. Gaster, JDB, vol. 1 (1962), p. 820.

38 מַנָּה אִדֲנָא - An uncertain word used only in this instance in the OT. The Samaritan divides the word into two, and reads מַנָּה אִדֲנָא; but it is difficult to see what sense to make of this in the context. The LXX reads διάφάνεια (from γένει) meaning, "I will scatter, disseminate, disperse". This rendering is generally preferred by most critics: so G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 31; G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 194. For the suggestion to consider the term to derive from the root מִנָּה...
Except ... the anger of the enemy
Lost ... their adversaries
Lost they say: 'Our hand is exalted!'
And not: 'YHWH has done all this!'
For they are a nation void of counsel.
And there is no understanding in them.


39 The first two colons of this verse are extremely difficult, and yet the problem is usually ignored by most commentators. The versions also are of no help in solving the textual difficulties. The LXX reflects a longer text:

\[ \text{לֹּא יֵכֶם אָדֶבֶּנֶּר, לְמֹשְׁכֵּרֵךְ אֵלֹּהֵי יָדָּךְ, וּלְמֹשְׁכֵּרֵךְ אֵלֹּהֵי עֵדֶתֶּךְ.} \]

Retranslated into Hebrew, this would probably be:

\[ \text{לֹּא יֵכֶם אָדֶבֶּנֶּר, לְמֹשְׁכֵּרֵךְ אֵלֹּהֵי יָדָּךְ, וּלְמֹשְׁכֵּרֵךְ אֵלֹּהֵי עֵדֶתֶּךְ.} \]

It will be noticed that the LXX omits the verb from the first colon. The second colon of the LXX is not contained in the MT. But it can be translated back into Hebrew, since מְשֶׁכֶרֶךְ is the term for מְשֶׁכֶרֲךָ (cf. Ex. 20:12 = Dt. 5:16; Dt. 32:47). The third colon of the LXX is presumably a translation of the second colon of the MT, but there are a number of difficulties. המָשְׁכֶּרֶךְ is probably the translation of מְשֶׁכֶרֲךָ, though מְשֶׁכֶרֲךָ would be more correct. The verb מְשֶׁכֶרֶךְ means "to attack jointly", and this does not seem to correspond to מְשֶׁכֶרֶךְ. Perhaps this is how the verb מְשֶׁכֶרֶךְ was understood in the LXX (either from מְשֶׁכֶרֲךָ (II) = stir up strife, cf. BDB, p. 156, or perhaps related to מָשָׁר = to engage in battle, cf. BDB, p. 173). Anyway, the Samaritan also has a number of different variants. It reads מָשָׁר for מְשֶׁכֶרֲךָ, מָשָׁר for מְשֶׁכֶרֲךָ, and מָשָׁר for מְשֶׁכֶרֲךָ. The textual situation here is somewhat analogous to that of vs. 15 and vs. 43. Unfortunately, however, there are no Qumran fragments to help us with this verse. In view of these difficulties, an incomplete translation is offered.
Had they been wise they would have understood this,
They would have discerned their latter end. 40
How can one chase a thousand,
Or two put a multitude to flight,
Unless their rock sells them
And YHWH delivers them?
For their rock is not like our rock
And our enemies...

40 There is some confusion as to whom the poet is describing in vv. 28-29. Earlier critics maintained that the reference is to Israel (so Ewald, Schultz, Kamphausen, Dillmann, Driver and others, as cited by J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 103). A.J. Levy, op. cit., p. 91 observes that Jewish commentators (Ibn Ezra, Sa'adiah, Rashi, Solomon ben Maimon, and others) maintain that the verses refer to Israel’s enemies. Recently, biblical critics seem to adopt this interpretation; cf. O. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 11; G. von Rad, op. cit., pp. 198f.; G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 35. In my opinion vv. 28-29 does not refer to Israel but to Israel’s enemies, because the term נֵּז in vs. 28, (cf. also vv. 21, 43) refers to non-Israelite nations.

41 נָּבָה - The meaning and etymology of this term is uncertain. The LXX reads, άνενάτος = "unintelligent, foolish," which is probably no more than an interpretation. The term נָּבָה occurs in this form only two other times: Ex. 21:22 and Job 31:11. Based on Ex. 21:22, the term has traditionally been rendered as "judges". Such an interpretation, however, does not make any sense in the above context. A different suggestion, still based on Ex. 21:22, is made by E.A. Speiser, "The Stem PLL in Hebrew," JBL, 82(1963), pp. 301-306. His hypothesis is that the stem נָּבָה = "to assess, reckon", and therefore נָּבָה = "assessment, estimate". He translates לָּבַּה in Ex. 21:22 as "according to estimate" (cf. LXX, μιᾶ ταυτόν = according to estimate). He does not consider Jb. 31:11, but offers the following translation for the above passage: "even in our enemies' estimation". While his suggestion may possibly apply to Ex. 21:22 (cf. however, B.S. Jackson, "The Problem of Exod. XXI:22-5," VT, 23(1973), pp. 273-304, who offers no solution for the term נָּבָה but considers לָּבַּה in Ex. 21:22 to be an interpolation), and while his rendering of the above passage may possibly make sense, the real problem in Speiser's proposal here is syntax. There is no justification for his rendering. A number of critics have suggested
For their vine is from Sodom's vine,
And from the fields of Gomorrah.
Their grapes are poisonous grapes,
They have bitter clusters.
Their wine is the poison of reptiles,
And the cruel head of vipers.
"Is this not stored up with me,
Sealed in my treasuries,
Until the day of punishment and recompense,
Until the time when their foot shall slip?"

an emendation of either the term or the line (for a survey, see J.R.
Boston, op. cit., pp. 108-110), but there seems to be no consensus
about either the emendations or the interpretation of the word. The
problem, must, therefore, remain open until we understand more precisely
the meaning of נֵבָּֽשׁוֹפָה.

42 שֹׁלֵשׁ This term occurs four other times in the Old Testa-
ment (II Kgs. 21:4; Isa. 16:8; Jer. 31:39; Hab. 3:17). M.R. Lehman,
"A New Interpretation of the term שֹׁלֵשׁ, " VI. 3 (1953), pp. 361-371,
suggests that שֹׁלֵשׁ is actually a compound, made up of the com-
ponents שֹׁלֵשׁ and תְּשׁוֹפָה which correspond to בוֹּפְּרַת, Field of Death,
in biblical Hebrew" (p. 361). He indicates, moreover, that the con-
nection in which שֹׁלֵשׁ is found in the OT associates it with the
Mōt-cult described in the Ras Shamra text 49.II.30ff. The proposi-
tion seems quite attractive but I am not convinced that any of the OT
passages connect שֹׁלֵשׁ with the Mōt-cult. As a matter of fact, the
context both here in the Song and the four other instances calls for
the usual rendering of "fields".

43 שֹׁלֵשׁ - No need to emend M.T.; cf. Akkadian kamāsu (CAD, vol. 8,
p.114), "to gather." This is obviously rare usage, but the meaning was
seized by the LXX, which reads שֹׁלֵשׁ. In the Samaritan the rare
שֹׁלֵשׁ became the more usual שֹׁלֵשֶׁ which has the same meaning.

44 Read דַּע הַֽפְּרָתָה for דַּע הַֽפְּרָתָה, following the LXX and the Samaritan
along with commentators.

45 דַּע שְׁלֹשֶׁ - Interpreting this word with G.E. Kendenhall, The Tenth
Generation, pp. 69-104, who maintains, quite convincingly, that the term
refers to "divine punitive vindication."
For near is the day of their calamity,
And swiftly comes the doom upon them!"  
Indeed, YHWH will vindicate his people,
And will have compassion on his servants;
Because he will see that (their) strength is exhausted;
And neither ruler nor caretaker remaining.  
And [YHWH] will say: "Where are their gods,
The rock in whom they trusted,


47. The meaning of this phrase is unclear, and it occurs four other times in Deuteronomic material (I Kgs. 14:10; 21:21; II Kgs. 9:18; 14:26). Martin Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien, vol. 1, p. 75 n. 2, maintains that it is a stereotyped expression, the meaning of which is no longer clear. Other biblical critics, however, have attempted to suggest the meaning of the phrase, although there is no general agreement. J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 123, lists, among others, the following suggestions: "Vornehm und Gering" (Schultz), "Festes wie unfestes" (Ewald), "zurückgehaltener und Lediger" (Keil), "Gehaltene und Gelassene" (Knoch), "das Fest und Lose" (Klostermann), "Eingehaltene und Loser" (Dillmann), "Höriger und Freier" (König), "fettered nor free" (Driver), "protector nor helper" (Levy), "bond nor free" (Wright). P.P. Saydon, "The Meaning of the Expression בְּעַלְיָבָה", VT, 2(1952), pp. 371-374, suggests "the helpless and the abandoned"; cf. also E. Kutscher, "Die Wurzel תָּבָה im Hebräischen", VT, 2(1952), pp. 57-69. The adopted translation here follows the suggestion of M. Heidenreich, "The YQTL-QTL (QTL-YQTL) Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic", A.A. Neuman Forschungen (1962), p. 283 n. 6, who proposes to revocalize the expression to בְּעַלְיָבָה and renders it as "ruler (cf. I Sam. 9:17) and caretaker (cf. Ugaritic 'dh and Hebrew ωβ in Isa. 3:17)."

48. There is now a fragment from Qumran IVQ that has been identified as Deut. 32:37-43. For a description of the extant portion see P.W. Skehan, BASOR, 136(1954), pp. 12-15. Since the Qumran fragments has considerable lacunae in vv. 37-42, it is of little help for these verses; vs. 43 is quite well preserved and will be discussed below. There is, however, a textual problem in vv. 37-38. The
Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,
Drank the wine of their libations?
Let them rise up and help you!
Let them be a shelter over you!
Behold now, for I, I am he
And there are no gods beside me!
I slay and I make alive!

difficulty is related to the subject of the clause. Opinion is divided as to whether the subject of יָדָנ is יְהוָה or someone else. Even the Versions are divided. The LXX reads, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κόποις, while the Samaritan reads, יָדָנ, presumably referring to the enemies. Skehan reconstructs the TVQ fragment to support the LXX reading. J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 125, lists those who prefer יְהוָה (Ewald, König, Delbrück, Kamphausen, Eissfeldt, etc.) and those who maintain that the enemies are speaking (Ehrlich, Levy). His own preference is to follow the LXX rendering. Since the speaker in vv. 39-42 is יְהוָה, there is no reason to assume that vv. 37-38 refers to someone different than יְהוָה. Having determined that יְהוָה is the speaker, there is still the question of who may be the subject of יְהוָה/יִדֶנ. Is it Israel or the enemies? All critics, except C.J. Labuschagne, "The Song of Moses: Its Framework and Structure" in De Fructu Ocis Sui, p. 97, consider Israel to be the subject; e.g. S.R. Driver, op. cit., p. 377; G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 199; G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 36; W.L. Moran, op. cit., p. 275; J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 126. Such an interpretation, however, must be considered incorrect, since the following verse (vs. 38) challenges the gods to protect their protégé against the imminent punishment. This can only refer to the enemies, since Israel's punishment is already something of the past.

49 Instead of MT 'יִדֶנ read 'יִדֶנ with the Samaritan, LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate Versions, since the preceding verbs in the context are in plural.

50 אַלִי́ אֲלִי́ - N. Walker, "Concerning HU' and 'AMI HU'", ZAW NF 33(1962), pp. 205-206, suggests that "this expression cannot be anything else but an echo of the Divine Name 'EMYEH, 'I am', the Hebrew rendering of Kenitic YAHWEH, which is of Egyptian origin". His evidence, however, is weak and unconvincing.
I wound and I heal!
And none can deliver from my hand!
Therefore I lift my hand to the heavens,
And swear, as I live forever; 51
If I what my glittering sword,
And my hand grasps [the sword] in judgement, 52
I will send punishment 53 on my adversaries,
And requite those who hate me;
I will make my arrows drunk with blood,
And my sword shall devour flesh,
From the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the nobles of the enemy. 54

51 Between the two colons of this verse the LXX inserts καὶ ἰδοὺ ὅτι δύονται μου. The IVQ manuscript is unfortunately too fragmentary at this point to be of any help (see P. Skehan, BASOR, 136 (1954), p. 13). A. J. Levy, op. cit., p. 99, considers the LXX addition as an explanatory gloss, and he may be right. The simplest and best method, therefore, is to follow the MT at this point. All biblical critics do the same.

52 The usual interpretation is to consider ἔτοιμοι as the object of ἀποφέρων.

53 See n. 45.

54 ἀναλαμπάω ἀναλαμπάω - There is some difficulty about the meaning of this expression. The verb ἀναλάμβανω means "to let loose", or "to hang loose". The noun in this context seems to refer to the loose and unbraided hair of the head. However, the LXX reads ἀφέων τοὺς, meaning "noble" or "noble". The opinion of biblical critics is divided between these two interpretations. For instance, Driver, Eissfeldt, and Wright, among others, follow the former interpretation, while Ewald, Kamphausen, Dillmann, König, and others follow the LXX rendering (as cited by J. R. Boston, op. cit., p. 135). The rendering of "from the long-haired heads of the enemy", seems to yield here an unsuitable sense; hence the LXX interpretation is preferable.
Rejoice, O heavens, before him! 55
And worship him, O sons of god(s)!
Rejoice, O nations, with his people!
And ascribe power to him, O all angels of god!

55 The textual difficulty in this verse is so severe that it cannot be reconstructed with certainty. The LXX has eight colons, the IVQ fragment has six colons, while the MT has four colons.

LXX

εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοί, ἵματα, καὶ προσκυνήσασθαι αὐτῷ μιᾷ θεῶ.
καὶ ἐνμεθύσασθαι ἡμῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.
καὶ ἐνδοχριστάσθαι κόσμου πάντες ἁγγείον θεῶ.
ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τοῦ νικῶν αὐτοῦ ἐθάνατον.
καὶ ἐκδίκηται, καὶ ἀνιαπόδησον διὰ τὸν ἐγερθὸς.
καὶ τῶν μισθῶν αὐτῶν ἀντιποτῆς.
καὶ ἐκεκαθηρεῖται Κύριος τὰς γῆς τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.

IVQ

καὶ ημεῖς θυσίαν τῇ θεῷ αὐτῷ.
καὶ ημεῖς τιμήσασθαι τῷ ἐθάνατῳ.
καὶ ημεῖς ἐκδικηθήσομεν διὰ τοῦ ἐγερθός.
καὶ ημεῖς τῶν μισθῶν αὐτῶν ἀντιποτῆς.
καὶ ημεῖς ἐκεκαθηρέσθαι Κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.

The differences in the three texts may be diagrammed as follows:

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The LXX has a text of eight colons. Of these, the IVQ text has colons 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8, while the MT text has colons 3, 5, 6 and 8. The question that arises is: which of these three recensions can be regarded as preserving the original text? Or, to put it differently, is there an expansion or contraction of the original text? In trying to solve this problem critics are just as divided as the Versions.

W.F. Albright, VT, 9(1959), pp. 339-341, maintains that the LXX text must approximate the original and that the other texts are to be explained as having lost certain colons. He bases his views on the assumption that the increasing evidence from the Qumran scrolls indicate that the Hebrew originals, which were "once edited in antiquity,
For he will avenge the blood of his children, 
And will avenge and send punishment on his enemies, 
And will requite those who hate him. 
And YHWH will purge the land of his people.

suffered far more from omissions by copyists than from additions." O. Eissfeldt, op. cit., pp. 13-14, follows the IVQ recension in general but reads בַּיָּדָ נ for בַּיָּד in the 2nd colon, and יִרְבָּ ה for יִרְבּ in the 3rd colon. On the assumption that the LXX is a conflation, P.W. Skehan, BASOR 136(1954), pp. 12-15, and F.M. Cross, The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies, (1958), pp. 135-136, independently suggest a four colon modification of the MT. G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 33 proposes, with some reservation, a six colon reconstruction, based on the LXX, colons 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8.

Although the correctness of any of the three Versions cannot be demonstrated, I have nevertheless, followed the LXX rendering so that the Epilogue (vs. 43) corresponds to the Prologue (v. 1-3), consisting of 1 strophe in tetralectic (for the discussion of strophic structure see pp. 155-162).

Emerd נֶעֶר to read נֶעֶר (so IVQ: double possessive seems unnecessary).
CHAPTER III

PHILOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR DATING THE SONG OF MOSES

The purpose of this chapter is to examine philological characteristics of the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1-43) in order to determine if any such linguistic data provide clues for dating the poem.

The procedure involves the analysis of the four following linguistic elements:

1. Syntax and Morphology
2. Parallelism and Assonance
3. Metrical Structure
4. Terminology

The omission of Hebrew orthography from the list is deliberate. It is based on the conclusions of the most recent and major study of Hebrew orthography by F.M. Cross and D.N. Freedman. Their overall analysis leads them to identify three stages in the development of Hebrew orthography:

1. Purely consonantal script antedates the 9th century B.C.
2. The final mater lectionis is associated with the period between

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the 9th century and the Exile.

3. Both final and medial matres lectionis are characteristic of the period during and after the Exile.

However, as a device for dating the Song, Hebrew orthography leaves a lot to be desired; it raises more problems than it solves. First, the consistency with which changes of the script were incorporated before and after the Exile must remain a matter of speculation. Certain inconsistencies were bound to survive in a given text either internally, due to a lack of understanding in the use of matres lectionis, or externally, among different versions of the same passage. Second, the principles and development of Hebrew orthography are not conclusively established so that some of the dates of the epigraphical material on which Cross & Freedman based their conclusions are suspect. Third, inscriptive evidence is inconclusive; even if the dates of epigraphical material are accepted, one or two inscriptions from a certain period or from a certain area of territory do not justify inferences about the general practices of the whole period or of the whole territory. Cross and Freedman's orthographical principles yield very little of any significance when they are applied to the Song. Until conclusive evidence is available and until the

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principles of Hebrew orthography are more fully understood, the method remains an uncertain instrument for probing and for locating the date of the Song.

The other four linguistic characteristics promise more conclusive analysis of the Song and are examined in turn as follows.

Each analysis is prefaced by an explanation of the linguistic element in question and the method by which it is exploited to reveal the date of the Song. This method of analysis is then applied and conclusions drawn. Finally, an over-all evaluation of the results is tabulated so that the linguistic pattern of the Song may be appreciated in a wider perspective.

As a general rule, the analysis throughout this chapter is governed by Robertson's division of two linguistic poles: early (13th-10th cent. B.C.) and late, or standard (8th cent. B.C. and after). Each section establishes the linguistic patterns of early and late poetic Hebrew, followed by an analysis of the Song in order to indicate the linguistic features of the Song. The presence of characteristics that are typical of either an early or late poetic Hebrew are accepted as evidence of an early or late date respectively. However, the pre-

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sence of a mixture of early and late patterns constitutes evidence of either archaising or the period of transition (10th-8th cent. B.C.). In this event, the two possibilities are considered under each section and eventually in the over-all evaluation of the results.

Syntax and Morphology

One of the most recent and important linguistic works relating to the dating of the Song of Moses, as well as to other Old Testament poetry, is the thesis of D.A. Robertson. His purpose is to determine whether any Hebrew poetry can be dated by linguistic evidence as early poetic Hebrew - the period from the time of the Exodus in the 13th century B.C. to the establishment of the monarchy in the 10th century B.C. The result of his study leads him to conclude that the Song of Moses and certain other poems can be ascribed to the 11th-10th century B.C.

His method of approach is based on the following procedures:

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4 D.A. Robertson, op. cit.
5 Ibid., p. 231.
first, biblical poetry that can be dated on other than linguistic evidence is analyzed; next, the linguistic nature of any poem in question is compared with that of poetry of known date in order to arrive at an approximate date.

His investigation with the first procedure leads him to two conclusions: 6 (1) almost all Hebrew poetry that can be dated on non-linguistic evidence comes from the prophetic books which date from the middle of the 8th century B.C. until late in the post exilic period - this poetry he labels standard poetic Hebrew; (2) opinions on the dating of all other poems are so debatable that no poem can be dated on non-linguistic grounds to the early period and that in consequence no characteristic grammatical forms can be attributed with certainty to this early period.

Denied any useful insight into the nature of early poetic Hebrew, Robertson attempts a different route. He reconstructs early poetic Hebrew by combining two linguistic entities: the Ugaritic poetry and the Amarna glosses. These are correlated with rare grammatical features of biblical poetry as a whole though Robertson is quick to admit that innumerable possibilities exist for accounting for a rare form other than by postulating its antiquity. 7

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6 Ibid., pp. 1-5.
7 Ibid., pp. 6-9.
In other words, he posits two linguistic poles: pre- and post 8th century B.C. On the one hand, the grammatical patterns of standard poetic Hebrew are deduced from biblical poems datable by non-linguistic evidence from the 8th century B.C. to the post-exilic period. On the other hand, the grammatical patterns of early poetic Hebrew are deduced from a linguistic combination of biblical and extra-biblical poems.

Before Robertson analyses the grammatical patterns that emerge from early and standard poetry he clarifies a number of procedural concerns. First he specifies that though, theoretically, the term "linguistic" includes the study of elements such as phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicography and orthography, his study is concerned with syntax and morphology only. Second, Robertson chooses alternative terms to identify the two verbal forms which are normally identified by the terms "Imperfect" and "Perfect". Since these two terms relate to grammar rather than structure, that is, they identify usage rather than the physical structure of verb forms, Robertson prefers to label them, respectively, the "prefix conjugation" (abbreviated to pref) and the "suffix conjugation" (abbreviated to suff). Robertson's alternatives offer an additional advantage: the addition of the conjunction y as a prefix i.e., pref, w-pref, suff and w-suff. Third,

\[8\textit{Ibid.}, \text{ pp. 12-16.}\]
Robertson excludes from his study all but such passages which beyond reasonable doubt refer to past time. Fourth, all "B - stem", 3rd masculine singular and plural forms of initial y/w verbs are excluded because on the basis of the consonantal text it is impossible to distinguish the "suffix" from the "prefix" conjugation. All verbs in subordinate clauses are also omitted "for the sake of consistent linguistic method". 9

Robertson attempts next to reconstruct the syntactical forms of early biblical poetry by appealing to Ugaritic mythical and epical sources. He chooses a number of narrative passages which yield the following results: 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>pref</th>
<th>w-pref</th>
<th>suff</th>
<th>w-suff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4(51, IIAB) iv-v 8-30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4(51, IIAB) iv-v 82-88 + 97-112</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4(51, IIAB) vi 16-36 + 38-59</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3('nt, VAB) ii</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14(Krt, IX) iii-iv 156-211</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 demonstrates that, of the four morphologically distinct

9 Ibid., p. 16.
10 Ibid., pp. 16-20. For the classification of the Ugaritic texts, see p. 17 n. 5.
forms, prefix and suffix conjugations predominate in early narrative passages. With a different selection of passages, Robertson demonstrates further that "the positioning of the w-pref conj within a line of poetry follows a very stereotyped pattern. It very rarely is initial; rather it habitually is medial." His survey of these texts shows that the w-pref form occurs 15 times initially and 32 times medially.

Robertson proceeds next to describe the pattern of verbal forms phrased in past narrative in standard poetic Hebrew among poems datable on non-linguistic grounds to the 8th century B.C. and thereafter. He tabulates his results as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos 2:9-12; 9:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isa. 5:1b-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerm. 2:5-8, 20-21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXILIC PROPHETS

1. Passages that recount the exile:

Isa. 42:6b-25; 43:12-28; 47:6-7a
50:1b; 52:1-7a-8a

pref w-pref suff w-suff
1 7 13

2. Passages that recount YHWH’s dealings:

Isa. 48:13-5a; 51:2b; 55:14

pref w-pref suff w-suff
5 5

3. Passages referring to the “Servant”:

Isa. 41:8-9; 42:1; 49:1b-3a
49:8
Ezek. 19:2-12
Ezek. 28:12b-19

pref w-pref suff w-suff
9 7 17 16 4 12

POST-EXILIC PROPHETS

Isa. 63:1-14

pref w-pref suff w-suff
2 6 6 1

PSALMODIC TYPES

Lam.

pref w-pref suff w-suff
6 24

Ps. 137

pref w-pref suff w-suff
3

Robertson concludes from Table 6. that, of the four morphological forms, the suffix and the w-prefix conjugations are the ones habitually used in standard poetic Hebrew. Furthermore, he demonstrates that the position of the w-prefix conjugation is more frequently initial (54 times) than medial (27 times). 14

14 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
The grammatical patterns that emerge from his analyses leads Robertson to distinguish the following differences between early and standard poetic Hebrew:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The suffix and prefix conjugations are predominantly used to narrate past events.</td>
<td>The suffix and w-prefix conjugations are predominantly used to narrate past events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The w-prefix conjugation is merely a conditioned variant of the prefix conjugation and hence its position is almost always medial.</td>
<td>The w-prefix conjugation is a fully independent verbal form and hence its position is almost always initial.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By classifying verbal forms used in past narrative in biblical poetry, Robertson formulates a working hypothesis for dating poems that cannot be dated by non-linguistic evidence. Thus, "the presence of the pattern typical of early poetic Hebrew in a poem of unknown date constitutes evidence of an early date... The presence of a pattern of standard poetic Hebrew in a poem of unknown date constitutes evidence of a date in the eighth century or thereafter. The presence of both patterns constitutes evidence of archaizing."  

Analysis of the verbal patterns of the Song of Moses (Deut. 32) according to Robertson's theory yields the following data. 17

Table 8

1. All the verbs in independent clauses referring unambiguously to the past time are contained in vv. 8-20.

2. Six verbs must be omitted - one (in vs. 13) is a 3m form of an initial y/w verb, while the other five (in vv. 15, 17, 18) are in relative clauses:

   vs. 13 wnmqhw
   vs. 15 'shw
   vs. 17 yd'wm
   vs. 17 b'w
   vs. 17 'srwm
   vs. 18 yldk

3. Following the Massoretic Text 18 there are seventeen prefix conjugations, nine w-prefix conjugations and three suffix conjugations:

   prefix (17)  w-prefix (9)  suffix (3)

   vs. 8 ysb
   vs. 10 ym'ahw

---

17 For Robertson's own analysis of the Song, see op. cit., pp. 55-57.

18 There are discrepancies among the Greek, Samaritan and Hebrew verbs in vv. 10, 11, 13, 15, 16. On the whole I have followed the Hebrew (MT) text.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prefix (17)</th>
<th>v-prefix (9)</th>
<th>suffix (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vs. 10</td>
<td>ysbnnhw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 10</td>
<td>ybywnnhw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 10</td>
<td>yrgrnhw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 11</td>
<td>yfyir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 11</td>
<td>yrhp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 11</td>
<td>yprš</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 11</td>
<td>yrqhw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 11</td>
<td>yšľhw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 12</td>
<td>ynhnw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 13</td>
<td>yrkkhw</td>
<td>wyškł</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 14</td>
<td>tšth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 15</td>
<td>wynšan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 15</td>
<td>wybtį</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>šmnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>byťt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>kšyt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>wytš</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>wynl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 16</td>
<td>yqnžhw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 16</td>
<td>ykyšhw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 17</td>
<td>ysbhw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 18</td>
<td>tšy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefix (17)</td>
<td>W-prefix (9)</td>
<td>Suffix (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 18</td>
<td>wțiškh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 19</td>
<td>wți'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 19</td>
<td>wyn's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 20</td>
<td>wyn'mr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Of the nine w-prefix forms, four are initial and five are medial.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial (4)</th>
<th>Medial (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vs. 13</td>
<td>wyn'kl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 15</td>
<td>wyn't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 15</td>
<td>wyn'bl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 18</td>
<td>wțiškh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 19</td>
<td>wyn's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 20</td>
<td>wyn'mr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis indicates that the syntactical characteristic of the Song is not typical of either early or standard poetic Hebrew but a combination of both. There are 17 prefix (early pattern) and 9 w-prefix (standard pattern) conjugations, with 5 w-prefix, medial forms (early pattern) and 4 w-prefix, initial forms (standard pattern). The conclusion is clear. On the basis of syntactical analysis, the Song shows evidence of early and standard biblical poetry. The next issue is to establish the period which best accounts for the verbal characteristics of mixed patterns.
The issue cannot be resolved on the evidence of syntactical analysis alone. The morphological evidence of the Song, must also be examined in order to assess the issue from a wider perspective. Since Robertson's analysis and conclusion are based on the examination of both linguistic features, it seems appropriate to follow his precedent with an investigation of morphological characteristics.

Robertson distinguishes two groups of morphemes: 19

Group I — Morphemes which are recognized by the Massoretes and therefore indicated by their pointing.

Group II — Morphemes which are not recognized by the Massoretes and hence are not indicated by their pointing.

Taking each group separately, Robertson indicates the following differences between early and standard poetic Hebrew: 20

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group I — Morphemes recognized by Massoretic pointing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> The y/w of a final y/w root is retained when it opens a syllable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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19 D.A. Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

Early

B. Derivatives of the proto-Semitic element "a" function as ordinary relative pronouns.

C. There are two forms for affixing the 3ms pronominal suffix an to the prefix conjugation: anhu (the earlier form), annu (the later form).

D. The 3mpl pronominal suffix -mw is affixed to nouns, verbs and prepositions.

E. The -y (pronounced -i) morpheme is frequently used and is associated with nouns or participles in the bound state.²¹

Standard

No derivatives of the element "a" occur as relative pronouns.

There is only one form for affixing 3ms pronominal suffix an to the prefix conjugation: annu (the later form).

There are two 3mpl pronominal suffixes that are affixed to nouns, verbs and prepositions: -hm and -m. The 3mpl pronominal suffix -mw is affixed to prepositions only.

The -y (pronounced -i) morpheme is less frequently used and is often associated with nouns or participles in the appositional state.

Early

F. The nominal -w (-3) is affixed to nouns in both genders (masc. and fem.), but only in one number (sing., not plur.).

Standard

Same as 'early' except it is less frequently used.

Group II - Morphemes not recognized by Massoretic pointing:

A. The probability of reading an enclitic -m which would elimi-

nate an otherwise difficult MT form:

Analysis of the Song on morphological evidence follows.

Table 10

Group I

A. The y/w of a final y/w root

There is one instance of the preservation of the syllable-

opening y/w (early) and three instances of the loss of y/w (standard).

With y/w (Early) | Without y/w (Standard)

| vs. 3 | hbw |
| vs. 37 | ḥṣyw |
| vs. 38 | yḏtw |
| vs. 39 | r_yw |

B. Derivatives of the element d (ג)

No instances of derivatives of the proto-Semitic element d (ג).
can be cited for Deut. 32. Instead, there is one instance of the relative pronoun נָא (in vs. 38) which is often considered a late characteristic. In this respect then, the Song conforms to the standard pattern.

C. Affixing the 3ms pronominal suffix

The Song contains three of the older forms (early pattern) for affixing the 3ms pronominal suffix -anhu:

vs. 10 yabbnhw
vs. 10 ybnwnhw
vs. 10 yarnhw

D. The 3mpl pronominal suffix

The Song contains 4 instances of the early form, 26 instances of standard form and 13 instances that may be either early or standard poetic Hebrew.

1. The 3mpl pronominal suffix -mw is found on nouns in 4 instances:

vs. 27 arymw
vs. 32 lnhm
vs. 37 nhymw
vs. 38 zhymw

---

22 So D.A. Robertson, op. cit., pp. 81 n.1, 89.

23 I have not followed Robertson's result in this case since his analysis is incorrect and yields 4 early and 11 standard forms; see, D.A. Robertson, op. cit., p. 95.
2. The third pronoun suffix -m is found on prepositions in 3 instances:

vs. 23 ivement
vs. 32 ivement
vs. 35 ivement

3. The third pronoun suffix -hm is found on nouns in 2 instances only, though in the one case the text is questionable:

vs. 21 bbblyhm
vs. 26 ppyhm (text ?)

4. The third pronoun suffix -hm is found on prepositions in 2 instances:

vs. 20 mhm
vs. 28 bhm

5. The third pronoun suffix -m is found on nouns in 11 instances, though in one case the text is dubious:

vs. 5 mmmm (text ?)
vs. 17 btykm
vs. 20 hrykm
vs. 29 rhrtykm
vs. 30 swrm
vs. 31 swrm
vs. 32 gpmm
6. The 3mpl pronominal suffix -m is found on verbs in 7 instances:
   vs. 17 ydm
   vs. 17 šrm
   vs. 21 qny'm
   vs. 21 k'ym
   vs. 30 mkrm
   vs. 30 hagyrn
   vs. 38 wyērkm

7. The 3mpl pronominal suffix -m is found on prepositions in 4 instances:
   vs. 20 bm
   vs. 23 bm
   vs. 24 bm
   vs. 38 'lykm

Hence, the following results may be summarized from the above analysis:

1. The 4 instances of the 3mpl pronominal suffix -mw on nouns (#1) indicate the pattern of early poetic Hebrew.
2. The 3 instances of the 3mpl pronominal suffix *-m* on prepositions (#2) indicate the pattern of either early or standard poetic Hebrew.

3. The 4 instances of the 3mpl pronominal suffix *-hm* on nouns and prepositions (#3 and 4) indicate the pattern of standard poetic Hebrew.

4. The 22 instances of the 3mpl pronominal suffix *-m* on nouns and verbs (#5, 6, and 7) indicate the pattern of standard poetic Hebrew.

E. The use of the *-y* morpheme

An analysis of the Song indicates that there is one instance of *-y* morpheme (early pattern):\(^{24}\)

vs. 13 bnyty

F. The frequency of the nominal *-y* (*-5*)

There are no instances of the nominal *-y* (*-5*).

Group II

A. The enclitic *-m*

There are no instances of the enclitic *-m*.

The following table summarizes the results of the syntactical and morphological variants in the Song.

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\(^{24}\)Robertson omits to mention this one instance. For an analysis of biblical morphemes see his later article, "The Morpheme *-y* (*-I*) and *-w* (*-O*) in Biblical Hebrew", VT, vol. 19(1969), pp. 211-223.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>No. of early instances</th>
<th>No. of standard instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 pref. conj.</td>
<td>9 w-pref. conj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 med. w-pref.</td>
<td>4 init. w-pref.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group I A.</td>
<td>1 y/w root</td>
<td>3 y/w root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>- d (z)</td>
<td>1 b Fr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>3 -anhu pron. suff.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>4 -mw 3mpl pron. suff.</td>
<td>26 -hm/m 3mpl pron. suff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>1 -y morph.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td>- w (-w)</td>
<td>- w (-w)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group II A.</td>
<td>encl. -m</td>
<td>encl. -m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This summary clearly confirms the presence of both early and standard syntactical and morphological forms in the Song. Though the data falls short of yielding conclusive evidence of the date of the Song, the analysis does at least narrow the field for identifying the period which accounts for a mixture of patterns.

If the Song is considered characteristic of standard poetic Hebrew (8th cent. BC. and after), then the presence of all the instances of early forms, such as the prefix conjugations, the preservation of the y/w root and the instances of the older forms -anhu and -mw, must be regarded as evidences of archaizing. Such a conclusion may be legitimate, but it certainly is not unequivocal. The proportion of
prefix conjugations seems to be high so that it is unjustifiable to assume confidently that all these early forms are the result of conscious archaizing on the part of the author of the Song. ²⁵

If, on the other hand, the Song belongs in the early poetic Hebrew category (13th-10th cent. B.C.), as Robertson believes it does (11th-10th centuries B.C.), then the presence of a significant number of standard forms has to be explained. For instance, how is the presence of 9 w-prefix conjugations or the 26 instances of -hm/-m 3 mpl pronominal suffixes to be explained?

It is possible that the presence of early and standard forms in significant numbers represents poetic composition during a period of transition from early to standard poetic Hebrew. Characteristics of poetry in such a period might be the frequent occurrence, rather than mere vestigial instances, of older forms associated with early patterns and the frequent occurrence of younger forms which, as a result of gradually increasing popularity, become characteristic of standard poetic Hebrew. If this is the case, then the most appropriate period to match the description "period of transition" is the period between the 10th and the 8th centuries B.C.

²⁵ Cf. D.N. Freedman, "Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry", ZAW, 72 (1960), pp. 101-107, who notes a number of instances of archaic forms, the use of which were deliberate rather than haphazard. However, he cites no instances for Deut. 32.
Parallelism and Assonance

There is no ancient Israelite manual governing the rules of poetry, and the principles that guide the stylistic analysis for dating biblical poems are strictly based on comparative study. The nature of Hebrew poetry is often compared to Canaanite, Babylonian and Egyptian poetry which then assists in the inference of distinctions between chronological stages. Thus, by studying the poetic techniques of the literature of the ancient Near East, scholars construct a model on which they base a theory of stylistic sequence-dating in Israel. "We can now parallel changing poetic style with historically meaningful content," states Albright, "a method which gives us approximate date for stylistic modifications." 26

The starting point of this principle goes back to Lowth's theory of parallelismus membrorum in 1753. 27 His views can be reduced to two general rules. First, poetic verses consist of two (and sometimes three) colons. Here are two examples that illustrate this point:

How long shall the wicked, O Lord,  
how long shall the wicked exult?  
(Ps. 94:3)

26 W. F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan, p. 3.

The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice,
the floods have lifted up their roaring.
(Ps. 93:3)

Second, the structural principle in poetic verses is parallelism
(parallelismus membrorum). This relationship of parallelism to colons
may be one of three kinds:

1. Synonymous parallelism - The second colon repeats the content of
the first in different words:

But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
(Ps. 1:2)

2. Antithetic parallelism - The second colon contrasts the content
of the first in order to illuminate the idea:

The Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.
(Ps. 1:6)

3. Synthetic parallelism - The second colon supplements or strengthens
the thought of the first:

All the earth worships Thee
they sing praises to Thee,
sing praises to Thy name.
(Ps. 66:4)

Lowth’s analysis was later supplemented by a fourth category
known as climactic parallelism[^28] to include all those instances in

[^28]: For a brief survey of the development of these terms, see,
S.E. Loewenstamm, "The Expanded Colon in Ugaritic and Biblical Verse",
which the second colon completes the thought of the first, such as the following example:

The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness, the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
(Ps. 29:8)

Realizing the importance of the stylistic characteristic of parallelism, W.F. Albright selects and analyses a group of Canaanite and biblical material. His observation, however, leads him to coin a new term: repetitive parallelism. This shift in terminology is indicative of a shift in the method itself. Unlike his predecessors, Albright does not restrict his definition to an initial colon that completes itself in a second or third colon but includes all those verses in which the same words recur in two cola of one verse. The following is an example of this type:

In the midst of the years renew it, in the midst of the years make it known, in wrath remember mercy.
(Hab. 3:2)

Thus, according to Albright, there is repetitive parallelism in this verse, even though the first colon expresses a complete idea, and even though its relationship to the second colon is one of synonymous parallelism.

This repetitive pattern, which is also a Canaanite poetic char-

acteristic, leads Albright to consider next the possibility of dating biblical poems. He argues that the poetic device of repetitive parallelism, a striking feature in Canaanite poetry, is characteristic of early biblical poetry. Repetitive parallelism was later replaced by other stylistic features, such as assonance and paranomasia, which became distinguishing features of a later period.

The Canaanite repetitive pattern from which Albright constructs his hypothesis of early Hebrew poetry is based upon the three epics of Baal, Aqhat and Keret, which, according to him, were put into their extant form sometime between the 17th and the 15th centuries B.C. Here are three examples, one from each epic, to illustrate the Canaanite pattern of repetitive parallelism:

Behold, thine enemies, O Baal,
Behold, thine enemies shalt thou crush
Behold, thou shalt crush thy foes.

Ask thou for life, O lad Aqhat,
Ask thou for life, and I'll give it to Thee,
Immortality, and I'll grant it to Thee.
(Aqhat II, vii:26ff.)

May Horon break, O my Son,
May Horon break Thy head,
May Glory-of-the-Name-of-Baal, Thy skull.
(Keret II, vi:54ff.)

Thus, this Canaanite poetic feature is considered a stylistic factor for determining the date of a biblical poem. The presence of repetitive parallelism in any given Hebrew poem is evidence of an early date. The absence of repetitive parallelism and/or the presence of assonance and paranomasia is an indication of a later date.

Albright proceeds next to consider the incidence of repetitive parallelism in various Hebrew poems. Judging from stylistic indications, he classifies the Song of Miriam (Exod. 15), the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5) and the oracles of Balaam (Num. 23-24) among the earliest Israelite poetry. The Song of Moses (Deut. 32) and the Blessing of Moses (Deut. 33), however, represent an intermediate type with less frequent instances of repetitive parallelism. "We infer that Deut. 32 contains only echoes of true repetitive parallelism," he states, "and that it dates from a time when assonance and paranomasia had become characteristic features of poetic styles."


Albright attempts to determine the date of the Song more precisely. Since the style of the Song is intermediate between archaic repetitive parallelism, as in the Songs of Miriam and Deborah, and the 10th century style of the lyric lament of David (II Sam 1:19-27), Albright concludes that "Deut. 32 probably dates from about 1025 B.C." 34

Albright bases this conclusion on five instances of repetitive parallelism and nine instances of assonance: 35

Deut. 32:2 - repetition of two prepositions:

Like fine rain on the grass,
Like showers on the herbs.

Deut. 32:6 - repetition of a pronoun:

Is not He thy father who created Thee? He who made Thee and formed Thee?

Deut. 32:17 - repetition of a verb (based on textual emendation): 36

Gods whom they knew not;
(And) whom their fathers knew not.

Deut. 32:39 - repetition of a personal pronoun:

34Ibid., p. 15; cf. also his article, VT 9(1959), p. 339. Following Eissfeldt's dating, this is Albright's third and latest view on the date of the Song. His two previous dates were the 17th cent. B.C. and the 10th cent. B.C. respectively in the two editions of his book, From the Stone Age to Christianity, (1940), p. 227 and (1957), p. 296.

35W.F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan, pp. 15-16.

36For Albright's proposal to emend the MT text of vs. 17, see his article "Some Remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy XXXII", VT, 9(1959), pp. 341-342.
Behold now, I am I,
And there is no other God than I;
I kill and restore life,
After I have smitten I heal,
And none can save from my hand!

Deut. 32:43 - repetition of a verb (based on textual restoration): 37

Rejoice with Him, O heavens,
And bow before Him, O sons of God!
Rejoice with His people, O nations,
And honour Him, all sons of God!

Of the "nine inductive cases of assonance" Albright unfortunately cites three instances only: 38

Deut. 32:16 - assonance is achieved by repetition of suffixes:

Is He not Thy father who created Thee,
He who made Thee and formed Thee?

Deut. 32:21 - two words appear in different forms:

They set up a no-God as My rival,
They made Me angry by their follies;
So I will set up a no-people as their rival,
I will make them angry with a foolish nation.

Deut. 32:22 - phonetically similar words are set in parallelism:

For a fire is kindled in my nostrils,
It will burn to lowest Sheol.

There are, however, three other instances of assonance in the
Song and in all three cases assonance is achieved by repetition of

37 For Albright's textual restoration of vs. 43, see VT, 9(1959), pp. 339-341.

38 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
verbal suffixes:

Deut. 32:10 - He encompassed him, he cared for him
He guarded him, as the apple of his eye.

Deut. 32:11 - So he took him,
So he carried him.

Deut. 32:15 - You grew fat,
You grew thick,
You gorged.

Albright's view seems justified to a degree, even though he
does not present a detailed argument for the typological history of
Hebrew poetry. There are no archaic repetitive parallelisms in the
Song similar to the repetitive parallelisms in Jdg. 5, Ex. 15, or the
Canaanite material, and G.E. Wright comments on other interesting
omissions. He points out, that, except for vs. 13a "the poem almost
totally lacks the personifications of nature and the elaborate quotation
of borrowed images and phrases from Canaanite poetry which were
so frequent in the more ornate compositions of pre-ninth century
Israel." 39

Such omissions notwithstanding, there are five instances of
repetitive parallelism which, as Albright has rightly observed, are
"echoes" of the archaic pattern. The presence of assonance, on the
other hand, points towards the period when paronomasia and assonance

39 G.E. Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of
Deuteronomy 32" in B.W. Anderson & W. Harrelson, Israel's Prophetic
Heritage, p. 41, n. 29.
tend to replace the earlier repetitive style. Consequently, the stylistic characteristic of the poem is a mixture of repetitive parallelism and assonance.

The next issue to be resolved, therefore, is the date of the Song. This mixture of stylistic characteristics may derive from an intermediate period between shifts in poetic techniques. Certainly one cannot ascribe an early date since the instances of repetitive parallelism lack the distinctive Canaanite pattern. Similarly, one cannot ascribe a late date since the presence of the repetitive style has to be accounted for. Hence, the Song may be thought to derive from a time when both poetic features were in common use. That the nature of repetitive parallelism in the Song is simply an "echo" of the archaic pattern of the 17th-15th centuries B.C. is an indication of a change of style down through the centuries. Precisely how much time elapsed before usage established assonance in favour of the archaic pattern is difficult to determine. One conclusion, however, is clear: the poem contains a mixture of both patterns. This suggests an intermediate period around the 10th-8th century B.C.

Metrical Structure

The prosodic pattern of Ugaritic meter is identified by F.M. Cross as one of the factors for determining the date of certain Hebrew
poems. Cross concludes that mixed meter of \( \frac{1}{2} \) and \( \frac{1}{2} \) "is typical of Ugaritic epic style. In pure form it is found only in the earliest Hebrew poetry, notably the Song of the Sea, the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), the Lament of David, and Psalm 29. Cross proceeds next to demonstrate that the characteristic style of the Song of the Sea (Ex. 15:1b-18) is typical of the Ugaritic prosodic pattern of mixed meter. He divides the poem into two parts, with a total of 9 strophes. The strophes are marked off by the change of meter (from \( \frac{1}{2} \) to \( \frac{1}{2} \)), and consist of alternating couplets and triplets. The last strophe of each section has an additional concluding short couplet. The structure can be tabulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Song of the Sea: Metrical Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 2b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{41}\) Ibid., pp. 115-116 n. 14.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., pp. 126-131. This diagram is a revised form of his previous one in the "The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth", JThC, 5(1968), pp. 12-16.
According to Cross, this characteristic of mixed metrical structure conforms to the prosodic patterns of the Late Bronze Age. Furthermore, the baroque use of climactic parallelism, internal rhyme and assonance in the Song of the Sea associate it closely with the Song of Deborah (Jôges. 5), the Lament of David (II Sam. 1), the Blessing of Moses (Deut. 33), Jacob's Prophecy for his Sons (Gen. 49), David's Song of Deliverance (II Sam. 22 = Ps. 18) and Ps. 29, all of
which may be dated around the 11th-10th cent. B.C.\textsuperscript{43} Cross considers the Song of the Sea to be "one of the oldest compositions preserved by biblical sources," that dates around the "late twelfth or early eleventh century B.C.\textsuperscript{44}

It is interesting to note that Cross does not include the Song of Moses (Deut. 32) in his comparative list of early poems. The reason he offers is that, in his opinion Deut. 32 cannot date any earlier than the 9th cent. B.C.: "Despite strong arguments offered by Eissfeldt, Albright, and others for an eleventh-century dating of the hymn, I am not inclined to date it earlier than the ninth century B.C.\textsuperscript{45}

Cross does not offer any evidences for his conclusion nor any record that he analysed the metrical pattern of Deut. 32. The following tables repair this omission. They illustrate the Song's metrical characteristics.

Deut. 32 may be divided into six sections (see Table 13), with a total of 15 strophes (see Table 14);\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., pp. 121-123.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., pp. 123-124.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p. 264 n. 193.
\textsuperscript{46} For a discussion of the strophic structure see pp. 155-162.
Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>vv.</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>1 strophe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusation</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>1 strophe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of benefits</td>
<td>7-14</td>
<td>3 strophes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Sin</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>1 strophe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>19-42</td>
<td>8 strophes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>vs. 43</td>
<td>1 strophe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These 15 strophes consist of alternating distichs, tristichs, tetrastichs, pentastichs and hexastichs. Furthermore, there seems to be an overall artistic pattern. The opening and closing strophes are in tetrastichs while the remaining strophes consist mainly of pentastichs. On the whole, the strophes consist mainly of a cola with a few b cola interspersed here and there. The structure may be tabulated as follows:

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strophe</th>
<th>vv.</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 1</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>tetrastich</td>
<td>l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 2</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>pentastich</td>
<td>l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 3</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>pentastich</td>
<td>l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 4</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>pentastich</td>
<td>l:1::b:l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Strophe 5 | 13-14 | pentastich | l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1::l:1:

47A square bracket represents a reconstructed phrase. For the reconstruction see pp. 49f.
Strophe 6  vv. 15-18  hexastich  l1l1l1l1b1l1l1l1l1
Strophe 7  vv. 19-21  pentastich  l1l1l1l1l1l1l1l1
Strophe 8  vv. 22-24  pentastich  l1l1l1l1l1l1b1l1
Strophe 9  vv. 25-27  pentastich  l1b1l1l1l1l1l1l1
Strophe 10 vv. 28-31  pentastich  l1l1l1b1l1l1l1l1b1
Strophe 11 vv. 32-35  hexastich  l1b1l1l1l1l1l1b1l1l1
Strophe 12  vs. 36  couplet  l1l1l1
Strophe 13 vv. 37-39  pentastich  l1l1l1l1b1l1l1l1l1
Strophe 14  vv. 40-42  pentastich  l1l1l1l1l1b1l1l1l1
Strophe 15  vs. 43  tetristich  [111][1][1][1][1][1][1]

The over-all prosodic pattern of Deut. 32 is strikingly different from that of Exod. 15. The strophes in Exod. 15 are marked off by the change of meter from $b$ to $l$, whereas in Deut. 32 there are no such characteristics. The prosodic characteristic of Exod. 15 is predominantly $b$, with $l$ at the end of each strophe, but such is not the case in Deut. 32. On the contrary, the prosodic characteristic in Deut. 32 is predominantly $l$, with $b$ dispersed in a few places. There are no tetristichs in Exod. 15; in Deut. 32 there are.

If Cross is justified in assigning an early date to Exod. 15 on the basis of a mixed metrical pattern, then Deut. 32 cannot be attributed to the same early period because it does not conform to the Ugaritic prosodic pattern. The presence of $l$ cola interspersed with $b$ cola in Deut. 32 can be explained by the survival of older forms characteristic of early patterns. The most logical date to assign to Deut. 32 is therefore the transitional period (10th-9th century B.C.).
Terminology

The comparative analysis of certain terms and expressions that indicate linguistic affinities with related words or phrases is another dating device. The principles employed by biblical scholars for dating a literary document from the Old Testament by this method are generally based on the following two procedures:

1. Lexical Comparison - Rare or uncommon words, or terms, may be explained by comparative lexical criteria which give an indication of the date of origin of a particular document. For instance, if certain words or terms in a document are recognized as archaisms or derivatives from related Akkadian or Ugaritic cognates then the implication is that the document in question may date from an early period. If, however, certain words or terms are explained as archaisms or derivatives from related Assyrian, Persian or Aramean cognates, then the implication is that the document in question is of a late date.

2. Linguistic Affinity - Words, phrases or expressions may be explained by a comparable linguistic affinity with other material the date of which is more or less established. Thus, if certain terms or phrases in a document are shown to be very similar to words or expressions in Chronicles, Ezra or Nehemiah, for instance, then the implication is that the document is of late date. If, however, certain phrases or words are shown to be very similar to terms found in Ex. 15, Num. 23-24, or Jgs. 5, the implication is that the document is of early date.

This approach is illustrated in three separate studies of the Song of Moses by S.R. Driver,49 J.R. Boston,50 and M. Dahood.51 A brief description of each study follows in order to describe the linguistic approach adopted by each researcher and to document each conclusion regarding the date of the Song.

Driver's linguistic analysis leads him to list a total of 56 roots which fall under one or more of the following categories:52

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Affinity with Wisdom Literature</th>
<th>Not earlier than Jer. or Ezek.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>'mrym</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>'rym</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>'rtltl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


52 S.R. Driver, *op. cit.* , p. 348. The structured table is my own work and not Driver's; it is presented here as a matter of convenience and for the sake of consistency with the rest of the work in this chapter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>Hapax</th>
<th>Uncommon</th>
<th>Affinity with Wisdom Literature</th>
<th>Not earlier than Jer. or Ezek.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ymwt</td>
<td>(Aram.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>dwr wjwr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yll</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>bwnn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>gwl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>hmr' (Aram.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ksn</td>
<td>yswrwm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>t'f</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>t'h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>zrym (of strange gods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>twbwt (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hks'ys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>s'dym (Aram.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>s'r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>s'yh (text ?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bwll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>hwm</td>
<td></td>
<td>thpwywt</td>
<td>hblm</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td></td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>qdh</td>
</tr>
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<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lh't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>mry</td>
<td>lhm(eat)</td>
<td>lhm</td>
<td>lhm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>mryry</td>
<td>qthb</td>
<td></td>
<td>rhp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>bph'h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>Hapax</td>
<td>Uncommon</td>
<td>Affinity with</td>
<td>Not earlier than Jer. or Ezek.</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>nkr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>plylm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>mrrt</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>kmws</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>šlm</td>
<td>štyd (Aram.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>štyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>'nl (Aram.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'nl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>'gwā w'zwā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'gwā w'zwā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>nsyk (text ?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>strh (text ?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>pr'ʊt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of this analysis may be summarized under the following four groups:

1. 14 hapax terms, though 3 words present textual difficulties.
2. 19 uncommon terms, 5 of which "have an Aramaic tinge..."
3. 5 terms (plus 5 verses, 1, 2, 6, 28, 29) which present noticeable affinities with the wisdom literature.
4. 18 "words or expressions otherwise occurring chiefly, if not entirely, in writings not earlier than the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel."53

The linguistic features of the first three categories are of no significant aid to Driver in dating the Song. The fourth category however, does have a bearing on his conclusion. An investigation of these 18 terms, which Driver associates with a period no earlier than the age of Jeremiah, is a prerequisite to an understanding of the date he proposes.\textsuperscript{54}

Table 16

1. \textit{\textit{w}l (vs. 4)} - No evidence is cited by Driver to support his view that this term occurs mainly during or after the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

2. \textit{\textit{dwr w}hwr (vs. 7)} - Driver considers this phrase restricted exclusively to late usage but certainly not earlier than Isaiah's time (cf. Isa. 13:20, 34:17, etc.). As evidence he cites I Chr. 26:13; 28:14; Est. 1:8; 1:22, etc.\textsuperscript{55}

3. \textit{\textit{z}rvm (vs. 16)} - This term as applied to "strange or foreign gods" is considered by Driver to occur mainly in writings not earlier than the age of Jeremiah. As evidence he cites the five instances in which the term is used to denote strange god(s): Jerm. 2:25; 3:13 (note the figurative use); Isa. 43:12 (sing.); Ps. 44:21; 81:10 (sing.).

\textsuperscript{54}The explanation of these 18 terms are condensed from S.R. Driver, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 348-381.

\textsuperscript{55}See S.R. Driver, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 355. The evidences he cites are, however, incorrect because \textit{dwr w}hwr does not occur in I Chr. 26:13; 28:14; Est. 1:8, 22.
4. tw³but (pl.) (vs. 16) — Here Driver indicates that the term as applied to wicked or idolatrous practices is not used any earlier than the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. He cites several instances in evidence as follows: 39 times in Ezekiel (e.g. 5:9, 11; 8:6, 9, 13, 15, 17); Jerm. 7:10; 44:24; and in Deuteronomic writings (e.g. I Kgs. 14:24; II Kgs. 16:3; 21:2, 11; Deut. 18:19, 12; 20:18).

5. hh³ys (vs. 16) — Driver makes no comment on this term.

6. hvl (vs. 18) — Driver's evidence for considering this term as not earlier than the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are: Prov. 8:24, 32; Ps. 48:7; 51:17; 90:2; Isa. 51:2.

7. hh³ym (vs. 21) — Again, Driver cites several instances as evidence that the term does not occur earlier than the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel: Jerm. 8:19; 10:8, 15; 14:22; 16:19; I Kgs. 16:13, 26 (Deuteronomic); Ps. 31:7; Jonah 2:8.

8. qdh (vs. 22). — He cites evidence as follows: Jerm. 15:14; 17:4; Isa. 50:11; 64:1.

9. lhm (vs. 22) — No evidence is cited by Driver to support his view that this term is of late usage.

10. l³m (vs. 24) — This term, according to Driver, is a poetical synonym of 'kl found chiefly in Proverbs: Prov. 4:17; 9:5; 23:1, 6; Ps. 14:14.

56 Driver's opinion seems to be incorrect since the term occurs frequently in the Old Testament and its occurrence in Isa. 30:7 certainly indicates its usage prior to Jeremiah's age.
11. רֶפֶס (vs. 24) - Driver identifies this term as a poetical word of late date. He cites evidence as follows: Hab. 3:5; Cant. 8:6; Job 5:7; Ps. 76:4; 78:48.

12. קֶרֶק (vs. 27) - Driver regards this word as an uncommon term occurring not earlier than Jeremiah's time. He cites Jer. 19:4 and Job 21:29 in evidence.

13. קֶרֶס (vs. 33) - Driver cites no evidence for this term.

14. כָּט (vs. 35) - According to Driver, this is an uncommon term, probably of Aramaic origin, since the occurrence of the Hebrew root is rare and its application in the Old Testament is either late or "tinged dialectically with Aramaisms." He cites in evidence as follows: Prov. 24:27; Job 3:8; 15:24, 28; Ecol. 9:12; Est. 3:14; 8:13; Isa. 10:13.

15. כָּלָכ (vs. 36) - No evidence is cited by Driver for this term, though he considers it to be an uncommon Aramaic term occurring not earlier than Jeremiah's period.

16. כָּנָר וּכָנָר (vs. 36) - Both terms are considered to be uncommon and their etymology, according to Driver, cannot be determined with any certainty. They recur in Deuteronomic passages: I Kgs. 14:10; 21:21; II Kgs. 9:8; 14:26.

17. בּיַבָּה (vs. 42) - No evidence is cited for this term.

18. ברָמִין (vs. 43) - Driver associates this term with a late period and he cites the following instances: Job 29:13; Ps. 32:11; 65:9; 81:2.
Based on these linguistic features as well as on certain literary characteristics and theological viewpoints Driver concludes that the Song may be "properly assigned to the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, c. 630 B.C." 57

There are however, a number of problems associated with Driver's analysis. The following table illustrates some of these difficulties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence Cited</th>
<th>Evidence Lacking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. dwr wdhwr</td>
<td>1. 'wl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. zrym</td>
<td>5. 'hk'ys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ts'byh</td>
<td>9. 'lht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 'hul</td>
<td>13. 'kzr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. hblym</td>
<td>15. 'zlt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. qdh</td>
<td>17. 'byh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. 'hm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. ršp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. nkř</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. tšyd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. tswr w'zwb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. hrnyh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the first place, assuming that Driver's method of application is accurate, then 6 of the 18 terms which he claims do not occur prior to the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel lack supporting evidence. He cites no references to back his assertions about these 6 terms.

In the second place, there are some obvious errors in his tabulation of the remaining 12 terms. These errors are due partly to incorrect evidence and partly to the fact that Ugaritic studies were not available at his time. For instance, the evidence cited for the 2nd term dwr wdwr (vs. 7) is incorrect, while the 7th term hhlyn (vs. 21) which according to Driver does not occur earlier than Jeremiah's age happens to occur prior to Jeremiah's age (cf. Isa. 30:7). Moreover, we know that the 3rd term, zrym (vs. 16), occurs earlier in Phoenecian sources (KAI 26A III, 16; KAI 26 C IV, 18). Another example is the 11th term, rṣp (vs. 24), which occurs both in Phoenecian and Ugaritic sources (KAI 26A II, 10-11; Krt:1a). In view of these facts one cannot confidently depend on Driver's analysis and his proposed date remains open to question.

Boston's work is somewhat similar to Driver's though his linguistic analysis leads him to establish a relationship between the Song and the wisdom traditions. He lists the following 17 terms as evidence for linguistic parallels with wisdom literature:

58

Table 18

1. šmr (vs. 1) - occurs 52 times elsewhere, 21 instances of which occur in Proverbs (12 in chps. 1-9) and 11 of which occur in Job.

2. šmr py (vs. 1) - occurs 12 times, 5 instances of which are in Proverbs (all in chps. 1-9), 2 in Job, 1 in Ps. 19 and 1 in Ps. 78.

3. 1q (vs. 2) - occurs entirely in wisdom literature: 6 times in Proverbs (5 in chps. 1-9), 1 in Job 11:4, and 1 in Isa. 29:24.

4. 1y (vs. 2) - occurs 40 times, 15 instances of which are in Job and 3 in Proverbs.

5. Šmr (vs. 2) - occurs 36 times; more than half occur in Ps. 119.

6. 'q (vs. 5) - occurs 19 times (with its derivatives), 11 instances of which are in Proverbs (1 in chps. 1-9).

7. ymr and šmr (vs. 7) - the former occurs only once again in Ps.

90. Of the 9 instances of the latter, 4 occur in Proverbs (3 in chps. 1-9), and one in Job 6:22.

8. šmr meb (vs. 10) - occurs only once again in Prov. 21:19.

9. šmn Švn (vs. 10) - occurs only once again in Prov. 7:2, and in a different form in Prov. 7:9 and Ps. 17:8.

10. šmr (vs. 15) - as a name for God, the term is most characteristic of Job.

11. thpt (vs. 20) - occurs 10 times, all in Proverbs (4 in chps. 1-9).

12. šmr (vs. 20) - occurs 6 times, 3 instances of which are in Proverbs.
13. lhm (vs. 24) - occurs 5 other times, 4 instances of which are in Proverbs (2 in chps. 1-9) and one in Ps. 141:4.
14. byn 'pryt (vs. 29) - occurs only again in Ps. 73.
15. mrrh (vs. 32) - occurs only 3 other times in Job 13:26, 20:14, 25.
16. 'kfr (vs. 33) - occurs 12 times, 4 instances of which occur in Proverbs (1 in chps. 1-9) and 2 in Job.
17. 'al (vs. 35) - occurs 4 other times: 1 in Prov. 20:14, 1 in Job 14:11, 1 in Jer. 2:36, and 1 in 1 Sam. 9:7.

Noting the "great" number of linguistic parallels between the Song and Proverbs 1-9 and Job, Boston concludes that there is a definite relationship between the Song and "court" wisdom traditions: "The greatest number of linguistic parallels are to Proverbs, particularly the first nine chapters, and Job... The explanation of these affinities would be that the Song was written at royal behest within the circles of wise men associated with the palace and the temple." 59

Boston notes, however, that "there are a number of features in the poem which seem to suggest an early and/or non-Israelite influence on the poet." 60 He cites the following 9 elements in evidence:

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60 Ibid., p. 226.
61 Ibid., p. 226.
Table 19

1. qnh (vs. 6) - The use of this term meaning "create" or to "beget" is common in Ugaritic. The more usual Hebrew meaning is to "acquire".

2. ymwt and šmwt (vs. 7) - The plural forms are rare in Hebrew but common in Ugaritic and Akkadian.

3. The use of mun energicum in vv. 10 and 12 seems unusual. It is often found in Akkadian and Ugaritic.

4. rhp (vs. 11) - This verb is rare in Hebrew, but common in Ugaritic.

5. The possible personifications in vs. 24 are unusual in classical Hebrew but common in Ugaritic.

6. bmwy (vs. 13) - The possible genitive case ending in this term is rare in Hebrew but common in other Semitic languages.

7. p'g (vs. 26) - This verb is unique to Ugaritic. 62

8. rkb (vs. 13) - The use of this verb in the sense of mounting a place of sacrifice is found in Ugaritic, but nowhere else in Hebrew.

According to Boston, none of these terms taken alone is conclusive; nevertheless, all of them together indicate that the poet either incorporated portions of older poetry into his composition or

62 No reference is cited by Boston to support this statement.
that he was influenced by early and non-Israelite literature. His overall analysis of the Song, however, leads him to conclude that the 7th century B.C., Hezekiah's period, is the date of the Song. 63

Boston's observations with respect to the linguistic characteristics of the Song do not appear to be very significant since there are a number of weaknesses in his adopted procedure. In the first place, his argument, that there are 9 instances of "early and/or non-Israelite influence" in the Song is simply stated without any supporting evidence. He fails to indicate the references (if there are any) of either the "non-Israelite" or the "early" influences. In the second place, his examination of the linguistic features of the poem appear cursory rather than thorough. He fails to account fully for the linguistic features of the Song, and therefore, treats the whole linguistic question quite inadequately. In fact, he presents the linguistic data not to aid in solving the date of the Song, but to help in explaining its provenance.

Boston's so-called "great" clustering of wisdom words seems impressive at first glance; but close examination renders it less significant than Boston makes it appear. A simple calculation of the frequency of his 17 terms indicates that the total occurrence of these 17 terms adds up to 212, 103 of which occur in wisdom literature. To

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63 J.R. Boston, op. cit., p. 220.
develop an argument based on one half of the evidence is poor methodology. Boston, unfortunately, does not take into full account the remaining "great" number (over 50%) of linguistic affinities between the Song and other non-wisdom biblical material. Hence, the date he proposes is not based on linguistic characteristics of the poem but on his overall exegetical observations. Whether or not his conclusion is correct, his incomplete treatment of the linguistic features of the Song is enough to indicate the unreliability of his analysis.

Dahood's study deals with "parallel pairs", a term which he uses in preference to the more common term "fixed pair" to describe those vocabulary units (one or two words in each unit) which may be used either in one colon or in the respective clauses of a bicolon.

Dahood indicates that one of the frequent features of Ugaritic poetry is the repetition of the same word in parallel cola, always occurring together in the same sequence. In Hebrew poetry, however, the order of synonyms is often reversed. To be sure, there are instances of Hebrew poetry that resemble the pattern of Ugaritic parallel pairs but they are limited to a score of cases.64

64M. Dahood, op. cit., p. 77.
the following 25 parallel pairs for Deut. 32:65

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>Ref. in RSP I</th>
<th>Ugaritic</th>
<th>Deut. 32</th>
<th>Biblical Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>II 565</td>
<td>šm‘...udn</td>
<td>h'zyn//šm‘</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>II 205</td>
<td>̄t̄l//rbb</td>
<td>̄t̄l ... rbyb</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>II 350</td>
<td>mtr//tll</td>
<td>mtr//tll</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>II 519</td>
<td>rbb//šr‘</td>
<td>š'yr̄m//rbbym</td>
<td>Note metathesis in Dt. 32:65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,18</td>
<td>II 448</td>
<td>ĝr + il</td>
<td>swr ... 'l</td>
<td>II Sam. 22:32; Ps. 18:3; 89:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>II 3</td>
<td>ab//kn</td>
<td>'b//kwn</td>
<td>only in Dt. 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>II 161</td>
<td>hw//hw</td>
<td>hw'//hw'</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>II 423</td>
<td>qny//knn</td>
<td>qnh//kwnn</td>
<td>only in Dt. 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>II 241</td>
<td>ymt//šnt</td>
<td>ymt//šmbt</td>
<td>only in Ps. 90:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>II 425</td>
<td>'lm//dr dr</td>
<td>'lm//dr wr</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>II 63</td>
<td>arš + dbr</td>
<td>'rš + mdbr</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>II 69</td>
<td>arš//šrm</td>
<td>swr ... 'rš</td>
<td>Ps. 61:3; 114:7-8; Job 18:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>II 190</td>
<td>hlb//hmat</td>
<td>hm'h//hlt</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,33</td>
<td>III 29</td>
<td>btn</td>
<td>ptnym</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>III 70</td>
<td>kr(m)</td>
<td>krym</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65 The listing of these 25 parallel pairs has been collected by the present writer.

66 For an explanation of this term, see pp. 42f.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>Ref. in RSP I</th>
<th>Ugaritic</th>
<th>Deut. 32</th>
<th>Biblical Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>III 59</td>
<td>bmr</td>
<td>bmr</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>II 198</td>
<td>ḫl + ṣyd</td>
<td>yld//ḥyl</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>II 169</td>
<td>hr//arg</td>
<td>'ṛš//ḥr</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>II 5</td>
<td>ḫb//ḥrt</td>
<td>ṭwyb//ḥrt</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>II 44</td>
<td>ʾlph//rbt</td>
<td>ʾlp//rbhh</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-31</td>
<td>II 451</td>
<td>ʾṣr//ʾṣ</td>
<td>ʾṣwr//ʾṣwr</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>II 143</td>
<td>ġpn ... šdmt</td>
<td>ġpn//šdmtn</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>II 592</td>
<td>tnn//bṭn</td>
<td>tynn//ptn</td>
<td>only in Ps. 91:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>II 216</td>
<td>yd//ḥrb</td>
<td>ḫrb//yd</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>II 125</td>
<td>bšr + dm</td>
<td>dm//bšr</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No attempt is made by Dahood to interpret the significance of these parallel pairs except to stress the unlimited possibilities for assessing Hebrew poetry and prose by the application of this technique. In all fairness to Dahood, however, it must be stated that his purpose is different from both Boston's and Driver's. Unlike them, Dahood does not accumulate linguistic data in order to solve a problem in Deut. 32, nor is his data confined to the parallel pairs in the Song. The entries in his list however are not totally insignificant; they include 6 pairs that merit examination:

Table 21

1. II 448 ṭwr ... ṭ (vs. 4, 18) - occurs again 3 times in biblical literature: II Sam 22:32; Ps. 18:13; 89:27.
2. II 3 šb//kwn (vs. 6) - occurs only in Deut. 32.
3. II 493 qnh//kwn (vs. 6) - occurs only in Deut. 32.
4. II 241 ymwt//šnwt (vs. 7) - occurs only once more in Ps. 90:15.
5. II 69 šwr ... 'rṣ (vs. 13) - occurs again 3 times in biblical
   literature: Ps. 61:13; 114:7-8; Job 18:4.
6. II 592 twnn//ptn (vs. 33) - occurs only once more in Ps. 91:13.

These 6 parallel pairs are significant because they are not
commonly used in biblical literature and because they are related to
the Ugaritic, factors which are usually accepted as evidence for
early dating. This evidence is especially important to the assess-
ment of the overall linguistic characteristics of the Song at the end
of this section.

Dahood's classification of terms, though it has limited ap-
lication to the objective of this study, which is the dating of the
Song, does focus attention on a vehicle for reaching the objective:
the terms. There are 457 words in the Song. The majority of these
terms are commonly used throughout the biblical period and are of no
help in dating the Song; nor are the 14 terms which Driver notes
occur only in the Song, because they cannot be compared with any
datable material.

Eissfeldt 67 rightly points out the hazards of trying to date the
Song on the basis of uncommon terms which have linguistic affinities

67. Eissfeldt, Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32:1-43 und das
Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Hose-
Liedes, pp. 15-25.
with a certain period, such as the terms which Driver associates with Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the terms Boston associates with the wisdom literature. From such evidence it is just as logical to argue that the date of the Song is earlier or later than Jeremiah as it is to argue that it is contemporary with the prophet. It is equally valid to debate the possibility of other unknown source(s) that influenced both Jeremiah and the author of the Song and equally fruitless. There has to be a more productive alternative for identifying terms that bear directly on the date of the Song.

The method proposed for trial is to list all those terms in the Song that also occur in certain passages of biblical literature which by general consensus are identified with either an early or a late period. In other words, the criterion for this trial method is not the frequency with which a term appears in biblical literature but its location.

The reason is not hard to justify: in this sort of an analysis the frequency of a term is not as important as its location in biblical material. For instance, one term in the Song may occur 3 times in other parts of biblical literature, while another term may recur 30 times. In what way does the frequency of either one of these two terms help to determine the date of the Song? The answer is obvious. The critical factor is the location in which any one term recurs. If the term that recurs 3 times is located, for example, in Jgs. 5, Isa. 10
and Isa. 40 then one may conclude that, in spite of its infrequent occurrence in biblical material, it nevertheless indicates its association with the early period (Jgs. 5), during the 8th century B.C. (Isa. 10), and with post-exilic times (Isa. 40). Hence, while the frequency of this term is not high, location indicates that it was in use throughout the entire biblical period.

If, on the other hand, a term recurs 30 times, 20 instances of which are found in Isa. 44 and 10 in I Chr. then one may conclude that, despite its frequency the term is not common to the entire biblical period but restricted to post-exilic times. It requires no great leap of the imagination to deduce that the location of a term is more significant than its frequency for determining the date of the Song. In order to exploit this assumption, the following guidelines are proposed as a basis for analysis.

1. Early - Terms that are associated with an early period are restricted to terms that occur either in Ugaritic or only in the following biblical material: Gen. 49; Exod. 15; Num. 23-24; Deut. 33; Jgs. 5; II Sam. 22 = Ps. 18.68

2. Late - Terms that are associated with a late period are restricted to terms that occur only in the prophetic literature of the 8th cent. B.C. and thereafter.

68 These biblical passages are generally accepted as early; cf. F.M. Cross, Canaanite Myth & Hebrew Epic, pp. 115-116, pp. 121-123; D.N. Freedman, "Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry", ZAW 72 (1960), pp. 101ff.; D.A. Robertson, op. cit., p. 4.
2. Terms that occur in both early and late biblical material are irrelevant to this study and are not listed.

4. Terms that recur in Psalms and/or wisdom literature are excluded since the dating of many of them is questionable.

5. No prose material is considered; only poetry.

These then are the guidelines which, when they are applied to the 457 words of the Song, classify the words as follows:

428 words occur in both early and late biblical material.
13 words do not recur in any other biblical material.
8 words occur only in Ps./Wsd. material.
3 words occur in early biblical material.
5 words occur in late biblical material.

The last four categories are tabulated as follows:

Table 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>Hapax</th>
<th>Ps./Wsd.</th>
<th>Early</th>
<th>Late</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y'rp</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dt. 33:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ks'yrm</td>
<td></td>
<td>I Aqt 44:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>wp'tltl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ymt</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ps. 90:15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

69 Emending the term to read from 5' is; see discussion on pp. 42f.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>Hapax</th>
<th>Ps./Wad.</th>
<th>Early</th>
<th>Late</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<td>yll</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>ybwmmhw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>k'fyšwn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ps. 17:8; Pr. 7:2,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>bbrtw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ps. 68:14; 91:4; Jb. 39:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>k'fytk</td>
<td></td>
<td>brym</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jerm. 2:25; 3:13; Isa. 43:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>l̄dyym</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ps. 106:37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>s'rwn</td>
<td></td>
<td>hdyym</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jgs. 5:18</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>thpt</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>s'mn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>qdhh</td>
<td></td>
<td>Isa. 50:11; 64:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>wtlht</td>
<td></td>
<td>Isa. 42:25; Joel 1:19; 2:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>mzy</td>
<td></td>
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<td>24</td>
<td></td>
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<td>wlympy</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>mryry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ps. 141:4; Pr. 4:17; 9:5</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>ūḥt</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>ṣ'pyhm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hos. 13:14; Isa. 28:2</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>ṣ'hly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ps. 58:5; 140:14; Jb. 6:14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mic. 7:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>Hapax</td>
<td>Ps./Wsd.</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Late</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>'kbr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jb. 30:21; 41:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>kms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>'tdt</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>nsykm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>strh</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Since the guidelines for this study exclude terms that occur in both early and late biblical material as well as terms that occur only in Ps./Wsd. the 428 terms that are current throughout biblical material and the 8 terms that appear only in Ps./Wsd. are no help in dating the Song. The 13 hapax terms are also excluded. The remaining evidence for dating the Song consists of 3 early and 5 late terms, and it is interesting to note where these terms occur again in biblical material:

**Early Terms (3)**

- ytrp (vs. 2) - occurs once more only in Deut. 33:28.
- kṣ'yrn (vs. 2) - occurs in Ugaritic material, I Aqt 44:46. 70
- ḫdšym (vs. 17) - occurs once more in Jgs. 5:8.

**Late Terms (5)**

- bzyrn (vs. 16) - with reference to gods, the term occurs in: Jerm. 2:25; 3:13; Isa. 43:12. 71

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70 Assuming that the emendation of štr to str is correct.
71 Also in Ps. 44:21; 81:10.
qdḥh (vs. 22) — occurs in: Isa. 50:11; 64:1. 72
wlḥt (vs. 22) — occurs in: Isa. 42:25; Joel 1:19; 2:3. 73
qḥ (vs. 24) — occurs in: Isa. 28:2; Hos. 13:14. 74
zhl (vs. 24) — occurs once more in Mic. 7:17.

In addition to these terms there are a number of phrases that also fall within the categories defined by the guidelines. These phrases occur in late biblical material:
‘l bmr t̲r̲ (vs. 13) — occurs in: Amos 4:13; Isa. 58:14.
ḥwr bwtwlh (vs. 25) — occurs in: Jerm. 51:22. 75
’sy hw’ (vs. 39) — occurs only in Deutero-Isaiah: Isa. 41:4; 43:10, 13; 46:4; 48:12.

The relevant data represent 3 early terms, 5 late terms, and 3 late phrases. How is this evidence to be interpreted? The preponderance of terms and phrases associated with a late period challenges the credibility of an early date for the Song. On the other hand, 3 instances of early terms are difficult to explain conclusively. One explanation may be to consider the author's conscious awareness

72 Also in prose: Jerm. 15:14; 17:4.
73 Also in Ps./Wisd., and in prose: Mal. 3:19.
74 Also in Ps. 91:6.
75 Also in prose: Ezek. 9:6; II Chr. 36:17.
of 3 terms that were in early use, but such speculation cannot establish whether the author influenced later writers or was influenced by them, or even whether he was contemporary with later authors. There is one more recourse - namely the parallel pairs which are part of the overall linguistic pattern discussed in this section.

This method under trial for dating the Song, though it excludes both Driver's and Boston's methods, is based on Dahood's analysis of parallel pairs and the examination, Table 21, of the terms in the Song. A summary of these conclusions follows.

There are a total of 9 instances of early features (6 parallel pairs and 3 terms) and 8 instances of late features (5 terms and 3 phrases). On the one hand, the evidence of late characteristics rules out the possibility of an early date for the Song. On the other hand, the evidence of early features are not so few that they may be considered simply as vestigial instances. These mixtures of both early and late patterns seem to confirm once again the period of transition from early to standard poetic Hebrew - the period between the 10th-8th century B.C.

Evaluation of the Results

The preceding pages analyse the linguistic characteristics of the Song. Four different principles were applied in order to determine
if any of the linguistic data provide a clue for dating it and the result of each method was recorded separately at the end of each section. Table 23 summarizes these results to reveal the over-all linguistic pattern of the Song.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Feature</th>
<th>Early</th>
<th>Late</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syntax and Morphology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal conjugations</td>
<td>17 pref. conj.</td>
<td>9 w-pref. conj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position of w. pref.</td>
<td>5 medial</td>
<td>4 initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y/w root</td>
<td>1 preserved</td>
<td>3 lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the element d (z)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 'šr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3ms pronom. suff.</td>
<td>3 -anhu</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3mpl pronom. suff.</td>
<td>4 -mw</td>
<td>26 -hm/-m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-v morpheme</td>
<td>1 -v</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the nominal -w (-ö)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the enclitic -m</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Parallelism and Assonance   | 5 parallelism | 6 assonance |
| Metrical Structure          | not early    | possibly transitional |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Feature</th>
<th>Early</th>
<th>Late</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terminology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel pairs</td>
<td>6 pairs</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>3 terms</td>
<td>5 terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrases</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 phrases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The linguistic characteristics of the Song are sufficiently explicit to indicate a mixture of both early and late features. This indication provides a relatively easy solution for dating Deut. 32.

The numerous instances of late features exclude the possibility of an early dating of the Song. Similarly, the number of early features compromises speculation about the archaizing of the Song. The only period that explains the significant presence of both early and late forms is the period of transition, the period between the 10th century B.C. and the 8th century B.C. Only such a period could account for the frequent occurrence of older forms characteristic of younger forms which eventually become characteristic of late or standard poetic Hebrew.
CHAPTER IV

THE SONG OF MOSES: STRUCTURE, SENSE AND DATING

The purpose of the present chapter is to offer an interpretation of the Song as a whole and, in so doing, to discover (a) whether our conclusion on dating throws any light on the interpretation of the Song and (b) whether our interpretation of the Song throws any confirmatory light on its dating.

The first step, therefore, toward grasping the Song in its original meaning must be to discover how its constituent parts are functionally ordered to constitute the whole. We are looking, in a word, for structure as the guide to sense.

Once again, past scholarship offers a rich variety of clues and cues. We might distinguish, first of all, two lines of analysis: the search for strophic structure and the search for rhetorical structure.
Scholarship on Strophic Structure

A.J. Levy, writing in 1931, maintained that the Song of Moses was composed in pentastichs, for he had observed that each sequence of five lines contained one complete thought. He accordingly divided the text into twelve five-line strophes and discerned an arrangement of strophes in four sections: introduction, Section A, Section B, and conclusion. This, concretely, is the pattern Levy proposed:

Table 24

Introduction

Pentastich I (vv. 1-4) – The poet emphasizes YHWH’s righteousness.

Section A

Pentastich II & III (vv. 7-12) – The poet reviews the early history of the Hebrews.

Pentastich IV & V (vv. 12a-18) – He contrasts the kindness of YHWH with the apostasy of Israel.

Section B

Pentastich VI & VII (vv. 19-26) – YHWH is vexed and requites His people with treatment to match their deeds.

Pentastich VIII & IX (vv. 27-35) – YHWH repents on account of the enemies’ pride; their punishment is stored with Him.

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1 A.J. Levy, The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32), 1931.

2 Ibid., p. 43. Levy, however, rearranges the sequence of the MT verses (such as vs. 3 is placed as the opening verse of the poem) and deletes a number of lines (such as vv. 15b, 16) in order to arrive to his desired pentastichs (see especially pp. 44-47).
Pentastich X & XI (vv. 37-42) - YHWH answers the derision of the enemy and takes His revenge on them.

Conclusion

Pentastich XII (vv. 36 & 43) - The poet comforts his co-religionists and assures them of YHWH's redemption.

Levy's identification of the pentastich as the basic strophic unit had been earlier suggested both by A. Klostermann (1893) and N. Schloegl (1904). Unlike Levy, however, Schloegl had not proposed significant textual rearrangement. Klostermann had spoken of a tetrastich (two pentastichs) strophe as the basic construction of the poem.

In 1966 J.R. Boston proposed a comparable arrangement, though his textual emendations were less drastic than Levy's. Boston's contention was that the entire poem consisted of twelve strophes (two equal units of six strophes). The predominant length of each strophe was five lines. The whole was framed by introductory and concluding four-line units. There were three exceptions to the five-line strophe (vv. 13-15, 19-22, 23-26) but, according to Boston, at

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3 A. Klostermann, Der Pentateuch, pp. 296, 315, 348f.
least one of these (vv. 13-15) was likely to have contained a five-line strophe in the original. His arrangement may be tabulated as follows:

Table 25

Unit I

The Proem (vv. 1-3)
Strophe 1 (vv. 4-6) – Preliminary statement and interrogation.
Strophe 2 (vv. 7-9) – Assignment of Israel as YHWH's portion.
Strophe 3 (vv. 10-12) – YHWH's care of Israel in the wilderness.
Strophe 5 (vv. 15c-18) – The rebellion of Israel.
Strophe 6 (vv. 19-22) – The sentence of Israel by YHWH.

Unit II

Strophe 7 (vv. 23-26) – Proclamation of the Covenant Curses.
Strophe 8 (vv. 27-29) – The offense of the enemy.
Strophe 9 (vv. 30-33) – A lament or dirge over Israel.
Strophe 10 (vv. 34-36) – Assurance of vindication.
Strophe 12 (vv. 40-42) – Oracle of YHWH: Vengeance against the enemy.
Coda (vs. 43)

6 Ibid., pp. 12, 145-146. He deletes the last colon of vs. 14 and the second colon of vs. 15.
7 Ibid., pp. 12-148.
Thus, the Proem and Coda, according to Boston, consisted of four lines, while strophes 1–12, with the exception of strophes 4, 6, and 7, consisted of five lines. Strophes 6 and 7 consisted of six lines, a phenomenon he did not try to explain. Strophe 4, which consisted of six lines in the MT, had originally had five lines. He performed what he himself called a "drastic operation" by deleting the last colon (half-line) of vs. 14 and the second colon (2nd half-line) of vs. 15:

vs. 14  
亞מה עבצ ופלש צור

vs. 15  
שלום עליך ושאטר

Boston offered four reasons for omitting these two colons: "the verb in the second person, the metrical problem, the missing parallel colon, and the fact that it lengthens the strophe to six lines." Whether or not this reconstruction eliminates the problem raised by the length of the strophe is disputable, since there are two other exceptions (strophes 6 and 7) to the general pattern of the five-line strophe.

Perhaps the most intriguing analysis of the strophic structure of the Song in the post-World War II period has been the study of P.W. Skehan.¹⁰

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⁸Ibid., p. 66. For his arguments see pp. 62–69.

⁹Ibid., p. 66.

According to Skehan the Song consists of 69 lines that may be divided into three equal units (3 x 23 lines) which represent the Hebrew alphabet. Here is his statement:

...the whole poem splits rather readily into three parts, each of which divides on an identical pattern into adequate logical units; which can hardly be an accident. When one inquires what it is that has prompted the poet to adopt as a unity, for threefold repetition, the particular number of lines he offers us, the answer is based on alphabetic considerations. The poem consists of 69 verses, or 3 x 23; that is, three times the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet from Aleph to Taw, with the letter Pe added again at the end to close the cycle.\(^\text{11}\)

Skehan sought to show that these three units, which consist of vv. 1-14, vv. 15-29 and vv. 30-43, contain a combination of couplets or triplets.\(^\text{12}\)

**Table 26**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit I (vv. 1-14)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vv. 1-2</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 3-4</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 5-6</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 7</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 8-9</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 10</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 11</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
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\(^{11}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 160.}\)

\(^{12}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 157-160.}\)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unit II (vv. 15-29)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vv. 15-16</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 17-18</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vv. 19-20</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vs. 21</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 22-23</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vs. 24</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vs. 25</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 26-27</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 28-29</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit III (vv. 30-43)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vv. 30-31</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vv. 32-33</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vv. 34-35</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vs. 36</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vv. 37-38</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 39</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 40-41a</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vv. 41b-42</td>
<td>triplet</td>
<td>3 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 43</td>
<td>couplet</td>
<td>2 lines</td>
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23 lines
The likelihood that the alphabet had had an influence on the structure of the poem implied, for Skehan, "a well-established literary tradition; and that the composition is quite systematic, and not a lyric effusion whose length would be subject to no fixed law."\(^{13}\) Skehan suggested, moreover, that this structure was simply the poet's characteristic way of writing a 70-line poem. According to a chain of tradition which runs through Rashi, the Targum Yerushalmi, and Sifré, the "sons of Israel" who went into Egypt were seventy in number (referring to Gen. 46:27); the interpretation of לֵּבָנָה in the MT text may be a reference to the same number in the veiled allusion of vs. 8.\(^{14}\) If, however, the original text read לֵבָנָה, as is probable,\(^ {15}\) the text would then match the table of nations in Gen. 10 which originally listed seventy names. Later tradition supported the notion of seventy nations with seventy angels over them. Skehan cited as supporting evidence the analogies of the seventy sons of the goddess Asherah at Ugarit, Moses and the seventy elders, and the Jewish Sanhedrin composed of three sections with twenty-three members in each section.\(^ {16}\) On this evidence he attributed a

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 160.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., pp. 162-163.

\(^{15}\) At the time of Skehan's writing this article (1951) the Qumran fragment, which is now considered to be the ending of vs. 8, was as yet undiscovered.

\(^{16}\) P.W. Skehan, op. cit., pp. 162-163.
tripartite form to the poem and divided the strophes of the poem into a combination of couplets and triplets in order to obtain the required twenty-three lines in each unit.

Critique

Most of the textual rearrangements proposed by Levy seem arbitrary. His strophic analysis, moreover, is compromised from the start by these textual rearrangements. If, to establish a strophic order, it is necessary to delete some lines (e.g. vv. 15b, 16) and transpose others (e.g. the poem made to open with a line transposed from vs. 31), the result can only deepen the sober critic's skepticism.

Boston has similar problems. His strophes do not consistently work out at pentastichs (e.g. vv. 19-22, 23-26). But the really acid test of his theory is the division at vs. 23. Here Boston has done what the poet did not do: sacrifice theme to strophe. In fact, vs. 23 does not open a new thematic sequence. It is part and parcel of the punishment theme opened in vs. 19.

Skehan's effort to establish three parts (vv. 1-14, 15-29, 30-43) on purely formal grounds would have had to be acknowledged as a definitive insight if only the formal divisions were then verified by correlative thematic divisions. Unhappily, this is not the case. A stronger argument might be made for the opening of a new "adequate logical unit" at vs. 15 than could be offered for the opening of his final part at vs. 30; but in neither case is the point of division
"inevitable"; indeed, it is not even clear-cut. The division at vs. 30 seems positively implausible. Skehan's references to confirmatory parallels in Judaic tradition justifiably drew from C.E. Wright the comment that the sources in question were late "and a real problem arises as to how much of such formal numerical structuring can be read back into classical Hebrew material". 17

Scholarship on Rhetorical Structure

Strophic structure is mainly a matter of rhythmical form, as such. Rhetorical structure, on the other hand, is mainly a matter of thematic sequence and function. Hence, the question of rhetorical structure (like the question of genre, with which it tends to merge) is by and large more immediately relevant than strophic structure to the grasp of particular verbal meaning. There would be little point, to be sure, in making an exhaustive survey of all the suggestions relating to the rhetorical structure of the Song. But a number of critical studies have effectively illuminated the structure and hence the semantic thrust of the Song. 18

S.R. Driver in his study of the entire book of Deuteronomy,

17 C.E. Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32", in B.W. Anderson & W. Harrelson (eds.), Israel's Prophetic Heritage, p. 34.

18 The unanimous opinion of biblical critics is that the poem is not composite but one single unit.
devoted considerable effort to analysis of the structure and contents of the Song. He divided the poem into 13 sections:

vv. 1-3 Exordium. Heaven and earth are invoked as audience of the poet's lofty theme.

vv. 4-6 The poet's theme is defined more closely: viz., to contrast the unchangeable rectitude and faithfulness of YHWH with the corrupt and faithless behaviour of His people.

vv. 7-14 Israel's past demonstrates the providential care which YHWH has lavished upon His people.

vv. 15-18 Israel's ingratitude and defection from YHWH is contrasted with the abundance of good things which it enjoyed.

vv. 19-22 The poet anticipates the punishment incurred by Israel's defection.

vv. 23-25 He specifies the manifold forms of calamity which YHWH threatens will follow the judgement imposed upon Israel.

vv. 26-27. Only dread of the adversaries' taunts restrains YHWH from executing Israel's annihilation.

vv. 28-29 The poet explains why YHWH has been forced to threaten His people thus severely: Israel's inveterate inability to discern its true welfare.

vv. 30-33 Israel's disasters are due only to YHWH's alienation, occasioned by Israel's sin: the heathen gods have not the power to

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inflict them (vs. 31): the heathen nations are too corrupt to do so (vv. 32f.).

vv. 34-36 Such corruption cannot remain for ever unnoticed by YHWH: it calls for vengeance; and in the end He will interpose on His people's behalf, and abandon their enemies to destruction.

vv. 37-39 God will speak to them through the extremity of their need, bringing them to own, by the logic of facts, that the gods in whom they trusted are unworthy of their regard, and so making it possible for God to interpose on their behalf.

vv. 40-42 In conclusion, YHWH solemnly promises that He will whet His sword, and grant His people vengeance on their foes.

vs. 43 The last section marks the conclusion of the Song, corresponding to the exordium (vv. 1-3).

Based on "more or less coherent units of thought," G.E. Wright divided the poem into 7 sections: 20

vv. 1-6 Introduction. The poet begins by calling on all elements in heaven and earth to hear his words and concludes with a summons to praise YHWH (vv. 1-3). He continues with a brief introductory statement of his theme: the goodness and stability of God, and by contrast the faithlessness of Israel to the God who made them a people (vv. 4-6).

20 G.E. Wright, op. cit., pp. 34-36.
vv. 7-14 Kerygma: Appeal to the mighty acts of God. This is the first main section of the poem, and it consists of a call to remember what God has done for Israel. First comes His election or choice of Israel to be his people. Next is a poetic statement of the wilderness and conquest themes.

vv. 15-18 Indictment. This is the poet's formal statement of the second part of the theme (vv. 5-6): in their satisfied condition, Israel abandoned their true Rock and turned to idolatry.

vv. 19-29 The sentence or penalty. In response to the indictment, YHWH himself is now heard to deliver the sentence: Because of Israel's idolatry He will trouble them with a "no-people" a "foolish nation;" fire, warfare, pestilence and beasts will bring terror and destruction. The reason God did not decree complete destruction on Israel was not that they were undeserving of it; the only reason was that the enemy people whom he expected to use as his agent were so lacking in sense that they would think they had wrought the destruction by their own power.

vv. 30-38 The poet's assurance of salvation. It is quite obvious to the poet that Israel's trouble at the enemy's hand can only be a result of YHWH's withdrawal of His support and not the power of the gods of the enemies; for everything belonging to the enemies is vile and poisonous, and the time is near when God will implement His just and punishing action against Israel. Indeed, God will have pity on Israel and save them as soon as he sees: (1) that their power is gone,
(2) that they publicly acknowledge that the false gods to which they have turned are powerless to help them.

v. 39-42 The word of YHWH confirms the poet's words of hope. This second speech of God is a parallel to and a confirmation of, the poet's statement to Israel of the grounds for hope in the present situation. As surely as though God had sworn a mighty oath, the poet expresses his full confidence in God's determination to punish all His enemies.

v. 43 The poet's final exhortation of praise. In this confidence the poet now turns back to those addressed at the beginning (v. 1) and calls on the whole of God's heavenly assembly to shout for joy and to worship or praise him, for He will surely save His people and cleanse their land.

Considering the structure of the Song by its "internal evidence," G. von Rad, likewise divided the poem into 7 sections: 21

v. 1-7 The didactic opening summons (vv. 1-3) is followed by the poet's announcement of his theme: YHWH's Name, that is, YHWH as he has become manifest to Israel; the Rock; the faithful God against whom Israel has sinned. Here the poem introduces one of its great themes, Israel's denial of God. Next, it reminds us that YHWH is known from history (v. 7). We need only ask our elders. In this

way the poet skilfully prepares for the transition to a review of the
history of God and his people which represent the first main part of
the poem.

vv. 8-14 The beginning of this history, which elsewhere in Israel
is paraphrased in terms such as "election," is here presented in a
way unique in the Old Testament. At the beginning of all history,
when YHWH was establishing the boundaries of all peoples, he divided
up the nations according to the number of the sons of God; i.e., he
subordinated one nation to each of the heavenly beings who had to
take care of it, like a guardian angel. He departed from this gen-
eral plan in one respect only: Israel was chosen by YHWH for himself
and subordinated directly to himself. Then, the story passes from
this event, which took place in the divine council before all history,
to the first encounter between YHWH and Israel: YHWH "found" Israel
in the wilderness. The poem then goes on to dwell with descriptive
comparisons upon the protection and sheltering control which followed,
yet without referring to any precise historical situation.

vv. 15-18 This section, with its occasional change in person, makes
the whole appear as a prophetic indictment. It deals with YHWH's
partner, who has been so much sheltered and pampered. The outcome
of these special favours is unexpected. Israel becomes weary of
YHWH and turns aside to other gods. The significant feature is the
historical awareness of the religion of YHWH—these gods are called
"new gods that have come in of late," who can therefore not boast of
a relationship to Israel determined by a long history. In this account of history disloyalty to YHWH is stated in a striking manner: as a sin against the first commandment, thus revealing a dependence on a view of history already subordinated to theology. This view is none other than the Deuteronomistic view of history.

vv. 19-25 These verses describe the outburst of divine wrath. God summons against Israel "those who are no-people," as well as famine, pestilence and beasts of prey.

vv. 26-35 This section is particularly important to an understanding of the whole poem, since it is an interlude which takes us out of the turmoil of historical processes and allows us to overhear a soliloquy or a detailed deliberation in the heart of God. YHWH is firmly resolved to annihilate Israel completely and to blot out its memory from amongst mankind, but he fears he will be humiliated by his enemies, who would certainly attribute the annihilation of Israel to their own strength and fail to recognize the hand of YHWH. After YHWH has pictured to himself the complete wickedness in which these people live he announces solemnly and formally the result of his deliberation. He recalls his role as judge and avenger which pertains to him alone, and by virtue of which he will shortly advance against the nations.

vv. 36-38 Here, we seem to hear a prophetic message of salvation. The synonymous parallelism of "vindicate" and "have compassion" (vs. 36) demonstrates a legal act of deliverance. In restoring his people to his favour, YHWH humbles them by reproaching them about their idols,
to whom they have offered their trust and their sacrifices. The failure of their idols, which in the opinion of the Song can already be perceived within history, sweeps the poem on to its real culmination in a splendid testimony by YHWH to his own all-sufficient being as God.

vv. 39-43 YHWH announces with great solemnity, swearing by his everlasting life that he will destroy these nations. The Song then closes with a hymn which is a reply to this divine resolve. The reference to an imminent expiation for the land is remarkable. Was such expiation a necessary corollary to a hostile invasion? It is more likely that it represented an expiation for Israel’s cultic aberrations.

In his short, 1969 commentary on Deuteronomy, W.L. Moran treated the Song briefly but incisively. He took the literary form of a covenant lawsuit to be the basic structure presupposed but brilliantly transformed by "this baroque poem." He first listed a point-by-point correlation between the text of the Song and the elements of the literary form "covenant lawsuit":

1. Summons to witness (vs. 1)
2. Accusation in form of a question (vs. 6)
3. Recounting of plaintiff's benefits to the accused (vv. 7-14)
4. Affirmative statement of breach of covenant (vv. 15-18)

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5. Judgement (vv. 19ff.)

He accordingly divided the Song into six parts:

**vv. 1-5** Introduction. "Give ear - hear" (vs. 1) inverts the order of a traditional parallelism and is perhaps intended as an indication of the inversion of form in the entire poem.

**vs. 6** Accusation. "Creation" refers to the bringing of Israel into existence as a people.

**vv. 7-14** History. As the universal God who separates the nations, he is 'Elyon = the Most High, but as the one who keeps Israel for himself, he is YHWH (vs. 8). Moreover, "the sons of God" are the angelic host, a demythologized form of the sons of 'El in the Canaanite pantheon, who numbered 70 (cf. the 70 peoples in Gen. 10, the 70 sons of Jacob in Deut. 10:22). Striking by its absence is any reference to the exodus; Israel is found in the desert, which is hardly Egypt, led to, and finally established in, the Promised Land. This scheme of salvation-history, which is paralleled in Hos. 9:10 and Ezek. 16:3ff., probably goes back to a group which joined Israel only after the exodus.

**vv. 15-18** Sin. Despite God's having brought them from a terrible desert to a virtual paradise, Israel, fat with his gifts, rejects him for other gods.

**vv. 19-42** Judgement. This long section is articulated by the catchword "say" (vv. 20, 26, 37, 40). Up to this point the poet is the speaker; in this section, YHWH speaks. This is explained in terms of
the influence of the early prophetic form in which the prophet himself makes the accusation, quoting YHWH only when the punishment is to be declared or threatened. Lex talionis determines the punishment (vv. 20-25). Note how the poem moves back almost step by step to indicate how sin undoes divine grace or election. These steps follow each other in stages: jealousy and anger (vv. 21/16), foolishness and scoffing (vv. 21/15), the devastation of mountains and earth, famine and pestilence instead of plenty (vv. 22-24/13f.), the sword and terror instead of divine protection and gentle affection (vv. 25/10-12).

Only one step remains for sin to undo divine election: utter annihilation. With masterful suspense this step seems to reach a climax (vs. 26). But no! The same accusation is levelled against Israel's enemies as against Israel itself (vv. 28-30). In its utter helplessness Israel will realize that the other gods are no gods at all, and that YHWH, he alone, is God (vv. 37-39). Then the oath (vv. 40-42) pledges Israel's freedom from its oppressors.

**Conclusion.** As the LXX and the Qumran fragment indicate, this short concluding hymn-like section has been subject to editorial modification. Although the original form is difficult to reconstruct, it is almost certainly the "sons of God" who are addressed and not the nations.

**Critique**

It should be observed that prior to the identification of the relevance to the Song of the "Covenant Lawsuit", Driver had divided the text into parts and characterized the content of each part in a
way which strikingly corresponds to analyses exploiting the work of numerous critics on "the Rib pattern". Though sometimes mistaken in detail (e.g. he did not understand the opening lines of the Song as an invocation of witnesses), he deftly focused on the central themes throughout, beginning with the basic contrast of the faithfulness of YHWH with the faithlessness of his people. His division of vv. 7-18 into two clearly differentiated parts is certainly right (a new motif is introduced in vs. 15) and his characterization of the content of the parts is solidly based (vv. 7-14 recount a history of YHWH's benefits, whereas vv. 15-18 center on Israel's sin). In vv. 19-42 he is doubtless correct in specifying such sub-sections as vv. 26-27, 37-39, 40-42 (contrast von Rad and Wright).

The key that Driver lacked is the generic pattern "covenant lawsuit"; for, as Moran has shown, the Song is a creative variation on this pattern, simultaneously exploiting it in a positive and in an antithetical way. The result is that the Song of Moses effectively exhibits an original generic principle. Indeed, it appears to be unique in genre: a covenant lawsuit inverted to forge a salvation oracle and the whole presented in the didactic mode. It is a Mischgedicht.

Von Rad's treatment of the Song is characteristically full of insightful comments. But, unaware (like Driver) of the relevance of the Rib-pattern, he did not compensate as adroitly as Driver had by
a grasp of thematic detail which would willy-nilly correlate with
the pattern. Wright, as we have remarked, recognized that the Rib-
pattern was centrally significant to the sense and movement of the
Song; but his characterization of the content of the rhetorical
parts is sometimes misleading (e.g., vv. 7-14 is hardly a "kerygma")
and his description of the second half of the text as an "expanded"
form of the Rib is vague and a little confusing. These defects are
largely remedied by Moran's short analysis, which will serve here as
our point of departure for analysis both of the Song's structure and
of its sense.

Rhetorical and Strophic Structure

It does not seem possible to establish an order of strophes on
a purely formal basis. Of the purely formal aspects of the text the
most we can say, it would seem, is that (a) parallelism is basic and
recurrent, and (b) the qina meter is frequent. By combining formal
and thematic considerations we may, perhaps, discover a strophic ar-
rangeement which is plausible. But first we should take account of the
rhetorical factors, particularly the poem's thematic progression.

The pattern of the Rib or covenant lawsuit is clearly enough

23 The term qina was first coined by D.K. Badde who noticed that
the meter of the book of Lamentations consisted of 3 + 2 accented
syllables (i.e. 3 syllables in the first hemistich and 2 syllables in
the second hemistich). Cf. also G.A. Smith, The Early Poetry of Israel,
pp. 12, 22f., 76.
present in the Song. To recapitulate Moran's list, the elements are:

1. Summons to witnessess (vs. 1)
2. Accusation in form of a question (vs. 6)
3. Recounting of plaintiff's benefits to the accused (vv. 7-14)
4. Affirmative statement of breach of covenant (vv. 15-18)
5. Judgment (vv. 19 ff.).

This reveals the skeletal sequence of motifs in the text. It does not, however, immediately establish a differentiation of parts within the poem. If the error of Skehan's study was to abstract from content in favor of strophic form, the shortcoming of Moran's was to move without further ado from the RB-pattern to an implicit determination of parts.

Let us consider the opening of the Song. It moves from Moses' invocation of witnessess (vs. 1) through an expression of hope that his teaching will be effective (vs. 2) to the announcement of his intention to treat the theme of God's greatness (vs. 3). The next verse, insofar as it has the effect of carrying out the intention announced in vs. 3, signifies the completeness of the poem's first unit of meaning and opens a new, if closely related, unit. The internal cohesion of vv. 1-3 (conceived not thematically but functionally) as well as the slight caesura between vv. 3 and 4 justifies characterizing the first
three verses as an exordium (Driver),\textsuperscript{24} proem (Boston),\textsuperscript{25} or prologue (Alday).\textsuperscript{26} If vs. 4, addressed to Israel, begins to execute the intention announced in vs. 3, vs. 5 (however one might reconstruct it) evokes Israel's guilt—the second element of the Song's bipolar base: the fidelity of YHWH, the infidelity of his people. The epiplexis of vs. 6 effectively closes the rhetorical unit opened in vs. 4.

These observations lead us to posit for the opening verses of the Song (and to expect through the remainder of it) a rhetorical structure which has exploited, without being reducible to, the Rib-pattern. Vv. 1-6 constitute two related but distinct parts, of which the first (vv. 1-3) is a prologue to the whole poem. The Rib or covenant lawsuit is undoubtedly relevant to analysis of the Song. The structure of the Song cannot for all that be inferred simply and solely from the Rib-pattern. Thus, the motif "invocation of witnesses" has been transformed, i.e., pressed into a new form. It is now the opening element of a prologue to a didactic poem which will unfold in accord with its own logic.

The main body of the Song opens, as we have noted, by setting up the groundwork (fidelity/infidelity) of the Song's theme. Rhetorically,

\textsuperscript{24}S.R. Driver, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 348.

\textsuperscript{25}J.R. Boston, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{26}S.C. Alday, "El Cántico de Moisés (Dt. 32)", \textit{Estudios Biblios}, 26(1967), p. 143.
vv. 7-14 constitute the next thematic movement (Driver,27 Wright,28 Alday,29 Moran30), which corresponds to and reflects an element of the covenant lawsuit: the plaintiff's benefits to the accused. Just as in the lawsuit we have here an adaption of the "antecedent history" (Baltzer31) or "historical prologue" (Mendenhall32) of the covenant formulary; a recapitulation of YHWH's redemptive acts. Vv. 15-18 state the charge against Israel (breach of covenant) and vs. 19 opens the theme of the punishment to come.

It is immediately evident that the passage beginning in vs. 19 consciously recapitulates motifs that have appeared in the preceding verses. Is there any patterns to be grasped here?

Vv. 15-18 feature the motifs of forsaking (vs. 15), of jealousy and provoking (vs. 16), of sacrificing to demons (vs. 17), and of for-

28 G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 35.
30 W.L. Moran, op. cit., p. 275.
getting (vs. 18). These aspects of the charge against Israel now seem
to reappear in the judgment to come: forsaking (vs. 20), jealousy and
provoking (vs. 21), the ravaging of Israel by the demons (vs. 24),
and the blotting out of the memory of the nation (vs. 26). Crime
(vv. 15-18) and punishment (vv. 19-26) correlate in accord with the
lex talionis.

Or is this the pattern which actually organizes the text? Moran
offers an interesting alternative proposal. The judgment passage opening
in vs. 19 is made to undo, in reverse order, "the work of grace":

jealousy and anger (21/16), foolish and
 scoffing (21/15), (same stem nbl),
mountains and earth devastated, famine,
etc. instead of plenty (22-24/13f),
sword and terror instead of the divine
protection and gentle affection (25/10-12).
Only one step remains, utter annihilation,
for sin to undo the divine election itself
(8f), and in a masterpiece of response,
which can only be brought out in English
by a free translation, in 26 this step
seems to be reached: 'I said, "I will
scatter... from among men. But no! I
fear provocation..."

To represent this analysis schematically:

33 W.L. Moran, op. cit., p. 275.
Let us consider both proposals. With respect to the first, are the five correlated motifs (forsaking, jealousy, provoking, demons, forgetting) really present in the text? It should be noted that the word "forsake" occurs only in vs. 15; vs. 20 may express the idea but the word is lacking. "Jealousy" and "provocation" in vs. 21 are clearly played off against the same words in vs. 16. The "demons" motif is less obvious. Are Reaheph and Qeteb (vs. 24) consciously played off against the shedim (vs. 17) to whom Israel offered sacrifice? Possibly, but the case is not clear. Lastly, is the clause "I shall extinguish their memory from among men" meant to reverse the motif of Israel's forgetting of YHWH in vs. 18? A mechanically perfect application of the lex talionis would be YHWH's forgetting of Israel. But this is not exactly what we find in the text.
The concentrically structured pattern appears, by contrast, to be solidly based throughout. The deliberateness of the reprise in vs. 21 of "jealousy" and "anger" from vs. 16 cannot be questioned. The foolishness of the "foolish nation" in vs. 21 appears to be a rhetorical hinge connecting the charge against Israel (vs. 15), YHWH's judgment against Israel (vs. 21) and, the salvation of Israel implied in YHWH's judgment against his own instrument of vengeance (vv. 28f.). The point here is the deliberateness, in vs. 21, of the reprise of the root nbl from vs. 15. The rich food and drink in the land to which YHWH led Israel (vv. 13-14) is reversed by devastation of the land and its produce (vs. 22) with resultant famine (vs. 24). But given these correlations, we have the key to the rest of the text: sword and terror (vs. 25) reverses the tender protection of vv. 10-12 and the election of vv. 8-9 is on the point of reversal by utter annihilation evoked in vs. 26 only to be revoked in the sequel.

The sequel turns on the pivot of vs. 27. YHWH would have destroyed Israel except that the adversaries chastising Israel would misread their role in the drama. The no-people chosen to provoke Israel is, indeed, foolish; it misunderstands its own acts and its own destiny. Thus, the theme of the Song (as often in the collected oracles of the prophets) shifts from the judgment of Israel to the judgment of Israel's oppressors.

It is clear that the poet is speaking in vs. 31. Can we, then,
delimit the speeches of YHWH? He begins to speak in vs. 20, and his words run at least to vs. 27, possibly to vs. 30. He speaks again either at vs. 32 or 34. The poet speaks in vs. 36. YHWH speaks again in vs. 37 addressing either Israel or its oppressors, concluding in vv. 40–42 with an oath of vengeance on enemies. It seems that despite punctuating the text with the catchword "say", "and he said" (vs. 20), "I said" (vs. 26), "he will say" (vs. 37), and "I will say" (vs. 40) -- the poet has made little effort to distinguish his words from the words of YHWH. Convention, perhaps, preferred the slight surprise of an unannounced change of speaker; or, perhaps, the change had little significance insofar as the message to the readership was the same, whether it was YHWH or the poet who spoke. Though it is accordingly unclear how significant to the poet and his audience was the differentiation of voices, this remains a question on which we will presently offer an opinion.

Regardless of whether the words in vv. 37–38 are directed to Israel or to its oppressors, vs. 35 has brought the judgment section's first thematic sequence (which began in vs. 19 and took a deliberately surprising turn in vs. 27) to a climactic end, and a new thematic development appears to impose itself with the word of the poet in vs. 36. But to whom does YHWH direct his words beginning in vs. 37? The answer is furnished by three data: First, vs. 36 has returned to the relation between YHWH and his people. Second, the first stichos of vs. 39
seems designed to evoke the covenant between YHWH and his people (cf. Ex. 20:3 and Deut. 5:7), emphasizing (as earlier, in vs. 12) that YHWH and he alone (Deut. 6:4) saves Israel. Third, the taunt of vv. 37f. is paralleled by the address to Israel in Jgs. 10:14 and Jer. 2:28, which, indeed, accords with the ḫīb-pattern. The address to Israel, however, culminates in the theme of divine retribution, a scheme of thought fundamental to all the thematic changes (including that of Israel's salvation) rung on the Deuteronomic economy of religion. With these observations we have arrived at a division of vv. 19-42 into two movements: (a) vv. 19-35 and (b) vv. 36-42.

The first (vv. 19-35) breaks down into two parts: the condemnation that would undo Israel (vv. 20-27) is abruptly converted into the undoing of Israel's adversaries (vv. 28-35). In this second part, it would seem that YHWH speaks only the emphatic final lines of vv. 34f.

The second movement (vv. 36-42), introduced by the words of the poet (vs. 36), is made up of a speech of YHWH to Israel, having three moments: taunt (vv. 37f.), claim (vs. 39), and oath (40-42). There follows the epilogue of vs. 43.

We may accordingly set the outline of vv. 19-42 into the larger outline of the Song, as follows:

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34Cf. W.L. Moran, op. cit., pp. 275, under 238e.
1. Prologue (vv. 1-3)

2. Accusation (vv. 4-6)

3. History of benefits bestowed on Israel (vv. 7-14)

4. History of Israel's sin (vv. 15-18)

5. Judgment: Israel's condemnation — and salvation! (vv. 19-42)
   (a) Israel's benefits revoked (vv. 20-27); but no — its enemies are condemned! (vv. 28-35)
   (b) YHWH alone can save Israel — and shall! (vv. 36-42).

6. Epilogue (vs. 43)

Thus far we have mainly35 considered two sorts of structure: a
generic pattern, that of the ṪṬb (invitation of witnesses, accusation,
plaintiff's benefits to the accused, statement of breach of covenant,
judgment), and a stylistic pattern, that of concentrically structural
antithesis (e.g., election, protection, plenty reversed by famine,
terror, annihilation). We have also noted that these patterns correlate:
the hinge or pivot of the concentrically structured antitheses (sty-
listic pattern) is precisely the opening of the final element of the
ṪṬb: judgment (generic pattern). At this point we are finally in a
position to return to the question of strophic structure.

Can we, and ought we, differentiate strophes within the Song?
And, if so, does any structural pattern emerge?

35"Mainly": because the formal differentiation of "prologue" from
"main body" is irreducible either to generic pattern or to stylistic
pattern.
The answer to both questions would seem to be yes. Though the analysis of rhetorical structure confirms our earlier conclusion that large strophes such as Skehan proposed are excluded, it does lend support to a revised form of the hypothesis that the Song is largely composed of pentastichs. The prologue, clearly, is a tetristich; but let us consider the main body of the Song.

The accusation (vv. 4-6) is a pentastich.

The history of benefits (vv. 7-14), when divided into its rhetorical components, falls into three pentastichs (vv. 7-9, 10-12, 13-14).

The history of sin (vv. 15-18) is a hexastich.

With the judgment (vv. 19-42) we find, in the first part (vv. 19-35), that the response of YHWH (vv. 19-27), in perfect correlation with the analysis of rhetorical structure, falls into three successive pentastichs (vv. 19-21, 22-24, 25-27). This is followed by a reflection of the poet (vv. 28-33) and a final word of YHWH (vv. 34-35). The reflection of the poet is composed of a pentastich (vv. 28-31) and a tristich (vs. 32); the word of YHWH is a tristich (vv. 34-35).

The second part of the judgment (vv. 36-42), introduced by the

36See above, pp. 129-133.
poet's distich (vs. 36), is essentially composed of YHWH's speech (vv. 37-42), which falls into two pentastichs (vv. 37-39 and 40-42).

The epilogue, like the prologue, is a tetraستich (vs. 43).

We would therefore propose the following typographical layout of the Song, adding some marginal notes on rhetorical structure:

(Poet): Prologue (vv. 1-3)
Listen 0 heavens and I shall speak,
and hear 0 earth the words of my mouth.
Let my teaching drop as (the) rain,
let my speech flow as (the) dew,
As (the) weatings upon the grass
and as the showers upon the herb.
For I will proclaim the name of YHWH.
scribe greatness to our god!

Accusation (vv. 4-6)
The rock - perfect are his deeds
for all his ways are just.
A god of faithfulness and without deceit,
righteous and upright is he.

0 perverted and crooked generation.
Will you thus repay YHWH,
0 senseless and unwise people?
Is he not your father, who created you,
he (who) made you and established you?

History of Benefits
(vv. 7-14)
Remember the ancient days!
consider the years, (from) time immemorial
Ask your father and let him declare to you,
your elders, and let them tell you.

Election
When Elohim assigned the nations as possession(s),
when he separated the sons of Men,
He fixed the boundaries of the peoples
according to the number of the sons of god(s),
And YHWH's portion (was) his people Jacob,
his inherited lot (was) Israel.

Protection in desert
He found him in a desert land,
and in the desolate howling wilderness.
He encompassed him; he cared for him;
he guarded him, like the prize of his eye.
As an eagle stirs its nest,
hovers over its young,
(So) he spreads his wings, takes him,
carries him over his pinions.

YHWH himself led him!

yeh, there is no foreign god like him!
Entry into land, its plenty

He made him mount upon the hillsides, and gave him to eat the produce of the field;

He made him suck honey from the rock, and oil from flint-rock;

Curds of cattle, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs,

And Bashan-breed rams, and goats, with the choicest heads of wheat;

And the juice of grapes you drank (as) wine, and Jacob ate and was filled.

And Jesurun grew fat and kicked.

— you grew fat, you grew thick, you gorged —

Then he forsook the god who made him and acted stupidly against the rock of his salvation.

They made him jealous with strange (gods), with abominable practices they vexed him.

They sacrificed to demons who are no-gods; gods whom they knew not;

New ones who came in of late, whom your fathers did not dread.

The rock who gave you birth you forgot and remembered not the god who bore you.
And YHWH saw and was stirred to jealousy
from (the) provocation of his sons and daughters;
And he said: "I shall hide my face from them;
I shall see what will be their end.
For they are a perverse generation,
children in whom there is no faithfulness.
They stir me to jealousy with a no-god,
they provoke me with their vanities.
So I shall stir them to jealousy with a no-people
with a foolish nation I shall provoke them.

Indeed a fire is kindled in my nostril(s)
and it will burn even to the depths of Sheol.
It will consume the earth and its produce,
it will set ablaze the foundations of the mountains.
I will add evils upon him,
my arrows will I use up against them.
Ravaged by Famine, and attacked by Resheph
and (by) bitter Qeteb,
And the teeth of beasts will I send against them,
with the poison of the crawlers of the dust.

Externally, the sword will bring bereavement,
and internally, terror.
Both for the young man and the maiden,
the suckling as well as the gray-haired man.

I considered: 'I shall shatter them (to pieces),
I shall extinguish their memory from among men!'

Except ... the anger of the enemy
lest ... their adversaries
Lest they say: 'Our hand is exalted!'
and not: 'YHWH has done all this!'

For they are a nation void of counsel,
and there is no understanding in them.
Had they been wise they would have understood this,
they would have discerned their latter end.

How can one chase a thousand,
or two put a multitude to flight,
Unless their rock sells them
and YHWH delivers them?
For their rock is not like our rock
and our enemies ... .

For their vine is from Sodom's vine,
and from the fields of Gomorrah.
Their grapes are poisonous grapes,
they have bitter clusters.
Their wine is the poison of reptiles,
and the cruel head of vipers.

(YHWH):

"Is this not stored up with me,
sealed in my treasuries,
Until the day of punishment and recompense,
until the time when their foot shall slip?
For near is the day of their calamity,
and swiftly comes the doom upon them!"

(Poet) YHWH alone saves Israel (vv. 36-42)

Indeed, YHWH will vindicate his people,
and will have compassion on his servants;
Because he will see that (their) strength is exhausted,
and neither ruler nor caretaker remaining.

(YHWH): Taunt

And [YHWH] will say: "Where are their gods,
the rock in whom they trusted,
Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,
drank the wine of their libations?
Let them rise up and help you!
let them be a shelter over you!

Claim

Behold now; for I, I am he!
and there are no gods beside me!
I slay and I make alive; I wound and I heal;
and none can deliver from my hand!
Therefore I lift my hand to the heavens,
and swear, as I live forever:
If I whet my glittering sword,
and my hand grasps (the sword) in judgement,
I will send punishment on my adversaries,
and requite those who hate me;
I will make my arrows drunk with blood,
and my sword shall devour flesh,
From the blood of the slain and the captives,
from the nobles of the enemy."

(Poet): Epilogue
(vs. 43)
Rejoice, O heavens, before him!
and worship him, O sons of god(s)!
Rejoice, O nations, with his people!
and ascribe power to him, O all angels of god!
For he will avenge the blood of his children,
and will avenge and send punishment of his enemies,
And will requite those who hate him,
and YHWH will purge the land of his people.

Given these observations on the structure of the Song, we can
now turn to a more careful exploration of its sense.
The Sense of the Song

Like much of biblical literature, the Song of Moses eloquently affirms diverse religious values without the least interest in solving the problem of their systematic coherence. Here the poet offers us the orthodox Deuteronomic economy of blessings and curses. (Fidelity to YHWH is rewarded with covenantal blessings, infidelity punished with covenantal curses) in combination with the equally traditional theme of YHWH's promises and Israel's election as irrevocable. Any effort to decide which of these themes has the ultimate primacy in the Song of Moses is probably doomed to futility. The two themes coalesce in the judgment on Israel's enemies (vv. 27-35), in YHWH's oath (vv. 40-42), and in the epilogue to the Song (vs. 43).

Nevertheless, when we consider the thrust of the Song in terms of the effect of the poet's variation on the Rib-pattern, what is thrown into relief and highlighted? Clearly, the saving word of YHWH. Israel sins and YHWH punishes; but for all Israel's sins, YHWH saves! The Rib-pattern essentially affirms the Deuteronomic economy (itself rooted in the most ancient covenant traditions). The skillful variation on the pattern worked out in the Song of Moses affirms YHWH's invincible will to "vindicate his people" (vs. 36). The Rib-pattern does not, to be sure, positively exclude the theme of salvation. But the variation on the pattern consists in explicitly celebrating it. This salvation, moreover, is evidently gratuitous. Israel has earned
nothing but repudiation. If the nation is saved it is not because of its own righteousness but because of the folly and perversity of its enemies (vv. 27-35; cf. Dt. 9:14) and because of the simple compassion of its Lord (vs. 36).

We will now supplement these general considerations on the religious sense of the Song as a whole with comments on the religious valences of each of its parts.

Prologue (vv. 1-3) G.E. Wright\(^\text{37}\) struggled with a theological problem in the Song's opening line. How are heaven and earth conceived here? And what is the sense of the poet's calling on heaven and earth to be witnesses to the Rib of YHWH against his people? Do we have evidence of polytheism in this text? Are the ancient deities of heaven and earth converted into angels? Or should we understand the expression, with R.B.Y. Scott,\(^\text{38}\) as designating, not elements of the material world, but population areas: the heavenly hosts and people on earth?

H.B. Huffmon has appealed to the practice attested in Hittite and Aramaic treaties of summoning as witnesses not only the gods but

\(^{37}\)G.E. Wright, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 44-49.

the natural elements.\textsuperscript{39} This was a sound and illuminating reference, but it did not explain why natural phenomena (heaven and earth are probably meant to divide the whole of nature between them\textsuperscript{40}) are conceived as having a witnesses' role. Is it a poetic apostrophe like (say) a romantic poet's appeal to nature? Surely not. In Hittite religion natural phenomena were induced with numinous being and, as Moran has pointed out,\textsuperscript{41} they were "still objects of cult" at the time of treaties to which Huffman appealed. In the sphere of the divine, in other words, there was a continuum between the high gods of the Hittite pantheon and the world of nature. It is no doubt beyond our reach to try to define the sense that "heaven" and "earth" retained for the poet who produced the Song of Moses. But, in the ancient oriental resources on which he drew, heaven and earth were invoked "to achieve as far as possible an association of the treaty obligations with the entire world of the divine".\textsuperscript{42} These witnesses act as guarantors of the treaty, "lords of the oaths". At entry into covenant they


\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 319.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 320.
were, "to pursue relentlessly, all who break their oath..." But the
time for vengeance has now come; the covenant witnesses are summoned
to the covenantal Rib.

Accusation (vv. 4-6) The phrase, "Will you thus repay YHWH",
referred in all probability to a specific sin. What sin? One that
brands the people as perverted and crooked, senseless and unwise. It
is a sin offensive to YHWH particularly and precisely insofar as he is
"father" of Israel. The most likely candidate, at this point in the
Song, is idolatry, i.e., violation of the principal stipulation of the
covenant, the "statement of substance", as Baltzer calls it, which
is designed to govern the covenantal relationship of vassal to leige.

If the relation of Israel to YHWH is that of child to father,
does this imply the creation tradition, as in the first books of
Genesis? Probably not. But that YHWH's election and protection were
conceived in terms of creation, is attested by the antithesis between
vv. 26 and 8-9.

The epithets "senseless and unwise" suppose the common biblical
equation of intelligence with seeking after God (cf. Ps. 14:2).

\[43\] K. Baltzer, op. cit., p. 15.
\[44\] Ibid., p. 12.
\[45\] See above, p. 45 , note 5.
History of benefits (vv. 7-14) The Song's doctrine of God calls for special attention. In vs. 8 we read of 'Elyon assigning the nations as possessions and of YHWH inheriting Israel. What is the thrust of these conceptions?

It is generally agreed that 'Elyon was originally used by the Canaanites as a title for the Exalted One, the highest god of their pantheon, 'El.\(^46\) The problem in this passage is to decide whether 'Elyon is to be understood as a survival of the Canaanite cosmological and mythological tradition or as a divine appellative for YHWH. To put it in simpler terms, the question is whether 'Elyon here refers to 'El or to YHWH.\(^47\)

Whatever the ultimate interpretation of vs. 8, one fact is clear. 'Elyon of vs. 8 distributes nations to the various gods.\(^48\) In Canaanite myth this function was 'El's; it is 'El who assigns nations to the gods

\(^46\)For a discussion on the Canaanite god 'El and the appellations appropriated by Israel, see: O. Eissfeldt, El im Ugaritischen Pantheon, (1951); M.H. Pope, El in the Ugaritic Texts (1955); F.M. Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic, (1973), pp. 13-75.

\(^47\)See commentary on vs. 8, pp. 45f., where it was stated that the term 'Elyon may be applied to at least three gods: 'El, YHWH and Baal. In this case Baal is not realistic.

\(^48\)On distribution to the "sons of god(s)", see below, pp. 170-175.
in Philo of Byblos.\footnote{Philo of Byblos FGrH 790 F 2,31,35,38, in which Kronos = 'El distributed portions of the world to Adad, Astarte, the Baalat of Byblos and Thot of Egypt. Cf. also, A. Baumgarten, The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos, Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1972, p. 257, n. 8.} Since 'Elyon can be a title for 'El, and since 'Elyon of vs. 8 is filling a role known to have been 'El's, there can be no doubt that Dutt. 32:8-9 preserves a remnant of what was originally a myth of 'El.

Did the author of Dutt. 32, however, intend to identify 'Elyon with 'El, to repeat the old myth in its full and original sense? If so, one conclusion is ineluctable: YHWH, as one of the gods who receive a share from 'Elyon = 'El, would then be subordinate to 'El.\footnote{See O. Eissfeldt, "El and Yahweh," JJS, vol. I (1956), p. 29; T.H. Gaster, Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament, pp. 318-9.}

Dutt. 32:8-9 was not understood as an 'El myth in later Judaism. A verse in Ben Sira (= Ecclesiasticus, 2nd century B.C.) is the earliest testimony to the Jewish exegesis of Dutt. 32:8-9. Ben Sira 17:17 reads as follows:\footnote{J. Levenson, in an article to appear in HTR, has suggested that Deut. 4:19 is an even earlier exegesis of Dutt. 32:8. In Deut. 4:19 YHWH distributes (סֵפֶר) the sun, moon, etc., as doilies to be worshipped by other nations. If Levenson is correct, as seems plausible, the understanding of Dutt. 32:8 in Dutt. 4:19 is essentially the same as Ben Sira. For retroversion from Greek into Hebrew, see N. Segal, The Complete Book of Ben Sira, p. 103.}

\begin{verbatim}
Greek: εἰς τὸν κατέχειν θεόν και μετὰ κυρίου Ἰσραήλ
Hebrew: יְשַׁמְרוּ הַגְּדוֹל הָלָה וּלְכָל אֲשֶׁר יָרְדָה
\end{verbatim}
Ben Sira clearly understood "Elyon of the Song as an appellative for YHWH. It is "Elyon = YHWH who supervises the distributing; indeed, it is a mark of YHWH's love for his people that while as supervisory god he could have chosen any nation, he chose Israel. Wright and von Rad, among other scholars, accept this interpretation. 52

The difficulty facing an interpreter of Deut. 32:8-9 is now clear. What did the author of Deut. 32 intend when he wrote vv. 8-9? Did he mean "Elyon = 'El-in its earlier and original sense as preserved by Philo of Byblos, with the consequent subordination of YHWH to 'El? Or, did he equate 'Elyon with YHWH, and intend the interpretation found in Ben Sira? On this alternative, the poet would probably have been well aware of the old 'El associations of the motif of distributing the world to the gods, but would have deliberately appropriated 'El's role for YHWH.

The text furnishes the clues for solving this question. A number of traits that originally belonged to 'El are totally appropriated by YHWH. For instance, two traits of 'El are his fatherhood (ab adn) and creatorship (bnv bmr and on 'rs). 53 Both of these traits


are identified with YHWH (vs. 6):  

Is he not your father who created you,  
He (who) made you and established you?

Again, the Ugaritic appellation of ʾltpn ʾil ʾdnd, "Beneficent and Benign El", 55 is used, if not in form, at least in a similar sense for YHWH (vs. 36):  

Indeed, YHWH will vindicate his people,  
And will have compassion on his servants.

If therefore, the divine traits of 'El as "father", "creator", and "the compassionate one", are all appropriated by YHWH, there is no reason why 'El's function of dividing the nations among gods cannot be considered as having been also appropriated by YHWH. 'Elyon, then, in the Song is an epithet for YHWH. Thus, by utilizing the Canaanite mythic language, the poet describes YHWH's traits as: father, creator, progenitor, compassionate, and supreme god who divided the world but chose Israel. Ben Sira thus emerges as having seized the author's intentions.

In vs. 8, as elsewhere, the gods (here "sons of god(s)" = ʾʾlbaʿ ʾl) present the following problem: Is the existence of these gods asserted or denied? Three passages seem to imply the denial of the existence of

54Cf. Isa. 43:11; 44:2.

55Gordon, UT, 49:1,21-22, etc.; M. Pope, op. cit., p. 44.
other gods:

vs. 12 Yea, there is no foreign god like him!

vs. 17 They sacrificed to demons who are no-gods.

vs. 39 Behold now for I, I am he!
And there are no other gods beside me! 56

Taken at face value, these statements may be understood as rhetorical remarks negating the reality of gods other than YHWH. As such, it may be argued that the mention of "demons who are no-gods" may indicate the presupposition of the poet that the so-called gods are in reality not gods at all but demons.

There is, however, the possibility of a different interpretation. Still considering the above statements as rhetorical remarks, it could be argued that the poet characteristically describes the incomparability of YHWH. In that case, the existence of the other gods is not denied by the poet, but YHWH is presented as greater than any other divine being.

That this latter interpretation seems to be the intention of the poet may further be indicated by the following statements:

vs. 17 They sacrificed to demons, who are no-gods;
Gods whom they know not;
New ones who came in of late,
Whom your fathers did not dread.

56 For similar concept see: Isa. 43:11-13, 25; 45:5-7, 18, 21-22; 46:14.
vs. 31 For their rock is not like our rock.

vv. 3-7c. And [YHWH] will say: "Where are their gods, The rock in whom they trusted, Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, Drank the wine of their libations? Let them rise up and help you! Let them be a shelter over you!

The mention of "new gods who came in of late," the comparison between "their rock" and "our rock,"\(^57\) and the challenge of YHWH to the other gods to prove their power,\(^58\) all presuppose the existence of divine beings, but assert their powerlessness. In other words, there is not a denial of the existence of other gods but a denial of their power in comparison with YHWH.

That such is the case, may also be deduced from the two passages which refer to the "sons of god(s)":

vs. 8 He fixed the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of god(s).\(^59\)

vs. 43 Rejoice, 0 heavens, before him! And worship him, 0 sons of god(s).\(^60\)

\(^57\)The image of the rock is frequently used in the Cld Testament to characterize God's strength, permanancy and protection; cf. Ps. 18:2, 32, 47 (Eng. 18:2, 31, 46); Ps. 78:35; Isa. 17:10; Hab. 1:12.


\(^59\)Following the LXX and the IVQ fragment. For a discussion on the reconstruction see p. 46.

\(^60\)Following the LXX. For a discussion on the reconstruction see pp. 61f.
Who are the "sons of god(s)?" The original reference designated the divine members of the Canaanite pantheon. In the Ugaritic writings the bn 'il or bn 'ilm ("the sons of 'El") connotes the gods collectively who form part of the pantheon of which 'El is the head. This Canaanite designation is best illustrated in Gen. 6:1-4:

vs. 2 ...the sons of god(s) saw the daughters of men were fair, and they took to wife such of them as they chose...

In general, biblical scholars maintain that the entire passage (Gen. 6:1-4) is a relic of the ancient mythological narrative. Cassuto, who minimizes the mythological element in this passage, eventually consents that a fragment of myth "was retained as [it] was innocuous to Israel's montheistic faith". Consequently, the term "sons of god(s)" (בָּנָי לֹאֵל) is considered to refer to divine beings of the heavenly court.

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61 So, for instance: F.M. Cross, op. cit., p. 45; T.H. Gaster, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 79.


65 Ibid., p. 301.

66 Cf. E.A. Speiser, Genesis (The Anchor Bible), p. 44.
Another good illustration is Ps. 29:1.

Ascribe to YHWH, O sons of god(s),
Ascribe to YHWH, glory and strength

The recognition that this psalm is a YHWHistic adaptation of an older Canaanite hymn to the storm-god Baal is due to H.L. Ginsberg. Just like Deut. 32:43, this psalm too calls all the "sons of god(s)" to acclaim and praise the sovereignty of YHWH.

Thus, the term "sons of god(s)" as used in biblical literature refers to divine beings, though they are mainly devoid of the ancient mythological framework. As Rosé rightly observes (for Deut. 32:43) the poet "admits that the nations have been assigned to "the sons of gods" (namely to actual deities) as an inheritance", but he "is willing to grant these "sons of gods" only the function of singing and praising the Lord."68

In the light of all these passages, it is difficult to conceive of the poet's denial of the existence of divine beings other than YHWH.


Their reality assumed, they are conceived to be powerless.

In vs. 10 the poet describes how YHWH "found" Israel abandoned and exposed in the wilderness. The description is remarkable. There is here no reference to the Exodus tradition. The omission has naturally attracted the attention of the critics. S.R. Driver writes: "The poet starts, not with the deliverance from Egypt, but with a situation better designed ad exaggerandum Dei in eos beneficium (Le Clerc), and to illustrate His providential care."69 H.W. Robinson expresses a different opinion: "For the poet's purpose Israel's history begins in the desert, so that a more effective contrast may be gained with the settled home of Canaan."70 A.J. Levy, who considers the poem to be an exilic composition, makes the following observation: "It is of interest to note here that YHWH met the Hebrews in the desert where the blast howls, an idea which is quite different from that which the older prophets emphasized repeatedly, namely, that YHWH delivered Israel from the Egyptian slavery."71 G. von Rad proposes that the "finding" tradition in the Song is "an old tradition, by this time half-forgetten, about the origins of Israel", which had, in fact, been almost completely

70H.W. Robinson, Deuteronomy and Joshua in The Century Bible, p. 22.
pushed aside and overlaid by the other traditions of the election (the Exodus tradition, the patriarchal tradition)."72

Perhaps this tradition did indeed have its ultimate origin in a group which did not share in the Exodus experience but joined with the others in the wilderness. On the other hand the truly significant facet of this passage may be, not the omission of other traditions, but the inclusion of this distinct "finding" tradition. The conception of YHWH finding Israel occurs elsewhere twice:

Like grapes in the wilderness I found Israel.
(Hos. 9:10)

No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you; but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. And when I passed by you, and saw you wailing in your blood, I said to you in your blood, "Live, and grow up like a plant of the field." And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full maidenhood; your breasts were formed, and your hair grown; yet you were naked and bare.
(Ezek. 16:5-7)

These appear to be variant forms of the "finding" theme as presented by the Song. Hosea compares Israel to the grapes found in the wilderness, while Ezekiel relates how the infant Israel was exposed at birth and rescued from imminent death. The description in the Song

72G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 197.
as not as graphic as Ezekiel's. Nevertheless it states that YHWH found Israel in the most inhospitable place and protected it like an eagle protects its young. One is reminded of Achaemenes of Persia and Ptolemy I Soter of Egypt, who were both exposed in infancy and protected by an eagle. 73 T.H. Gaster observes:

...our passage alludes to the familiar tale of the child who is exposed at birth on a mountain or in some other inhospitable place, but is eventually found and succored by divine intervention or by a friendly beast or bird. We need think only of the exposure of Zeus or Dionysus in Classical myth, although other examples occur all over the world.

Following this line of interpretation, Gaster indicates that the reference to the feeding of Israel on honey and curd (vv. 13-14) is significant because these are the characteristic foods with which Zeus, Dionysus and Iamos among others were nurtured as newborn infants. 75

History of Sin (vv. 15-18) Here we meet one of those biblical traditions which associates the hard days of the desert with the time of goodness and the comparatively easy life in the land of promise with sin. Exposed to the perils of the howling waste, Israel would have perished were it not for YHWH who found and sheltered it and abundantly

73Aelian, NA xii.21; Pausanias, i.6.
74T.H. Gaster, op. cit., p. 319.
75Ibid., p. 319.
provided for its needs. But prosperity made Israel ungrateful and insolent.

Now the sin of Israel is concretely defined: it turned to other gods and performed abominable practices. 76 Instead of being forever indebted to YHWH for its survival, Israel quickly forgot its very source of existence.

Is Israel's offence moral or religious? Kaufmann noted 77 that in the prophetic literature the national sin of Israel is of both types, but that in the historical books and the Torah only idolatry qualifies. He writes:

In spite of the historiographer's view that YHWH is a moral and just God moral sin plays no part in the historical books as a decisive factor in the destiny of Israel. This is the view of the Torah as well... The archetypal national sins of Israel are the cultic defection of the golden calf, and the lack of faith in YHWH shown in the episode of the spies (Num. 13-14; Deut. 1:22ff.). 78

In the Song, as Kaufmann asserts, "idolatry is the crucial national sin." 79 Its moral dimension, however, is certainly evident. The accu-

77Y. Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, pp. 157-166.
78Ibid., p. 159.
79Ibid., p. 159.
sation of "forsaking" and "forgetting" YHWH (vv. 15, 18) amounts to a charge of infidelity (vv. 5-6, 20). The national sin is religio-
moral and, according to the poet, the sole decisive factor responsible for the dilemma of Israel.

Judgment (vv. 19-42) — Part One: Benefits revoked, but no — its enemies are condemned (vv. 19-35) Because Israel abandoned YHWH, so YHWH will abandon Israel (vs. 20); because Israel provoked the jealousy of YHWH by foolishly serving foreign gods, so YHWH will provoke Israel with a foolish nation (vs. 21). Moreover, YHWH will retaliate by sending all sorts of terror and calamity (hellish fire, arrows, famine, pestilence, wild beasts and the sword), almost to the point of annihilating Israel (vv. 22-26). He refrains from this last act, however, lest the credit due to YHWH is claimed by the enemy (vs. 27).

In this list of calamities the absence of reference to the Exile can only be explained if the Song was composed and already traditional prior to the exile. But the description of Israel's prosperity

80 "Hiding the face" is a biblical expression denoting the divine decision of abandoning or withholding favour (cf. Deut. 31:17).

81 Cf. Hos. 4:6 for retribution motif.

in vs. 15 is more easily made to refer to the period of the monarchy
than to that of the tribal league. This would, of course, correlate
with our views on dating worked above on the basis of philological
evidence.

Referring to the mood of vv. 10-27, Kaufmann suggests that it
reflects "an age that saw itself living in troubled and bitter times
of YHWH's wrath — YHWH had hidden his face." The historical period
most appropriate for such an age, according to Kaufmann, is the 9th-
8th centuries B.C. He writes:

"During the terrible century between the reigns
of Ahab and Jeroboam II a significant change
took place in the mood of the people. The
incessant Aramean wars ravaged and impoverished
the land; and with them came famine and plague
(Amos 4:6ff.; Isa. 1:5ff.). To the religiously
sensitive, it seemed as if YHWH were withdrawing
his favour, as if a turning point in Israel's
destiny had been reached."

A turning point is indeed reflected in the poem. YHWH's re-
taliatory activities do not culminate in blotting out Israel's memory
from among mankind. Such an act would disgrace his name. This is

83 Y. Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 280.
84 Ibid., pp. 279-280. The connection between Deut. 32:36 and
II Kgs. 14:26-27 becomes an additional evidence for Kaufmann in asserting
his suggestion of the date of the Song.
85 Cf. Isa. 43:25; 48:9-11; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22.
a key aspect of the theology of governance that runs throughout the Song. YHWH rules the world; if his own people were to be annihilated, how would his name be glorified?

But in the thought-schema of YHWH’s role of the world, he is unfailingly just. If he overthrows the enemies of Israel, it must be because they, independently (so to speak), deserve it. The poet’s reflection (vv. 28-33) makes this point, and the word of YHWH (vv. 34-35), which climaxes and concludes the passage, underscores it. The accumulated iniquities of the nations are “stored up” in the counsel of YHWH until the time appropriate for retribution:

Judgment—Part Two: YHWH alone can save Israel — and shall (vv. 36-42) Compassion, in the theology of the Song, is an ultimate explanation. Here it follows immediately on the just condemnation of Israel’s enemies as a second way of accounting for Israel’s salvation. The motif is, in fact, even more fundamental to the Song’s celebration of salvation than is the motif of the enemies’ condemnation.

YHWH’s first word, the taunt, dramatizes the bankruptcy of the foreign gods to whom Israel had foolishly paid cult-service. The other side of this coin is the claim that concludes the pentastich:

Behold now, for I, I am he! And there are no gods beside me! I slay and I make alive! I wound and I heal!

The taunt and the claim equally make the point, fundamental to YWHism.
of YHWH's uniqueness. The monotheism is not metaphysical; it is conceived not in the order of being but in that of activity, where YHWH — and he alone — is effective.

The oath of the final pentastich asserts a righteous and effective vengeance which is limited neither to Israel nor to its enemies. It is universal. Insofar as enemies from among the nations are envisioned, it has (like vv. 27-35) something of the character of a salvation oracle for Israel. But "those who hate me" (vs. 41) does not exclude Israel, in principle; on the contrary, the motif may be a deliberate reprise from the great commandment (Ex. 20:15; Deut. 5:9).

This, nevertheless, does not imply an indiscriminate merging of Israel and the nations. The world, according to the poet, is divided into two realms: Israel, who knows YHWH, and the rest of the nations, who do not know YHWH. 86 Israel alone is the real subject of history. The nations, deprived of the knowledge of YHWH, have a positive significance only insofar as they enter into the history of Israel. This ideology derives from an early phase of Israelite religion. 87

In the Song there is a new emphasis on this ideology. The poet.

86 In agreement with Y. Kaufmann, op. cit., pp. 358-359.
87 Y. Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 358.
seems to be looking forward to a "day of judgement" for the nations (vs. 35). 88 His view of the two realms (Israel and the nations) remains, by comparison with the literary prophets, relatively undifferentiated. Isaiah envisions the return of the nations to YHWH (Isa. 2 and passim). Jeremiah and Habakkuk conceive of Israel's historic mission as a struggle with the idolatry of the world. What had hitherto been the portion of Israel alone (knowledge of YHWH) becomes a universal human legacy.

**Epilogue (vs. 43)** The heavens and the gods are to rejoice, to worship YHWH, for his perfect righteousness. This is the righteousness proper not only to a ruler who rules justly but to a God prompted by his own holiness to cleanse the polluted land of his people.

**Interpretation and Dating**

We have already remarked that the total lack of reference to the theme "expulsion from the land" in vv. 19-27 (despite the point-by-point reversal of YHWH's benefits in vv. 20-26 and the specific inclusion of entry into the land in vs. 13 as one of YHWH's benefits) excludes an Exilic or post-Exilic date for the Song. Less apodictically, we excluded a pre-Davidic date on the basis of the prosperity motif in vs. 15.

88 Cf. Y. Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 358, who states: "The new eschatology that came into being during the Aramaic wars did conceive of a universal "day of YHWH", a judgement of all nations, ..."
(The theme of the richness of the land of promise is very ancient, but a pre-monarchial parallel to vs. 15 appears to be lacking. The closest text, apart from Deut. 31:20, is Hos. 13:6).

We observed above, moreover, that the Song understands the destiny of the nations to depend on the dispositions of YHWH; that it envisages something like a judgment of the nations; but that, by comparison with the literary prophets, the writer's view of the relation between YHWH and the nations remains relatively undifferentiated. This would seem to favour a dating that stands in the transition period between the shape of the traditions that derive from the tribal league and that of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk.

Demonstrably early poetry such as the Song of the Sea (Ex. 15), the Song of Deborah (Jgs. 5), and the Oracles of Balaam (Num. 23-24), regularly exhibits a remarkable artistry; but in none of these instances of early poetry do we find a refinement comparable to that of the Song of Moses with its stylistic subtleties; and, above all, its deft and all-transforming variation on the Rib-pattern. This, too, counts toward the plausibility of a later date. A date before the ninth century is improbable in the view of Kaufmann, Cross, Moran, and others.

89See pp. 181ff.
Once we have established, on philological grounds, that the Song must be dated to a transitional era between the early and late periods, we are finally in a position to treat the question of the specific historical references found in the text. This is an inquiry into the concrete historical backdrop supposed by the author of the Song. It is simultaneously calculated to illuminate the sense of the Song and its dating.

Of the three choices allowed by G.E. Wright (the Philistines, the Arameans or Syrians, and the Assyrians), the first possibility is positively unlikely because it violates the limit of tempus a quo established on philological grounds. The third is positively unlikely since, as we have seen, the theory that the language of the Song is archaizing fails in plausibility. Let us, accordingly, reconsider the alternative of the Arameans.

The 9th century B.C. is, in Israelite history, the period of the divided kingdom. The political history of Judah, the Southern kingdom, was dominated by the Davidic dynasty throughout the kingdom's entire existence, except for one brief interval, the reign of queen

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90 See pp. 123ff.
91 G.E. Wright, op. cit., pp. 66f.
92 See above, pp. 123ff.
Athaliah (842-837 B.C.). During her reign she killed most of the "royal seed" of the Davidic line and established Baal-worship (II Kgs. 11). However, this incident does not appear to conform to the narrative presented in the Song.

It was a time of turmoil. During the 9th cent. B.C. Judah was on various occasions, at war with its sister kingdom Israel. One such occasion occurred, for instance, during the reigns of king Asa of Judah (913-873 B.C.) and king Baasha of Israel (900-877 B.C.). Again, the historical events do not seem to correspond to the events in the Song, especially since Asa is considered a "good king" who destroyed numerous idols and restored the temple treasures (I Kgs. 15:9-15; II Chr. 16:1-14). Another such occasion occurred during the reign of king Amaziah of Judah (800-783 B.C.) and king J(eh)oshaphat of Israel (801-786 B.C.), the result of which was the defeat of Amaziah (II Kgs. 13-14). Not only does this event fail to match events in the Song, it occurs several years after the period which is postulated for the date of the Song.

During the 9th cent. B.C., Judah also allied itself on various occasions with Israel to wage war against Syria. Such was the case, for instance, during the reign of king Jehoshaphat of Judah (873-849 B.C.)

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93 There is a difference of opinion on the chronology of the Divided Kingdom. The dates adopted here are from the charts in B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 192, 202, 240, 267, 294.
in an ill-fated war against Syria (I Kgs. 22:1-40). This event does appear to bear a close resemblance to some features of the poem.

Ahab's religious policy which is described as "wicked" (I Kgs. 16:29-34), coupled with the Assyrian showdown at Qarqar (853 B.C.), suggest certain parallels with the Song. The evidence which is lacking, however, is any reference to the kind of catastrophe described in the Song which might have befallen Judah or even Israel at this historical juncture. Similarly, the short reign of king Ahaziah of Judah (842 B.C.) who joined king Jehoram of Israel (849-842 B.C.) to fight unsuccessfully against king Hazael of Syria (II Kgs. 8-9; II Chr. 22) cannot be accepted as historical equivalents of the themes that run through the Song.

There is very little in the history of the Southern kingdom around the 9th century B.C. which corresponds to events in the Song. This conclusion leaves only the political and religious conditions of the Northern kingdom to consider.

The political history of Israel is more turbulent than that of Judah. 94 At the turn of the 9th century B.C., the Northern kingdom

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went through a period of revolution during which there were three aspirants to the throne. In the resulting confusion, there was a rapid turn-over of kings owing to assassination, suicide and intrigue. Finally, through a coup d'etat, the commander of the army, Omri (876-869 B.C.), emerged as the victorious king (I Kgs. 16:23-38). His political astuteness is evidenced in his wise decision to transfer the capital from Tirzah to Samaria and to establish a dynasty of such prestige that for many years after his death Assyrian kings continued to refer to the Northern kingdom as "the land of the house of Omri."  

In order to strengthen himself against the Syrians, Omri made an alliance with Phoenicia, while his son, Ahab (c. 869-850 B.C.), married the Phoenician princess, Jezebel (I Kgs. 16:31). This event paved the way for Phoenician cultural and religious influence which, inevitably, roused prophetic opposition. The practice of importing and introducing foreign deities including the complete cultic ritual associated with these deities and their priestly and prophetic functionaries, evidently originated as a policy of the Northern kingdom during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel (I Kgs. 16:29-22:40; II Kgs. 9:30-37).  

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95 B.W. Anderson, op. cit., p. 199.

96 Solomon undertook a similar policy almost a century before; cf. I Kgs. 11:4-8.
Jezabel's reputation as a strong-minded woman and as a fanatical worshipper and promoter of non-Israelite deities is so well documented that it requires no further elaboration. Suffice it to say that the series of prophetic narratives which center around the figures of Elijah and Elisha (I Kgs. 17-22) indicate the activity of Celtic rituals and practices foreign to the YHWHistic religion. Such activities, however, were not limited to the reign of Ahab. His two sons and successors to the throne, Ahaziah and Jerah, were also considered to have indulged in the evil ways of the "house of Ahab" and provoked the anger of the God of Israel (I Kgs. 22:51-53).

These religious conditions are reminiscent of the allusions of the Song - the denunciatory tone of the poet in response to Israel's infidelity to its God (Deut. 32:16-17). Israel forsook its God and turned to "new gods who came in of late, whom they knew not, whom their fathers were not acquainted" (vs. 17). Israel embraced "abominable practices and provoked the anger of its God" (vs. 16). The Song seems to reflect the religious condition of Israel during the 9th century B.C., especially during the reigns of Ahab and his two succeeding sons.

There are, furthermore, other historical events that occurred in the Northern kingdom in the 9th century B.C. which may possibly be associated with some of the allusions in the Song.
J(eh)oram (849-842 B.C.) was the son of Ahab and the last of the Omrid dynasty to inherit the throne of Israel after displacing his weak and sickly brother Ahaziah (850-849 B.C.). During his reign, Ben-Hadad I of Syria (880-842 B.C.) besieged Samaria (II Kgs. 6:24-7:20). The precise date of this event is not known, but the condition that developed in Israel is revealing. As a result of this siege, there was such a great famine in the city that mothers ate their own children (II Kgs. 6:28-29). It is quite possible that the reference to the famine in the Song (vs. 24) alludes to this period.

After the siege J(eh)oram was murdered in 842 B.C. by Jehu (842-815 B.C.) who usurped the throne and became king in his stead (II Kgs. 9:11). His bloody revolution against the house of Omri, followed by the slaughter of Ahab's whole family in Samaria (some seventy persons in all), the extermination of all the high officials in Jezreel (II Kgs. 10:1-11) and the murder of some forty members of the visiting royal party of Judah (II Kgs. 10:12-14) may possibly represent the "infernal terror" alluded to in the Song (vs. 25).

The same fate in the same year overtook J(eh)oram's adversary, Ben-Hadad I of Syria was murdered in 842 B.C. by his servant Hazael (842-798 B.C.) who usurped the throne and became king in his stead

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97 For the conflicting data regarding J(eh)oram's date, see H.B. MacLean, "Joram", ID vol. 2 (1962), p. 972.
(II Kgs. 8:17-15, cf. I Kgs. 19:15). The Assyrian annals report the incident as follows: "... Hazaël, the son of nobody, seized the throne." 98 It is interesting to note that Hazaël is referred to as "the son of nobody." 99 By extension, it seems logical to speculate that the Syrians are the "people of nobody" or, as the Song puts it, the "no-people." (vs. 21).

The conclusion that the allusion to the "no-people" refers to the Syrians has been proposed by earlier critics, notably Oettli, Knobel, Dillman, Westphal and Kaufmann. 100 The historical records strengthen the conclusion that the Syrians during the reign of Hazaël are the "no-people" who, as the Song states (vv. 21-26), harassed Israel. 101 By his continual assault and depredations against Israel, especially after 837 B.C. when Assyrian pressure on Syria ceased, Hazaël menaced the kingdom of Israel (as well as Judah) throughout the reigns of Jehu and J(ah)oram (II Kgs. 13:3, 13). Hazaël annexed from Jehu all the Israelite lands East of the Jordan river (II Kgs. 10:32-33; Amos 1:3). Then around 815 B.C., he marched through the

99 Al Baumgarten suggests that the phrase "son of nobody" is a traditional formula for a "pretenders".
100 As cited by S.R. Driver, op. cit., p. 346; see also Y. Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, p. 280.
length and breadth of Palestine in order to capture Gath. His sustained assault and oppression during the next few years humbled Israel and seriously reduced its military force (II Kgs. 13:1-3, 7, 22).

When Hazael arrived at the gates of Jerusalem, King Jehoram of Judah (837-800 B.C.) was forced to pay him a heavy tribute (II Kgs. 12:17-18; II Chr. 24:23-24). This incident is described by the historiographer as follows:

Hazael, king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.
(II Kgs. 13:22)

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them continually into the hand of Hazael, king of Syria... Then Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him; for he saw the oppression of Israel... Therefore the Lord gave Israel a saviour...
(II Kgs. 13:3-5)

This "saviour" was none other than the Assyrian king, Adad-nirari III (811-783 B.C.), who by his military campaigns against Syria and Palestine around 805 B.C. succeeded in breaking the power of the Syrian empire. Thus the historiographer's statement and the words of the poet (vv. 35-43) seem to correspond once again with the historical facts of the period under consideration. Syria continued to decline for several years until it was first conquered by Jeroboam.

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102 B. Mazar, op. cit., p. 115; W.W. Hallo, op. cit., p. 42. For the inscriptions of Adad-nirari which tell of the event, see ANET, pp. 281-282.
II of Israel (786-746 B.C.), and later by Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 B.C.) who converted it into a district capital, a stronghold of Assyria in Trans-Euphrates.

In summary, the evidence suggests that the religious and political history of the Northern kingdom during and after the second half of the 9th century B.C. corresponds to various allusions in the Song. First, the religious policy of Israel as represented by Ahab, Ahaziah and Joram is interpreted by both the biblical historiographer and the author of the Song as a rejection of their God, YHWH. According to the poet, this act of rejection calls for divine retribution (vv. 19-26). Because Israel provokes the jealousy of God with a "no-god" and vexes him with its vanities, so also God provokes Israel with a "no-people" - the Syrians.

Second, according to the poet, God determines to discharge his wrath and judgment upon Israel, as a result of its disloyalty (vv. 19-26). Thus, as a result of Ben-Hadad's siege, Israel is plagued internally by a famine (vs. 24) followed by terror and insecurity (vs. 25) created by the bloody revolution of its king Jehu. In addition to this internal horror, there comes the external panic (vs. 25) brought about by Hazael's bloody campaigns that almost exterminate Israel (vs. 26). Both Jehu (842-815 B.C.) and Hazael (842-798 B.C.) are contemporaneous rulers whose reigns are marked by bloody events. It appears, therefore, that the poet considers these two kings and
their activities as the instrument of divine retribution. God's wrath and punishment is discharged over Israel internally and externally (vs. 25). The internal punishment seems to refer to Jehu's bloody slaughter of all the members of the Omride dynasty sometime around 842 B.C. The external punishment, on the other hand, seems to refer to Hazael's sustained and ruthless campaigns which seems to have stretched from about 835 B.C. to 815 B.C.

Third, despite this gloomy picture, the poet is full of optimism and anticipates an imminent reversal of conditions (vv. 35-43). Kaufmann's comments on this topic are pertinent. He speculates that the Song dates from the time of Hazael's campaigns against Israel and Judah, or, to put it in his own words, "from the time of the Aramean wars."¹⁰³ Kaufmann states,¹⁰⁴

Hazaël's victories over Jehu and Jehoahaz were a great puzzle to the pious. Ahab's house and the last traces of Baalism had been destroyed: why did YHWH continue to chastise Israel? The puzzlement and disappointment were resolved in the expectation of a day when YHWH would wreak vengeance upon Israel's enemies.

The poet's prediction that Israel's enemy, the Syrians, will shortly be struck down (vv. 35, 41-42) and that Israel's blood will

¹⁰³ Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 280.
¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 281.
be revenged (vv. 36, 43), shares significant similarities with the historical narrative and may indicate the poet’s keen foresight in predicting the consequences of the resurgent Assyrian power under Adad-nirari III. The record shows that Adad-nirari III’s military campaign to Syria and Palestine took place around 805 B.C. If we accept this date as Israel’s date of “victory” from oppression, then the Song was composed sometime between Hazael’s and Adad-nirari III’s campaigns; sometime between 815-805 B.C.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ This is precisely the period identified by G.E. Wright, op. cit., p. 67, though not through a linguistic analysis, but through a form-critical study. “My preference”, he states, “is the period around 815-805 B.C. in the reign of Joahaz (Jehoahaz) of Israel...”
CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion we will, first, offer a succinct résumé of our inquiry into the date of the Song of Moses. Then we will specify what we consider to be the contribution of this dissertation. Finally, we will indicate a few of the questions bearing on the history of the religion of Israel which arise as a result of our dating of the Song.

There has been a large and varied critical literature on the date of the Song of Moses. In part this literature is now obsolete, but only because it has itself successfully promoted increasingly rigorous and fruitful inquiry. It has turned out that the initially most hopeful line of research -- the quest of a concrete historical candidate for the "no-people" of vs. 21 -- is the least helpful of all, if taken on its own, in isolation from other evidence. The inquiry into antiquity is helpful for determining a terminus post quem, but this does not provide a specific date. On the other hand, philological inquiry, including linguistics and stylistics, has proved to be a most fundamental and helpful tool for determining with good probability a reasonably short span of time within which to date the poem. Archaizing could not be ruled out with apodictic certainty, but it repeatedly appeared to be an improbable alternative to the hypothesis of composition during the "transitional" period in poetic Hebrew: the 9th century B.C. A very late date (Exilic or post-Exilic) must in any case be
ruled out on interpretative grounds: lack of reference to the Exile is unexampled in Exilic or post-Exilic literary productions of this kind.

Once the Song was dated on philological grounds to the transitional era between early and late poetic Hebrew, it became possible to draw on other avenues of inquiry for confirmation and greater specificity. The Song's unique rhythm and stylistic sophistication, quite without parallel in certainly early poetry, made a pre-9th century B.C. date positively implausible. The Rib-pattern itself pointed to the springs of the prophetic movement as the earliest likely date of the Song. The theme of idolatry as the great national sin bringing Israel to ruin likewise counted as evidence in favour of 9th century B.C. or later dating.

At this point the question of the possible historical allusion of vs. 21 could be profitably taken up again. The Arameans commended themselves as the long discussed "no-people" who provoked, but were not permitted to annihilate, Israel. The result is a probable date—certainty in such matters is not to be had— for the Song of Moses. If Adad-nirari III's campaign (ca. 805 B.C.) was the occasion of Israel's "vindication", then the Song was composed in the last years of the 9th century B.C.

Ultimately, this thesis is oriented toward the illumination of
the history of Israel. But in and of itself it is limited to an attempt to settle one single matter of fact: the dating of the Song of Moses. The contribution of the thesis is twofold. First, it has provided a critical review of the arguments for dating and a new synthesis of those elements of arguments which have survived critique. Second, the central feature of the new synthesis has been an original philological analysis. Several other new elements of admittedly secondary importance (e.g., the analysis of strophic structure) came to light in the course of the inquiry.

Last of all, what new questions arise from this thesis? The age to which we have assigned the Song of Moses was heir to the ` and E traditions (Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers), the extraordinary history of the succession to the throne of David, (2 Sam.6 - I Kgs. 2), numerous sagas (from Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel) and poems (Song of the Sea, Song of Deborah, Oracles of Balaam, etc.) from the era of the tribal league. Now, together with the Elijah-Elisha cycle of legends, we have the Song of Moses to illuminate an age in Israel’s faith just prior to the epoch-making, mid-8th century rise of the movement of literary prophets. The Song is one among several eloquent and powerful links (one thinks of the traditions of Deuteronomic preaching and its law codes) between the great covenant traditions and the oracles of the prophets.

The parallels between the Song of Moses and the prophetic lit-
erature raise the question of the influence of the Song on the prophets from Hosea through Isaiah and Jeremiah to Second Isaiah. For, though the Rib-form is doubtless very ancient, its earliest literary appearance may well be precisely in the Song of Moses. Insofar as there is question of direct influence between the Song and the prophets, it is the latter who are the beneficiaries. The dating of the Song, over and above illuminating the inner life of late 9th century Israel, helps us to estimate the power of tradition and the limits of originality in the prophetic movement. But these are large matters and they raise unanswered questions. Our purpose has not been to resolve such questions but, in the light of the dating of the Song to accent their inevitability.
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