

Authoritative Writings in Early Judaism and Early Christianity

Edited by
TOBIAS NICKLAS
and JENS SCHRÖTER

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Their Origin, Collection, and Meaning

Edited by

Tobias Nicklas and Jens Schröter

Mohr Siebeck

Tobias Nicklas, born 1967; 2000 Dr. theol.; 2004 Habilitation; currently Professor of New Testament at Universität Regensburg; since 2018 Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies »Beyond Canon« (DFG-Kolleg-Forschungsgruppe 2770), Universität Regensburg.

Jens Schröter, born 1961; 1992 PhD; 1996 Habilitation; currently Professor of New Testament Exegesis and Theology and New Testament Apocrypha at the Faculty of Theology, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

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Introduction

This volume is based on papers presented at the symposium »Authoritative Writings in Early Judaism and Early Christianity: Their Origin, Collection and Meaning« in Barcelona, 25–27 May 2017. The conference was organized as a collaboration between the Ateneu Universitari Sant Pacià in Barcelona, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the Universität Regensburg, and as part of a series of meetings on »New Perspectives on the Formation of the New Testament« (2015), on the Eucharist (2013), and on Gnosticism (2011).

Our leading ideas can be formulated as follows. In 1968 Hans von Campenhausen published an outstanding and still highly influential study on the formation of the Christian Bible.¹ Almost exactly fifty years later, the perspectives on the processes that have led to the formation not only of the Christian, but also of the Jewish Bible are in need of fresh consideration.

First, a current perspective cannot be restricted to the »Christian Bible,« but has to take into account that the early Christians were engaged in a process of authorization of writings that had begun in Israel and Judaism before the emergence of Christianity and was continued in the first centuries CE by Judaism and Christianity in their respective ways. These processes did not take place independently of each other, but in (at least partly) controversial debate and competition. The formation of the *Christian* Bible therefore cannot be separated from the processes that led to the *Jewish* Bible. This is one of the reasons why the paradigm of a »parting of the ways« was repeatedly called into question in recent scholarship and has to be reconsidered, perhaps even to be replaced by a different model.² In any case, early Christianity may be regarded as an inner Jewish movement, and the differentiation between Judaism and Christianity as a complex and long-lasting development that is reflected not at least in the reception and re-interpretation of Jewish authoritative writings.

The processes leading to collections of normative texts started in Israel and early Judaism. Even if it is debated at what time the idea of authoritative or even »holy« texts occurred, it is likely that after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and the loss of political independence texts became increasingly important for the identity formation of the Jewish religion. In these processes the Torah played a key role as the first normative Jewish text corpus.

¹ Hans von CAMPENHAUSEN, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel* (1st edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968; repr. in Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 39; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

² See, e. g., Tobias NICKLAS, *Jews and Christians? Second Century Christian Perspectives on the »Parting of the Ways«* (Annual Deichmann Lectures 2013) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

After this, other collections, like the prophetic books, Psalms, and sapiential writings led to the emergence of corpora that served to construct an »identity« of the people of Israel, its history and self-perception, its relationship to God, and its ethical orientation. These writings, however, were not regarded as »canonical« in the sense of fixed texts. They rather existed as (partly quite diverse) collections with flexible text forms. This is proven, for example, by the so-called »Reworked Pentateuch« texts from Qumran. They even could be translated from Hebrew into Greek with the Greek text being regarded as of the same authority as the Hebrew, at least by Diaspora Jews like Philo of Alexandria or by Christian authors like Justin Martyr and others.

The emergence of authoritative text corpora was accompanied by a constant process of interpretation and rewriting, demonstrated, for example, by Philo's commentaries, texts belonging to the so-called »Rewritten Bible,« or »parabiblical texts« such as Jubilees, the Genesis Apocryphon, the Apocryphon of Moses, or additions to biblical books as to Daniel and Esther.

These processes are presupposed by early »Christian« authors who often quote »Scripture« or »the (holy) Scriptures« as authority and occasionally refer to »the Torah and the Prophets (and the Psalms).« However, early Christian authors developed a distinct view on the writings of Israel: in many cases their faith in Jesus Christ became the key and starting point of their views on the Scriptures of Israel. This resulted in a peculiar use of these writings besides that in Judaism – although many hermeneutical and methodological principles are comparable. A remarkable component of this reception of Jewish writings appears in early Christian apocalypses, which can even appear as expanded and reinterpreted Jewish apocalyptic writings.

Moreover, the emergence of early *Christian* writings marked a new step in the development of authoritative writings and their collections. The »New Testament« occurred first in form of various collections of writings – gospels, letters of Paul, Acts, and the »Catholic epistles« – and not as a book. This is corroborated by the manuscript evidence. In the second and third century the idea of a New Testament was not that of a »book,« but of a new perspective on the God of Israel and his revelation through Jesus Christ, documented in narratives about Jesus, letters to communities and individuals, theological tractates, a history of the early Christian movement, and so forth.

Against this background, the emergence of the New Testament canon in the second and third century raises questions that need to be reconsidered. Marcion's place in early Christianity was thoroughly scrutinized more recently by Judith Lieu;³ against this background also his role in the development of the

³ Judith M. LIEU, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); but see also Lieu's contribution in the present volume.

New Testament needs reconsideration. The emergence of the Fourfold Gospel was brought into discussion with a provocative thesis by Francis Watson.⁴ Research on non-canonical writings of early Christianity has highlighted that the distinction of »accepted« – eventually »canonical« – writings from those that were disputed or rejected as »apocryphal« was a complex process in which different perspectives on the meaning of Jesus Christ, his origin, and his earthly activity emerged. Eventually, it has to be taken into consideration that there was no formal decision of the early Church about the New Testament canon or the Christian Bible. Certain writings were accepted as authoritative as the Christian church regarded them as being in agreement with the apostolic creed and because they were acknowledged by most Christian congregations.

The different contributions of this book offer a wide range of approaches to these ideas. They bring together perspectives from scholars dealing with the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint, early Jewish writings beyond the canon, New Testament and early Christianity including so-called Gnostic literature. We are grateful to the contributors of this volume as they bring together so many fresh and fascinating ideas coming from very different parts of the field. A special gratitude is due to Dr. Luigi Walt from the Universität Regensburg Centre for Advanced Studies »Beyond Canon« (DFG-Kollegforschungsgruppe FOR 2770) who prepared the manuscript for publication and to Judith Bauer and Judith König for their help with many details of this process. We would like to thank the publishing house Mohr Siebeck, mainly Dr. Katharina Gutekunst and Elena Müller, for taking care of the process of publication.

We do not want to finish this introduction without a special word of thanks to a very special person without whom the wonderful symposia in Barcelona would not be possible. Armand Puig i Tàrrec has always been the »heart« of the Barcelona conferences, bringing together eminent scholars from different backgrounds, creating an atmosphere of friendship and mutual exchange, and communicating the results into church, academy, and society. He is not only well-known as a scholar of highest international reputation, a former SNTS president, whose work on Jesus was translated into several languages and who published about as different topics as the Eucharist in ancient Christianity, Jesus's parables, apocryphal Gospels, Biblical hermeneutics, and the symbolism of Antonio Gaudí's *Sagrada Família*.⁵ He is also an outstanding academic leader and,

⁴ Francis WATSON, *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

⁵ We just refer to Armand PUIG I TÀRRECH, *Jesus: An Uncommon Journey. Studies on the Historical Jesus* (WUNT II/288; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); IDEM, *Jesús. Un perfil biogràfic* (Barcelona: Proa, 2004; translated, e.g., into Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, English, French, and German); IDEM, *Un Jesús desconocido. Claves de lectura del Evangelio gnóstico de Tomás* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2008); IDEM, ed., *Els evangelis apòcrifs*, Vol. 1 (Barcelona: Proa, 2008; translated into Spanish and Italian) and Vol. 2: *Textos gnósticos* (Barcelona: Proa, 2015); IDEM, *La Sagrada Família segons Gaudí. Comprendre un símbol* (Visions 40; Barcelona: Pòrtic, 2008); IDEM, *Teologia de la Paraula a la llum de la Dei Verbum* (Col·lectània Sant Pacià 112; Barcelona: Ateneu

perhaps even more, a churchman dedicated to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, a person who builds bridges and opens doors, a dedicated »pastor« and priest of his community who knows to connect social commitment with deep spirituality. But first and foremost we got to know him as a wonderful host, a person full of humour, and with a heart of gold – in one word: a real friend. That is why we want to dedicate this volume to him, but at the same time hope that our collaboration will continue for many years.

Regensburg and Berlin, April 2019

Tobias Nicklas and Jens Schröter

Universitaria Sant Pacià, Facultat de Teología de Cataluña, 2015); but many, many others could be mentioned.

Textual Authority in Ancient Israel and Judah

Factors and Forces of its Development

Konrad Schmid

The *books* of the Bible were not written as the books of the *Bible*. They evolved over time in terms of their literary history, as well as in terms of their canonical history.¹ In other words, literary history and canonical history of the Bible do not coincide, but they overlap. This article will ask about factors and forces that were relevant for the development of texts' authoritativeness in ancient Israel and Judah.² Of course, this is a broadly researched topic,³ but because the problem is multi-levelled, the field is still very open in many respects.

This paper is structured in two main parts. The first part aims at clarifying three points about the developing authority of writings in ancient Israel and Judah that seem to be basic, but are nonetheless contested in scholarship. In light of these remarks, the second part tries to identify the main factors that triggered processes of authorization for writings that later became biblical.

¹ See, e.g., Konrad SCHMID, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

² For the notion of »authoritativeness« over against »authority« see, e.g., Eugene ULRICH, »From Literature to Scripture: Reflections on the Growth of a Text's Authoritativeness,« *DSD* 10 (2003), 3–25; George J. BROOKE, »Authority and the Authoritativeness of Scripture: Some Clues from the Dead Sea Scrolls,« *RevQ* 25 (2012), 507–23; Mladen POPović, »Prophet, Books and Texts: Ezekiel, Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Authoritativeness of Ezekiel Traditions in Early Judaism,« in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. idem (JSJSup 141; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 227–251.

³ See below n. 5 and in addition the following recent contributions that use the term and concept of »authority« with regard to the Bible: Dan BATOVICI and Kristin DE TROYER (eds.), *Authoritative Texts and Reception History: Aspects and Approaches* (BibInt 151; Leiden: Brill, 2017); Phillip M. LASATER, »Text Reception and Conceptions of Authority in Second Temple Contexts: A Response to Judith H. Newman,« in *Jeremiah's Scriptures. Production, Reception, Interaction and Transformation*, ed. Hindy Najman and Konrad Schmid (JSJSup 173; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 263–267; Diana V. EDELMAN (ed.), *Deuteronomy-Kings as Emerging Authoritative Books: A Conversation* (ANEM 6; Atlanta SBL 2014); Mladen POPović (ed.), *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism* (JSJSup 141; Leiden: Brill, 2010).

1. Cornerstones of Textual Authority in Ancient Israel und Judah

1.1. Judaism gradually developed into a book religion, and this process came to a first peak in 70 CE

Judaism and Christianity are often identified as »book religions,«⁴ which is true insofar as holy writings play a central role in them. However, it is a truism that Judaism and Christianity emerged gradually over centuries as religions that are centred mainly on texts. This development has a counterpart in the evolution of both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures as Bibles. Neither the writings of the Hebrew Bible nor those of the New Testament were conceived as »biblical« by their authors at the time of their writing. These texts only *became* »biblical« over the course of time, a process that has been described in different ways by various recent contributions.⁵

⁴ See, e.g., Siegfried MORENZ, »Entstehung und Wesen der Buchreligion,« *TLZ* 75 (1950), 710–716; repr. in *Religion und Geschichte des alten Ägypten: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1975); Siegfried HERMANN, »Kultreligion und Buchreligion: Kultische Funktionen in Israel und in Ägypten,« in *Das ferne und das nahe Wort*, ed. Fritz Maass (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1967), 95–105; Carsten COLPE, »Sakralisierung von Texten und Filiationen von Kanons,« in *Kanon und Zensur*, ed. Aleida and Jan Assmann (Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation 2; Munich: Fink, 1987), 80–92; Jan N. BREMMER, »From Holy Books to Holy Bible,« in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Mladen Popović (JSJSup 141; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 327–360, here 333–336. For methodological distinctions see Jörg RÜPKE, »Heilige Schriften und Buchreligionen: Überlegungen zu Begriffen und Methoden,« in *Heilige Schriften. Ursprung, Geltung und Gebrauch*, ed. Christoph Bultmann, Claus P. März, and Vasilios N. Makrides (Münster: Aschendorff, 2005), 191–204; Andreas A. BENDLIN, »Wer braucht heilige Schriften?: Die Textbezogenheit der Religionsgeschichte und das ›Reden über die Götter‹ in der griechisch-römischen Antike,« *Heilige Schriften*, ed. Bultmann, 205–228.

⁵ See, e.g., Odil H. STECK, »Der Kanon des hebräischen Alten Testaments: Historische Materialien für eine ökumenische Perspektive,« in *Vernunft des Glaubens. Wissenschaftliche Theologie und kirchliche Lehre*, ed. Wolfhart Pannenberg et alii (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 231–252; repr. in *Verbindliches Zeugnis I: Kanon, Schrift, Tradition*, ed. Wolfhart Pannenberg and Theodor Schneider (Dialog der Kirchen 7; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1992), 11–33; John J. COLLINS, »Before the Canon. Scriptures in Second Temple Judaism,« in *Old Testament Interpretation: Past, Present and Future. Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker*, ed. James Luther Mays, David L. Petersen, and Kent Harold Richards (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 225–244; repr. in John J. COLLINS, *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (VTS 54; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 3–21; Jan ASSMANN, *Fünf Stufen auf dem Wege zum Kanon* (MTV 1; Münster: LIT, 1999), repr. in *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis: Zehn Studien* (Münich: Beck, 2000), 81–100; Jürgen VAN OORSCHOT, »Altes Testament,« in *Heilige Schriften*, ed. Udo Tworuschka (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), 29–56; William SCHNIEDEWIND, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Timothy LIM, *The Formation of the Jewish Canon* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2012); Heinz-Josef FABRY, »Das ›Alte Testament,« in *What is Bible?*, ed. Karin Finsterbusch and Armin Lange (CBET 67; Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 283–304; Tal ILAN, »The Term and Concept of Tanakh,« in *What is Bible?*, ed. Finsterbusch and Lange, 219–234; Tobias NICKLAS, »The Development of the Christian Bible,« in *What is Bible?*, ed. Finsterbusch and Lange, 393–426; Michael SATLOW, *How the Bible Became Holy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015); Armin LANGE, »Canonical History of the

For the Hebrew Bible's formation as authoritative literature and its sociological background, a fundamental distinction is needed: the Hebrew Bible is a library containing books that partially go back to the First Temple period, but all of the books were reworked in exilic and postexilic times and therefore are no longer immediate witnesses to ancient Israelite religion. Rather, they reflect the religious decisions and convictions of the Judaism(s)⁶ during the Persian and Hellenistic eras.⁷ But when did Judaism (or Judaisms) begin? Usually, the term »Judaism« is applied to the religion of ancient Israel and Judah only when this religion was no longer *exclusively* based on the temple cult and the monarchies of Israel and Judah – and that means no earlier than the so-called Babylonian exile.⁸ The term Ἰουδαϊσμός »Ioudaismos« is first attested in the Maccabean period, and it reflects the encounter with »Hellenism.«⁹ Shaye Cohen, however, prefers to render this term with »Jewishness« rather than »Judaism.«¹⁰ Be that as it may, one should recall that, until 70 CE,¹¹ ancient Judah's religion remained centred primarily on the sacrifices in the temple of Jerusalem, with the same situation applying to the Samaritans at different periods as well. Of course, at that time, some synagogues in the diaspora and in the land alike had already been established, and the worship in these settings focused on liturgical and probably exegetical readings from what were considered Israel's holy writings. In the Hebrew Bible, very few passages clearly show that specific texts were considered to be authorities. John J. Collins's recent study of the Torah's normativity from Deuteronomy to Paul argues that the Torah's authority in the Second Temple period was not as central as usually assumed.¹² Indeed, by no means do all texts from the Second Temple period witness explicitly to the notion of the Torah as an authoritative text. Characteristic

Hebrew Bible,« in *Textual History of the Bible*, Vol. 1: *The Hebrew Bible*, ed. Armin Lange and Emanuel Tov (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 35–81; Timothy LIM and Kengo AKIYAMA, ed., *When Texts are Canonized* (BJS 359; Providence RI: Brown University Press, 2017); Lee M. McDONALD, *The Formation of the Bible*, 2 vols. (London: T&T Clark, 2017).

⁶ See Diana V. EDELMAN (ed.), *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms* (CBET 13; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995).

⁷ See Christoph LEVIN, »Die Entstehung des Judentums als Gegenstand der alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft,« in *Congress Volume Munich 2013*, ed. Christl M. Maier (VTS 163; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1–17.

⁸ Marc Z. BRETTLER, »Judaism in the Hebrew Bible? The Transition from Ancient Israelite Religion to Judaism,« *CBQ* 61 (1999), 429–447.

⁹ Steve MASON, »Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,« *JSJ* 38 (2007), 457–512.

¹⁰ Shaye J. D. COHEN, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1999).

¹¹ See Daniel R. SCHWARTZ, »Introduction: Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History? Three Stages of Modern Scholarship, and a Renewed Effort,« in *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History? On Jews and Judaism Before and After the Destruction of the Second Temple*, ed. idem and Zeev Weiss (AJEC 78; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1–19.

¹² John J. COLLINS, »The Transformation of the Torah in Second Temple Judaism,« *JSJ* 43 (2012), 455–474; IDEM, *The Invention of Judaism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

for the period is what Hindy Najman has called »the vitality of scripture within and beyond the ›canon‹.«¹³ In places like Elephantine, the Torah seemed neither present as a text nor followed by the Jews there.¹⁴

One should, therefore, be careful about interpreting pre-70 CE phenomena within the Hebrew Bible from a perspective governed by post-70 CE perceptions of Judaism. The texts of the Hebrew Bible were composed in a time when there was neither a Bible nor a Judaism that could be identified as a »book religion.« Or as Reinhard Kratz has put it, we have to safeguard the essential difference between »historical and biblical Israel«¹⁵ – biblical Israel has a Bible from the time of Moses onward, whereas historical Israel does not. In historical terms, the Bible is a post-biblical phenomenon.

1.2. Texts become authoritative not primarily because they claim authority, but because they are deemed authoritative

A specific text's authoritative *outlook* does not guarantee that it will become authoritative, normative, or canonical. Especially the apocalyptic literature that never, or only partly, became canonical in Judaism and Christianity is proof of this observation. More than most other texts, those that are considered apocalyptic exhibit extensive strategies for claiming divine origin.¹⁶ They claim to go back to heavenly revelations and visions, usually received by one of the great figures of the past such as Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Baruch, or Ezra.¹⁷ Yet these very texts had a hard time finding their way into a canon. The Syriac and the Ethiopic Bibles

¹³ Hindy NAJMAN, »The Vitality of Scripture within and Beyond the ›Canon‹,« *JSJ* 43 (2012), 497–518.

¹⁴ Reinhard G. KRATZ, »Temple and Torah: Reflections on the Legal Status of the Pentateuch between Elephantine and Qumran,« in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 77–103; IDEM, »Zwischen Elephantine und Qumran. Das Alte Testament im Rahmen des Antiken Judentums,« in *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007*, ed. André Lemaire (VTS 133; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 129–146; IDEM, »Elephantine und Alexandria. Nicht-biblisches und biblisches Judentum in Ägypten,« in *Alexandria*, ed. Tobias Georges et alii (COMES 1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013), 193–208. See also comprehensive treatment by Gard GRANERØD, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period: Studies in the Religion and Society of the Judean Community at Elephantine* (BZAW 488; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016).

¹⁵ Reinhard G. KRATZ, *Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁶ See, e.g., Ernst HAAG, *Das hellenistische Zeitalter. Israel und die Bibel im 4. bis 1. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Biblische Enzyklopädie 9; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003); Michael TILLY, *Apokalyptik* (UTB 3651; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Florian FÖRG, *Die Ursprünge der alttestamentlichen Apokalyptik* (Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 45; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2013).

¹⁷ See Hindy NAJMAN, Itamar MANOFF and Eva MROCZEK, »How to Make Sense of Pseudonymous Attribution: The Cases of 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch,« in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*, ed. Matthias Henze (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 2012), 308–336.

were more receptive to these writings than others, but even the Apocalypse of John remained contested for many centuries.

On the other hand, texts like Song of Songs or Qoheleth became biblical despite pursuing a very limited, literary strategy of authorization. They are ascribed to King Solomon,¹⁸ and they are rather untheological (in the case of Song of Songs) and even sceptical (Qoheleth). Even more astonishing is the book of Esther's canonical status. It neither mentions God nor is its authorship linked to a figure from Israel's past.¹⁹ For these writings, a specific reception was apparently much more important for their authority than their production.

It is fairly safe to say that when investigating the process of how biblical writings became biblical – that is, how their authority as normative writings came about – both perspectives need to be taken into account. An authoritative text is first and foremost a text that is *considered* to be authoritative by a certain community,²⁰ but an authoritative text also needs some features in and of itself that bring a community to consider it authoritative. Therefore, the factors of textual production and reception play a role in a text's becoming authoritative.

1.3. The development of textual authority in ancient Israel and Judah must consider the originally political role of some core texts

The kernel of the Hebrew Bible canon is the Torah. The Torah is its most authoritative element and, in historical terms, it is the oldest part of the biblical canon.²¹ Why did the Torah become authoritative?²² Over the past few decades, we have

¹⁸ See Niels Peter LEMCHE, »Solomon as Cultural Memory,« in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination*, ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 158–181; see also Joseph VERHEYDEN (ed.), *The Figure of Solomon in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Tradition: King, Sage and Architect* (TBN 16; Leiden: Brill, 2013).

¹⁹ See Harald Martin WAHL, »Glaube ohne Gott? Zur Rede vom Gott Israels im hebräischen Buch Esther,« *BZ* 45 (2001), 37–54. The LXX of Esther offers some theological interpretation: Kristin DE TROYER, *Die Septuaginta und die Endgestalt des Alten Testaments* (UTB 2599; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 26–48.

²⁰ See David CARR, »Canonization in the Context of Community: An Outline of the Formation of the Tanakh and the Christian Bible,« in *A Gift of God in Due Season*, ed. Richard D. Weis and David Carr (JSOTSup 225; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 22–64.

²¹ See KNOPPERS and LEVINSON, *The Pentateuch as Torah* (n. 14). For recent approaches to its composition see Thomas RÖMER, »Zwischen Urkunden, Fragmenten und Ergänzungen: Zum Stand der Pentateuchforschung,« *ZAW* 125 (2013), 2–24; IDEM, »Der Pentateuch,« in *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments*, Vol. 1, ed. Walter Dietrich et alii (Theologische Wissenschaft 1/1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014), 52–166; Konrad SCHMID, »Der Pentateuch und seine Theologiegeschichte,« *ZTK* III (2014), 239–271; Reinhard G. KRATZ, »The Analysis of the Pentateuch: An Attempt to Overcome Barriers of Thinking,« *ZAW* 128 (2016), 529–561 and Jan C. GERTZ, Bernard M. LEVINSON, Dalit ROM-SHILONI, and Konrad SCHMID, ed., *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures between Europe, Israel, and North America* (FAT 111, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016).

²² See Catherine HEZSER, »Torah als ›Gesetz? Überlegungen zum Torahverständnis im antiken Judentum,« in *Ist die Tora Gesetz? Zum Gesetzesverständnis im Alten Testament*,

learned that this process was fuelled by two very important political factors that developed the notion of textual authority within the Torah.²³ The first one is the formation of the book of Deuteronomy within its Neo-Assyrian political context as the kernel of the kernel of the Hebrew Bible canon. Since the 1960s scholars like Rintje Frankena and Moshe Weinfeld have pointed out that the book of Deuteronomy is a subversive reception of Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties.²⁴ In the 1990s Eckart Otto and Bernard Levinson confirmed this approach.²⁵ The recent findings in Tell Tayinat prove that those vassal treaties were also employed in the western region of the Assyrian Empire and thus in all likelihood also applied to Judah, probably under King Manasseh.²⁶

What does »subversive reception« of Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties mean? The vassal treaties obliged the leaders of subdued people and nations to be loyal to the Neo-Assyrian king and not to engage in any other political relations. What does the book of Deuteronomy do? It also claims Israel's complete loyalty, but toward God himself rather than an earthly king, whether the Neo-Assyrian or the Judean king.

In Deuteronomy's language, this claim upon Israel reads as follows:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד וְאַהֲרֹבֶת אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךְ וּבְכָל־נֶפֶשְׁךְ וּבְכָל־מַدְּךְ	Hear, O Israel: YHWH, our God, is one YHWH. You shall love YHWH, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.
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Frühjudentum und Neuen Testament, ed. Udo Rüterswörden (BThS 167; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 119–139.

²³ See Konrad SCHMID, »Anfänge politikförmiger Religion: Die Theologisierung politisch-imperialer Begriffe in der Religionsgeschichte des antiken Israel als Grundlage autoritärer und toleranter Strukturmomente monotheistischer Religionen,« in *Religion – Wirtschaft – Politik: Forschungszugänge zu einem aktuellen transdisziplinären Feld*, ed. Antonius Liedhegener, Andreas Tunger-Zanetti, and Stephan Wirz (Zurich and Baden-Baden: Pano and Nomos, 2011), 161–177.

²⁴ Rintje FRANKENA, *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy* (OTS 14; Leiden: Brill, 1965), 122–154; Moshe WEINFELD, »Traces of Assyrian Treaty Formulae in Deuteronomy,« *Bib* 46 (1965), 417–427; IDEM, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

²⁵ Eckart OTTO, »Treueid und Gesetz. Die Ursprünge des Deuteronomiums im Horizont neuassyrischen Vertragsrechts,« *ZAR* 2 (1996), 1–52; IDEM, *Das Deuteronomium: Politische Theologie und Rechtsreform in Juda und Assyrien* (BZAW 284; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999); Bernard M. LEVINSON and Jeffrey STACKERT, »Between the Covenant Code and Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty: Deuteronomy 13 and the Composition of Deuteronomy,« *JAJ* 3 (2012), 123–140. Carly L. CROUCH, *Israel and the Assyrians: Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon, and the Nature of Subversion* (SBL Ancient Near East Monographs 8, Atlanta: SBL, 2014) argues against this assumption.

²⁶ See Hans-Ulrich STEYMANS, »Deuteronomy 28 and Tell Tayinat,« *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34 (2013), 1–13.

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