

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 5A, Positions on the Date of Deuteronomy Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 5A, Positions on the Date of Deuteronomy, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt surveys scholarly debate regarding the authorship and dating of Deuteronomy. Several scholars, including Tennant and Holscher, argued for a post-621 BC composition, while others, like Ewald, Westphal, and Oestreicher, proposed earlier dates, pre-dating Josiah's reforms. The lecture also discusses von Rad's form-critical approach, emphasizing Deuteronomy's structural unity and suggesting a pre-monarchic origin connected to covenant renewal festivals at Shechem. Finally, the text mentions scholars who maintained a Mosaic authorship, contrasting with the prevailing critical views. The lecture concludes by highlighting the ongoing debate surrounding the book's structural integrity and its implications for interpretation.

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 5A – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Pentateuch → Deuteronomy).



**Vannoy_Deut_Sessi
on05A.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 5A, Positions on the Date of Deuteronomy

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture excerpts on Deuteronomy:

Briefing Document: Analysis of Deuteronomy's Authorship, Date, and Structure

I. Introduction

This document analyzes various perspectives on the authorship, date, and structure of the Book of Deuteronomy, based on the provided lecture excerpts. The lecture explores both traditional views and the challenges posed by critical scholarship, spanning from the 19th century to contemporary thought. It emphasizes the shift in focus from solely literary criticism to form criticism and the impact this has had on understanding the book's integrity and origins.

II. Key Themes and Ideas

- **The Central Question:** The overarching theme revolves around determining when and by whom Deuteronomy was written. This question directly impacts our understanding of its authority and its place within the Old Testament narrative.
- **Challenging Mosaic Authorship:** The document presents a range of scholars who have challenged the traditional Mosaic authorship, proposing later dates for the book's composition. These dates range from the pre-monarchic period, to during the monarchy, all the way to post-exilic times.
- **The Wellhausen Theory and Its Challenges:** The lecture highlights Julius Wellhausen's influential theory, which places Deuteronomy in the time of Josiah (around 621 BC) and connects it directly to the centralization of worship in Jerusalem. However, various scholars have since challenged this view, proposing alternative dates and origins.
- **Centralization vs. Purification of Worship:** A key point of debate is whether Deuteronomy primarily emphasizes the centralization of worship at a single sanctuary (as proposed by Wellhausen) or the purification of worship practices. This distinction is crucial for dating the book and understanding its purpose.

- **The Role of Form Criticism:** The lecture emphasizes the importance of form criticism, which focuses on the literary genre and structure of the book as a whole, rather than just analyzing its individual literary strands. This approach, notably employed by Gerhard von Rad, has led to new perspectives on the book's unity and origins.
- **Deuteronomy's Structure as a Key to Understanding:** The lecture highlights how the structural integrity of Deuteronomy has been questioned and defended. Scholars like Von Rad and Meredith Kline emphasize the importance of the book's overall structure in uncovering its meaning and context.

III. Scholarly Positions on the Date of Deuteronomy

The lecture outlines several perspectives on the date of Deuteronomy, moving away from simply attributing authorship to Moses.

- **Post-Exilic Dates (ca. 500 BC):H. Tennant:** Argues that Deuteronomy 17, which outlines rules for a future king, could only have been written when there was no king on the throne but a high probability of one being appointed. He also points out the stipulation that the king must be a native Israelite, which is unlikely to have been needed after the early post-exodus period. He suggests a date around 500 BC.
- **Holscher:** Also supports a date around 500 BC, post-Josiah, arguing that Deuteronomy's call for a centralized sanctuary was "impractical idealism" in pre-exilic times. He viewed the book as the product of "wishful thinking of unrealistic post-exilic dreamers." He saw it as a priestly document not prophetic.
- **Later Monarchical Dates (Earlier than 621 BC but later than the beginning of the Monarchy):H. Ewald:** Proposed that Deuteronomy was written in the reign of Manasseh, preceding Josiah.
- **G. Westphal:** Argued that Deuteronomy inspired Hezekiah's reforms, moving the potential date further back.
- **Th. Oestreicher:** Challenged the idea that both Josiah's reform and Deuteronomy demanded centralization of worship, arguing rather for "cult-reinheit" (purity of worship) as the primary concern, rather than "cult-einheit" (unity of worship). Oestreicher places the book back to the 900's B.C. He also stated that the reforms of Josiah were underway before the law book was found.

- **Adam C. Welch:** Argued that the focus of Deuteronomy was on the *character* of the places of worship, not on a single location. He proposed that the call for centralization in Deuteronomy 12:1-7 was a later insertion and that the book contained material from Northern Israel from the time of Samuel.
- **Pre-Monarchic, But Non-Mosaic Dates: Edward Robertson:** Argued that Deuteronomy was a codification of laws from various sanctuaries brought together by Samuel to promote religious unity at the rise of the monarchy.
- **R. Brinker:** Similar to Robertson, but emphasizes purification, rather than centralization as the main purpose.
- **Mosaic Date:** The lecture acknowledges that a traditional view attributing Deuteronomy to Moses has been consistently upheld, even in the face of modern critical scholarship. Some scholars who have maintained this position: James Orr, H.M. Weiner, O.T. Allis, E.J. Young, J. Ridderbos, G.C. Aalders, and R.K. Harrison.
- It is also noted that even recently new lines of argumentation have been developed which strongly support the traditional view.

IV. The Structural Integrity of Deuteronomy

- **Challenges to Integrity:** The lecture highlights challenges to the book's structural integrity, especially concerning its introductions. It notes the views of G.E. Wright and Martin Noth, who suggest that Deuteronomy has two separate introductions and that Deuteronomy should be grouped into a "Deuteronomic History" extending through 2 Kings, rather than with the rest of the Pentateuch. Noth saw the first four chapters as the introduction to that historical work, and the second introduction, chapters 5-11, as an introduction to the book within that larger structure.
- **Von Rad's View:** Gerhard von Rad, in contrast, highlighted the book's overall structure as a deliberate and unified form. He identified four sections:
 1. Historical presentation and exhortation (Deuteronomy 1-11)
 2. The reading of the law (Deuteronomy 12-26)
 3. The sealing of the covenant (Deuteronomy 26:16-19)
 4. Blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 27ff).

- **Von Rad's Cultic Liturgy Thesis:** Von Rad proposed that Deuteronomy's structure reflects an ancient covenant renewal festival, likely held at Shechem. He argued that the book's material was preserved and transmitted by the Levites and that the book's form was not *ad hoc*, but arose from this cultic liturgy.
- **Meredith Kline's Form Critical Approach:** The lecture introduces Meredith Kline's work as an example of a form-critical approach that respects the integrity of the book, using the structure of the book for understanding its meaning.

V. Key Quotes

- **Tennant on Deuteronomy 17:** "Chapter 17 could not have been written when there was a king on the throne. But only when there was the probability that one would be elected and it was necessary to insist that certain things must be adhered to."
- **Holscher on Centralization:** "To demand a single sanctuary in pre-exilic times would have been a piece of impractical idealism."
- **Holscher on Deuteronomy's Nature:** "Deuteronomy was not a program for reform, but the wishful thinking of unrealistic post-exilic dreamers."
- **Oestreicher on Worship:** "Deuteronomy was concerned with cult-reinheit not cult-einheit...Josiah's reform was more concerned with purity of worship than unity of worship at a central sanctuary."
- **Von Rad on Deuteronomy's Form:** "We may leave aside many of the difficulties currently raised by Deuteronomy and confine ourselves to the matter that has barely been touched on by scholars despite all the controversy about the nature of the book. What are we to say about the form of Deuteronomy with its remarkable succession of teachings, laws and so on?"
- **Von Rad on the Unity of the Book:** "It is precluded by the recognition of the fact... that Deuteronomy is, in form, an organic whole."
- **Von Rad on Deuteronomy's Cultic Origin:** "Deuteronomy shows a remarkable arrangement...This arrangement is not due to literary considerations. To the contrary; we must suppose that Deuteronomy is here following a traditional cultic pattern, probably back to a liturgy of a cultic festival."
- **Von Rad on the Final Form of Deuteronomy:** "in its present form Deuteronomy is to be attributed to the Levites, the priests, who taught the law during the monarchical period."

- **Von Rad on the Location of Deuteronomy's Origin:** "we shall suppose one of the sanctuaries in Northern Israel, Shechem or Bethel, to be Deuteronomy's place of origin in the centuries before 621. There are no sufficient reasons for going further back."
- **Robertson on Deuteronomy's Purpose:** "With the rise of kingship, there was a need for unification. So for that purpose a summary of legislation comprising the codification of the law codes of the sanctuaries was prepared under Samuel's guidance, and that code was the book of Deuteronomy."
- **G.E. Wright on Deuteronomy's Introductions:** "Neither needs the other; they seem independent of each other."

VI. Implications

The various positions on the date, authorship, and structure of Deuteronomy have major implications for understanding the book's message and its place within the canon:

- **Authority and Inspiration:** Attributing the book to Moses gives it a uniquely authoritative status, while later dates raise questions about its source and the nature of its inspiration.
- **Historical Context:** Different dating scenarios place the book in different historical contexts, which influences how we interpret its laws and teachings.
- **Theological Message:** The debate over centralization vs. purification of worship affects how we understand the core theology of Deuteronomy.
- **Old Testament Canon:** The placement of Deuteronomy is changed depending on whether one views it as part of the Pentateuch or as part of the "Deuteronomic History."

VII. Conclusion

The lecture excerpts provide a detailed overview of the complex academic discussion surrounding Deuteronomy. It highlights the shift from traditional views to critical approaches and finally to form-critical analysis. By exploring these various perspectives, one gains a more nuanced understanding of the book's complexities and its enduring significance.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 5A, Positions on the Date of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Tennant, why could Deuteronomy 17 not have been written when a king was already on the throne?
2. What was Holscher's view on the practicality of a central sanctuary as described in Deuteronomy?
3. How did Oestreicher's view of Josiah's reforms differ from Wellhausen's regarding cultic purity and unity?
4. What was Adam C. Welch's view on the importance of Deuteronomy 12:1-7 in relation to the centralization of worship?
5. What was von Rad's unique contribution to the study of Deuteronomy, and how did he use form criticism in his approach?
6. What are the four sections of Deuteronomy as described by von Rad, and what is the significance of that structure?
7. What was von Rad's view on the origin of the literary form of Deuteronomy and its connection to Israelite cultic practices?
8. What was Edward Robertson's argument for a pre-monarchic, non-Mosaic origin of Deuteronomy, and what role did Samuel play in that theory?
9. How did Wright and Noth challenge the structural integrity of Deuteronomy, and what is the "Deuteronomistic History Book" theory?
10. How did Meredith Kline's approach to Deuteronomy differ from that of previous scholars, especially regarding the integrity of the book?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Tennant argued that Deuteronomy 17's stipulations for a future king would not make sense if a king was already present, as it addresses the conditions under which a king should be chosen and what restrictions he should adhere to. Therefore, it had to be written in a time when a king was only a probability.

2. Holscher believed that a central sanctuary, as seemingly demanded in Deuteronomy, was impractical in pre-exilic times because it would be impossible for the entire population to travel to Jerusalem for a week while leaving their farms and animals unattended.
3. Oestreicher argued that Josiah's reforms were more focused on cultic purity (cult-reinheit) than cultic unity (cult-einheit) at a central sanctuary, unlike Wellhausen's view that the reforms demanded centralization of worship, and that the reform had begun before the Law Book was found.
4. Welch believed that Deuteronomy 12:1-7 was a later insertion and did not represent the emphasis of the entire book, which he felt was more focused on the character of the places of worship rather than their centralization.
5. Von Rad uniquely applied form criticism to the study of Deuteronomy, focusing on its overall structure and genre, emphasizing that its form indicated it was an organic whole, not just an amalgamation of various sources.
6. Von Rad divided Deuteronomy into four sections: historical presentation with paranetic material (1-11), the law (12-26), sealing of the covenant (26:16-19), and blessings/curses (27ff). He found the structure significant, believing it was not created ad hoc, but rather developed from the literary structure of covenant renewal ceremonies.
7. Von Rad proposed that the form of Deuteronomy came from a traditional cultic liturgy, likely connected to a covenant renewal festival held at Shechem, where covenantal elements were preserved, developed over time, and transmitted to people by Levites during the monarchical period.
8. Robertson argued that in the pre-monarchic period, decentralized sanctuaries developed divergent legal traditions. With the rise of kingship, a need for religious unity emerged, which led to a codification of laws under Samuel's guidance, resulting in the book of Deuteronomy as a means to create unity.
9. Wright and Noth challenged the book's integrity by suggesting that the book has two introductions (1-4 and 5-11). They argued that Deuteronomy was part of a larger "Deuteronomistic History Book" spanning from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings, rather than part of the Pentateuch.

10. Kline utilized a form-critical approach but, unlike previous scholars, honored the book's integrity instead of constructing theories that conflicted with it. He analyzed the book's structure while accepting it as a literary whole, which offered a new perspective on interpretation and date.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer each of the following essay questions in a thoughtful and well-organized essay format.

1. Compare and contrast the views of Tennant and Holscher on the dating of Deuteronomy, and discuss how their arguments differ from the classic Wellhausen position.
2. Analyze the arguments for a pre-monarchic, non-Mosaic origin of Deuteronomy by examining the perspectives of Robertson and Brinker. Discuss the significance of the role of sanctuary practices in their respective theories.
3. Discuss von Rad's use of form criticism and his conclusions regarding the unity of Deuteronomy's structure. How does this approach challenge or complement other theories discussed in the material?
4. Explain the contributions of both Wellhausen and Noth and their theories regarding the dating, sources and structural unity of Deuteronomy.
5. Evaluate the arguments for and against the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. Discuss how more recent approaches, such as Kline's, might impact our understanding of the book's composition.

Glossary of Key Terms

Ad Hoc: Created or done for a particular purpose as necessary; impromptu.

Covenant Code: A legal collection found in Exodus 20:23–23:33, often considered to be one of the earliest legal codes in the Old Testament.

Cult-Einheit: A German term meaning "cultic unity," referring to the idea of centralization of worship, especially at a single sanctuary.

Cult-Reinheit: A German term meaning "cultic purity," referring to the proper and pure ways of worship, often seen as a separate emphasis from cultic unity.

Deuteronomic History: A historical narrative proposed by Martin Noth spanning the books of Deuteronomy through 2 Kings, theorized to have been compiled by a Deuteronomic historian during the exilic or post-exilic period.

Form Criticism: A method of biblical criticism that analyzes the structure and genre of literary units in order to understand their origin, function, and social context.

Genre: A category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.

Hexateuch: The first six books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua), sometimes treated as a unit.

Liturgy: A form or order of worship, especially a public one.

Paranetic Material: Exhortations, preaching, or teachings that are intended to instruct or persuade the audience, often found in the context of legal or historical narratives.

Pentateuch: The first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), also known as the Torah.

Post-Exilic: Referring to the period after the Babylonian exile (586 BCE), when the Jewish people were permitted to return to their homeland.

Pre-Exilic: Referring to the period before the Babylonian exile (586 BCE).

Priestly Code: A collection of laws and regulations found primarily in the book of Leviticus and parts of Exodus and Numbers, often associated with the priestly class in ancient Israel.

Wellhausen Position: The theory developed by Julius Wellhausen, proposing that the Pentateuch was compiled from four distinct sources (J, E, D, and P) and that Deuteronomy was a late, seventh-century text supporting Josiah's centralization of worship.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 5A, Positions on the Date of Deuteronomy, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Deuteronomy and Its Origins

1. **Why do some scholars date Deuteronomy to around 500 BC, long after Moses?**
2. Some scholars, like Tennant and Holscher, propose a late date for Deuteronomy (around 500 BC) based on several arguments. Tennant argued that the stipulations for a future king in Deuteronomy 17, specifically that the king be an Israelite, suggest a time when there was no king, but a clear expectation of one, potentially after the exile. Holscher believed that demanding a single, centralized sanctuary, as he interpreted Deuteronomy 12 to do, would have been impractical in pre-exilic times. He viewed Deuteronomy not as a reform program, but as the wishful thinking of post-exilic priests, essentially imagining an ideal past rather than reflecting a historical reality. These interpretations suggest the book was created to address the needs and desires of the post-exilic community.
3. **What is the Wellhausen position on the date and authorship of Deuteronomy, and how have others challenged it?**
4. The classic Wellhausen position assigns a late date (around 621 BC, during the reign of King Josiah) and a prophetic background to Deuteronomy. Wellhausen connected Deuteronomy with the reforms of Josiah, seeing the book as demanding a centralization of worship in Jerusalem, and seeing it as having a prophetic rather than a priestly origin. Many scholars have challenged this view. Some, like Ewald, pushed the date back to the reign of Manasseh, a few kings before Josiah. Others, like Westphal, believed the book was behind Hezekiah's reforms even earlier. Oestreicher and Welch argued that Deuteronomy was not primarily concerned with the *centralization* of worship (cultic unity), but rather with its *purity* (cultic reinheit), and both thought that Deuteronomy arose from Northern Israel at a time before Josiah. These scholars saw the book's emphasis to be focused on the character of the places of worship, not the number. Some scholars even locate the book's roots much earlier, before the monarchy, and some even try to defend Mosaic authorship.

5. **How did the idea of 'cultic purity' vs. 'cultic unity' influence views on Deuteronomy?**
6. Scholars like Oestreicher and Welch introduced the concepts of *cult-reinheit* (cultic purity) and *cult-einheit* (cultic unity) to challenge Wellhausen's view of Deuteronomy's emphasis. Wellhausen had argued that Deuteronomy mandated the centralization of worship, but these scholars countered by suggesting the book's primary concern was with the *purity* of worship, not its centralization. They argued that the reformers, including Josiah, were more concerned with eliminating idolatry and unapproved practices from the various existing places of worship than in mandating a single location. This shifted the discussion from a focus on centralized worship to one on proper ritual and practices wherever they occurred.
7. **What is Von Rad's contribution to the study of Deuteronomy?**
8. Gerhard von Rad shifted the focus of Deuteronomy studies from literary criticism to form criticism, emphasizing the overall structure and genre of the book. He argued that Deuteronomy's literary form was not an ad hoc creation but was tied to an ancient cultic pattern, specifically a covenant renewal festival. He identified four main sections within the book: a historical overview, a reading of the law, the sealing of the covenant, and blessings/curses. He posited that this structure stemmed from a liturgy used at a covenant renewal festival, possibly at Shechem in the pre-monarchical period, and later preserved and transmitted by Levites. Von Rad viewed Deuteronomy as a unified work and the product of a long process of development.
9. **How do scholars argue for a pre-monarchic origin of Deuteronomy?**
10. Scholars like Robertson and Brinker propose a pre-monarchic origin for Deuteronomy, dating it around the time of Samuel. Robertson suggested that after the settlement in Canaan, independent sanctuaries developed their own traditions. The rise of the monarchy necessitated a unified code, leading to the codification of law codes from various sanctuaries. Deuteronomy then becomes the standard law book created to bring unity. Brinker's view is similar, but focuses on purification rather than unification. Thus, these views connect Deuteronomy not with the later monarchy or a post-exilic ideal, but to a need in an earlier phase of Israel's history.

11. What arguments are used to defend the traditional Mosaic authorship and early date of Deuteronomy?

12. Despite the arguments for later dates, scholars such as James Orr, H.M. Weiner, O.T. Allis, E.J. Young, J. Ridderbos, G.C. Aalders, and R.K. Harrison have continued to advocate for the traditional Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. They maintain that the book itself presents Moses as its author and they engage critically with all the arguments that would date it later. They challenge the assumptions behind later dating and provide evidence to support its early origin during Moses' lifetime.

13. What challenges have been raised concerning the structural integrity of Deuteronomy?

14. The structural integrity of Deuteronomy has been questioned by scholars like Wellhausen, Wright and Noth, who argue that the book is not a unified work but is a collection of different sources, revisions and layers, and sometimes even part of a larger historical narrative. Wellhausen, for example, viewed chapters 12-26 as the core of the book with chapters 1-11 and 27-34 as secondary additions. Wright, following Noth, highlighted what he saw as two independent introductions (chapters 1-4 and 5-11) arguing that 1-4 introduce a "Deuteronomic history" while 5-11 introduce the book of Deuteronomy itself. They therefore see Deuteronomy as not a part of the Pentateuch, but the head of a different collection, Deuteronomy through 2 Kings. These views challenge the idea that the book had one author or a uniform development, emphasizing instead, its complex and layered composition.

15. How does the form-critical approach impact interpretations of Deuteronomy's structure?

16. Form-critical approaches, as used by von Rad and Kline, emphasize the literary structure and genre of Deuteronomy, focusing on the form as a reflection of its intended purpose and origins. Von Rad's emphasis on the cultic form suggests that Deuteronomy's structure is tied to ancient religious practice, specifically the covenant renewal ceremony. Kline's use of form criticism honors the text's integrity, exploring the book's literary and rhetorical features without imposing late dates. These form-critical approaches highlight the unified structure of Deuteronomy, challenging the view that it is a fragmented or disjointed text, and they support a view of the book that fits with its own internal claims.