Dr. Robert Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 7, J. A. Thompson's David/Solomon Date Examined Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 7, J. A. Thompson's David/Solomon Date Examined, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt discusses the dating of Deuteronomy, focusing on the debate surrounding its Mosaic authorship. Several scholars' opinions are presented, contrasting views that propose a late date (7th-6th centuries BC) with those arguing for an earlier date (11th-10th centuries BC, or even Mosaic authorship). The discussion centers on the treaty-covenant form of Deuteronomy and whether its structure indicates a late or early date of composition. Different interpretations of the historical prologue, geographical expressions, and the relationship between Deuteronomy and the writings of the prophets are examined. Ultimately, the lecturer concludes that the evidence supports a Mosaic origin, despite acknowledging the complexity of the arguments.

2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 7 – 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_Session07.mp3

3. **Briefing Document: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 7, J. A. Thompson's David/Solomon Date Examined**

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

Briefing Document: Deuteronomy and Covenant Form

Executive Summary:

This briefing document analyzes the lecture notes on Deuteronomy, focusing on the debate surrounding its dating and the influence of ancient Near Eastern treaty structures on its form. The lecture primarily addresses the arguments concerning whether Deuteronomy was composed in the Mosaic era (around the 13th century BCE) or at a later date (7th-11th centuries BCE), possibly even during the Babylonian exile. The core of the discussion revolves around the parallels between Deuteronomy and ancient treaty forms, specifically Hittite and Assyrian treaties. While some scholars see the structural similarities as evidence of an early Mosaic date (as argued by Kline and Kitchen), others contend that the treaty form was imposed on the text later (as suggested by Thompson, Frankina, and Weinfeld), or that the analogy doesn't exist at all (Nicholson). Ultimately, the lecturer (Vannoy) sides with a Mosaic dating, asserting that the weight of evidence supports Kline's and Kitchen's arguments, which rely on the structural parallels with earlier treaties.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. **The Treaty/Covenant Form and the Dating of Deuteronomy:**

- The lecture heavily focuses on the debate surrounding the influence of ancient Near Eastern treaty forms on the structure and content of Deuteronomy. This is a central element in the dating of the book.

- **Kline's Argument:** Meredith Kline argues for a Mosaic date (around the 13th Century BCE) based on the structural similarities between Deuteronomy and Hittite treaties, which include a historical prologue and stipulations. He considers the focus on the succession of Joshua and the treaty's orientation towards the Mosaic age as evidence against a late origin of the book.
- Quote from Kline: "If it is once recognized that the Deuteronomic treaty must have been produced whole for a particular occasion, the pervasive orientation of the book to the situation of Israel in the Mosaic age, and especially the central concern of this treaty with, of all things, the dynastic succession of Joshua, is always awkward for advocates of a 7th century origin of the book. It becomes quite inexplicable for them."
- **Thompson's Reservations:** J. Thompson proposes a date for Deuteronomy during the 11th-10th centuries BCE (Solomon and David), arguing that:
- The treaty form could have been imposed on the text long after Moses' time.
- Quote: "The possibility must be allowed that Deuteronomy was cast in the shape of an ancient treaty by someone who wrote long after Moses' day."
- The historical prologue isn't a strong date indicator, as Assyrian treaties might have had them implied, stated orally, or lost due to breakage.
- He cites a disputed 7th century text with a historical prologue, attempting to undermine the link between early treaties and the historical prologue.
- **Other Late Date Arguments:** R. Frankina and M. Weinfeld argue that Deuteronomy's curses are based on Assyrian treaty curses, and that the treaty form is imposed by court scribes during the time of Hezekiah or Josiah (7th-8th Century).
- **Kitchen's Counterarguments:** K.A. Kitchen counters Thompson's arguments by:
- Highlighting the difference between early treaties (14th-13th centuries BCE) which have historical prologues, and later treaties, which do not.
- Argues the 7th century text cited by Thompson does not have a true historical prologue.
- Emphasizes that Deuteronomy corresponds to the 14th-13th century treaty form, making it of at least 1200 BC.

- Quote: “The present writer cannot see any legitimate way of escape from the crystal clear evidence of the correspondence of Deuteronomy with the remarkably stable treaty, or covenant, form of the 14th-13th centuries B.C."
- **Vannoy's Position:** The lecturer ultimately sides with Kline and Kitchen, stating that Thompson's arguments do not outweigh the evidence for an early Mosaic date of Deuteronomy. He sees the weight of the evidence pointing in the Mosaic direction, noting the unlikelihood of the treaty form being imposed on the material at a later date.

1. **Historical Prologue:**

- The presence or absence of a historical prologue is a central point of contention in the debate over Deuteronomy's date.
- **Kline's Argument:** Kline considers it significant that early Hittite treaties had them while later Assyrian treaties did not, positioning Deuteronomy as early based on its prologue.
- **Thompson's Rebuttal:** Thompson downplays the importance of the historical prologue, saying that Assyrian treaties might have assumed, stated it orally, or that it might be lost to damage of text.
- **Kitchen's Response:** Kitchen asserts that early treaties do have the prologues and later treaties do not, countering Thompson’s claims regarding the 7th century text and its supposed prologue.

1. **Internal Structure of Deuteronomy:**

- The lecturer notes the structural relationship between chapters 1-11 (Yahweh’s action towards Israel) and chapters 12-18 (Israel’s response to that action). McConville points out that this action-response characteristic is deeply embedded in the language of Deuteronomy.

1. **"Beyond the Jordan" Expression:**

- Thompson uses the expression "beyond the Jordan" as possible evidence for a post-Mosaic authorship, as the language seemingly implies a viewpoint from inside Palestine.
- The lecturer shows the expression appears to be ambiguous based on its contextual usage. Vannoy contends that the expression lacks definition and does not support arguments for a post-Mosaic origin.

1. **Prophetic Influence Debate:**

- Thompson argues that some passages in the prophets reminiscent of Deuteronomy do not prove that the prophets knew Deuteronomy. He proposes that it is possible that Deuteronomy is based on the prophets, suggesting a later date.
- Vannoy acknowledges that proving priority between the prophets and Deuteronomy is difficult, and that this argument is not conclusive.

1. **Post-Mosaic Additions:**

- Thompson suggests that some passages, such as the account of Moses' death and geographical expressions, suggest post-Mosaic additions.
- Vannoy believes these aren't significant and does not oppose the addition of the account of Moses' death to the end of the book.

1. **Rejection of the Treaty/Covenant Analogy:**

- Nicholson argues against the treaty/covenant analogy altogether, and wishes to return to the Wellhausen hypothesis that there was no concept of covenant before the late date for Deuteronomy.
- Vannoy and Kitchen disagree with this claim, emphasizing the strength of evidence supporting the treaty/covenant relationship.

1. **Curses:**

- The lecture discusses the debate around curses of the treaties. Frankina cites the close similarities between curses in Esarhaddon treaties and Deuteronomy as proof that Deuteronomy borrowed from them.
- Kitchen and Kline counter by arguing that formulations of curses are stereotypical, and the curses can be formulated and used for centuries, even between different cultures.

Conclusion:

The lecture highlights the complex and ongoing debate surrounding the authorship and dating of Deuteronomy. While various scholars offer differing views based on interpretations of the text and its parallels with ancient Near Eastern treaties, the lecturer and a number of scholars (Kline, Kitchen, McConville) lean towards a Mosaic date based on the structural and thematic evidence. The lecture stresses that there are still debates to be had and that the issue isn't completely settled. The lecture also indicates that many arguments, such as “beyond the Jordan” and influence of the prophets on the text are not conclusive in proving either a Mosaic or late date of authorship. This also suggests that much of the debate comes from presuppositions and an unwillingness to accept the Mosaic origin of the text.

Further Research:

- The specific articles mentioned in the lecture, particularly those by Kitchen, Thompson, Frankina, and the two Campbells, should be reviewed for a more in-depth understanding of the arguments.
- The works of Wellhausen should be examined, specifically regarding the documentary hypothesis of the Old Testament's origin.
- Further examination of Hittite and Assyrian treaties should be done to understand the specific structures being discussed.
- Explore the arguments from different points of view, such as Mosaic authorship versus late authorship and conservative versus liberal theological interpretations of the text.

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of the complex issues presented in the lecture, providing a solid base for further study.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 7, J. A. Thompson's David/Solomon Date Examined

Deuteronomy Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is the primary point of disagreement between Kline and Thompson regarding the dating of Deuteronomy?
2. According to Thompson, what are two reasons why the historical prologue may not be a strong indicator for dating?
3. How does Kitchen respond to Thompson's claim that a 7th-century treaty contains a historical prologue?
4. What is McConville's conclusion about the treaty form in Deuteronomy and how does it relate to the structure of the book?
5. According to Kitchen, when does Deuteronomy's basic structure and content suggest it originated?
6. What argument do some scholars use about the relationship between the prophets and Deuteronomy, and how does Thompson challenge this argument?
7. What are two examples Thompson offers as possible post-Mosaic additions to Deuteronomy?
8. How is the phrase "beyond the Jordan" used in the book of Deuteronomy?
9. What is Nicholson's main argument regarding the treaty form and the covenant form in Deuteronomy, and how does Kitchen respond?
10. What is the significance of the concept of "oath" in relation to covenant, according to Vannoy?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Kline argues that Deuteronomy's treaty structure points to a Mosaic origin (1200s BC) based on its similarity to earlier Hittite treaties, while Thompson suggests it could have been cast into that form much later, around the time of the United Monarchy (11th-10th centuries BC).

2. Thompson argues that the absence of a historical prologue in Assyrian and Aramaic treaties may not be significant because the prologue could have been assumed, stated orally, or could have been in a broken section of the text.
3. Kitchen disputes Thompson's claim by pointing out that the 7th-century text in question is fragmentary, making the presence of a historical prologue unclear, and states that the so-called prologue in the Ashurbanipal and Kidar treaty is a single historical allusion, not a true prologue.
4. McConville concludes that the action-response characteristic of a treaty is embedded deeply in the language of Deuteronomy, connecting Yahweh's actions in chapters 1-11 with Israel's obligations in chapters 12-18, and that the treaty form challenges the late dating of Deuteronomy.
5. Kitchen argues that the basic structure and content of Deuteronomy align with the remarkably stable treaty/covenant form of the 14th-13th centuries B.C. (around 1200 B.C. at the latest), indicating a much earlier origin than suggested by the Wellhausen school.
6. Some scholars claim that prophetic passages with language similar to Deuteronomy demonstrate the prophets' familiarity with Deuteronomy, but Thompson suggests that Deuteronomy may be based on the prophets, rather than vice-versa, meaning a late date for Deuteronomy.
7. Thompson suggests that the account of Moses' death in chapter 34, and the geographical expression "beyond Jordan," are possible post-Mosaic additions; he argues the viewpoint of the land is from inside of Canaan and not from the outside (where Moses delivered the sermons).
8. The phrase "beyond the Jordan" is used ambiguously in Deuteronomy, sometimes referring to the eastern side (Transjordan) and sometimes to the western side, indicating that the phrase refers to a region in reference to the Jordan and its use must be determined by context.
9. Nicholson denies any analogy between the treaty form and the covenant form, claiming the idea of covenant didn't exist before the assumed late date of Deuteronomy, which Kitchen refutes citing early evidence of covenant in other literatures and calling the claim against all evidence.
10. According to Vannoy, the covenant relationship itself and the covenant form can be seen as a form of an oath, which is evidenced by Israel's repeated declarations of accepting the terms of the covenant, and he argues they are near synonyms.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer the following questions in a well-organized essay format.

1. Compare and contrast Kline's view of Deuteronomy's dating with Thompson's. Discuss their key arguments and the evidence they use to support their positions.
2. Analyze the significance of the historical prologue in the dating of Deuteronomy. Evaluate the arguments for and against its presence or absence as a strong indicator of when the book was written.
3. Discuss the role of the treaty form (specifically, the Hittite treaty form) in understanding Deuteronomy's structure and date of composition. Consider the arguments that support and challenge a treaty-based interpretation of Deuteronomy.
4. Explore the different arguments regarding the relationship between the prophets and Deuteronomy. How has this relationship been used to argue for both early and late dating of Deuteronomy?
5. Evaluate the concept of a “Mosaic” authorship of Deuteronomy. Consider the challenges to a Mosaic date such as the alleged presence of post-Mosaic additions and the issue of the book’s perspective.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Sitz im Leben:** A German term meaning "setting in life" or "situation in life." It refers to the historical and social context in which a text or tradition was developed.
- **Treaty Form:** The structural and formal conventions used in ancient Near Eastern treaties, typically involving elements like a preamble, historical prologue, stipulations, blessings, curses, and witnesses.
- **Hittite Treaties:** Treaties from the ancient Hittite civilization (ca. 1600-1178 BCE) that are often cited as an early example of the treaty form and are used as comparisons to the biblical covenant.
- **Assyrian Treaties:** Treaties from the Assyrian empire (ca. 911-609 BCE) that differ from Hittite treaties in that they lack a historical prologue.
- **Aramaic Treaties:** Treaties written in Aramaic, such as the Sefire treaties (ca. 8th century BCE), used in the discussion of treaty form and dating in relation to Deuteronomy.
- **Historical Prologue:** A section in ancient treaties that provides a historical overview of the relationship between the parties involved, often detailing past actions and events that justify the current treaty agreement.
- **Wellhausen School:** A school of thought in biblical scholarship that developed the Documentary Hypothesis, arguing that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) is a composite text created from different sources written at different times, with Deuteronomy being attributed to a late, 7th century BCE origin.
- **Deuteronomic School:** A scholarly term used in the lecture to discuss a possible group of authors or editors who might have been responsible for shaping the final form of Deuteronomy. This connects to the idea of a late date (time of Josiah) for Deuteronomy.
- **Mosaic Authorship:** The traditional view that Moses wrote the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), including Deuteronomy, often in the 13th century BCE.
- **Transjordan:** The region east of the Jordan River.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 7, J. A. Thompson's David/Solomon Date Examined, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Deuteronomy's Origin and Structure

1. **What is the core debate surrounding the dating of the Book of Deuteronomy, and what are the main positions?** The central debate revolves around whether Deuteronomy originated in the time of Moses (around the 13th century BC) or much later, during or after the time of the monarchy (11th-7th centuries BC). The traditional view, often associated with figures like Meredith Kline, posits Mosaic authorship, placing it in the context of the treaty forms of the late Bronze Age. In contrast, scholars such as J. Thompson, Moshe Weinfeld, and R. Frankina, argue for a later date, suggesting that the treaty form was imposed upon existing material by later scribes. A more recent position, presented by Nicholson, questions the very analogy between Deuteronomy and ancient treaties.
2. **How does the treaty form of ancient Near Eastern treaties relate to Deuteronomy, and what arguments are made about its significance for dating the book?** The structure of Deuteronomy bears striking similarities to ancient Near Eastern treaties, particularly Hittite vassal treaties of the 14th-13th centuries BC. These treaties often included elements such as a historical prologue, stipulations, and blessings and curses for obedience or disobedience, elements present in Deuteronomy. Proponents of an early date argue that this correspondence suggests a composition during the time of these treaties, bolstering the Mosaic authorship. Conversely, scholars who favor a later date argue that the treaty form could have been imposed on the text by scribes in later periods, such as the time of the Assyrian treaties (7th century) or during the monarchy.

3. **What is the significance of the "historical prologue" in this debate, and how is it used to argue for different dating?** The presence of a historical prologue, which recounts the past relationship between the suzerain (the king) and the vassal (the subordinate), is a characteristic of Hittite treaties. Early theories proposed that this feature was absent in later Assyrian and Aramaic treaties, making its presence in Deuteronomy evidence for an earlier date, similar to the Hittite treaties. However, later evidence is argued to show that some 7th century treaties have a historical prologue which weakens the argument. Those who oppose this argue this new found evidence is disputed or not a true example of a historical prologue.
4. **How do scholars like Thompson and Frankina argue for a later date of Deuteronomy, despite its perceived treaty form?** Scholars such as J. Thompson and Frankina acknowledge the treaty form within Deuteronomy but argue that it was imposed later, drawing parallels with Assyrian treaties. They suggest that the curses found in Deuteronomy Chapter 28 are based on Assyrian treaty curses, thus placing its composition much later. Additionally, they contend that the historical prologue, despite being used to suggest an early date for the book, may have been stated orally, or may have been included in parts of treaties that have not been recovered, thus weakening its significance for an early date.
5. **What are some of the arguments used against a Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, and what are the counter arguments?** Arguments against a Mosaic authorship include: (1) The claim that prophetic passages similar to Deuteronomy do not prove that the prophets knew Deuteronomy, but rather, Deuteronomy is based on the prophets; (2) The presence of post-Mosaic additions, such as the account of Moses' death; (3) The geographical expressions such as “beyond the Jordan,” which are seen to be implying a viewpoint from inside Palestine rather than from the plains of Moab (where Moses is presumed to have written it). Counterarguments to these claims include: (1) The difficulty in proving priority when there are language similarities between the prophets and Deuteronomy; (2) That the inclusion of Moses death in Chapter 34 was an understandable addition to a book that is primarily about his final words to the Israelites; (3) That the “beyond the Jordan” phrasing is ambiguous, and refers to “the region of the Jordan,” and not a perspective from either side of the Jordan, so it can be applied to either side depending on context.

6. **How do scholars like Kitchen and McConville support the Mosaic date based on the treaty form, and what is their criticism of the Wellhausen theory?** Scholars such as Kitchen and McConville maintain that the structural and content parallels between Deuteronomy and the ancient treaty form of the late Bronze Age strongly favor a Mosaic date. They highlight the basic structure of Deuteronomy which is best explained by an early date, and emphasize the action-response characteristic of treaties, which is deeply ingrained in the language of the book. They also challenge the Wellhausen theory (JEDP), which posits that Deuteronomy was written much later, and claim this theory cannot survive close scrutiny, as it ignores strong evidence suggesting that it is a single literary entity, produced at a single time.
7. **What is the significance of the "curses" debate in relation to the dating of Deuteronomy, and what counter-arguments are made?** Some scholars, like Weinfeld and Frankina, emphasize the similarity of Deuteronomy's curses to those of the later Assyrian treaties, arguing for a later date, as the Assyrian treaties are later. This suggests that Deuteronomy borrowed from the Assyrian treaties. Counterarguments state that such curse formulations can become stereotyped over time and that these similarities are due to continuity in stereotyped expression that can occur over centuries.
8. **What is Nicholson's position on the treaty-covenant analogy, and what does it imply for understanding the book of Deuteronomy?** Nicholson denies the validity of the treaty-covenant analogy altogether, suggesting there is no connection between the two, thus rejecting the claim that Deuteronomy's structure indicates its date. He suggests that the idea of covenant and Israel did not exist prior to the assumed late date of Deuteronomy, and that any usage prior to this late date is a retrojection. This goes against most of the evidence, and brings him back to the Wellhausen theory.