

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10A, Treaty Covenant Objections and Responses Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10A, Treaty Covenant Objections and Responses, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture discusses the scholarly debate surrounding the date of Deuteronomy, focusing on the "treaty covenant" analogy. Scholars compare Deuteronomy's structure to Hittite, Assyrian, and Aramaic treaties, disagreeing on whether its similarities to Hittite treaties point to a Mosaic origin or if later influences are more significant. The lecture presents arguments for both early and late dating, highlighting the importance of the historical prologue and the evolution of treaty forms. Different scholars propose various origins, including cultic practices, prophetic circles, and court scribes. Ultimately, the lecture concludes that while definitive proof is lacking, the Mosaic origin offers the most comprehensive explanation of the available evidence.

**2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10A – 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
on10A.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10A, Treaty Covenant Objections and Responses

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided source, "Vannoy_Deuteronomy_EN_Lecture10A.pdf":

Briefing Document: Dating and Structure of Deuteronomy

I. Introduction

This document summarizes a lecture by Robert Vannoy discussing the date and structure of the Book of Deuteronomy. The central point of debate revolves around the book's relationship to ancient Near Eastern treaty forms, specifically Hittite, Assyrian, and Aramaic treaties. Vannoy engages with arguments for both a Mosaic (early) and later (7th Century) date for Deuteronomy, focusing on the treaty covenant analogy developed by Meredith Kline.

II. Key Concepts and Arguments

- **Treaty Covenant Analogy:** The lecture centers on the idea that the structure and content of Deuteronomy reflect the form of ancient suzerainty treaties, particularly the Hittite treaties of the 2nd millennium BCE.
- **Hittite Treaties:** These treaties featured a historical prologue outlining the relationship between the suzerain (king) and vassal, stipulations or obligations of the vassal, and blessings and curses associated with obedience and disobedience, respectively. They also named the gods of *both* the suzerain and vassal as witnesses.
- **Assyrian Treaties (7th century BCE):** These treaties, like those of Esarhaddon, differed. They lacked the historical prologue, and while stipulations and curses were present, the gods cited as witnesses were typically *only* the Assyrian gods.
- **Aramaic Sefire Treaties:** These treaties were closer to Hittite treaties in their selection of gods, citing gods of both parties, but also displayed some notable differences, including more clauses that protected the rights of the head partner.
- **Meredith Kline's Thesis:** Kline argues that Deuteronomy closely aligns with the structure and spirit of the earlier Hittite treaties, making it a "classic" form of the treaty document. He suggests that the presence of the historical prologue and the emphasis on the vassal's gratitude and respect for the suzerain align with the

Hittite form and are absent in later Assyrian and Sefire treaties. Kline asserts that this supports a Mosaic (early) origin for Deuteronomy.

- **Quote from Kline:** "While it is necessary to recognize its essential continuity and pattern between the earlier and later treaties, it is proper to distinguish the Hittite treaties of the second millennium B.C. as the classic form and without any doubt the book of Deuteronomy belongs to the classic stage in this documentary evolution."
- **Objections to Kline's Thesis: J.A. Thompson:** He suggests Deuteronomy could have been written later by someone consciously using an ancient treaty form. He questions the uniqueness of historical prologues in 2nd millennium treaties citing an article by A.F. Campbell that references a 7th-century treaty with a historical prologue.
- **Vannoy's Response to Thompson:** Vannoy notes the case cited by Campbell is not a clear-cut example, and another scholar (E.F. Campbell) says "the reading is far from clear". Additionally, while a later composition is possible, Vannoy argues it does not invalidate the strength of Kline's model.
- **J.C. Plasteras:** He argues that Israel could have maintained knowledge of the earlier covenant forms in its cult and then applied them to Deuteronomy at a later date. He criticizes Kitchen, who makes similar arguments to Kline, for overlooking this possibility.
- **Quote from Plasteras:** "Israel would always have retained the same basic covenant form in her cult. So that every layer of tradition, J, E, D, or the redactional combination of these earlier sources would all reflect the same basic covenant structure."
- **R. Frankena:** He points to similarities between curses in Deuteronomy and those in the 7th-century Assyrian treaties of Esarhaddon, suggesting Deuteronomy borrowed from these later treaties.
- **Quote from Frankena:** "The religious reform of Josiah was directed against Assyria, and it is therefore tempting to regard the renewed covenant with Yahweh as a substitution of the former treaty with the king of Assyria. That the text of this covenant should betray knowledge of the Assyrian treaties, which it seems to replace, seems only natural to me."

- **Von Rad:** He admits a relationship between Deuteronomy and the Hittite treaty structure but attributes the book's form and development to a long cultic process, arguing for a late date.
- **D.W. Nicholson:** Similar to von Rad, he claims the form of Deuteronomy comes from the cult, connecting it to a liturgical pattern of covenant renewal. He suggests prophetic circles from Northern Israel who fled after the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE, were key agents behind the preservation of traditions.
- **Moshe Weinfeld:** He opposes any cultic origin for the covenant form and attributes Deuteronomy to court scribes from Hezekiah's or Josiah's time who were familiar with treaty writing. He rejects Kline's assertion that the Hittite treaty is unique and argues that treaty forms remained essentially the same through time. He also downplays the significance of the lack of a historical prologue in Assyrian treaties.
- **Vannoy's Defense of Kline:** He argues that Plasteras's and other cultic origin theories do not adequately explain *when and how* this specific form entered into Israel's cult and that even granting a cultic origin does not negate the strength of Kline's argument.
- He argues that Frankena doesn't adequately explain the difference in overall structure between Hittite and Assyrian treaties.
- He supports Kline's view that the curses in Deuteronomy are best explained by a common tradition of curse formulation going back to the 2nd millennium.
- Vannoy highlights the significance of the historical prologue in Hittite treaties and its absence in the Assyrian treaties as an important distinction.
- He agrees with Kline's position that the oratory aspect of Deuteronomy as a farewell speech by Moses within the context of covenant renewal is more plausible than the idea of late literary devices from court scribes.
- **Quote from Kline on Weinfeld:** "The oration character of Deuteronomy Weinfeld explains as a literary device. Programmatic speeches were placed in the mouths of famous persons to express the ideological views of the author."
- He notes that the text's focus on the dynastic succession from Moses to Joshua supports an early Mosaic origin, making the 7th-century origin harder to explain.

- **Fixity of the Text:** Vannoy notes that Kline uses the immutability of treaty documents as a concept supporting the idea that once Scripture is written, it is not something to be added to or changed.

III. Key Points of Debate

- **Significance of the Historical Prologue:** Is the historical prologue a unique characteristic of the earlier Hittite treaties or was it also a feature of later treaties, meaning it's presence in Deuteronomy is not as significant a link to the Hittites?
- **Evolution vs. Continuity of Treaty Forms:** Was there a discernable evolution in treaty forms from the Hittites to the Assyrians or was the basic form of treaties essentially the same throughout?
- **Cultic vs. Literary Origins:** Did the form of Deuteronomy originate in the cult, or was it a literary creation of court scribes or prophetic circles?
- **When Did the Covenant Form Enter Israel?** Even if a later date is posited for Deuteronomy, when and how did this treaty form enter Israel's religious practice, especially given the emphasis on the covenant at Sinai?

IV. Vannoy's Conclusion

While acknowledging that no absolute proof is possible, Vannoy believes that Kline's model, which sees Deuteronomy as aligning most closely with the earlier Hittite treaty structure, is the most satisfactory explanation. This model effectively accounts for the historical prologue, the overall structure of the book, and the context of Moses' farewell and covenant renewal. He argues that while various scholars propose other models and that there are arguments to the contrary, they fail to fully account for all the various aspects of the form or provide an equally viable alternative historical context for the adoption of this treaty form into Israel's religious life. He concludes that Kline's model provides the strongest basis for the book's Mosaic origins, although not to the point of "conclusive proof".

V. Next Steps

The lecture will move on to discuss the "centralization of worship" in Deuteronomy, which will likely also play into the discussion about the book's dating and purpose.

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of the arguments and counter-arguments regarding the date of Deuteronomy. It emphasizes the role of the treaty covenant analogy and highlights the major points of contention amongst scholars.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10A, Treaty Covenant Objections and Responses

Deuteronomy Study Guide

Quiz

1. What is the key difference between the witness gods in Aramaic/Hittite treaties versus Assyrian treaties, and why is this significant? Aramaic/Hittite treaties name the gods of both the suzerain and the vassal as witnesses, while Assyrian treaties name only the gods of the Assyrian king. This distinction suggests that Aramaic/Hittite treaties emphasized reciprocity, which is unlike the more one-sided nature of Assyrian treaties.
2. According to Kline, how does Deuteronomy's structure and spirit compare to Hittite, Sefire, and Assyrian treaties? Kline argues that Deuteronomy corresponds more closely in structure and spirit to the earlier Hittite treaties than it does to the later Sefire and Assyrian treaties. He notes the presence of a historical prologue, an element found in the Hittite treaties but not the others.
3. What is Thompson's primary objection to using the historical prologue as evidence for a Mosaic date of Deuteronomy? Thompson argues that the historical prologue isn't exclusive to the second millennium treaties because a 7th-century treaty with a historical prologue was discovered. He concludes this means that the historical prologue in Deuteronomy does not necessarily indicate a second millennium composition.
4. What is Plasteras's argument against Kitchen's conclusion that the treaty form in Deuteronomy points to an early date? Plasteras claims that Israel could have preserved the treaty form in their cult, regardless of when it fell out of use in the ancient Near East. This allows for the possibility that Deuteronomy's treaty form was adopted later, even if it was originally developed in the second millennium.
5. According to Frankena, what aspect of the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon does he use to argue for a 7th-century date for Deuteronomy? Frankena uses the similarities between curse formulations in the Esarhaddon treaties and those found in Deuteronomy 28 to argue that Deuteronomy was written in the 7th century, influenced by the Assyrian treaties, as it was written when Israel was dominated by Assyria.

6. How does Kline respond to the argument made by Frankena about curse formulations, and what point does Kitchen make to support his position? Kline counters by stating that curse traditions existed as far back as the 2nd millennium, meaning the similarities don't prove a 7th-century date. Kitchen supports this by citing old Babylonian data that suggests an ancient, long-standing tradition of curse formulations predating the Assyrian treaties.
7. How does von Rad view the structure of Deuteronomy, and what does he argue about its origin? Von Rad acknowledges that Deuteronomy's structure is analogous to Hittite treaty structures but believes it is rooted in the cult and was developed over a long period. He does not ascribe its origin to any specific moment in history, but to a long process of development in Israel.
8. What does Nicholson suggest about the agents responsible for the preservation and transmission of Deuteronomy's traditions? Nicholson argues that prophetic circles in Northern Israel, who fled south after the fall of Samaria, preserved and transmitted the traditions found in Deuteronomy and that this material was drawn up during the time of Manasseh and found during Josiah's reign.
9. According to Weinfeld, what is the origin of the structure of Deuteronomy, and who were the agents who created the book? Weinfeld posits that the structure of Deuteronomy follows a literary tradition of covenant writing, not a cultic ceremony. He argues that court scribes, familiar with treaty writing during the time of Hezekiah or Josiah, were responsible for composing the book.
10. How does Kline refute Weinfeld's view of the literary origin of Deuteronomy and its "programmatic speeches"? Kline argues that Weinfeld's concept of "programmatic speeches" suggests a later, Wellhausen-esque idea of pious fraud. Kline notes that the oration form in Deuteronomy does not come from a literary tradition but, rather, from the historical event of Moses' farewell address and covenant renewal.

Answer Key

1. Aramaic/Hittite treaties cite the gods of both suzerain and vassal as witnesses, whereas Assyrian treaties only cite the gods of the Assyrian king. This is significant because it shows the emphasis on a more reciprocal relationship in earlier treaties, versus the one-sided approach in the Assyrian versions.
2. Kline argues Deuteronomy's structure and spirit correspond more closely to earlier Hittite treaties than later Sefire or Assyrian treaties. He points out that the

presence of a historical prologue is unique to Hittite treaties and is a major distinguishing factor.

3. Thompson objects by citing a 7th-century treaty with a historical prologue, thereby suggesting that it's not a unique characteristic of second-millennium treaties. This indicates that a historical prologue is not necessarily evidence for a Mosaic date.
4. Plasteras argues that even if the Hittite treaty form was out of use, Israel might have preserved it in their cult, allowing Deuteronomy to have been written later while using the structure. This implies the form could have been adopted in the cult at a later point in history.
5. Frankena uses similarities in curse formulations between the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon and Deuteronomy 28 to argue that Deuteronomy was written in the 7th century. He suggests that Deuteronomy copied the curses from an Assyrian treaty of that time.
6. Kline counters that curse traditions were long-standing, extending back to the 2nd millennium, thus similarities aren't evidence for a 7th-century origin. Kitchen also points out the old Babylonian data, which suggests these traditions were well-established long before the Assyrian treaties.
7. Von Rad views the structure of Deuteronomy as analogous to Hittite treaties but argues it developed from Israel's cult and evolved over time. He emphasizes a long process of development rooted in the cult.
8. Nicholson suggests that prophetic circles from Northern Israel preserved and transmitted the traditions in Deuteronomy after the fall of Samaria, and that they drew up the program for reform before the book was found during Josiah's reign.
9. Weinfeld argues the structure of Deuteronomy came from a literary tradition of covenant writing, rather than a cultic ceremony, and that court scribes during Hezekiah's or Josiah's time were the book's authors.
10. Kline refutes Weinfeld by saying the literary aspect, such as the "programmatic speeches," is a pious fraud, and that the oration form was due to the historical circumstance of Moses' farewell speech and covenant renewal, not from court scribes.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the arguments for and against a Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy based on the treaty covenant analogy. How does the presence or absence of a historical prologue and other stylistic elements factor into this debate?
2. Discuss the various perspectives on the origin of Deuteronomy's structure, considering the cultic, literary, and historical factors. Which position do you find most convincing and why?
3. Analyze the significance of the "curse formulations" in the context of dating Deuteronomy. How do the different scholars interpret their role in understanding the book's origins and development?
4. Evaluate Kline's response to Weinfeld's perspective on the origin of Deuteronomy and its "programmatic speeches." How do their differing views reflect broader disagreements about the nature of biblical authority and its transmission?
5. Explore the implications of a late date (7th century) versus an early date (Mosaic) for understanding the theological message and historical context of the book of Deuteronomy. How would each of these different perspectives impact interpretation?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Suzerain:** The superior party in a treaty relationship; a sovereign ruler or state exercising political control over a vassal.
- **Vassal:** The subordinate party in a treaty relationship; a subordinate ruler or state that owes allegiance and services to a suzerain.
- **Treaty Covenant Analogy:** The comparison of ancient Near Eastern treaty structures and forms with the covenant structure found in the Old Testament, particularly in Deuteronomy.
- **Historical Prologue:** A section at the beginning of ancient treaties that recounts the historical relationship between the suzerain and the vassal, providing the basis for the treaty.
- **Sefire Treaties:** A collection of Aramaic treaties dating from the 8th century BCE.
- **Hittite Treaties:** Treaties between the Hittite Empire and their vassal states during the 2nd millennium BCE.
- **Assyrian Treaties:** Treaties from the Assyrian Empire, especially those of Esarhaddon (7th century BCE).
- **Esarhaddon:** An Assyrian king of the 7th century BCE.
- **Curse Formulations:** A set of curses that would be imposed upon the vassal if the treaty terms were violated.
- **Cult:** The religious practices and rituals of a community, often associated with worship at a specific place, such as a temple.
- **Wellhausen Position:** A perspective that the Pentateuch was created much later than the events it describes, by piecing together various traditions from various times and origins.
- **Levites:** The priestly tribe of Israel that had a prominent role in religious rituals and maintaining the traditions of the covenant.
- **Paranesis:** Exhortation; a style of speech that aims to encourage or persuade the listener in the context of moral or religious instruction.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10A, Treaty Covenant Objections and Responses, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Okay, here's an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source, formatted with markdown:

FAQ: The Date and Structure of Deuteronomy

1. **What is the central argument regarding the structure of the Book of Deuteronomy and its connection to ancient treaties?** The central argument, primarily advanced by Meredith Kline, posits that the structure of Deuteronomy closely resembles the treaty forms used by the Hittites in the second millennium BCE. These treaties featured elements like a historical prologue, stipulations, and blessings/curses. Kline argues that Deuteronomy's structure and spirit, especially its historical introduction and emphasis on the vassal's gratitude, aligns more with these earlier Hittite treaties than the later 8th and 7th century Assyrian and Aramaic treaties, suggesting a Mosaic origin for the book.
2. **How do the Aramaic Sefire Treaties and Assyrian treaties differ from the Hittite Treaties in their structure?** While the Hittite treaties included the gods of both the suzerain and the vassal as witnesses, the Assyrian treaties only cited the gods of the Assyrian king. The Aramaic Sefire treaties, while closer to Hittite treaties in some ways like citing the gods of both parties, lacked a historical prologue, and had stipulations that were more one-sided, favoring the suzerain, unlike the more balanced Hittite treaties. The absence of a strong element of gratitude and respect, vital in Hittite treaties, is also missing in both Sefire and Assyrian treaties.

3. **What is the significance of the historical prologue in these ancient treaties, and why is it important in the debate about the date of Deuteronomy?** The historical prologue is significant because it established the historical context and basis for the treaty relationship. It detailed the acts of kindness and power of the suzerain, which created a basis of gratitude from the vassal. This historical prologue is a notable feature of the Hittite treaties, and it also appears in Deuteronomy. The presence of this historical prologue in Deuteronomy is a key argument used by those who support a Mosaic authorship since it is not prominent in the later Assyrian or Aramaic treaties. Conversely, critics argue that a 7th-century treaty shows a historical prologue, undermining its unique nature of 2nd millennium Hittite treaties.
4. **What are the main objections to Kline's theory, and how does he respond to them?** The main objections include:
 - **Late Composition:** Critics argue that Deuteronomy could have been written long after Moses by someone who consciously chose to use an older treaty form. They claim the form was preserved in the cult of Israel and could be used much later.
 - **7th Century Historical Prologue:** Critics cite a 7th-century treaty that supposedly included a historical prologue, arguing against its being a unique characteristic of the 2nd millennium treaties.
 - **Curse Formulations:** Critics like Frankena argue that the curses in Deuteronomy are similar to those in 7th-century Assyrian treaties, suggesting a late origin for Deuteronomy.
1. Kline's responses include:
 - While acknowledging a theoretical possibility of a later date, the pervasive orientation of Deuteronomy to the Mosaic age and succession of Joshua is awkward for a 7th century origin.
 - The historical prologue in the 7th century treaty is not clearly defined.
 - He asserts the tradition of curse formularies is long standing, not originating with the 7th-century Assyrian treaties. And he stresses that the overall structure of Deuteronomy matches the Hittite treaties, something that is not explained if it was written by someone in the 7th century.

1. **How does the concept of a "cultic" origin of the treaty form factor into the arguments against a Mosaic date for Deuteronomy?** Some scholars, like von Rad and Nicholson, argue that the covenant form found in Deuteronomy originates from the cultic practices and liturgical patterns of Israel, rather than a specific historical treaty tradition. They suggest that the form developed over time within the cult and that Deuteronomy was created within this context, not by Moses. This view seeks to undermine the idea that Deuteronomy was consciously based on ancient treaty structures and places it in a later context of cultic development.
2. **What is Weinfeld's view on the origin of Deuteronomy's structure, and how does it differ from both Kline's and the cultic origins position?** Moshe Weinfeld rejects both the cultic origin of Deuteronomy's structure and Kline's argument that it reflects the unique form of Hittite treaties. He argues for a literary, rather than cultic, origin. He posits that Deuteronomy's structure is based on a literary tradition of covenant writing. He believes that it was created by court scribes at the time of Hezekiah and Josiah who were familiar with Assyrian treaties. He claims the structure was not unique to the 2nd millennium Hittite treaty but rather, one form throughout time and that Deuteronomy reflects the influence of 7th century Assyrian treaties.
3. **How do proponents of a late date for Deuteronomy use the similarities between curses in Deuteronomy and Assyrian treaties to argue for a later date?** Proponents of a late date, such as Frankena, emphasize similarities between curses in Deuteronomy and those found in the 7th-century vassal treaties of Esarhaddon, a late Assyrian King. They suggest that Deuteronomy was written or at least influenced by the 7th-century Assyrian treaties in the time of King Josiah as a substitution of a covenant with Yahweh instead of allegiance to Assyria. This argument aims to show that the writer was familiar with 7th-century Assyrian treaties and therefore cannot be from the time of Moses.
4. **What does Kline say regarding the text of Deuteronomy and its implications for the concept of canon?** Kline suggests that the structure of biblical authority is tied to the idea that, like ancient treaty documents, the text of Deuteronomy was not to be tampered with. It was seen as a document to not be added to, changed, or modified, once it was put down. He applies this to the concept of canon in Scripture, stating that once Scripture is written and given, it is not meant to go through a process of reformulation. This reinforces his view of the Mosaic origin and authority of the book.