

Integrating the Song of Moses into Deuteronomy and Reshaping the Narrative

Different Solutions in MT Deut 31:1–32:47 and (the
Hebrew *Vorlage* of) LXX Deut 31:1–32:47

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The Masoretic Text (MT) of Deut 31–32¹ and the Septuagint (LXX) of the same² differ significantly in terms of plot. Since the Greek translation of Deuteronomy typically maintains a very close relationship to its Hebrew source text, the differences in the two chapters point to a different Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Greek text in comparison to the (Proto-)Masoretic one.³ In scholarship, the meaning of the different versions of Deut 31–32 has not been fully recognized yet. The reasons are manifold. The few studies using lower criticism concentrated on single variants and did not notice the implications for the plot.⁴ The plot of Deut 31–32 has received attention in scholarship on only a

¹ In terms of the narrative structure of Deut 31–32, the Samaritan Pentateuch (Sam) agrees with MT.

² I use the critical edition provided by J. W. WEVERS, *Deuteronomium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977). In the verses that are key to the plot, Deut 31–32 in Wever's edition is in accordance with the text of Codex B; cf. the Septuagint edition provided by A. E. BROOKE and N. MCLEAN, *The Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), vols. 1 and 3.

³ See especially A. AEJMELEAUS, "Die Septuaginta des Deuteronomiums," in *Das Deuteronomium und seine Querbeziehungen* (ed. T. Veijola; Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft 62; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 1–22; M. K. H. PETERS, "Deuteronomion: To the reader," in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (ed. A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 141–146. Some fragments of the Deuteronomy manuscripts from Qumran point to the existence of a Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Deut 31–32 (different from the MT). With regard to the plot, what is especially important is 1QDeut^b, frag. 13 ii, which preserves the beginning of Deut 31:1 (ויכל משה לדבר את כל הדן), and 4QDeut^b, frag. 10, which confirms a long version of Deut 31:9. For a quick overview of the textual evidence, see E. ULRICH, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcription and Textual Variants* (VTSup 134; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 236–243.

⁴ Cf. L. LABERGE, "Le Texte de Deutéronome 31 (Dt 31,1–29; 32,44–47)," in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies: Papers Read at the XIIIth IOSOT Congress, Leuven, 1989* (ed. C. Brekelmans and J. Lust; BETL 94; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 143–160; F. NWACHUKWU, "The Textual Differences between the MT and the LXX of Deuteronomy 31:

few occasions; these studies focus mainly on the MT and its problems.⁵ The most studied text in Deut 31–32 is undoubtedly the so-called Song of Moses (32:1–43), which according to a broad scholarly consensus is of non-Deuteronomian provenance.⁶ However, in searching for its time of origin, the related narrative context, when it was considered at all, was considered only in the MT.⁷

In this study, I will not analyze all variants comprehensively but will focus on the plot. I will briefly analyze first the narrative sequence of MT Deut 31:1–32:47 and then that of (the Hebrew *Vorlage* of) LXX Deut 31:1–32:47. An appendix with a synoptic translation of the key verses provides a quick overview of the main textual differences between the versions. It is my thesis that both versions reflect different processes of redactional integration of texts into other texts. In the case of MT Deut 31:1–32:47, redactors inserted the Song of Moses into an independent edition of Deuteronomy in the late exilic or early postexilic period and reshaped the narrative. The emphasis is on

A Response to Leo Laberge,” in *Bundesdokument und Gesetz. Studien zum Deuteronomium* (ed. G. Braulik; Herders Biblische Studien 4; Freiburg: Herder, 1995), 79–92.

⁵ Cf. E. TALSTRA, “Deuteronomy 31: Confusion or Conclusion? The Story of Moses’ Threefold Succession,” in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomian Literature: Festschrift C. H. W. Brekelmans* (ed. M. Vervenne and J. Lust; BETL 133; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 87–110; J.-P. SONNET, *The Book within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy* (BibInt 14; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 117–182; B. BRITT, “Deuteronomy 31–32 as a Textual Memorial,” *BibInt* 8 (2000), 358–374; D. MARKL, *Gottes Volk im Deuteronomium* (BZABR 18; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 133–230. An exception is N. LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur IV* (SBAB 31; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2000), 219–245. Lohfink’s focus was all in all on the MT, but he pointed to some important plot differences between the versions of MT and LXX Deut 31–32 in order to show that plot questions mattered for ancient Israelite authors. With respect to the terminology, Lohfink referred to the difference between *fabula* and *sujet* made by the Russian Formalists and used the terms *Fabel* (chronological order of events) and *Erzählfolge* (order of narration or narrative order).

⁶ Scholars have dated the song anywhere from the Mosaic to the Maccabean period. For a survey of the different scholarly positions, see P. SANDERS, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (OTS 37; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1–98, and E. OTTO, “Moses Abschiedslied in Deuteronomium 32: Ein Zeugnis der Kanonsbildung in der Hebräischen Bibel,” in *Die Tora: Studien zum Pentateuch; Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 641–678, here 641–650. The song belongs to a group of psalms that appear “irregularly” in the narrative and prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible; cf. J. W. WATTS, “Biblical Psalms outside the Psalter,” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (ed. P. W. Flint and P. D. Miller; VTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 288–309, here 288.

⁷ Cf. O. EISSFELDT, *Kleine Schriften* (5 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1966–1973), 3:322–334; J. W. WATTS, *Psalms and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (JSOTSup 139; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 63–81; S. WEITZMAN, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 32–58; M. LEUCHTER, “Why Is the Song of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy?,” *VT* 57 (2007), 295–317; OTTO, “Moses Abschiedslied” (see n. 6).

motivating the addressees to live in their future according to the Deuteronomic commandments. In the case of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Deut 31:1–32:47, pentateuchal redactors rewrote and restructured the passage. The emphasis is on comprehensive Torah teaching and learning before Israel can start a new life in the promised land.

1 MT Deuteronomy 31:1–32:47

First, I want to present a rough overview of the main scenes and themes of MT Deut 31:1–32:47, outlined in the table below:

I: Moses addresses Israel and Joshua about the inheritance of the land

- 31:1–6 Moses goes and speaks “these words” to all Israel, addressing them about their inheritance of the land.
- 31:7–8 Moses addresses Joshua in front of Israel, commanding him about his twofold future task.

II: Moses writes the Torah and commands regular public reading of the written Torah

- 31:9 Narrative statement: Moses writes down “this Torah” and gives the Torah to the Levitical priests and all the elders.
- 31:10–13 Moses addresses them, commanding them to conduct a public Torah reading regularly.

III: YHWH addresses Moses and Joshua in the tent and gives his revelation of the song

- 31:14a YHWH addresses Moses, commanding him to appear together with Joshua in the tent for the purpose of addressing Joshua.
- 31:14b–15 Narrative statement: Moses obeys; YHWH appears in the tent in a pillar of cloud.
- 31:16–21 YHWH addresses Moses in the tent, speaking about the future behavior of the people, commanding Moses and Joshua to write and Moses to teach “this song.”
- 31:22 Narrative statement: Moses writes “this song” on that day and teaches it to the children of Israel.
- 31:23 He (i.e., YHWH) addresses Joshua (in the tent), commanding him about his first future task.

IV: After he finishes writing the Torah, Moses speaks the song to the elite; Moses and Joshua speak the song to the people

- 31:24–29 After Moses finishes writing “the words of this Torah” on a scroll, he addresses the Levites, commanding them to deposit the Torah and to assemble the elite (i.e., all elders of the tribes and the officials), so that he may speak to them “these words” (i.e., the words of the song).
- 31:30 Narrative statement: Moses speaks “the words of this song” to the “whole assembly of Israel” (i.e., the assembled elite).
- 32:1–43 The words of the song.
- 32:44 Narrative statement: Moses comes and speaks “all the words of this song” to the people, “he and Joshua.”

V: Moses finishes speaking “all these words” and admonishes Israel for a final time

- 32:45 Narrative statement: Moses finishes speaking “all these words” to all Israel.
- 32:46–47 Moses addresses them, admonishing them for a final time to keep the Torah.

I will now turn to the single passages, briefly describing their narrative logic and pointing to the main inconsistencies in and between the different scenes.

I: Moses addresses Israel and Joshua about the inheritance of the land.

After Moses establishes the Moabite covenant (Deut 28:69–30:20), the events in the world of Deuteronomy move forward. In Deut 31 the scene changes, indicated by the use of the introductory verb הלך in v. 1 (literally: “he [i.e., Moses] went”). In his speech to the Israelites, Moses focuses on the future inheritance of the land. In his speech to Joshua, Moses appoints Joshua as his successor. Joshua will have to fulfill two tasks: to lead the people to the land and to cause the people to inherit the land.⁸

II: Moses writes the Torah and commands regular public reading of the written Torah.

According to 31:9, Moses wrote the Torah and gave the Torah to the Levitical priests and all the elders of Israel (i.e., the religious and civil representatives of the people).⁹ What does “give” mean exactly? Closely connected with v. 9 is

⁸ Cf. G. BRAULIK, “Die deuteronomistische Landeroberungserzählung aus der Joschijazeit in Deuteronomium und Josua,” in *Das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk* (ed. H.-J. Stipp; ÖBS 39; Frankfurt: Lang, 2011), 89–150, here 129; K. FINSTERBUSCH, “Deuteronomy and Joshua: Torah in the Book of Joshua in Light of Deuteronomy,” *JAJ* 3 (2012), 166–196, here 169.

⁹ Cf. Deut 27:1, 9: The levitical priests “represent” the divine side, the elders the side of Israel; cf. N. LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium IV* (see n. 5), 270–273; SONNET, *Book*

v. 10: Moses commanded both groups to cooperate in reading the Torah in public at the Succoth feast in every year of remission. In my view, it is reasonable to read this command as an explanation of v. 9: the giving of the Torah is a kind of charge giving the Levitical priests and all the elders special responsibility for its public teaching. In any case, the emphasis in the passage is not on the scroll and its deposition.¹⁰ What exactly happened to the material Torah scroll remains open.

III: YHWH addresses Moses and Joshua in the tent and gives his revelation of the song.

There are several problems in Deut 31:14–23 in terms of plot: according to 31:14–15, YHWH wanted to address *Joshua* in the tent. Unexpectedly, YHWH first addressed *Moses*, in 31:16–21: YHWH left Moses with no illusions about the future behavior of the people, prophesying that they would break the covenant at a future date. Furthermore, YHWH commanded Moses and Joshua to write and Moses to teach the song. The function of the song is to be a witness against the people (see vv. 19b, 21a). According to 31:22, Moses wrote and taught the song the same day (meaning after the revelation in the tent). This narrative statement interrupts the scene in the tent, because in 31:23 the scene in the tent continues: the verse begins with *ויצו את יהושע*. This clearly refers back to 31:14–15: he, that is YHWH, has now confirmed Joshua's appointment regarding his first future task.¹¹

IV: After he finishes writing the Torah, Moses speaks the song to the elite; Moses and Joshua speak the song to the people.

This complex passage (31:24–32:44) requires several comments:

(a) Moses, after he finished writing the words of the Torah on a scroll, addressed the Levites and commanded them to take and deposit the scroll (31:24–27). When compared to 31:9, the differences in the narrated details (in

within the Book (see n. 5), 140; K. FINSTERBUSCH, *Deuteronomium: Eine Einführung* (UTB 3626; Göttingen 2012), 159–162.

¹⁰ Nota bene: the term ספר is not mentioned.

¹¹ According to Josh 1:2–5, YHWH commanded Joshua to fulfill the first task, which Joshua did in 1:10–12:24. According to Josh 1:6, YHWH confirmed the appointment of Joshua with regard to the second task. In Josh 13:1–7, God commanded Joshua to fulfill the second task, which Joshua did in Josh 14–21. On this “appointment-confirmation system” in Deut–Josh, see N. LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur I* (SBAB 8; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990), 83–97; BRAULIK, “Die deuteronomistische Landeroberungserzählung” (see n. 8), 125–132; FINSTERBUSCH, “Deuteronomy and Joshua” (see n. 8), 168–170. This system was in all likelihood part of an old preexilic story (for a younger perspective on Joshua's appointment, cf. Num 27:23); see BRAULIK, “Die deuteronomistische Landeroberungserzählung,” 133–139; FINSTERBUSCH, “Deuteronomy and Joshua,” 194.

MT) point to two different acts of writing:¹² according to 31:9 Moses wrote down “this Torah” (הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת) and entrusted it to the Levitical priests and the elders for reading. The emphasis in 31:24–27, however, is focused on the *completion of writing* “the words of this Torah” (דְּבַרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת) and on the *depositing of the Torah scroll* next to the ark by the Levites. The last point shows that the *purpose* of entrusting the Torah is different. The first point, emphasizing completion of writing the Torah, inevitably leads the reader to the question: Which Torah text was missing beforehand? In context, there is a reasonable answer: it is the song.¹³

It should be noted that the revelation of the song as a divine Torah supplement in Moab is completely unexpected in the Deuteronomic plot.¹⁴ Moses received the divine commandments of the Deuteronomic Torah at Sinai (Deut 5), taught them in Moab, established a covenant, wrote the Torah down, and ensured its public dissemination for future generations. Until Deut 31:9–13, neither Israel within the world of Deuteronomy nor the reader would have guessed that the Torah was incomplete.

(b) In his speech to the Levites, Moses commanded them not only to deposit the Torah scroll but also to assemble the elite, i.e., the elders of the tribes and the officials,¹⁵ in order to speak to them “these words” (31:28–29).¹⁶ As indicated by the reference to the words used by Moses in his speech to the Levites (דָּבַר +

¹² Cf. TALSTRA, “Deuteronomy 31” (see n. 5), 100; SONNET, *Book within the Book* (see n. 5), 125; MARKL, *Gottes Volk im Deuteronomium* (see n. 5), 139–140. Differently LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium IV* (see n. 5), 231–32 (one writing act reported twice).

¹³ Cf. C. SCHÄFER-LICHTENBERGER, *Josua und Salomo: Eine Studie zu Autorität und Legitimität des Nachfolgers im Alten Testament* (VTSup 58; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 182; TALSTRA, “Deuteronomy 31” (see n. 5), 100; SONNET, *Book within the Book* (see n. 5), 158–159; OTTO, “Moses Abschiedslied” (see n. 6), 653; FINSTERBUSCH, *Deuteronomium* (see n. 9), 185–186. Because there is no explicit statement about the relationship between song and Torah in the section, LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium IV* (see n. 5), 235–236, considered an alternative interpretation: the song is not part of the Torah and was written on a separate scroll. However, this document would remain as a *totes Motiv* in the text. Therefore, this interpretation is in my view unlikely.

¹⁴ Cf. SONNET, *Book within the Book* (see n. 5), 148; MARKL, *Gottes Volk im Deuteronomium* (see n. 5), 139.

¹⁵ The expression “elders of the tribes” is unique. With regard to the שְׂטָרִים, Deut 31:28 implies they have high status, as in Num 11:16 and Prov 6:7. In other contexts the שְׂטָרִים are lower assistants in the realm of jurisdiction and military, e.g., in Deut 16:18; cf. J.H. TIGAY, *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1996), 12; J.C. GERTZ, *Die Gerichtsorganisation Israels im deuteronomischen Gesetz* (FRLANT 165; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 83–84.

¹⁶ The shifts in number in vv. 26–29 do not indicate shifts in the addressees, pace SONNET, *Book within the Book* (see n. 5), 172: according to 31:25, Moses undoubtedly spoke *all* the following words to the Levites. However, the plural forms within his speech refer to the Levites as individuals, who have special tasks to fulfil, whereas the singular forms stress the whole group, i.e., the people, to which the Levites belong or which they represent here; cf. TIGAY, *Deuteronomy* (see n. 15), 297.

כל (דברים + קהל + כל), 31:30 is to be interpreted as the executive statement: Moses did in fact teach the elite (כל קהל ישראל) the words of the song.¹⁷ In 32:44, the book's narrator refers a second time to the teaching of the song. However, this teaching is different from the one narrated in 31:30: not only is the change of scene marked by the use of the introductory verb בוא (literally, "he [i.e., Moses] came"), but the teaching of the song is also addressed to a different group, העם ("the people"). Furthermore, the teaching staff is different: this time it is not Moses alone but Moses *and* Joshua.¹⁸

(c) I want to refer briefly to the complex content of the song as well. The speaker is Moses, in part quoting the words of YHWH. In the first part of the song (32:1–33),¹⁹ all emphasis is on Israel turning to foreign gods in the future and on YHWH's anger. The second part (32:34–43) describes YHWH's unexpected and merciful turning back to his people,²⁰ punishing Israel's enemies for their boasting.²¹

(d) An interesting inconsistency remains concerning teaching and writing the song in MT Deut 31:1–32:47. According to 31:19, YHWH commanded Moses and Joshua to write and Moses to teach the song. According to 31:22, Moses alone wrote the song and taught it. According to 31:30, Moses alone taught the song to the elite. According to 32:44, Moses and Joshua together taught the song to the people. In double contradiction to YHWH's command, then, Joshua had no part in writing the song (or better: in writing the Torah) but only in its teaching.²²

V: Moses finishes speaking "all these words" and admonishes Israel for a final time.

In 32:45, Moses is named again as the sole speaker. He now finishes speaking "all these words" (כל הדברים האלה). "These words" are not only the words of the song (31:30), the words of the Torah (31:24), or Moses's words to Israel in

¹⁷ The expression כל קהל ישראל (13× in the Hebrew Bible) can refer to all Israel or to only a part of Israel. In MT Josh 8:35 and 1 Chr 13:1, the expression undoubtedly refers to only a part of the people. In MT Deut 31:30 (in contrast to the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Deut 31:30, see below), the expression most likely refers only to the elite; cf. LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium IV* (see n. 5), 230, 240–244; MARKL, *Gottes Volk im Deuteronomium* (see n. 5), 217, pace SONNET, *Book within the Book* (see n. 5), 171–173.

¹⁸ Thus in MT Deut 31–32 the song is taught twice; cf. LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium IV* (see n. 5), 230–231.

¹⁹ On the structure of the song, see MARKL, *Gottes Volk im Deuteronomium* (see n. 5), 232–238.

²⁰ See especially Deut 32:36.

²¹ See especially Deut 32:27.

²² Do these inconsistencies reflect different positions of late scribes/redactors with regard to the authority of "Moses" and "Joshua" (representing "Pentateuch" and "Hexateuch," respectively)?

31:1–6. The reference to the beginning of the book, indicated by the exclusive combination of several expressions,²³ can hardly be overlooked.²⁴

1:1a: These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel.

32:45: And Moses finished speaking all²⁵ these words to all Israel.

This reference indicates that in the world of Deuteronomy, Moses has now fulfilled his main task. The book's narrator lets Moses conclude with a final admonition, focusing on the main point: Israel must keep "all the words of this Torah" in order to live (32:46–47).

As we have seen, the *rough* structure of MT Deut 31:1–32:47 is fairly clear.²⁶ However, brief examination of the narrative logic of the individual passages reveals that the song texts are not always well integrated into the plot: 31:16–21 and 22 interrupt the connection between 31:14–15 and 23. Furthermore, the revelation of the song causes some "plot-trouble": Moses has to deal with the Torah a second time, and he is forced to add the song as a supplemental text on the scroll. This synchronic evidence points to the following diachronic solution: redactors inserted the song and the related narrative texts. The song texts form a fairly coherent entity:

- 31:16–21 YHWH's commandment to write and to teach the song.
- 31:22 Narrative (proleptic)²⁷ statement: Moses wrote and taught the song "on that day."
- 31:24–32:44 Detailed explanation of v. 22: the words of the song and its writing and teaching.

This coherence points to rather concentrated redactional activity.²⁸ MT Deut 31:1–32:47 without the song texts must have then been reasonably compre-

²³ As already observed by L. PERLITT, *Deuteronomium, I. Teilband: Deuteronomium 1–6** (BKAT 5/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2013), 7, 9.

²⁴ G. BRAULIK, "'Die Worte' (*hadḏbārīm*) in Deuteronomium 1–11," in "*Gerechtigkeit und Recht zu üben*" (*Gen 18,19*): *Studien zur altorientalischen und biblischen Rechtsgeschichte, zur Religionsgeschichte Israels und zur Religionssoziologie; Festschrift für Eckart Otto zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. R. Achenbach and M. Arneth; BZABR 13; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 200–216, here 202–203, is certainly right that Deut 1:1a is in particular a superscription of Moses's first speech (1:6–4:40). In addition, Deut 1:1a has in my view a further function in the MT, framing the main speeches of Moses together with 32:45; cf. FINSTERBUSCH, *Deuteronomium* (see n. 9), 50–51.

²⁵ Sam lacks כל כל was probably inserted by late protomasoretic redactors in order to underline that Moses has now definitively fulfilled his main task in Moab.

²⁶ The narrative order and the order of the events in MT Deut 31:1–32:47 are, all in all, in accordance; cf. SONNET, *Book within the Book* (see n. 5), 180–182, and MARKL, *Gottes Volk im Deuteronomium* (see n. 5), 138–140, pace LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium IV* (see n. 5).

²⁷ Cf. SONNET, *Book within the Book* (see n. 5), 151.

²⁸ Cf. OTTO, "Moses Abschiedslied" (see n. 6), 652–656.

hensible. The cross-check shows that this is indeed the case: Moses's address to Israel about the inheritance of the land, his appointment of Joshua and his twofold future task, the writing of the Torah, the assurance of its transmission to following generations, YHWH's confirmation of Joshua as successor of Moses with regard to his first future task, and some final words of Moses together form a rather satisfying plot.²⁹

The question is what the rationale of the song-redactors (i.e., the redactors who inserted the song and the related narrative texts) was and when they acted. Most scholars assume the existence of an independent edition of Deuteronomy. This independent edition was in my view composed in the early exilic period (though the authors used and referred to preexilic sources like the Covenant Code,³⁰ the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon, and other Neo-Assyrian treaty material). The exilic edition in all likelihood contained most of the material in Deut 1:1–31:13; 32:45–47, plus a narrative about the death of Moses.³¹ The aim of the authors was first and foremost to strengthen the identity of the exilic community, outlining the ideal Israelite society: if Israel acted according to the Deuteronomic commandments, catastrophes like 597 and 586 BCE would never happen again.

In order to understand the rationale of the song-redactors, the threefold emphasis ביום ההוא (“on that day”) in YHWH's speech in the tent (31:17 [2×], 18) is especially revealing. “That day” on which Israel will turn to foreign gods and break the covenant certainly refers to a specific time, namely, the beginning of the sixth century BCE: according to the song-redactors, YHWH knew that the events of 586 BCE would happen. God and his prophet Moses are not naïve. Most important, however, the song gives the reason why God let Israel survive the catastrophe: because of his mercy and his devotion to his people. This point remained open in the early exilic edition Deuteronomy.³² The song-redactors,

²⁹ Some aspects of content and language underline the secondary character of the song texts. Thus, the idea of Moses's teaching the *elite* is a rather “un-Deuteronomic” idea: in Deut 1:1–31:13, Moses constantly addressed the *entire people*. Furthermore, in comparison to other Deuteronomic texts, which call on Israel to *choose* between blessing and curse (e.g., Deut 4:25–31; 28:1–68), the song texts insert an unusually pessimistic prospect on Israel's behavior in the land: the Israelites will *definitively* break the covenant in the future (cf. 31:17). Finally, the song texts display some “un-Deuteronomic” expressions such as אֵל נָבַר (cf. 31:18, 20; 32:12) or עַד בָּ (cf. 31:19, 26); and see SONNET, *Book within the Book* (see n. 5), 174–175.

³⁰ See the contribution of D. P. WRIGHT, “The Covenant Code Appendix (Exodus 23:20–33), Neo-Assyrian Sources, and Implications for Pentateuchal Study,” in this volume, pp. 47–85.

³¹ Cf. FINSTERBUSCH, *Deuteronomium* (see n. 9), 35–38.

³² For example, in Deut 4:25–31 Moses predicts destruction and exile if Israel does not keep the commandments. Moses also predicts that the surviving community in the exile can return to YHWH only because YHWH is faithful to the covenant that he made with the patriarchs. The question, however, why YHWH would not destroy the entire unfaithful people but let a remnant survive, is not answered. Only in Deut 30:3, part of the larger unit Deut 30:1–10, which is in all likelihood an early postexilic “Deuteronomistic” addition (cf. W. Gross,

in all likelihood, wanted to underline the message of the exilic edition:³³ the addressees, who live only by God's mercy after "that day," should by all means behave differently than Israel did before "that day" and should learn and keep the commandments of the Deuteronomic Torah in the future.

In other words, to explain the evidence of the song texts in MT Deut 31:1–32:47, there is no need to assume the Pentateuch's larger narrative horizon.³⁴ In contrast, however, the evidence of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Deut 31:1–32:47 cannot be explained *without* the larger pentateuchal horizon.

2 (The Hebrew *Vorlage* of) LXX Deuteronomy 31:1–32:47

I first want to present an overview of the main scenes and themes in LXX Deut 31:1–32:47 and its Hebrew *Vorlage*, respectively. In the table below, significant additions in comparison to the MT are set in *italics*, and important differences in terms of content are underlined.

I: Moses addresses Israel and Joshua about the inheritance of the land

31:1 Narrative statement: Moses finishes speaking "*all* these words" to all *children* of Israel.

Zukunft für Israel: Alttestamentliche Bundeskonzepte und die aktuelle Debatte um den Neuen Bund [SBS 176; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 40–44), is God's mercy mentioned as the reason why he let his exiled people return to the land.

³³ The "monotheistic" statement in Deut 32:39 is in my view a decisive argument against the preexilic origin of the song. The "polytheistic" statements in 32:8* and 32:43* (see on those verses especially A. ROFÉ, "The End of the Song of Moses [Deuteronomy 32:43]," in *Liebe und Gebot: Studien zum Deuteronomium* [ed. R. G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann; FRLANT 190; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2000], 164–172, here 167) provide an argument against a dating later than the late Persian period. In terms of method it does not seem possible to date the song on the basis of allusions, as the following positions may show: according to OTTO, "Moses Abschiedslied" (see n. 6), 672, the authors alluded to the "Texte der drei Kanonsteile"; however, according to G. FISCHER, "Das Ende von Deuteronomium (Dtn 26–34) im Spiegel des Jeremiabuches," in "*Gerechtigkeit und Recht zu üben*" (*Gen 18,19*): *Studien zur altorientalischen und biblischen Rechtsgeschichte, zur Religionsgeschichte Israels und zur Religionssoziologie; Festschrift für Eckart Otto zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. R. Achenbach and M. Arneht; BZABR 13; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 281–292, here 290–92, the author of Jeremiah alluded to the song.

³⁴ Pace OTTO, "Moses Abschiedslied" (see n. 6), 653–54: "Mit der Einfügung des Moseliedes und seines Rahmens sollte an die Pentateuchredaktion in Dtn 4,25–31 und Dtn 34,10–12 anknüpfend Mose als Erzprophet, der letzte, mit dem YHWH von Angesicht zu Angesicht wie in Dtn 31,16–22 gesprochen habe, zur Geltung gebracht werden." However, MT Deut 31 stands against this interpretation. First, the last person God speaks to in the tent is Joshua, not Moses (cf. 31:23). Second, according to 31:14–15, God speaks in the tent to Moses and Joshua "in a pillar of cloud" and not "face to face."

- 31:2–6 Moses addresses them, speaking about their inheritance of the land.
- 31:7–8 Moses addresses Joshua in front of Israel, commanding him about his twofold future task.
- II: Moses writes the Torah, and he commands, *on that day*, regular public reading of the written Torah
- 31:9 Narrative statement: Moses writes down “*the words of this Torah*” on a scroll, and he gives (it) to the Levitical priests and the elders.
- 31:10–13 Moses addresses them *on that day*, commanding them to conduct a public Torah reading regularly.
- III: YHWH addresses Moses and Joshua in the tent and gives his revelation of the song
- 31:14a YHWH addresses Moses, commanding him to appear together with Joshua in the tent for the purpose of addressing Joshua.
- 31:14b–15 Narrative statement: Moses obeys; YHWH appears in the tent in a pillar of cloud.
- 31:16–21 YHWH addresses Moses in the tent, speaking about the future behavior of the people, commanding Moses and Joshua to write and Moses and Joshua to teach “*the words of this song*.”
- 31:22 Narrative statement: Moses writes “this song” on that day and teaches it to the children of Israel.
- 31:23 He (i.e., Moses) addresses Joshua, commanding him about his first future task.
- IV: After he finishes writing the Torah, Moses speaks the Torah (including the song) to the elite
- 31:24–29 After Moses finishes writing “*all the words of this Torah*” on a scroll, he addresses the Levites, commanding them to deposit the Torah and to assemble the elite (i.e., the tribal leaders and the elders and the judges and the officials), so that he may speak to them “*all these words*.” (i.e., the words of the Torah, including the song).
- V: Moses speaks the song to the people
- 31:30 Narrative statement: Moses speaks “the words of this song” to the “whole assembly of Israel” (i.e., the people).
- 32:1–43 The words of the song.
- 32:44(a) Narrative statement: *Moses writes “this song” on that day and teaches it to the children of Israel (= 31:22).*

VI: Moses and Joshua speak the Torah to the people

32:44(b) Narrative statement: Moses comes and speaks “all the words of this Torah” to the people, “he and Joshua.”

VII: Moses finishes speaking and admonishes Israel for a final time

32:45 Narrative statement: Moses finishes speaking to all Israel.

32:46–47 Moses addresses them, admonishing them for a final time to keep the Torah.

I will now briefly comment on select aspects of the individual passages and will point in particular to the main differences from the MT.

I: Moses addresses Israel and Joshua about the inheritance of the land.

Deuteronomy 31:1 opens the final part of the book (Deut 31–34): Moses finished speaking “all these words.” In contrast to the MT of the verse, the expression “all these words” in LXX refers *back*, within Deuteronomy,³⁵ at least to (the Hebrew *Vorlage* of) LXX Deut 29:1 (“these are the words of the covenant”) and to 1:1 (“these are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel on the other side of the Jordan”). Deuteronomy 31:1 is the point in the story at which Moses definitively delivered his main message to the people.

II: Moses writes the Torah, and he commands, on that day, regular public reading of the written Torah.

According to the first sentence in 31:9, Moses wrote “the words of this Torah” on a scroll (assumed Hebrew *Vorlage*, עַל סֵפֶר).³⁶ Strikingly, the following sentence does not contain the direct object: the text does not report what exactly Moses gave to the Levitical priests and the elders (it could be the “scroll” or the “Torah”). As we will see below, there is a reason why the object is left out.

The narrated acts in v. 9 are rather isolated in context. In contrast to the MT, 31:10–13 is chronologically *unconnected* to v. 9: Moses “on that day” (assumed Hebrew *Vorlage*, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) commanded the Levitical priests and the elders. This means that Moses commanded them the same day (on which he wrote down the Torah), but that could be significantly later than his giving the Torah/ the scroll to the Levitical priests and the elders.

³⁵ Within the Pentateuch, “these words” can be understood as all words that Moses had to deliver to “the children of Israel” on God’s behalf.

³⁶ Cf. 4QDeut^a, frag. 10; see ULRICH, *Biblical Qumran Scrolls* (see n. 3), 237.

III: YHWH addresses Moses and Joshua in the tent and gives his revelation of the song.

After the tent scene (31:14–21), Moses wrote and taught the song “on that day” (v. 22) and addressed Joshua (v. 23). In terms of plot, 31:14–23 is puzzling: according to 31:14, YHWH wanted to address Joshua in the tent. However, an executive statement of such an address is missing. Rather, in 31:23 Moses addressed Joshua about his first future task outside the tent (and not YHWH inside the tent, as in MT). This is especially odd because the narrator repeats words that Moses had already spoken to Joshua (see v. 7).

IV: After he finishes writing the Torah, Moses speaks the Torah (including the song) to the elite.

The fourth passage, 31:24–29, requires more detailed reflection.

(a) Deuteronomy 31:24 contains the second reference to Moses’s writing the Torah in our section. In contrast to the MT, vv. 9 and 24 most likely refer to one and the same act. A strong indication is the use of common language: the expression “words of the Torah” and the key motif of the scroll are used in both verses, underlining the identity of the reported act of Moses. Thus, the narrator refers to Moses’s writing of the Torah for the first time before the tent scene (v. 9) and for the second time after it (v. 24). This leads to the question, when did the Torah writing in fact happen? Since Deut 31:24–29 contains clear references to YHWH’s words in the tent (taking the view that Israel in the land will by all means do “evil” and will be punished with “evil” by the angry God, and using the specific expression *עֵד בְּ*, “witness against”), the answer must be that Moses wrote the whole Torah from the beginning to its very end after the tent scene.

(b) Whereas 31:9 should be considered a kind of general proleptic statement that Moses wrote the Torah on a scroll, 31:24–29 reports the details. This report concentrates on the very moment when Moses finished writing the Torah.

(c) The Torah most likely includes the song. In v. 24, emphasis is put on “all”: Moses wrote down “all the words of this Torah.” This “all” (assumed Hebrew *Vorlage*, *כָּל*), which is not present in the MT, points to an inclusive meaning for *tôrâ* here. Furthermore, *only* such an inclusive sense can illustrate the meaning of the statement in v. 22 that Moses wrote the song, which would otherwise remain as a *totes Motiv* in the section: when Moses wrote the whole Torah, the very last text he wrote was the song.

(d) Immediately after Moses finished writing, he commanded the Levites to deposit the Torah scroll next to the ark and to assemble four groups of the elite of Israel (the tribal leaders, the elders, the judges, and the officials)³⁷ in

³⁷ Moses did not want to assemble the entire people. For example, women, children, old people, and *gerim* are missing from the list; cf. Deut 29:9–10 and 31:12, pace LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium IV* (see n. 5), 224: “In 31,28 LXX läßt Mose die Leviten nicht nur

order to teach them “all these words” (v. 28). What is the meaning of “all these words”? Since the expression clearly echoes “all the words of this Torah” in v. 24, these words, in contrast to the MT, cannot be limited to the song. Thus, we can conclude that Moses intended to teach the elite “*all the words of this Torah.*” There is no executive statement. In 31:30, a new scene begins (see below).

(e) In light of 31:24–29, the reason for the missing object (*Torah* or *scroll*) in the second sentence in v. 9 becomes clear: the *material Torah scroll* is given (to be deposited in the ark) only to those Levites who carry the ark (cf. 31:24). Responsibility concerning the *written Torah text*, namely, its reading in public at the Succoth feast in Jerusalem in every year of remission, is given to the elders in cooperation with the Levites. In other words, the missing object in 31:9aβ indicates that Moses “gave” the one and only Torah to the groups mentioned, but in different ways.

V: Moses speaks the song to the people.

In 31:30–32:44(a), the theme changes, and the focus shifts to Moses’s teaching the song.³⁸ The narrator has already reported in a general proleptic statement in 31:22 that this act happened “on that day,” but now he relates the details (it is especially noteworthy that the narrator in the nonmasoretic version uses the same narrative pattern as he did for Moses’s Torah writing: first the proleptic statement, then a more detailed report later in the text). According to 31:30, the addressees of Moses’s teaching are “the whole assembly of Israel” (assumed Hebrew *Vorlage*, כל קהל ישראל). In light of the last sentence in the passage, 32:44(a), the expression means *the whole people*, not only the elite, in contrast to the MT.³⁹

This last sentence, which is lacking in the MT, is an exact repetition of 31:22. In terms of plot, it makes no sense to understand 32:44(a) as a separate act, i.e., as a second writing and a second teaching of the song. Why should Moses write the song twice? Thus, the function of the statement 32:44(a) should be seen as a kind of affirmation: both acts, Moses’s writing the song and his teaching the people, are now indeed completed in the narrated world.

die Stammesältesten und Listenführer einberufen, sondern alle jene Amtsträger, die 29,9 LXX aufzählt. Dort werden zwar noch andere Gruppen hinzugefügt [. . .], doch selbst ohne diese Zusatzliste weckt die erweiterte Amtsträgerliste in 31,28 beim Leser schon die Vermutung, daß wie in 29,1 auch hier jetzt die Vollversammlung aller Israeliten einberufen werden soll.” It may be noteworthy that in Codex B (see n. 2) the elders are missing from 31:28.

³⁸ Interestingly, the Greek translator rendered the דברים of the song in 31:30 with ῥήματα (cf. LXX Deut 31:21), whereas the דברים of the Torah in 31:24, 28 were rendered with λόγους. It seems likely that the translation reflects the different meaning of the “words” in the passages Deut 31:24–29 and 31:30–32:44(a).

³⁹ Cf. LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium IV* (see n. 5), 224.

VI: Moses and Joshua speak the Torah to the people.

In 32:44(b) the scene changes, as is indicated by the use of the introductory verb בּוֹא in the assumed Hebrew *Vorlage*. The change of scene goes together with the change of theme: the people (including the elite⁴⁰) must now learn “all the words of this Torah.” Interestingly, the teachers are Moses *and* Joshua. The Torah teaching of Joshua comes as a surprise. However, according to 31:19 in the version represented by the LXX, YHWH commanded Moses and Joshua together in the tent to write and to teach the song.⁴¹ In light of this divine command, 32:44(b) could be interpreted in the sense that Joshua shared Moses’s Torah teaching with respect to its *last part*, the song.

One inconsistency concerning Joshua, however, remains in the nonmasoretic version of 31:1–32:47, too: in contradiction to YHWH’s command in the tent, Joshua had no part in *writing* the Song. The writing of the Torah texts is Moses’s exclusive task.

VII: Moses finishes speaking and admonishes Israel for a final time.

In 32:45, the narrator repeats the first three words of the section, i.e., Deut 31:1: “and Moses finished speaking” (assumed Hebrew *Vorlage*, ויכל משה לדבר).⁴² Moses has now definitively fulfilled his task of transmission.

This analysis has shown that the narrative order and the order of events in LXX Deut 31:1–32:47 and its Hebrew *Vorlage*, respectively, in contrast to the MT, are not in accordance at least in part.⁴³ The following table presents an overview of the *order of the events* “on that day” in the narrated world of the text:

Moses finishes speaking “all these words.”

Moses addresses Israel and addresses Joshua about his twofold future task.

YHWH reveals the song in the tent, commanding Moses and Joshua to write and to teach it.

Moses writes down the Torah (including the song), commanding the Levites to deposit the scroll and to assemble the elite.

Moses teaches the elite the Torah (including the song).

Moses teaches the people the song.

Moses teaches the people the Torah (including the song), together with Joshua.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, according to the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Deut 31–32, the elite must learn the Torah twice. Like the king, who should according to Deut 17:19 read from his personal copy of the Torah daily, the elite must know the Torah better than the people.

⁴¹ Cf. 4QDeut^c, frags. 54–55; see ULRICH, *Biblical Qumran Scrolls* (see n. 3), 238.

⁴² Cf. 1QDeut^b, frag. 13 ii; see ULRICH, *Biblical Qumran Scrolls* (see n. 3), 236.

⁴³ This was LOHFINK’s idea concerning MT Deut 31–32, see above notes 12 and 26.

(?) The same day: Moses commands the Levitical priests and the elders to conduct regular public Torah reading.

(?) Moses addresses Joshua about his first future task.

Moses finishes speaking.

In terms of content, structure, and narrative dynamic, the nonmasoretic version of Deut 31:1–32:47 is extremely complex. Some inconsistencies and oddities remain. The song, however, is rather well integrated into the plot: in contrast to the MT, the song is not a supplement to an already-written text. After the tent scene, Moses writes down the Torah *all in one go* from the beginning to its very end; the song is the final Torah text on the scroll. This, however, reveals where the real focus of the plot is: it is *not* on the song but on the Torah.

The main difference between the two versions of Deut 31–32 is undoubtedly that according to the nonmasoretic version, Israel in Moab must learn the Torah (32:44[b]). Within the narrated world of the independent edition of Deuteronomy, such comprehensive Torah learning at the very end of the narrated period (i.e., of the one day, at the end of which Moses dies) would not make any sense: Moses has *already* taught and Israel has *already* learned the Deuteronomistic commandments (cf. Deut 5:1, 31; 6–26).⁴⁴ Therefore, Torah in the nonmasoretic version of Deut 31–32 is not the Deuteronomistic Torah and the redactors are not “Deuteronomistic” redactors. Rather, the motif of Torah teaching and learning must have been integrated by the pentateuchal redactors, who compiled and redacted separate sources into a single literary composition, the (Proto-)Pentateuch, making the independent edition of Deuteronomy “the fifth book of Moses.” What could have been their rationale for reshaping Deut 31–32?⁴⁵

Torah was undoubtedly an important topic for the Pentateuch’s redactors. In all likelihood they inserted Exod 24:12 (the only verse in Gen – Num in which the term תורה refers to a comprehensive collection of laws):⁴⁶ God gave

⁴⁴ Cf. K. FINSTERBUSCH, *Weisung für Israel: Studien zu religiösem Lehren und Lernen im Deuteronomium und in seinem Umfeld* (FAT 44; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 306–314.

⁴⁵ Compared to MT Deut 31:1–32:47, the narrative structure of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Deut 31–32 should be considered the younger one; cf. LOHFINK, *Studien zum Deuteronomium IV* (see n. 5), 222. However, some single variants of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Deut 31–32 (which do not affect the plot structure) are, in comparison to the MT, in all likelihood older; see, e.g., 31:5 (assumed Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX: באשר; MT/Sam: כבכל המצוה אשר), and cf. NWACHUKWU, “Textual Differences” (see n. 4). Both versions reflect ongoing scribal activity in the Second Temple period. The song may have had a textual history of its own as significant variants indicate; cf., e.g., M. BOGAERT, “Les trois rédactions conservées et la forme originale de l’envoi du cantique de Moïse (Dt 32,43),” in *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt, Botschaft* (ed. N. Lohfink; BETL 68; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985), 329–340; ROFÉ, “End of the Song of Moses” (see n. 33).

⁴⁶ Cf. R. ACHENBACH, “Die Tora und die Propheten im 5. und 4. Jh. v.Chr.,” in *Tora in der Hebräischen Bibel: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte und synchronen Logik diachroner*

the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. Based on certain key terms like ירה and תורה, the Pentateuch's readership would understand this Sinaitic Torah as referring at least to Exod 25:1–31:17; the laws of Leviticus; Deut 5–26; the blessings and curses in Deut 28; and the song in Deut 32. In other words, in the world of the Pentateuch, Moses reveals the Sinaitic Torah *in process*. The problem is, the Sinaitic generation died in the desert; Israel in Moab is the second generation, who never heard the Sinaitic Torah in one piece. However, before starting life in the promised land, Israel must of course know the whole Torah.⁴⁷ This was most likely the reason, first, for optimizing the timetable of the Torah's writing (Moses wrote the whole Torah only *after* the last Torah text – the song – was revealed) and, second, for inserting a subsequent final, comprehensive, and intensive Torah teaching (to the elite and the people) in Deut 31–32.⁴⁸

3 Concluding Remarks

The findings may be concluded in three parts:

1. The narrative structure of Deut 31–32 was changed fundamentally in the course of the text's transmission at least twice. Both changes resulted from secondary insertions: the insertion of the song and related narratives into the independent edition of Deuteronomy and the insertion of the independent edition of Deuteronomy into the Pentateuch. What is generally remarkable here is the

Transformationen (ed. R. Achenbach et al.; BZABR 7; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 26–71, here 40; G. BRAULIK, “‘Die Weisung und das Gebot’ im Enneateuch,” in *Studien zu den Methoden der Deuteronomiumsexegese* (SBAB 42; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2006), 111–135, here 131; K. FINSTERBUSCH, “Aufsummierte Tora: Zur Bedeutung von תורה als Bezeichnung für eine Gesetzessammlung im Pentateuch,” *JAJ* 2 (2011), 1–28, here 19–20.

⁴⁷ The pentateuchal redactors, who reshaped Deut 31–32, most likely did not yet understand Torah as “Pentateuch”: Moses finished speaking the words of the Torah (see 32:44, 45), but this is not the end of the book or of the Pentateuch.

⁴⁸ Based on the analysis of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX/MT Deut 31–32 as presented in this study, much can be learned about the ways in which the pentateuchal redactors reworked the texts. The following lists only a few important points: (a) insertion of a chronological marker in order to disconnect acts (insertion of ביום ההוא in 31:10; thus, v. 9 can be read as an independent proleptic statement); (b) adjustment of language in order to create references between verses (use of the expression “words of the Torah” and the motif of the scroll in 31:9 and 31:24, thus indicating that Moses's acts of writing are one and the same; insertion of כל in 31:24 and 31:29, thus indicating that “all the words” in both verses are identical, i.e., all the words of the Torah); (c) repetition of a textual unit in order to clarify the plot (repetition of 31:22 after the song = 32:44[a], thus clarifying the identity of Moses's audience in 31:30, i.e., the people of Israel); (d) replacement of a word/theme in order to change the plot (change from “song” to “Torah” in 32:44[b], thus creating a new scene).

freedom of the redactors to reshape the plot. In particular, the version represented by the LXX indicates that the pentateuchal redactors thought carefully about the narrative logic of the artificial literary composition of the (Proto-)Pentateuch. It is evident how much questions of plot mattered to them.

2. The interesting point is, of course, why the (Proto-)Masoretic Text of Deut 31–32 became canonical and not the other version. After all, the nonmasoretic version contains a narrative about Moses's final Torah teaching! I can imagine two reasons. First, the plot structure of the nonmasoretic version was too complicated for the readership to grasp. Second, the plot was chronologically too unrealistic: Moses could not possibly teach the Deuteronomic law, establish a covenant, *and* teach the song and the whole Torah twice (to the elite and to the people) on the very last day of his life.

3. Deuteronomy 31–32 belongs to the very last part of the Pentateuch. This final part undoubtedly has special importance (as has every final section of an authoritative literary work). The different versions of Deut 31–32 are an exemplary demonstration of the fact that in the Hellenistic period (the time in which the LXX translators acted) the *final* shape of the Pentateuch still did not exist (otherwise they would of course have had the [Proto-]Masoretic version of Deut 31–32 as *Vorlage*). In light of this evidence, the work of the Jewish groups who were responsible for the standardization and the canonization of the Pentateuch in Judah can hardly be overestimated:⁴⁹ they had a huge task, choosing from several possibilities and deciding what shape the Pentateuch of the Jewish community should finally take.

⁴⁹ An idea of how textual standardization toward (Proto-)MT in Judah was achieved might be preserved in a *baraita* in the Jerusalem Talmud, Ta'anit 4:68a: "they confirmed the reading found in the two (scrolls) and abrogated the other [. . .]." In *Ant.* 3:38; 5:61; and 10:57, Josephus mentions that books/holy books of Moses were laid in the Jerusalem temple. These remarks could refer to master copies in the temple. With regard to the overwhelming evidence for textual plurality and the lack of any evidence for textual standardization in Judah up to the second half of the first century BCE, it seems highly unlikely that master copies of any text existed in the Jerusalem temple significantly earlier than the first century CE; cf. A. LANGE, "Nobody Dared to Add to Them, to Take from Them, or to Make Changes" (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.42): The Textual Standardization of Jewish Scriptures in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (ed. A. Hilhorst et al., JSJSup 122, Leiden: Brill, 2007), 105–126, here 116–17. In ancient Judaism, the earliest evidence for textual standardization is the Letter of Aristeas. This locates the beginnings of the textual standardization of Jewish Scriptures in Egyptian if not Alexandrian Judaism. Hence, it seems feasible that the beginnings of Jewish textual standardization go back to Greek influence; cf. LANGE, "Nobody Dared," 118–122.

Appendix: Translation of key verses of MT-Deuteronomy 31–32 and LXX-Deuteronomy 31–32

Significant additions are set in *italics*; important differences in terms of content are underlined.

Deuteronomy 31–32 MT

31:1 And Moses went and spoke
these words to all Israel.

2 And he said to them: . . .

9 And Moses wrote
this torah
and gave *it* to the priests, the sons of Levi,
who carried
the ark of the covenant of YHWH,
and to all the elders of Israel.

10 And Moses commanded them,
saying: . . .

14 And YHWH said to Moses:
Behold, your days to die approach.
Call Joshua and position yourselves
in the tent of meeting,
and I will command him.
And Moses went and Joshua,
–
and they positioned themselves
in the tent of meeting . . .

19 And now,
write for you (pl.) this song
and teach (sg.) it to the children of Israel,
put (sg.) it in their mouths . . .
22 And Moses wrote this song on that day
and taught it to the children of Israel.
23 And he (i.e., YHWH)
commanded Joshua *the son of Nun*
and said:
Be strong and courageous,
for you shall bring
the children of Israel into the land
which I swore unto them,
and I, I will be with you.

Deuteronomy 31–32 LXX

And Moses finished speaking
all these words to all *children of* Israel.
And he said to them: . . .

And Moses wrote
the words of this law on a scroll
and gave to the priests, the sons of Levi,
who carried
the ark of the covenant of the Lord,
and to all the elders of *the children of* Israel.
And Moses commanded them *on that day*,
saying: . . .

And the Lord said to Moses:
Behold, the days of your death approach.
Call Yesous and stand
by the entrance of the tent of testimony,
and I will command him.
And Moses went and Yesous
into the tent of testimony,
and they stood
by the entrance of the tent of testimony . . .

And now,
write (pl.) *the words of* this song
and teach (pl.) it to the children of Israel,
and put (pl.) it in their mouths . . .
And Moses wrote this song on that day
and taught it to the children of Israel.
And he (i.e., Moses)
commanded Yesous
and said:
Be strong and courageous,
for you shall bring
the children of Israel into the land
which the Lord swore unto them,
and he, he will be with you.

24 And it happened
 when Moses had finished writing
 the words of this torah on a scroll
 to the very end,
 25 then *Moses* commanded the Levites,
 who carried
 the ark of the covenant of YHWH,
 saying:
 26 Take this scroll of the torah
 and put it beside the ark . . .
 28 Assemble to me
all elders of your tribes
 and your officials,
 and I will speak in their ears
 these words (i.e., of the song). . . .

30 And Moses spoke in the ears
 of the whole assembly of Israel
 the words of this song
 to the very end. . . .

32:44(a) –
 –

44(b) And Moses came and spoke
 all the words of this song
 in the ears of the people,
 he and Hoshea the son of Nun.

45 And Moses finished speaking
all these words to all Israel.
 46 And he said to them: . . .

And when
 Moses had finished writing
all the words of this law on a scroll
 to the very end,
 then he commanded the Levites,
 who carried
 the ark of the covenant of the Lord,
 saying:
 Having taken the scroll of this law,
 put it beside the ark . . .
 Assemble to me
 your tribal leaders *and your elders*
and your judges and your officials,
 so that I may speak in their ears
all these words (i.e., of the law). . . .

And Moses spoke in the ears
 of the whole assembly of Israel
 the words of this song
 to the very end. . . .

*And Moses wrote this song on that day
 and taught it to the children of Israel.*

And Moses came and spoke
 all the words of this law
 in the ears of the people,
 he and Yesous the son of Naue.

And Moses finished speaking
 to all Israel.
 And he said to them: . . .