PART TWO

BIBLICAL STUDIES
A POSSIBLE TERMINUS AD QUEM FOR THE DEUTERONOMISTIC LEGISLATION – A FRESH LOOK AT DEUT 17:16

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Bustenay Oded is one of the few scholars who is not only an outstanding expert on the Neo-Assyrian literature, history and ideology but also endeavours to use his vast knowledge of this culture to shed more light on the history, literature and religion of ancient Israel and Judah. Therefore, I would like to convey my greetings and compliments to him with a study that also has to do with a possible connection between Judaean literature and history in the wider perspective of Assyrian/Babylonian and Egyptian affairs.¹

As I wrote my History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period more than 15 years ago, I came to realize that “the most important decision in the history of Israelite religion is made with a dating of an essential part of Deuteronomy to the time of Josiah”.² This decision shapes the whole reconstruction, because Deuteronomy became very influential for the subsequent literary and theological history of the Hebrew Bible. Needless to say, all kinds of Deuteronomistic literature is dispersed among the historical and prophetic books (Josh–2 Kgs; Jer; Hos; Amos; Mic; Zeph; Zech, and so on) and in some way even through the rest of the Pentateuch. Moreover, after the date or even the existence of the older Pentateuchal sources J and E was seriously queried, the dating of the Deuteronomy became the final great anchor for fixing the literary history of the Hebrew Bible. Its historical setting is of crucial importance for all kinds of diachronic reconstructions.

¹ A shorter version of this paper was presented at the colloquium in honour of Nadav Na’aman in Tel Aviv on January 24, 2008.