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The Political and Legal Uses of Scripture

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THE NEW CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF
THE BIBLE

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VOLUME I

From the Beginnings to 600

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Contents

more associated with levitical psalm-singing in the service of the temple. The storing of sacred texts in the sanctuary, an ancient practice throughout the ancient Near East, continued during the period of the texts we have surveyed, and served to prove for sages like Ben Sira that wisdom was resident in the temple, from where her teachings flowed forth to instruct not only the Jewish people, but the whole world.

The Hebrew Bible is reticent about how the scribes who wrote it were trained; what lessons they received in letters and culture; and how they transmitted their learning. That the temple played a significant role in all these activities is likely, and recent research tends to confirm that likelihood. Yet sacred texts from early times did not remain tied to the temple.[60] Non-priests were expected to know them, and to be able to express in solemn liturgical formulas laid down by those same texts the realities which so powerfully bound together temple, text and worshipper in solemn bonds of obligation to and service of the Almighty. Constructed and ordered according to a divine plan, the temple housed divine writings deposited in its most holy place: thus sacred writing and temple on earth embody heavenly realities, preserved indeed by priestly guardians, but made present in time and space for all Israel to know, observe and repeat. Nor is the future forgotten in these things: the preservation in the temple of texts which foretell what God intends has its own dynamic – but that would take us beyond the limits set for this chapter.

60 The implications of this observation for the continuing vitality of Judaism after 70 CE should be considered in tandem with the essay of Goldenberg, 'The Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple', pp. 191–205.

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The political and legal uses of scripture

JAMES W. WATTS

The Pentateuch, the five books at the beginning of the Hebrew Bible, was the first text to be treated as scripture in ancient Judaism. Though debate continues regarding whether and the extent to which all or part of Deuteronomy had normative authority in late seventh-century Judah, there is much evidence that by the fifth or fourth century BCE, the Pentateuch functioned essentially as scripture. The traditional name of this collection, the Torah ('instruction' or 'law'), implies the normative textuality that has distinguished it and subsequent scriptures (the Christian Bible, the Qur'ān, etc.) from other important texts in western religious and cultural traditions.

The Torah's precedence as scripture raises the question of how and why it accumulated such unique authority. The question of the origin of scripture is not just a question of canonisation,[1] of which books became authoritative when and under what circumstances. It is also a question of social function, of what practices, beliefs and social situations motivated elevating the Torah to such normative status. Addressing the social function of scriptures requires consideration of the political interests behind their publication and ongoing use, and it may also involve their role as law.

Ancient law and scripture

The name Torah might suggest that the Pentateuch's normative authority developed out of its legal functions. However, the notion that scripture's authority derives from its status as law does not correspond to the likely use of ancient law collections. Collections of laws dating from the third and second millennia BCE have survived from ancient Sumer, Babylon, Assyria and

1 See Barton in this volume, pp. 145–64.

Anatolia.[2] This Mesopotamian tradition of drafting collections of casuistic laws influenced the earliest biblical legal collection, the Covenant Code (Exod. 21–3), and through it most of Israel's other legal traditions.[3] There is no evidence, however, that texts containing such legal collections were ever cited or used in other ways to regulate the practices of law courts in any of these societies. The abundant documentation from Mesopotamian courts contains no references to texts such as Hammurabi's Code, even during that king's reign in the eighteenth century BCE. Scholars of ancient law continue to debate the purpose and function of ancient legal collections, but it is clear that these collections did not function, like modern laws, as norms regulating courts of law and other social institutions.[4] Therefore written civil laws had no normative legal function from which the Torah might have gained its authority. Only in the latter half of the first millennium BCE did several cultures around the Mediterranean begin to use public recitation and inscription to promulgate legal revisions and innovations.[5] The participation of the Torah in this cultural trend does not, however, explain the trend's origins or the motivations behind the Torah's authority in Judah, Samaria and elsewhere.

The Bible's portrayal of Israel's society confirms that legal function does not explain the origins of the Torah's authority. Pentateuchal laws and instructions receive little attention in the biblical accounts of Israel's history after settlement in the land (Joshua). Descriptions of legal proceedings make no references to written law, whether they reflect the legal contents of the legislation or not (2 Sam. 14:5–17; 1 Kings 21:8–13, 19–24; 2 Kings 8:1–6; Jer. 26:8–24; Ruth 4).[6] More broadly, stories of ritual and moral transgressions such as the corruption of Eli's sons (1 Sam. 1:12–17, 27–36) or David's adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11–12) do not quote or refer explicitly to relevant pentateuchal prescriptions. Nor do Israel's judges and kings buttress their edicts by citing Torah. Only in the late seventh century, according to the Deuteronomistic History

(Deuteronomy to Kings), or a hundred years earlier, according to Chronicles, do these histories tell of kings using a 'book of the law' to justify their changes to ritual practices (2 Kings 22–3 // 2 Chron. 34–5) or sponsoring public education in the written Torah (2 Chron. 17:7–9).[7] One other text (2 Kings 14:5–6) justifies the mercy shown by an eighth-century king to the children of his father's assassins by referring to the law of Moses and quoting it (Deut. 24:16), but it does not explicitly say that the written Torah was cited by the king himself.[8]

Critical scholarship has taken the almost total absence of the Torah from the storyline of the Deuteronomistic History as an indication that the pentateuchal sources did not begin to be composed until near the end of the history of the kingdom of Judah.[9] That is likely the case, but the rarity of even fictional projections of Torah use into earlier stories also shows that our assumptions about how scriptures *should* be used were not shared by the writers of the Hebrew Bible.

Pentateuchal instructions for using pentateuchal texts

Some pentateuchal passages explicitly state how the Torah should be used. Of course, the Pentateuch frequently exhorts its hearers and readers to obey its injunctions, but Deuteronomy also describes appropriation of the *text* of Torah both by households and by Israel as a whole. Though these passages originally referred only to Deuteronomy itself, their pentateuchal context soon made them apply to the Torah as a whole.

Deut. 6:20 anticipates interpretative discussion and commentary on Torah within households. The chapter also requires people to memorise the commandments (verse 6), to recite them within their households as well as during travels (verse 7), and to 'bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates' (verses 8–9; also Deut. 11:18–21). Verses 8–9 can be understood metaphorically to re-emphasise the internalisation of Torah depicted in verses 6–7. Since Antiquity, however, they have been taken literally as mandating that texts of Torah be worn as phylacteries (*tefillin*) and placed in containers

2 For an anthology of ancient legal collections, see Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, SBL Writings from the Ancient World 6 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995).

3 Cf. Schaper in this volume, pp. 105–44.

4 See the essays in Levinson, *Theory and Method*, and Raymond Westbrook, 'The Character of Ancient Near Eastern Law', in R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 16–21.

5 See LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 18–23; Gary N. Knoppers and Paul B. Harvey, Jr., 'The Pentateuch in Ancient Mediterranean Context. The Publication of Local Lawcodes', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 105–41; and Joachim Schaper, 'The "Publication" of Legal Texts in Ancient Judah', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 225–36.

6 See Dale Patrick, *Old Testament Law* (Atlanta, GA: Westminster John Knox, 1985), pp. 191–8; and LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 34–6, 55–95.

7 Cf. Bernard S. Jackson, *Studies in the Semiotics of Biblical Law*, JSOTS 314 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 115–41; and LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 37–9.

8 Because its citation of the Pentateuch is so unusual, some scholars consider the passage a later gloss: so James A. Montgomery, *Books of Kings*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1951), p. 439; the contrary view is maintained by T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, WBC 13 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), p. 179.

9 See Schaper in this volume, pp. 105–44.

(*mezuzot*) on the door frames of houses and gateposts of towns.[10] Torah texts thus replaced divine images which, in many ancient cultures, were carried as amulets and displayed at the entrances to houses and towns.[11]

Comparative study of the function of scriptures in various religious traditions shows that Deuteronomy's mandates are not unusual. Scriptures are typically ritualised in three dimensions: along an iconic dimension by manipulating and displaying the physical text, along a performative dimension by performing the words or meaning of the text through recitation, song, theatre and art, and along a semantic dimension by ritualising textual interpretation in sermon, lecture and commentary.[12] Deut. 6 anticipates and mandates the ritualisation of Torah in all three dimensions. That observation has relevance for understanding the political and legal force of Torah. Ritualising the three dimensions conveys authority on those who interpret scriptures, inspiration on those who perform them and hear them performed, and legitimacy on those who handle them. Thus the activities mandated in Deut. 6 tend to generate the kinds of claims to scriptural authority, inspiration and legitimacy that have characterised the Torah's history.

Deut. 31:9–13 makes the performative dimension central to Israel's experience of Torah. Moses commands the priests to preserve 'this torah' in the ark of the covenant and to read it aloud every seven years to all Israel during Sukkoth (the festival of booths). Though oral performance gets the most attention here, the passage also mandates iconic ritualisation by enshrining the Torah in the ark that is kept in the heart of Israel's central sanctuary (also Deut. 10:1–5). Karel van der Toorn points out that the Torah in the ark functioned like divine images found in ancient temples:

> Like the divine image in other Near Eastern civilizations, the ark served as the focal point of the divine presence . . . When it became a shrine for the revealed Word of God, its new function did not diminish its holiness; the written law had, in effect, taken the place of the image . . . Like the icon, the Book is both a medium and an object; as medium it refers the reader to a reality beyond itself, whilst as an object it is sacred in itself.[13]

Synagogues usually reproduce Deuteronomy's mandate by making the cabinet containing the Torah scrolls (*'Aron haQodesh* 'the holy ark') the central focal point of the synagogue's internal architecture. In contrast to the Torah's

regular performance and iconic enshrinement, Deut. 31 does not explicitly mention the semantic dimension of interpretation and commentary, though it may imply it in the motivation for the public reading that Israel may 'observe diligently all the words of this law' (verse 12).

A political concern for shaping communal identity governs much of Deuteronomy. Its instructions employ the iconic and performative dimensions of Torah to instruct and remind Israelites of their obligations under the covenant with YHWH. David Carr has described the ways in which many ancient societies used instruction in classic texts to enculturate an educated elite and distinguish them from everyone else by their erudition.[14] Deuteronomy makes such textual enculturation a universal ideal in Israel and a distinguishing feature of YHWH's people (see Deut. 4:5–8).

Public law readings

While the iconic and semantic uses mandated by Deut. 4 and 31 have direct reflexes in later Jewish practices, the command to read the Torah aloud every seven years at Sukkoth has not usually been observed in that way. Instead, the Torah has been divided into weekly sections (*parashot*) to be read sequentially in Sabbath services through the calendar year. (In rabbinic times, some synagogues used a three-year cycle instead.) The books of the Pentateuch, however, contain no indications of being composed or shaped for such episodic readings intended for homiletical expansion.[15] The Hebrew Bible's few references to using Torah scrolls focus exclusively on readings to public assemblies of the entire text, as mandated in Deut. 31.[16]

In the late seventh century BCE, King Josiah had 'all the words of the covenant book' read aloud to the assembled people of Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:2). The book had recently been discovered during renovations of the temple. Reading its contents provoked distress on the part of the king and his advisers and led them to make a covenant to abide by its provisions (23:3–4). Then Josiah purged the religion of Judaea of practices he now regarded as inappropriate in light of the book's provisions (verses 4–20, 24). The story associates the book's contents most closely with Josiah's command to keep Passover properly and asserts that it had not been observed in this way, or maybe at all, by any of his predecessors among the judges or kings of Israel and Judah (verses 21–3).

10 For discussion of figural versus literal interpretations and ancient evidence for the latter, see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, pp. 341–3; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 441–4.
11 Van der Toorn, 'Iconic Book', p. 241.   12 Watts, 'Three Dimensions', pp. 135–59.
13 Van der Toorn, 'Iconic Book', p. 242.

14 Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*; see further below.
15 Contra Anthony F. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien, *Rethinking the Pentateuch. Prolegomena to the Theology of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).
16 For further discussion of these texts, see Watts, *Reading Law*, pp. 15–31.

Approximately two hundred years later, the priest and scribe Ezra brought 'the book of the law of Moses' from Babylon to Jerusalem. He read it to the assembled people of Jerusalem with great ceremony (Neh. 8), so that the book was visually displayed (he 'opened the book in the sight of all the people', verse 5), its contents were recited ('he read from it from dawn until noon', verse 3), and its words translated or interpreted ('the Levites helped the people understand the law', verse 8; cf. verse 13). The public reading once again produced ritual reform: the people celebrated Sukkoth correctly, as had not happened since the time of Joshua (verse 18).

In both stories, public reading of Torah advanced a political agenda of ritual change, especially involving pilgrimage festivals (Passover, Sukkoth) and support for the Jerusalem temple.[17] In 2 Kings, it also involved sacred objects and space; in Ezra–Nehemiah, it affected the boundaries on membership in the community. Both Josiah and Ezra used public readings of Torah to bring about ritual changes in situations of considerable social conflict. They had other tools as well, not least military power (obviously in King Josiah's case, but also in the case of Ezra who, according to Neh. 8:9, was supported by Nehemiah, the Persian governor who commanded the local troops). The stories do not emphasise force, however, but rather depict the display and reading of Torah as a powerful form of persuasion to gain the compliance of the Jerusalem population. Other cultures also made use of authoritative texts to change ritual behaviour. Their examples cast light on the persuasive use of texts in ancient Israel and Judah.

Political legitimacy from ritual texts

Many ancient Near Eastern cultures used old texts to legitimise ritual changes. There is a striking contrast between ritual and legal texts in this regard: whereas collections of criminal and civil law do not seem to have been cited or used as norms for courtroom procedures, ritual texts were frequently cited as norms for changing ritual practices. For example, a Hittite king followed the instructions in old texts to restore forgotten rituals and treaties to avert a plague.[18] A Samnite priest revived a ceremony recorded in an old linen scroll

to coerce conscripts to serve in a war against Rome.[19] In Rome itself, senators consulted anthologies of Sibylline oracles to find ritual solutions to military crises.[20]

Ritual texts were often employed more broadly to legitimise rites, whether innovative or not. Egyptian 'lector priests' displayed and read from papyrus scrolls to authorise funerary rites and processions of divine images, among other things.[21] Mesopotamian kings justified their temple restoration projects on the basis of old foundation texts, sometimes claiming divine inspiration for their discovery centuries after they were lost.[22] Ugaritic lists of deities and former kings preserve the cuneiform equivalent of check marks in the margins confirming that rituals were performed for the proper entities and in order.[23]

There is sufficient evidence, then, from across the ancient Near East and Mediterranean to confirm that texts were frequently employed to authorise rituals and legitimise those officiating. Though kings and priests can be expected to have sufficient authority to preside over rituals, they seem to have sometimes felt the need to buttress their authority by appealing to old texts. The persuasive power of written texts comes from their appearance as speaking from the past in a voice independent of their readers. Though modern and post-modern theories of textuality cast doubt on such common views of textual meaning, they should not be allowed to obscure the rhetorical power of appeals to textual authority. In antiquity, such appeals were first used to legitimise rituals and ritual innovations and to buttress the power of those presiding over them. In Samaria and Judah, appeals to the Torah's ritual instructions legitimised the temples and their priesthoods which, in turn, enhanced the authority of Torah.

Official temple law in the Persian empire

Persian rule over Judah/Yehud (538 to 322 BCE) seems to have reinforced the authoritative use of ritual texts in the Jerusalem temple with official

17 Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric*, pp. 209–12; LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 142–3.
18 E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), p. 382; see also www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/CTH/. Translated by Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2002), p. 83. For more detailed discussion of these examples, see Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric*, pp. 199–208.

19 Livy, *History of Rome*, ed. E. Rhys, trans. C. Roberts (New York: Dutton, 1912), 10:38.
20 See Eric M. Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Roman Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 76–115.
21 David Lorton, 'The Theology of the Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt', in M. Dick (ed.), *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth. The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), pp. 123–210, at p. 149.
22 E.g. the sun-disc tablet of Nabu-Apla-Iddina, translated by Victor Hurowitz in *Context of Scripture*, ed. W. W. Hallo (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 2.135.
23 Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2002), pp. 12–13, 200.

imperial sanction. Various pieces of evidence suggest that Persian imperial agents officially recognised the legitimacy of some local temple laws in Egypt and Anatolia, as well as Judah (Ezra 7:11–26). Scholars have often concluded therefore that the Persian emperors actively encouraged the codification of ethnic law codes and their promulgation with the status of imperial law. Peter Frei argued that this system anticipated the federal legal arrangements of some modern states.[24] Pentateuch scholars suggested that Persian pressures may have motivated the inclusion of diverse legal collections (the Covenant Code in Exod. 21–3; the Holiness Code in Lev. 17–26; and the Deuteronomic Code in Deut. 12–26) in one large document, the Pentateuch.[25] Most recent evaluations of the issue have concluded that the Persians did not actively codify local laws or incorporate them into imperial law.[26] Persian imperial policy was content to let local officials conduct their own affairs so long as they continued to collect taxes for the emperor and did not threaten the internal peace of the empire.[27] As a result, the theory of Persian imperial authorisation of the Torah has fallen into disfavour.

The scattered ancient evidence for Persian official recognition of local or regional law collections nevertheless suggests some interesting parallels with the depiction in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah of Ezra's legal mission on behalf of the empire with the book of 'the law of the God of Heaven' in his hands (Ezra 7). Though it is now clear that Persia did not require or even encourage its dependencies to submit their laws to the empire for ratification, the evidence shows that some local authorities in various places did request Persian recognition of local temple laws so that their temples and communities would gain legal status in the empire. Like modern governments giving a particular company, product or item 'official' status, the Persians probably granted official recognition to temple laws as a token favour to local elites, without giving any attention to the contents of those laws.[28] The communities who received such recognition, however, stood to benefit by gaining official status, as did individuals who could plausibly claim

membership in an officially recognised temple community by, for example, paying a temple tax (Neh. 10:32).

The desire to apply for imperial recognition of Jerusalem temple law may have motivated the arrangement of Israel's diverse legal collections within one narrative sequence in the Pentateuch. It more obviously accounts for the central position in the Pentateuch of the ritual instructions and regulations usually assigned by source critics to P, the priestly source (Exod. 25–31, 35–40; Lev. 1–16). The Torah's normative authority in the Persian period arose from its status as officially recognised temple law governing the ritual and financial affairs of the Judaean and Samaritan temples. It should cause no surprise, then, that its core is dominated by extensive regulations concerning precisely such matters.

The Aaronide hierocracy

P's emphasis on ritual should not be allowed to obscure the fact that its ritual regulations place a heavy emphasis on personnel. They are just as concerned with *who* performs a ritual as they are with *how* it gets done. They mandate a monopoly by the descendants of Aaron over all priestly sacrificial service at the sanctuary altar. All the animal, vegetable and incense offerings brought by Israelites to the sanctuary must pass through their hands. The texts exalt the Aaronides through elaborate descriptions of their ordination for this office (Exod. 28–9; Lev. 8–9). They glorify the priest's job as essential for Israel's welfare and also dangerous for those who perform its duties (Lev. 10:1–3). In a personal divine oracle, the Aaronide high priest receives the authority to rule definitively about correct ritual practice and to teach the regulations in Israel (Lev. 10:10–11).[29] Though priests are less prominent in Deuteronomy, that book also gives interpretative authority to 'levitical priests' (17:8–13, 18, 18:1–8, 31:9–13, 24–26) rather than to a king (17:14–20) or prophets (13:1–5, 18:15–22).[30] Overall, then, the Pentateuch exalts priests much more than any other institutional authority and celebrates the high priest as the single most important individual in Israel's polity.[31]

24 Peter Frei, "Persian Imperial Authorization. A Summary", in Watts (ed.), *Persia and Torah*, pp. 5–40.
25 E.g. Blum, *Studien*, pp. 333–60; Crüsemann, *The Torah*, pp. 329–65.
26 See the other essays in Watts, *Persia and Torah*.
27 Anselm C. Hagedorn, 'Local Law in an Imperial Context', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 64–9.
28 Watts, 'Introduction', in *Persia and Torah*, pp. 3–4; Konrad Schmid, 'The Persian Imperial Authorization as a Historical Problem and as a Biblical Construct. A Plea for Distinctions in the Current Debate', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 23–38, at p. 31; and David M. Carr, 'The Rise of Torah', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 54–5.

29 See further Nihan, *Priestly Torah* and Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric*.
30 On the priestly character of both Deuteronomy and the editing of the Pentateuch, see Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch*, FAT 30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), pp. 243–63.
31 Moses is depicted as supreme, of course, but Moses represents no later Israelite institution. The Pentateuch harnesses Moses' prophetic authority not to institutionalise prophecy (though see Deut. 18:15–22), but rather to legitimise the Aaronide priesthood (Exod. 29; Lev. 8, 16; Num. 16–17).

The Deuteronomistic History, however, does not portray priestly dominance in Israel's society, much less Aaronide pre-eminence. Apart from the figure of Moses, who combines priestly activities with the roles of prophet, scribe, warlord and judge but remains inimitable and unequalled in subsequent Israelite history (Deut. 34:10–12), the Deuteronomistic History depicts Israel's leaders as warlords ('judges') and kings, with the principal political opposition coming from some prophets. It portrays priests as royal appointees who qualified for their positions by their political loyalties as much as their family lines. Priests and Levites get more mention in Chronicles, but nevertheless remain supporting characters in comparison with kings. They rarely occupy the attention of the biblical narrators (one exception is 1 Sam. 2–4, which splits its attention between Samuel on the one hand and Eli and his sons on the other).

Priests do not seem to have achieved the pre-eminent position assigned to them by the Pentateuch until after the Babylonian exile. In c. 535 BCE, the returning exiles were led by the priest Jeshua son of Jozadak and Zerubbabel, the grandson of the last king of Judah (Ezra 3:2). For the following two centuries under Persian rule, leadership in Judah/Yehud seems often to have been shared between a hereditary high priest and an imperial governor.[32] But by the end of the period, governors disappear from the record (as preserved by Josephus). Hellenistic rulers recognised the high priests as the supreme representatives of the Jewish people. Though the history of the Second Temple priesthood is not very clear, Jeshua's dynasty (called the Oniads in the Hellenistic period, after a series of high priests named 'Onias' in the third and second centuries) seems to have controlled the Jerusalem high priesthood for three and a half centuries, until being deposed in the turmoil preceding the Maccabean revolt (167–164 BCE).[33] During the Hellenistic period, according

to Josephus, Aaronide priests related by marriage to those in Jerusalem also reigned as high priests over the Samaritan temple on Mt Gerizim.[34] After being deposed from the Jerusalem high priesthood, a scion of the Oniads founded a Jewish temple in Leontopolis (Egypt) that lasted for three centuries.[35] The Hasmonaeans, another family claiming Aaronide descent (1 Macc. 2:1), came to power as a result of the Maccabean revolt and seized the high priesthood in Jerusalem for themselves.[36] A later generation of that family added the title 'king'.

Thus the returning exiles rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple under the leadership of priests claiming Aaronide descent. The high priestly family of Jeshua governed temple operations and gained increasing political power through the Persian period until being recognized by the Hellenistic kingdoms as pre-eminent in Judah and among Jews. The same family governed temples on Mt Gerizim and at Leontopolis as well. It seems that Jeshua's dynasty enacted P's doctrine of an Aaronide monopoly over the conduct of cultic worship wherever it might take place more than they did Deuteronomy's doctrine of the centralisation of cultic worship in only one place.

The hierarchical rhetoric of the Pentateuch, and especially its priestly source, therefore best matches the political situation of the Second Temple period. The Torah and the Aaronide dynasties of high priests both came to prominence in the early part of the period. Depending on when one dates the composition of the Pentateuch's P document, it was either written beforehand to lay the basis for the Aaronide's post-exilic monopoly or else it was composed in the Persian period to reinforce their growing power.[37] The

32 Historians debate whether governors continued in Judaea to the end of the Persian period or not: compare VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, pp. 107–11 with Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, p. 192.

33 See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*. Historians regularly term Jeshua's dynasty the 'Zadokites' because they traced their descent through Zadok, who was David and Solomon's high priest. 1 Chronicles claims Aaronide descent for Zadok (24:3) within the broader tribe of Levi. However, the dearth of references to Aaron in pre-exilic or even exilic literature suggests to many interpreters that the Aaronide and Levite genealogies are fictional. Debate continues over the relationship between Zadokites, Aaronides and Levites in the exilic and Persian periods. For example, Eckart Otto (*Deuteronomium im Pentateuch*, pp. 248–61) maintains that Jeshua's Zadokite dynasty championed Deuteronomy's views and then combined it with the P material of their rivals, the Aaronides, to form the Pentateuch. By contrast, Joachim Schaper (*Priester und Leviten*, pp. 26–42) argues that P's Aaronide claims were written to advance the interests of Jeshua's dynasty by bringing non-Zadokite priestly families into alliance with it. The latter view better explains acceptance of the Torah by Samaritan priests who, regardless of their actual descent, could not be expected to rally to the party of the Jerusalemite Zadok.

34 Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.302–3, 321–4.

35 Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.397, 13.62–73; B. J. 7.426–32.

36 Historians commonly argue that the Hasmonaeans were not of Zadokite descent and that the dynasty's lack of genealogical legitimacy drove sectarian opposition to it; see e.g. Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), pp. 492–3; Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, AB 41 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 71, 75; Geza Vermes, *An Introduction to the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999), pp. 130–1; Deborah Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs. The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 255–6, 280–2. The evidence for their non-Zadokite lineage and for ancient criticism of them on that basis is not clear, however, as pointed out recently by Allison Schofield and James VanderKam, 'Were the Hasmoneans Zadokites?' *JBL* 124:1 (2005), 73–87. Whether or not they claimed Zadokite standing (which was perhaps equivalent to descent through Jedaiah (1 Chron. 24:7) as Ezra 2:36 claims for the first post-exilic high priest, Jeshua), the Hasmonaeans according to 1 Macc 2:1 claimed Aaronide descent through J(eh)oarib (cf. 1 Chron. 24:7; Neh. 11:10).

37 Scholars continue to debate the dating of P's composition, which has usually been dated by historical criticism to the exile or thereafter in the Persian period. For arguments for a pre-exilic date, see e.g. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, pp. 3–35. A recent argument for a post-exilic dating can be found in Nihan, *Priestly Torah*, pp. 383–94, who has also argued that the Pentateuch was

Babylonian conquest had disrupted cultic worship in Jerusalem for two generations and thus threatened the ritual continuity usually ensured by priestly oral tradition. The Torah, claiming origins in thousand-year-old divine revelations to Moses, served to guarantee the accuracy of priestly practice. Like ritual texts deployed in other ancient cultures, the priests probably employed the Torah to legitimise not only their positions but also their conduct of the temple rites. Conversely, the Pentateuch gained influence from its public display and recitation and its official status as temple law. Aaronide priests and Torah scrolls legitimised each other's authority. As the Second Temple period progressed, the Torah's explicit grants of ritual authority were apparently used implicitly to buttress the Aaronide dynasty's political power as well.[38]

Growth of the Torah's authority

The normative influence of the Torah was originally restricted to Jewish and Samaritan temples, their personnel and their ritual practices, as one would expect of temple law. Just as in other ancient cultures, the normative determination of practice on the basis of texts developed first in ritual contexts (see above). Of course, from the earliest stages of literary history,[39] classic literary texts also exerted normative influence to enculturate the scribes who read and memorised them (see below). The notion of texts as independent norms for particular practices, however, developed first around ritual texts.

The sparse evidence for normative application of Torah in the late monarchic and Second Temple periods suggests that it was originally restricted to temple affairs dominated by priests. As already noted, King Josiah's reform extended only to sacred sites, objects, personnel and festivals. Though the reform was presumably prompted by an early form of the book of Deuteronomy, which contains much criminal and civil legislation, the accounts in Kings and Chronicles make no mention of its enforcement. Even the so-called 'legal reform' credited to King Jehoshaphat only mentions 'teaching' from the 'book of Torah of YHWH' (2 Chron. 17:7–9). While the inclusion of court officials along with priests and Levites could indicate that the group taught a broader range

of subjects than just ritual practice, the text does not specify the contents of the lessons.

After the exile, Ezra 3:2–5, 6:18 portrays cultic worship and then the temple itself being restored in accordance with written Torah. The priestly scribe Ezra also cited 'the book of the Torah of Moses' to enforce endogamous marriages in Judaea (Ezra 9:11–12). This use of the normative text to enforce community boundaries might seem to go far beyond a concern with just temple and ritual, but other indications in Ezra–Nehemiah suggest that was not the case. Temple personnel continued to be the primary focus of attention: priests and Levites head the list of those required to divorce 'foreign' wives (Ezra 10:18–23) and one priest from the high priestly family was forcibly expelled because of his marriage (Neh. 13:28). Purity concerns, a vital issue for priesthoods, motivated enforcing the Torah's ban on Ammonites and Moabites (Neh. 13:1–3, 9). The fact that the Pentateuch does not clearly describe foreigners as impure does not contradict this observation, but only emphasises the essential role of interpretation – and interpretative disagreements – in these controversies.[40] Thus perceived ritual necessity, in this case keeping the temple pure, seems again to have been a major motivation for the draconian marriage policies of Ezra and Nehemiah.[41]

Clear indications of Torah being applied to situations unrelated to temple rituals and concerns appear only in texts reflecting events of the second century BCE and later. They cite written Torah for the proper performance of marriage contracts (Tob. 1:8, 7:12–13), battle plans (1 Macc. 3:48), Sabbath observance (1 Macc. 2:34–41) and criminal executions (Sus. 62), as well as reflecting more typical ritual concerns for temple purity and offerings (1 Macc. 2:21, 27, 4:47, 53).[42] LeFebvre has demonstrated the influence on Jews in Egypt and, possibly, in Judah of Hellenistic administrative practices that emphasised citation of written laws. Originating in Athenian political reforms at the end of the fifth century, they were extended to regions under Ptolemaic and Seleucid rule in the third and second centuries.[43]

LeFebvre noted, however, that these imperial administrative mechanisms were internalised in the Hasmonaean period through a 'cultic impetus' to distinguish law-abiding Jews from lawless (Greek) tyrants, which is

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written to serve priestly interests in Samaria as well as Judah (Christophe Nihan, 'The Torah between Samaria and Judah. Shechem and Gerizim in Deuteronomy and Joshua', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 187–223).

38 This conclusion has been challenged by Rooke (*Zadok's Heirs*, pp. 243–65). Her argument, however, rests on a distinction between religious and political authority that does not account for contradictory and competing forms of authority, especially in a context of imperial domination. Cf. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, pp. 179–81.

39 See Schaper in this volume, pp. 105–44.

40 On the politics of Ezra's marriage policy, see Saul M. Olyan, 'Purity Ideology in Ezra–Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community', *JSJ* 35 (2004), 1–16.

41 LeFebvre, *Collections*, p. 129.

42 For a similar dating of the Torah's spreading authority based on different historical reasoning, see Reinhard G. Kratz, 'The Legal Status of the Pentateuch between Elephantine and Qumran', in Knoppers and Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah*, pp. 77–103.

43 LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 18–23, 146–82.

exemplified in the narratives of the books of Maccabees.[44] Our understanding of the nature of that ritual motivation can be expanded by examining the legal reasoning that appears in late Second Temple period texts. For example, the sectarian legal interpretations of the Qumran community explicitly expanded the temple boundaries, and therefore its purity requirements, to the entire city of Jerusalem and to their own communities as well.[45] The second- and first-century texts listed above seem to reflect a similar line of thinking, if not the same practical results. Even applications of Torah to military tactics and criminal law depended on ritual thinking that extended the concerns of temples to other places and issues. The Torah's normative application grew as Jews and Samaritans extended the boundaries of holiness and purity beyond the temple to the whole city, to other settlements, to their homes and even to themselves as a 'holy nation', wherever they might be (Exod. 19:6). Of course, purity and other ritual concerns were part of common life long before this time, and their importance is reflected in the Pentateuch's rhetoric. The conceptual extension of the temple's boundaries in the late Second Temple period, however, provided the internal logic that allowed the application of *written* temple law far beyond the temple, in accord with Hellenistic ideals of rule by written law. Thus written Torah came to govern wider swathes of everyday life than it ever had before.

A curriculum of Jewish resistance

This evidence for the Torah's growing political and legal authority, meagre as it is, is far greater than is the evidence for the use of the rest of the Hebrew Bible in Antiquity. Before and during the Second Temple period, there is very little explicit description of how the books that eventually came to be grouped and labeled *Nevi'im* 'Prophets' and *Ketuvim* 'Writings' were being used. Hints do appear, however, in materials dealing with the second century BCE and later that may indicate how additional books beside the Torah were used politically in Judaea.

Several texts from this time period (e.g. the prologue to Ben Sira, 1 and 2 Maccabees, sectarian texts from Qumran) refer to 'the Torah and the Prophets'. The category of 'the Prophets' was not yet strictly demarcated and probably included some books, such as the Psalms, that would later be categorised among the Writings. References to this two-part collection of Hebrew books coincide in time and place with the rise of the Hasmonaean dynasty of priest-kings. As a result, scholars of canonisation have long regarded Hasmonaean influence as key to the development of the second division of the Hebrew Bible, and probably the third as well.[46]

This historical context indicates that official endorsement of a larger collection of distinctively Jewish texts may have served the anti-Hellenistic political efforts of the Hasmonaean dynasty. After the Maccabean revolt, Judas Maccabee tried to collect books in Jerusalem, according to 2 Macc. 2:13–14. This effort may have been intended to counter Hellenistic cultural imperialism. David Carr argues that as Hellenistic culture spread through the Near East in the last few centuries BCE, traditional temples and their priesthoods became cultural bulwarks preserving the indigenous rituals, customs, languages and literatures of Babylon and Egypt. This also occurred in Jerusalem under the Oniad high priestly dynasty. Carr argues that when the Hasmonaeans seized the high priesthood for themselves, they broadened the Jerusalem temple's traditions of scribal enculturation into an effort to enculturate a wider elite. The phrase 'Torah and Prophets' refers to the curriculum they deployed in this effort: The Jewish Hebrew Scriptures were defined and functioned within the regional empire of the Hasmoneans as part of a project of specifically Hebrew (and non-Greek) education-enculturation to create a 'Jewish' identity. This identity was analogous yet opposed to the emergent, transnational 'Hellenistic' identity of the Hellenistic educational system.'[47] Carr argues that this anti-Hellenistic programme explains why the contents of the nascent Jewish Bible were limited by language (Hebrew, only a little Aramaic, but no Greek) and time of apparent origin (only texts that portray themselves as pre-dating the Hellenistic kingdoms). These limits were reinforced by the Hasmonaean-era doctrine that prophecy had ceased in the Persian period (1 Macc. 4:44–46, 9:27; 14:41). Carr maintains that, as the Hasmonaeans expanded their territorial control, they used the 'Torah and Prophets' to enculturate non-Jerusalem elites in these territories into their self-consciously Jewish kingdom. From Hasmonaean times onwards, mastery of this wider curriculum distinguished elite educated Jews, whether they lived in and around Jerusalem or not.[48]

44 LeFebvre, *Collections*, pp. 183–240.
45 Especially the Temple scroll (11Q19), the Rule of the Community (1QS), and the Halakhic Letter (4QMMT) from Qumran, and the related Damascus Document and Jubilees. See Hannah K. Harrington, *The Purity Texts*, Companion to the Qumran Scrolls (London: T&T Clark, 2004), pp. 11–18.

46 E.g. Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, pp. 138–66; van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 248–62.
47 Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, p. 262.
48 Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, pp. 260–72.

Carr's circumstantial argument depends on correlating the very brief references in late Second Temple texts cited above with the Hasmonaeans' anti-Hellenistic policies and with characteristics of the Hebrew Bible itself. As he readily admits, it rests on his broader observations about the use of curricular texts throughout the ancient world, including Greece, not just to educate literate scribes but also to enculturate powerful elites into the mores of their class. Carr nevertheless presents a plausible reason why Jewish scriptures (in contrast to the Samaritan Pentateuch) grew beyond the highly prized priestly Torah at their centre to include a wider selection of pre-Hellenistic Hebrew texts.

Priesthood and canon

Carr finds the source of scriptural authority to be the temple and its priesthood, even if the Hasmonaean priests extended scripture's curricular role to other, non-Jerusalem and even non-priestly elites. It might appear, however, that the canonisation of Torah actually constrained priestly power by making the authoritative text available publicly to competing interpreters.[49] The potential for priests to be displaced as the leading interpretative authorities by rabbinic scholars did become a reality in post-Second Temple Judaism, but despite historians' frequent assertions to the contrary there is little evidence for similar developments in earlier periods.[50] Leviticus (10:10–22), Deuteronomy (17:18) and Nehemiah (8:7–8) agree on placing interpretative authority in priestly and levitical hands. Their persuasive force is attested by the variety of Second Temple period texts, such as Ben Sira, Jubilees, *Testament of Levi*, and Aramaic Levi, that echo and extend the Pentateuch's glorification of the

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49 For discussion of how particular pentateuchal texts engage the issue of textual interpretation and priestly authority, see Watts, *Reading Law*, pp. 116–21; Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric*, pp. 59–61, 116–18.

50 So Stephen Fraade, 'The Early Rabbinic Sage', in J. G. Gammie and L. G. Purdue (eds.), *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), pp. 420–3; Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, pp. 194–204; and Risa Levitt Kohn and Rebecca Moore, 'Rethinking Sectarian Judaism. The Centrality of the Priesthood in the Second Temple Period', in Shawna Dolansky (ed.), *Sacred History, Sacred Literature. Essays . . . in honor of R. E. Friedman* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), pp. 195–213. For the common view that Levites and/or scribes in the Persian and Hellenistic periods took interpretive authority away from priests and laid the basis for the development of rabbinic traditions, see e.g. Elias Bickerman, *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees. Foundations of Postbiblical Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1962), pp. 67–71; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. I, pp. 78–83; M. Hengel, '"Schriftauslegung" und "Schriftwerdung" in der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels', in M. Hengel and H. Löhr (eds.), *Schriftauslegung im antiken Judentum und im Urchristentum*, WUNT 74 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), pp. 1–71; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1987), pp. 75, 101–2, 160–2; and Schaper, *Priester und Leviten*, pp. 305–6.

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high priest, the priesthood and the Levites.[51] Even the Qumran community, though polemicising against priestly practices in the Jerusalem temple by citing and interpreting pentateuchal texts (e.g. 4QMMT), nevertheless legitimised their own community and its interpretative positions on the basis of their leadership's priestly lineage.

In the first and second centuries CE, however, that situation changed suddenly in two communities that claimed to be heirs of Second Temple Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism dispensed with Aaronide leadership, replacing priests with rabbinic sages. These scholars filled the power vacuum left by the catastrophic Jewish wars against Rome in the first and second centuries. The rabbis, however, did not justify their position by historical necessity. They instead derived their authority from an unbroken chain of interpreters that they traced back through Ezra all the way to Moses, who could credibly be claimed as a paradigm of the halakhic sage. Aside from Ezra himself, however, the chain of authority includes only one high priest of the Second Temple era, Simon the Just.[52]

The early Christians dissociated themselves from the Aaronide priesthood even more radically. They blamed the high priest Caiaphas for arresting Jesus of Nazareth and arranging his execution (Matt. 26:57–68, 27:1; John 18:13–14, 19–24), and they reinterpreted the Pentateuch's celebration of the Aaronide priesthood to subordinate it and replace it with Christ's eternal priestly office (Heb. 3:1–6, 4:14–5:10, 6:19–10:14). Christians thereby separated themselves from the institutional centre of Second Temple Judaism and, soon thereafter, from Judaism itself.

Thus after hundreds of years of supporting Aaronide priesthood, Jews and Christians dissociated the Pentateuch from the institution that had elevated it to unique prominence. Unlike the priestly dynasties and temples that disappeared in Antiquity, the Torah's scriptural authority survived in its new political situations. These circumstances, however, required new literary contexts to cement the changes in leadership. As Hebrews succinctly puts it, 'When there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well' (7:12 NRSV). The Christian gospel modified and relativised the demands of Torah, and eventually made it just the 'Pentateuch', the first five books of an Old Testament canon now decisively shaped by the New Testament's elevation of Jesus as messiah and high priest. Jews, on the other

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51 James Kugel, 'Levi's Elevation to the Priesthood in Second Temple Writings', *HTR* 86 (1993), 1–63; and Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, pp. 202–7.

52 m. 'Abot 1:1–3; Fraade, 'Early Rabbinic Sage', p. 420.

hand, surrounded the Torah's interpretation with an 'oral Torah' that was eventually textualised as the Mishnah and the Talmud. The latter's semantic authority often overwhelmed that of the written Torah by celebrating the interpretative virtuosity of rabbinic disputations. By contrast, the Samaritans resisted expansions to their canon in the form either of an oral law or of additional written books: they recognize only the Torah as scripture. They also retain hereditary leadership by an Aaronide high priest to this day. Comparison of the scriptural canons and the histories of priesthood in these three traditions illustrates clearly the tight connection between the pre-eminence of the written Torah and the Aaronide line.[53]

The three dimensions of Torah

The growing interest in interpreting and applying the Torah's semantic dimension in all these communities did not overshadow its other dimensions. The Torah's iconic status had clear political consequences at various times. Karel van der Toorn argues that Israel's substitution of Torah scrolls for divine images may have strengthened the priests' monopoly over worship and interpretation. A complicated text like the Torah was probably more expensive and difficult to use than were many divine images. So substituting the text for an image may have actually had the effect of limiting access to its divinatory powers.[54] By the second century BCE, at any rate, Torah scrolls had become widely recognised symbols of Jewish religious practice, so much so that the Seleucid persecution attacked scrolls as well as people (I Macc. 1:56–7).[55] By the end of the Second Temple period, the Torah scrolls were equated with divine wisdom itself (Bar. 4:1) that was transmitted by angels (Acts 7:53). They thus functioned just like icons believed to mediate a heavenly reality.[56] Jews have preserved the Torah scroll's unique ritual status at the centre of worship.

Deprived after 70 CE of the unifying symbols of the Jerusalem temple and its high priest, the Torah survived as the sole Jewish icon of divine presence and favour. When Christians appropriated the Hebrew Bible within the interpretative context of the New Testament, they replaced the Torah scroll's iconic display at the centre of worship with similar veneration of elaborately decorated Gospel books.[57] Christianity's distinctive preference for the codex rather than the scroll served, among other things, to distinguish Christian worship visually from Jewish practices, at the same time as it imitated other Jewish liturgical forms. Christians also used Gospel books to represent physically Christ's authority in Roman and Byzantine courts of law.[58] The iconic form of their scriptures thus served to distinguish these communities religiously, but also politically and legally in Late Antiquity and thereafter.

The performative dimension of scriptures was likely ritualised widely as well, though we have very little specific information from the Second Temple period as to how Torah and other scriptures were read or recited. At Qumran, the sectarians not only heard law read aloud (perhaps their own laws as well as the Torah), they also expected public readings to feature prominently in the eschaton (1QS[a] 1.5–6). The Mishnah reports that kings such as Agrippa were accustomed to reading Torah aloud at the Sukkoth festival in the first century CE (m. Sotah 7.8). Luke 4:16–17 portrays public reading of the scroll of Isaiah in a first-century synagogue on the Sabbath.

Comparative study of scriptures shows that their scriptural status is maintained and their persuasive uses are enhanced by ritualisation of a text's performative and iconic dimensions, as well as ritual interpretation of its semantic dimension.[59] Modern Bibles, Torah scrolls and Gospel books are used iconically as ritual objects, as symbols of Jewish, Samaritan and Christian tradition, as emblems of clerical authority and learning, and (if old) as cherished heirlooms and valuable treasures. Their words are performed in the form of hymns, chants and cantatas, and their stories inspire scripts for films, plays and pageants.[60] Of course, their contents are also the subject of semantic interpretation and debate in social contexts, ranging from synagogue and church classes and sermons to academic monographs and commentaries.

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53 Later political challenges often left their mark on scriptural canons as well, though in different ways. See Moshe Halbertal, *The People of the Book. Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 72–81, 129–34; and George Heyman, 'Canon Law and the Canon of Scripture', *Postscripts* 2 (2006), 209–25.
54 Van der Toorn, 'Iconic Book', p. 248.
55 Book-burning became an increasingly frequent method of suppressing religious groups in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods; see Daniel Sarefield, 'The Symbolics of Book Burning. The Establishment of a Christian Ritual of Persecution', in Klingshirn and Safran (eds.), *Early Christian Book*, pp. 159–73.
56 Van der Toorn, 'Iconic Book', pp. 246–7; he also summarises the iconic function of Torah scrolls in rabbinic and later Judaism. See also William Scott Green, 'Romancing the Tome. Rabbinic Hermeneutics and the Theory of Literature', *Semeia* 40 (1987), 147–68.

57 Dorina Miller Parmenter, 'The Iconic Book. The Image of the Bible in Early Christian Rituals', *Postscripts* 2 (2006), 160–89.
58 Caroline Humfress, 'Judging by the Book. Christian Codices and Late Antique Legal Culture', in Klingshirn and Safran (eds.), *Early Christian Book*, pp. 141–58.
59 Watts, 'Three Dimensions', pp. 135–59.
60 On the role of performance in scripturalisation across multiple religious traditions, see William Graham, *Beyond the Written Word. Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Their contents have regularly been cited to claim divine authority for legal and political, as well as religious, agendas.

Religious and academic traditions since Antiquity have usually assumed that the latter function, the Bible's semantic authority, came first and that its performative and iconic uses developed secondarily because of the power of its verbal message. However, close attention to the history of the Pentateuch's use in Israel during the periods of monarchy and of the Second Temple suggests otherwise. In the case of the Pentateuch, mandates for its ritual performance and iconic veneration appear in the text itself. Evidence for such practices appears in the narrative record just as early as does any concern for its semantic interpretation. The Torah was used from the start to reinforce the growing power of priestly dynasties. As Jews and Samaritans in the Second Temple period increasingly and more frequently ritualised the three dimensions of Torah, the Pentateuch's status became pre-eminent. Its legal influence flowed from the expansion of the temple's ritual sphere, which it governed as temple law, to cover more and more aspects of social and domestic life. From the first evidence of its influence and use, the Torah was already being ritualised along its iconic and performative as well as its semantic dimensions to enhance its religious and political impact, and eventually its legal force as well. In this way, the Torah became the first 'scripture' in the sense of that term that later traditions still recognise and use.

16

Modern editions of the Hebrew Bible

EMANUEL TOV

Background

The hundreds of different Hebrew scripture editions and thousands of modern translations in various languages are more or less identical, but they differ in many large and small details. Yet, in spite of these differences, all these sources are known as 'the Bible'. The differences between the Hebrew editions pertain to the following areas: (i) the text base, (ii) exponents of the text presentation and (iii) the overall approach towards the nature and purpose of an edition of Hebrew scripture. In this chapter, we will review the philosophies behind the various text editions.

Behind each edition is an editor who has determined its parameters. Usually such editors are mentioned on the title page, but sometimes they act behind the scenes, in which case the edition is known by the name of the printer or place of publication.

The differences among Hebrew editions pertain to the following areas:

1. The text base, sometimes involving a combination of manuscripts, and, in one case, different presentations of the same manuscript. Codex Leningrad B19^A is presented differently in the following editions: *BH* (1929–51), *BHS* (1967–76), Dotan (1976), Dotan (2001) and *BHQ* (2004–) – *BH*, *BHS*, and *BHQ* will be referred to as 'the *BH* series'. These differences pertain to words, letters, vowels, accents and *Ketiv/Qere* variations. Usually the differences between the editions are negligible regarding scripture content, while they are more significant concerning the presence or absence of *Ketiv/Qere* variations. Equally important are differences in verse division (and accordingly in their numbering). In the case of critically restored texts ('eclectic editions'), differences between editions are by definition substantial. In addition to these variations, most editions also introduced a number of mistakes and printing errors, reflecting an additional source of divergence.