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MOSES' ROLE IN WRITING THE TORAH:
THE HISTORY OF JEWISH FUNDAMENTAL TENET

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Abstract: The basic axiom of Judaism over the generations has been that the Torah is of divine origin and was transmitted to Israel by Moses. Numerous and diverse notions regarding the composition of the Torah and Moses' role in writing it can and have been derived from this conservative doctrine, however. To date, no full and exhaustive inquiry into the matter having been conducted into the subject, some relevant sources and the relationship between the diverse views or their influence on one another still awaiting investigation. This paper seeks to fill this lacuna, focusing on the most primary and influential developmental stages of the tenet, and demonstrating that the emergence of these has largely been determined by polemics with other religious groups, including Pagans, Christians, Muslims, and Karaites.

Key Words: Jewish tenet, Jewish Exegesis, Moses, Torah (Pentateuch), Writing the Torah

I

The five books of the Torah is the foundation of Jewish life. The question of who wrote it, and how, penetrates to the deepest roots of Jewish belief, so that its importance cannot be overstated. The basic axiom of Judaism over the generations has been that the Torah is of divine origin and was transmitted to Israel by Moses.¹ Contemporary Jewish—and Christian—circles that reject the critical approach to the Bible accept this doctrine without reservation. Believing that Moses wrote each and every word of the Torah that God delivered to him, they regard this as a natural and self-evident truth that has been part of the framework of traditional Jewish religious belief since time immemorial. But many and quite different answers about the composition of the Torah and Moses' role in writing it can be and have been derived from this conservative doctrine. Some of these answers proved ephemeral and have had no influence on subsequent generations; others were taken by the rabbis as a mandatory starting point. Nevertheless, here too there have been far-reaching changes. The multiplicity of answers and statements is evidence of the extent to which this question has occupied the sages over the generations.

The question of the composition of the Torah in general and Moses' role in writing it in particular has been studied by scholars; some of the various opinions offered over the generations have been researched to some extent. However, to the best of my knowledge, no attempt has yet been made to present a systematic, chronological outline of the development of this tenet from ancient to modern times. The most important views were surveyed in the second volume of Abraham Joshua Heschel's monumental study.² Heschel collected statements about the heavenly origins of the Torah and its many ramifications.³ His explicit goal was to assign each position to the view of either Rabbi Akiva or Rabbi Ishmael. Is it therefore astonishing that usually he gave no thought to the authorities credited with the different views, their period, place, and the influence of their surroundings on them. Heschel also refrained from asserting which statements reflect widespread, influential, and hegemonic positions, and which are marginal views that never bore much weight.⁴ Ultimately, when it comes to the traditional Jewish position on the composition of the Torah—and the question of Moses' role in writing it—the contribution of Heschel's encyclopedic project is chiefly material: the collection and thematic classification of the most important utterances on the matter.

No one has continued Heschel's extensive research.⁵ Instead, during the past 40 years serious studies have been written on the stands of individual commentators and scholars on the question of the composition of the Torah. The most attention has been focused on Abraham Ibn Ezra's assumption that the Torah contains a number of verses added after Moses'

death, but few other scholars and sages—among them Philo, specific statements from the Talmud, Abraham Ibn Ezra's supercommentaries, the eighth of Maimonides' "Thirteen Principles of Faith" and few orthodox scholars from the enlightenment period—have also received some attention.⁶ Unlike Heschel's study, all of these studies have a limited and restricted horizon; most of them make no attempt to place the view of the particular sage or scholar in the history of the problem, uncovering all of his sources on the one hand and detailing its reception on the other.⁷

No full and exhaustive inquiry into the matter has thus to date been conducted into the subject. This has meant that not all of the relevant sources have been taken into account or the relationship between the diverse views or influence on one another investigated. This paper seeks to fill this lacuna, focusing on the most primary and influential developmental stages of the tenet.

II

One of Judaism's central tenets is that Moses wrote the Torah through the Holy Spirit. While the belief in the Torah's divinity appears to have formed part of the Bible's editors' ethos from the earliest stages of its compilation,⁸ this is not true with respect to Moses' authorship. This idea is not found in the biblical text itself. The Torah only intimates that Moses wrote some passages—namely, those that explicitly state that God commanded him to write things down.⁹ Moses thus noted the stations where the people of Israel camped in the wilderness ("Moses recorded...", Num 33:2), the account of the war with Amalek ("The Lord said to Moses, 'Inscribe this...'," Exod 17:14), a poetic section ("Moses wrote down this poem," Deut 31:22), and a limited list of laws ("Moses wrote down this Teaching [*Torah*]," Deut 31:9, 24).¹⁰

At a later stage, the writing of the book of Deuteronomy was attributed to Moses.¹¹ We learn this indirectly from the phrases "book of the Teaching," "the book of the Teaching of Moses," and "the Teaching of Moses." Recurring throughout Joshua and Kings, their context indicates that the reference is to various passage in Deuteronomy.¹² The majority of Deuteronomy being narrated in the first person singular by Moses, his authorship of the book was a logical deduction. Some verses in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles—composed during the Second Temple period—reflect the belief that Moses was responsible for some of the laws in Leviticus.¹³ I see no reason to assume that the laws in Leviticus were attributed to Moses at a specific stage while those in Exodus and Numbers were not. Although the context in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles meant that the "Teaching of Moses" to which they allude refer to laws in Leviticus, we should be cautious about arguing from silence here.¹⁴ At this stage at least, all the legal chapters in the Torah were attributed to Moses.

In post-biblical Second Temple literature and the first centuries c.e., the term *Torah* already referred to the whole Pentateuch, the frequent parallels—"the Teaching of Moses" and "the book of Moses"—indicating that Moses was thought to have authored all five books.¹⁵ In several cases, "Moses" serves as a synonym for "Teaching."¹⁶ As Josephus' words reflect, this view became prevalent during the Second Temple period: "Five of these [books] are the books of Moses, which contain both the laws and the tradition from the birth of humanity up to his death."¹⁷

The tenet that Moses wrote the Torah thus appears to have developed gradually, apparently only becoming a common belief towards the end of the Second Temple period—after the final canonization stage of the Torah. The Torah's sanctity and the legitimacy of Moses' prophecy appear to have been the subject of anti-Jewish pagan polemics at the end of the Second Temple period and the first centuries c.e.¹⁸ Various rabbinic dicta, for example, preserve echoes of this ancient polemic, Jews appearing to be particularly upset by claims regarding the book of Deuteronomy.¹⁹ In contrast to the remainder of the Torah, Moses speaks herein in the first person, the book also containing repetitions (with variations) of numerous passages found in other places in the Torah. These facts led to the claim that Moses wrote Deuteronomy on his own initiative, thus calling its sanctity—and that of the Torah as a whole—into question.

Polemics tending to generate dogmatic views and tenets. The dogma that Moses wrote the whole Torah may have arisen in the context of claims that the first four books of the Pentateuch possessed a different status to Deuteronomy, only this book²⁰ having been written by Moses. The polemics against the legitimacy of Moses' prophecy also appear to lie behind the development of the notion that God dictated the Torah to Moses word for word. Implicit traces of this notion can be found in several Second Temple sources. In *Jubilees*, for example, God commands the angel, "Dictate to Moses [*le-hakhtiv le-Moshe*]" from the first creation until My sanctuary is built in their midst forever and ever (1:27).²¹ The angel does so by recounting to him the book of *Jubilees* itself: "And the angel of the presence spoke to Moses by the word of the Lord, saying ..." (2:1). Although the relation between these two texts raises questions, for our present purposes the most important point is that both present Moses as an amanuensis. It is plausible to assume that this claim rests on the view that Moses wrote the Torah in a similar fashion—via "divine dictation"—the Jubilean author seeking hereby to stress that his book possessed the same sanctity as the Torah.

In the seventh vision of 4 *Ezra*, the Torah having been burnt when the First Temple was destroyed, God sends the Holy Spirit to Ezra to enable him to "write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things were written in your Law ... and my mouth was opened ... And the Most High gave understanding to the five men, and by

turns they wrote what was dictated ... As for me, I spoke in the daytime and was not silent at night. So during the forty days twenty-four books were written" (4 Ezra 14:22, 41–44). Ezra here is clearly modelled on Moses, writing a new Torah to replace that which had been burnt.²² It is reasonable to presume that Ezra reenacts the way in which he believed Moses originally wrote the Torah—i.e., word for word from God's mouth.

The dogmatism that is indirectly reflected in *Jubilees* and 4 Ezra would likely not have developed without the polemic against the sanctity of the Torah and Moses' prophecy. The influence the latter exerted on Jewish thought is also evident in the *Qumran Temple Scroll*, which quotes numerous texts from the Pentateuch. Those from Deuteronomy reflect a very interesting textual variant, God speaking in the first rather than the third person singular. As scholars have noted, this deliberate change was made in order to prove that Deuteronomy constitutes a word-for-word record of God's speech rather than Moses' words.²³

The sparsity of dicta relating to the role Moses played in writing the Torah precludes any determination of how prevalent the view that he wrote it word for word from God's mouth was during this period. Other, far less dogmatic, ideas certainly also existed. Philo, for example, is clearly not worried about the polemic over Moses' prophecy and the Torah's sanctity. Although he does not deal directly or extensively with Moses' part in writing the Torah, he makes several statements that suggest that Moses formulated and polished its texts independently. In others, he implies that God dictated the Ten Commandments and other laws to Moses, Moses writing the rest of the laws and probably also parts of or all the narrative sections.²⁴ In his view, God bestowed upon Moses the "fullness of the godhead," thus enabling him to write large parts of the Torah.²⁵

The polemic against the sanctity of the Torah and Moses' prophecy faded with the rise of Christianity, the central Christian streams also holding that the Torah is divine and was written by Moses.²⁶ The Christian-Jewish dispute focused upon the exegesis of the biblical texts rather than their sanctity and formation.²⁷ The absence of inter-religious controversy tends to cultivate general and schematic discussions on the one hand and permit a certain measure of flexibility on the other hand. This circumstance helps to explain why, during the early centuries, the Jewish Sages paid little attention to these issues. The notion that Moses wrote the Torah thus became entrenched as a fundamental tenet whose truth was not in doubt and required no proof or substantiation. Although faint echoes of an ancient Second Temple polemic against the Torah and the legitimacy of Moses' prophecy can be heard in the formative Jewish texts of this period,²⁸ the Sages not always fully understand their opponents' anti-Jewish claims.²⁹

The common approach the Sages adopted towards the question of the Torah's authorship is marked by a great degree of schematicity. Their

writings evincing the belief that the Torah originated in heaven³⁰ and at some stage was given to Moses, who wrote it down.³¹ They tended to avoid the issues of how the Torah was transmitted to Moses and his precise contribution to the text, however. The relatively few statements we find in their writings concerning these issues reflect interesting disagreements. Some maintain that the entire Torah, from first word to last, was written by Moses. Others propound that some verses were compiled after Moses' death. This controversy is explicitly referred to in *b. B. Bat.* 15a:

... eight verses in the Torah were written by Joshua, as it has been taught: [It is written], "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there" [Deut 34:5]. Now is it possible that Moses being dead could have written the words, "Moses died there"? The truth is, however, that up to this point Moses wrote, from this point Joshua wrote. Said R. Simeon, Can [we imagine the] scroll of the Law [*ha-Torah*] being short of one word, and is it not written, "Take this book of the Law [*sefer ha-Torah*]" [Deut 31:26]? No; what we must say is that up to this point the Holy One, blessed be He, dictated and Moses repeated and wrote, and from this point God dictated and Moses wrote with tears, as it says of another occasion, "Then Baruch answered them, 'He pronounced all those words to me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book'" [Jer 36:18].³²

This discussion reveals a further point of contention between the Sages. According to R. Simeon,³³ Moses wrote the Torah word for word as he received it from God's mouth, this view also being reflected in other passages.³⁴ Other statements, however, indicate that some Sages believed Moses to have written certain parts of the Torah of his own accord.³⁵ This view is exemplified in Abaye's explicit assertion in *b. Meg.* 31b. Mishnah *Meg.* 3:6 states: "On fast days [the reading from the Torah is] the section of blessings and curses. The section of curses must not be broken up, but must all be read by one person." Wondering why the reading is not to be interrupted, Abaye observes:

This rule was laid down only for the curses in Leviticus, but in the curses in Deuteronomy a break may be made. What is the reason?—In the former, they are formulated in the plural [i.e., God speaks in first person singular] and Moses uttered them on behalf of the Almighty; in the latter, they are formulated in the singular [i.e., God is described in the third person singular], and Moses uttered them of his own accord.³⁶

Although the words “Moses uttered them of his own accord” make it clear that he did not repeat God’s words verbatim, just how much independence he had remains obscure. One possibility is that he delivered them as they were, merely altering the text from first to third person singular. In light of the disparities between Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, however, it seems more plausible to assume that Abaye believed Moses’ creativity to have been far greater, the latter passage constituting a form of paraphrase of God’s words in Leviticus 26. Irrespective of its degree, Moses had sufficient freedom of action to create an essential distinction between the two accounts of the curses. A section that contains God’s literal words must be treated differently than one in which they are not precisely quoted. The books of the Torah thus do not all possess equal status, Abaye’s dictum indicating that linguistic-literary criteria can be adduced in order to determine their respective stature.³⁷

Abaye’s dictum indicates the belief that the Torah includes passages that Moses compiled of his own accord³⁸—a view that explicitly contradicts the well-known and frequently-cited *baraita* in *b. Sanh.* 99a:

“Because he hath despised the word of the Lord [and violated His commandment, that person shall be cut off—he bears his guilt]” [Num 13:51]—this refers to him who maintains that the Torah is not from Heaven. And even if he asserts that the whole Torah is from Heaven, excepting a particular verse, which [he maintains] was not uttered by God but by Moses himself, he is included in “because he hath despised the word of the Lord.” And even if he admits that the whole Torah is from Heaven, excepting a single point, a particular *ad majus* deduction or a certain *gezerah shawah*—he is still included in “because he hath despised the word of the Lord.”

This *baraita* is based on *m. Sanh.* 10:1: “... the following have no portion [in the world to come]: He who maintains that resurrection is not a biblical doctrine, the Torah was not divinely revealed, and an epikoros.” While this mishnah appears to preserve traces of a Second Temple polemic over the verity of Moses’ prophetic agency and the Torah’s sanctity, the *baraita* seems to reflect a legitimate inner-Jewish debate. Its author seeking to stress the fact that the Torah in heaven contained both laws and exegetical deductions—i.e., both written and oral Torah—Moses thus received the fullest possible revelation. This view corresponds to the well-known dictum: “Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, and Aggada—even what a veteran student would expound before his teacher—were all delivered to Moses on Sinai” (*p. Pe’ah* 2:6 [16b]).³⁹ Here, the writer is clearly not concerned with heretics who deny the Torah’s divine origin and

transmission via Moses but rather with those who attribute a certain measure of independence to Moses—as in the saying ascribed to Abaye above.⁴⁰

The canonical writings of the first centuries thus appear to evince an ambiguous attitude towards Moses' role in writing the Torah. This circumstance forced the medieval scholars to consolidate an independent opinion with respect to the matter. From the beginning of the tenth century onwards, Jewish commentators and scholars began engaging in a systematic exegesis of Scripture, taking particular care to understand the biblical text in accordance with its language and context.⁴¹ *Inter alia*, they also discussed the issue of the authorship of the biblical books.⁴² While these debates are not detailed, they are reflected—directly or indirectly—in the works of several prominent and influential writers of the period. Rashi (Northern France; d. 1105), the most important and well-known medieval commentator, reflects in his exegesis the wide range of opinions held by earlier Sages. He repeats those opinions without deciding between them. He thus repeats the schematic assertion that the Torah originated in heaven and was given to Moses,⁴³ and emphasizes that the Torah doesn't contain parts that Moses wrote of his own accord.⁴⁴ But he also citing Abaye's dictum that contradicts this view.⁴⁵ He likewise alludes to—but does not decide—the controversy concerning whether Moses wrote the verses depicting his death.⁴⁶

Other important and influential scholars seeking to attempt to conclusively determine the issue, one way or the other, a variety of opinions existed. Rav Sa'adia Gaon (Babel; 882–942), for example, stressed that Moses wrote the Torah via divine dictation—with the sole exception of the final verses in Deuteronomy describing his death: “The Holy One, blessed be He, said to His envoy [Moses]: Write ‘When God began to create heaven and earth’ [Gen 1:1]. He [God] dictated [the Torah] to him word for word and Moses wrote from ‘In the beginning’ to ‘you shall not cross there’ [Deut 34:4].”⁴⁷ This claim appears to form a counter-response to the Karaite claim that Moses was a *mudawwin*. Although the Arabic root *d-y-n* can carry the sense of literal writing, it can also signify the “composition,” “ordering,” and “joining together” of verses. The term *mudawwin* thus denotes both “writer” and “editor.” When applied to Moses, it denotes the fact that he did not merely write down the Torah word for word from God's mouth. Sa'adia Gaon's reservations regarding the Karaites and their exegesis⁴⁸ may have led him to stress the Torah's heavenly origin and present Moses as God's scribe.⁴⁹ In this context, it is interesting to note that R. Tuvia b. R. Eliezer (Byzantium, end of the eleventh century), author of the midrashic collection known as *Leqah Tov*, also highlighted the fact that “Our Master Moses wrote through the Holy Spirit ... from the mouth of the Almighty.”⁵⁰ Being heavily engaged in polemics with the Karaites,⁵¹ like Sa'adia, this comment might form part of his controversy with them over this issue.⁵²

Although the great Spanish commentator R. Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089–1167) was heavily influenced by Rasag, he did not accept the latter's opinion with respect to Moses' role in writing the Torah. According to Ibn Ezra, none of the prophets—the greatest of whom was Moses—were privileged to receive a textual revelation.⁵³ Ibn Ezra distinguished between the contents that God transmitted to the prophets and the literary expression of those contents—i.e. the words—which the prophets selected independently.⁵⁴ Thus while the Torah contains divine contents, its words were determined by Moses and reflect Moses' style and literary talent. Ibn Ezra also maintains that Moses did not include all the contents God transmitted to him in the Torah, Moses deciding of his own accord which were fit and proper to be written down and which should be delivered orally.⁵⁵ In other words, if God had revealed Himself to another prophet rather than Moses, we would have a different Torah—one reflecting the style and choice of material of this hypothetical prophet. According to Ibn Ezra, a different processes of formation is reflected in two significant passages. The Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 are a verbatim copy of the tablets written by God—"God's words, without any addition or omission, and they alone were written on the tablets of the covenant." This text differing slightly from the version of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, Ibn Ezra argues that the latter incorporates both God's words and Moses' interpretations: "God's words are included among the words of Moses."⁵⁶ He also assumes that the Torah contains a number of verses added after Moses' death.⁵⁷ Ibn Ezra's opinion that the prophets independently translated the divine content into words thus leads him to the inevitable conclusion that the person who wrote the account of Moses' death in the past tense (Deut 34:5–12) lived after Moses' lifetime—just as the writer who hinted at the existence of the Temple by using the present tense (Gen 22:14) lived after it had been erected. Had Moses written these verses, he would have used the future tense.

Ibn Ezra's thought betrays the influence of a theological-philosophical notion influenced by contemporary philosophy rather than intuitive philological considerations.⁵⁸ This fact distinguishes him from other commentators, such as Rashbam (d. ~1160), Rashi's nephew, and some of the Tosafists who lived and worked in twelfth-century North France and Germany. While the writings of Rashbam and some of the Tosafists suggest that they believed Moses to have formulated certain verses in the Torah of his own accord,⁵⁹ they appear to have reached this conclusion on the basis of philological analysis of the text rather than being influenced by contemporary philosophy.⁶⁰ Thus, for example, Rashbam's sensitivity to the literary aspects reflected in the Torah⁶¹ led him to contend that Moses had an agenda that prompted him to adopt unique expressions. While Rashbam and the Tosafists appear to have assumed that Moses had a measure of independence in the selection of his words, they did not offer a complete or comprehensive theory such as Ibn

Ezra's. It is therefore difficult to establish precisely what view they held regarding the extent of Moses' autonomy.

One of the more interesting conceptions is that of R. Moshe Zaltman, son of R. Judah He-Hasid (the Pious, twelfth-century, Ashkenaz), whose writings serves as an example of the principal disparity between Ibn Ezra on the one hand and Rashbam and the Tosafists on the other. According to Zaltman, the Torah contains a number of verses added after Moses' lifetime, by either Joshua or the men of the Great Assembly.⁶² Here, Zaltman's view resembles—and may even be influenced by—Ibn Ezra's. In contrast to Ibn Ezra and like Rashbam and the Tosafists, however, his conclusions appear to rest on a careful philological analysis of the biblical texts rather than earlier theological-philosophical notions.⁶³

In the final third of the twelfth century, Maimonides wrote his commentary on the Mishnah, including the “thirteen principles” of Jewish faith in the preface to the *Helek* section of tractate *Sanhedrin*. The “eighth principle” links the *baraita* in *b. Sanh.* 99a—according to which whoever denies that the Torah is from heaven has no part in the life to come—with the view that Moses wrote the whole Torah, word for word, from God's mouth. Formulating this principle as a doctrinal statement, Maimonides asserts that this issue forms one of the cornerstones of Judaism:

The eighth foundation is that the Torah is from heaven; to wit, it [must] be believed that the whole of this Torah which is in our hand today is the Torah that was brought down to Moses, our teacher; that all of it is from God ... and that it was dictated to him while he was of the rank of a scribe; and that he wrote down all of its dates, narratives and its laws.⁶⁴

This dogmatic formulation apparently constitutes an answer to an anti-Jewish Muslim claim that the Torah had been falsified over the course of the years⁶⁵—an examination of Maimonides' views regarding Moses' role in the composition of the Torah in the *Guide for the Perplexed* revealing a far more complex picture⁶⁶ that recalls various elements of Ibn Ezra's position.⁶⁷ The polemical-educational motive behind Maimonides' “eighth principle”⁶⁸ has not affected the weight of its influence on Jewish thinking throughout the ages, however, which has led to the common consensus that Moses wrote the whole Torah via divine dictation. Thus, for example, the writings of well-known and influential commentators such as R. David Kimhi (Radak; Provence, ca. 1160–1235), Nahmanides (Spain; 1194–1270), Joseph Caspi (Provence and Spain; 1279–1340), and R. Levi b. Gershom (Gersonides; Provence, 1288–1344)—all contain dogmatic statements to the effect that Moses wrote the Torah word for word by God's mouth that are variations on the “eighth principle.”⁶⁹

Particularly instructive is Maimonides' influence on Radak in this regard. The latter appears to have first read the "eighth principle" after having written some of his commentaries on Scripture but prior to his exegesis of the Torah.⁷⁰ A comparison of his interpretive works demonstrates that, towards the end of his life, Radak adopted a dogmatic stance towards the issue of Moses' role in writing the Torah, his words more than once appearing to constitute a variation on Maimonides' "eighth principle."⁷¹ Thus, for example, he writes in his preface to his commentary on Genesis:

Let me begin by saying that our teacher Moses wrote all the Torah from the mouth of the Almighty, from 'In the beginning' to 'before the eyes of all Israel' [Deut 34:12]. With respect to the final eight verses, a controversy exists between the ancient Sages [b. B. Bat. 14b–15a], for some say that Joshua wrote them. And thus we must believe, because everything was said through the Holy Spirit and the prophecy of Moses, blessed be his memory. For how did Moses our teacher know all the stories in the book of Genesis and from whom did he receive them, being in the wilderness? So in fact they were all told him from the mouth of the Highest.

In contrast, in his earlier writings, Radak displayed a certain conceptual flexibility that was the hallmark of the scholars who wrote before the influence of Maimonides' "eighth principle." Thus, for example, in his commentary on 1 Chron 1:7 he assumes that the Torah contains details that derive from human error:

And *rodanim*—This is written with a *resh* at the beginning; but in the book of Genesis [10:4] it is written "and *dodanim*," with two *dalets*. Since *dalet* and *resh* look similar, some readers of the genealogical works written in antiquity would read it with *dalet*, while others would read it with a *resh*. This, then, is how the name remained before people [or: pronounced by people]: with either a *dalet* or a *resh*. Therefore, one of the readings was recorded in the book of Genesis, and the other in this book [i.e. Chronicles], to indicate that it is all one name, even though one reads *dalet* and another *resh*.⁷²

The influence of Maimonides' "eighth principle" on Nahmanides is also instructive. The Spanish commentator asserting that the Torah was given for reading "by way of the divine names,"⁷³ he naturally found it

difficult to accept Moses' role in choosing its words.⁷⁴ His belief that God dictated the Torah to Moses word for word must thus be linked to the kabbalistic tradition upon which he drew. At the same time, an examination of his statements in regard to this issue evinces a close verbal affinity with the "eighth principle": "Moses was like a scribe who copies from an ancient book" (Introduction to Genesis).

This brief survey demonstrates that the influence of Maimonides' "eighth principle" was so great that it came to form a watershed in Jewish opinions regarding Moses' role in writing the Torah. Its impact on subsequent generations is exemplified not only in the adoption of the tenet that Moses wrote the whole Torah word for word from God's mouth but also in the belief that this has been the traditional Jewish view from time immemorial. The medieval scholars could not accept the idea that some of their predecessors could have attributed some other role to Moses—as revealed indirectly in their systematic neglect of Ibn Ezra's remarks that Moses formulated the biblical texts of his own accord and that the Torah contains passages added following his death. This attitude is particularly striking in the case of Nahmanides, who states in his introduction to his commentary on Genesis that he intends to "openly rebuke" Ibn Ezra for his exegesis.⁷⁵ It is also very prominent in Joseph Caspi, who, in his commentary to Ibn Ezra's commentary, ignores those remarks that are inconsistent with the "eighth principle."⁷⁶ This strategy of "overlooking" should come as no surprise to us, for were Ibn Ezra's views to be confronted head on he would have been denounced as denying one of the central tenets of the Jewish faith.

The fact that notions that undermined the "eighth principle" were ignored indicates that Maimonides' influence was so great that those who followed him chose—apparently unconsciously—not to address the question of Moses' role in the writing of the Torah in any systematic fashion. As Isaiah Berlin notes, "a doctrinaire is a man who is liable to suppress what he may, if he comes across it, suspect to be true."⁷⁷

Moses' role in the writing of the Torah only arose once again as a live issue towards the end of the fifteenth century, in the writings of Isaac Abravanel (Portugal and Italy; 1437–1508). In contrast to his predecessors, Abravanel sought to write a comprehensive commentary to the Torah in accordance with a general theological system. This desire is consistent with his literary productions, which include—*inter alia*—an in-depth engagement with the principles of the Jewish faith.⁷⁸ Abravanel collected together all the arguments pro and con the dogmatic view that Moses wrote the whole Torah word for word from God's mouth. Setting this forth in a letter to the prominent figures of his generation, he indicates that he was only unsure of the way in which Deuteronomy had been composed—whether Moses wrote it word for word from God's mouth or whether he composed it of his own accord:

My question and request is whether this book of Deuteronomy was given by the Lord from heaven, and its contents are like the rest of the Torah that Moses placed before the Israelites and everything from "In the beginning" through "in the sight of all Israel" is the words of the living God; or whether Moses himself composed Deuteronomy in order to expound what he understood of the divine intent in the elucidation of the precepts?⁷⁹

His doubts rest on two considerations: a) If Deuteronomy is no different from the remainder of the Torah, why does Moses speak in the first person singular in it and why does it contain so many repetitions of laws and events referred to in the other four books?; and b) How can Abaye's statement in *b. Meg.* 31b that Moses wrote the curses in Deuteronomy and the *baraita* in *b. Sanh.* 99a according to which the person who believes that even one word in the Torah was not written by Moses from God's mouth has no part in the world to come be reconciled?⁸⁰

The fact that Abravanel believes that no doubt exists that Moses wrote the first four books of the Torah word for word from God's mouth is striking—as is also his understanding that a harmonistic solution to the problem must exist—in light of his assumption that the dogmatic principle established by Maimonides is true and binding and that it is impossible that canonical Jewish literature contains another view.⁸¹ Of all the responses Abravanel received, the only one extant is that of R. Joseph Hayyun (Portugal; 15th century). This is a long and detailed missive filled with examples from the Torah.⁸² The following quote sums up Hayyun's opinion:

As for the sections that Moses spoke of his own accord, it was only their utterance that was his own, and not their being written down. Even though he said them of his own accord, he did not write any of them in the Torah, heaven forbid. But they were recorded throughout [!] the Torah, which Moses wrote at divine command. He did not write even a single letter on his own, but God agreed with him and looked favorably at what he had said to the people. So He Himself said them to Moses and determined their language Himself. He spoke to him all the words of the Torah and [Moses] wrote them in the scroll of the Torah just as it is written, without altering or changing a single thing of what God spoke to him. And this is the fundamental principle of the Torah.⁸³

According to Hayyun, while Moses said many things of his own accord throughout his lifetime, including the curses in Deuteronomy 20—as per Abaye's dictum in *b. Meg.* 31b—God nonetheless dictated the Torah to him word for word, including his own statements. Hayyun thus distinguishes between two stages: that when the events described took place—including Moses' utterances and deeds—and that at which God dictated the Torah to Moses. Hereby, the discrepancy between Abaye's statement and the *baraita* in *b. Sanh.* 99a and Maimonides' "eighth principle" is resolved, Abaye relating to the first stage⁸⁴ and the *baraita* and Maimonides to the stage of writing the Torah word for word from God's mouth. Hayyun thus contends that God dictated the Torah to Moses during his lifetime, Moses merely being a scribe, as per Maimonides' "eighth principle."

Hayyun's solution being both brilliant and simple, it is no wonder that Abravanel adopted it, adducing it on several occasions in his commentaries.⁸⁵ It explains why the style of Deuteronomy differs from and repeats things from the other books of the Torah, resolves the disagreement between Abaye and the *baraita*, and corresponds to Maimonides' "eighth principle." It also contains a doctrinal paradox, however, because it suggests that the Torah was not composed in a single, consecutive act but at various stages: "These verses in this book [i.e. Deuteronomy] were not arranged or written down until after Moses had finished saying all the content of this book, and then he wrote them down at divine behest, as for all the words of the Torah."⁸⁶ Hayyun's writings indicating that he believed human beings to have free will,⁸⁷ it is difficult to assume that he regarded Moses' own words to have been known to and predetermined by God before he uttered them. He thus appears to maintain that at the end of each stage at which God dictated part of the Torah to Moses, God still did not know—if we may say this of Him—what precisely the next part would contain, for Moses' own words that would later be included in the Torah had not yet been spoken.

In the modern Orthodox Jewish world and up to our own days, Maimonides' "eighth principle" has continued to be regarded as representative of the traditional view. On occasion, Joseph Hayyun's solution as established in Abravanel's commentary is cited alongside Maimonides'.⁸⁸ These conservative streams automatically reject scientific criticism of the Bible and, in the majority of cases, refrain from having any contact with it. Declaring their faith in terms closely corresponding to Maimonides' eighth principle, their aim is clearly polemical.⁸⁹ At the most, they only discuss the question of who wrote the last eight verses of Deuteronomy, in the spirit of the dictum in *b. B. Bat.* 14b–15a.⁹⁰ Over the past hundred and fifty years, however, some Jewish conservative Orthodox scholars have sought to confront this approach with the aim of demonstrating its errors and proving the validity of the traditional

stance.⁹¹ Some of these attempts reflect very interesting ideas,⁹² among them ideas regarding Moses' writing of the Torah and its divine dictation.

At the center of the dispute with biblical criticism lies the belief that the Torah represents a divine text. In other words, the debate revolves around one of the most fundamental and key Jewish tenets—perhaps the most significant of all.⁹³ As part of the endeavor to preserve this belief at any cost, some scholars appear ready to sacrifice other, less important doctrines. This fact seems to explain why some Jewish conservative Orthodox scholars who have engaged with the critical method have sought to reduce Moses' role in the writing of the Torah, the various passages in the Torah whose Mosaic authorship is difficult to accept leading them to the view that they were written by others.⁹⁴ Despite the divergences between them, David Kahana, R. Chaim Hirschensohn, and Mordechai Breuer exemplify this trend.

The works of David Kahana (Odessa; 1838–1915) are perhaps the most interesting of all the efforts made in the nineteenth century to attack the fundamental principle that Moses wrote the Torah word for word from God's mouth, precisely because of the discrepancy between his expressed scholarly goals and final conclusions. A fierce opponent of biblical criticism, he wrote in order to prove the correctness of the traditional Jewish view, representing biblical criticism as an anti-Semitic attempt to discredit Judaism and its beliefs and rejecting its findings out of hand. The pages of his books and articles are filled with uncompromising, dogmatic statements in defense of Judaism in line with Maimonides' eighth principle. In his footnotes, however, and indirect references, he manifested a stance far removed from that of the eighth principle. These demonstrate that while he believed the Torah to be divine, he refrained from specifying Moses as its author, being careful to use anonymous language, using such terms as "the writer," "the organizer," the "collector," "the publisher," etc. This unidentified person composed the Torah on the basis of ancient scrolls that contained sections which Moses himself had written, not hesitating to rework them and even add his own verses.⁹⁵ Kahana was thus in fact far more radical than some of the critical scholars who argued that he was vociferously opposed to them.⁹⁶

In contrast to Kahana's subtle and indirect acceptance of the idea that Moses did not write the entire Torah, R. Chaim Hirschensohn (1857–1935) proposed an explicitly halakhic distinction in the same direction.⁹⁷ According to Hirschensohn, while whoever denies that the Torah is from heaven is contemptuous of God's word and has no portion in the world to come (as stated in *b. Sanh.* 99a), the person who believes that the Torah is from heaven but believes that it contains sections that were *not* written by Moses denies the basis of the Jewish faith but is not punished by *karet*. Hereby, Hirschensohn sought to accredit scholarly views inconsistent with the dogmatic stance formulated in Maimonides' eighth principle and facilitate the opening of a Bible department at the Hebrew University in

Jerusalem.⁹⁸ This method was immensely significant, numerous other thinkers who propounded original and innovative ideas regarding this issue and the question of Moses' part in the writing of the Torah noting the influence it had on the shaping of their views.⁹⁹

Mordechai Breuer's works also weakened the fundamental principle that Moses wrote the entire Torah word for word from God's mouth. Breuer argued that the achievements of biblical criticism proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the Torah is divine, only something written by God being able to reflect the matrix of voices and views the Torah contains.¹⁰⁰ In his opinion:

Just as God could create the world in six days in violation of the normal laws of nature, so He could write the Torah with J, E, D, and P *contra* the scholarly laws of human literary composition.¹⁰¹

He does not contend, however, that Moses must be understood as having written the whole Torah from God's mouth, deliberately refraining from using names in referring to this issue: the Torah was written by "a prophet(s)" whom God chose for this purpose and contains additions that were inserted over the generations.¹⁰²

In a certain sense, the attitude of such scholars as Kahana and Breuer towards the question of what part Moses played in writing the Torah returns us to antiquity and the beginning of the Second Temple period, when the Torah was regarded as a divine text but Moses' role had not yet become a fixed, unquestionable doctrine.¹⁰³

III

We have seen herein that the history of the question of Moses' role in writing the Torah can be divided into several key periods. At the very beginning, Moses was not associated in any way with its composition, the linkage developing gradually and only becoming entrenched deep into the Second Temple period as a result of the pagan polemic that exploited the nature of the book of Deuteronomy to refute the Torah's sanctity and deny the authority of Moses' prophecy, leading to the establishment of the doctrine that Moses wrote the Torah word for word from God's mouth.

The controversy receding with the rise of Christianity, rabbinic literature only contains faint traces of the denial of the sanctity of the Torah and Moses' prophecy. In this peaceful climate, no binding dogmatic system developed, the Sages exhibiting highly interesting divergences with respect to the question of whether Moses wrote the whole Torah, from first to last verse, from God's mouth. In the absence of such a system, the medieval writers had to shape their own views regarding Moses' part in the writing of the Torah. During this period we thus find an array of opinions, some assuming that his creative liberty was extensive, others

limiting it and taking a dogmatic stand. The Muslim polemic against the Torah prompted Maimonides to formulate his eighth principle, his influence transforming it into a binding article of faith. The eighth principle continues to be the fundamental basis of Orthodox Judaism to this day, sometimes in conjunction with Joseph Hayyun's nuance—as in Abravanel's commentaries, in which he states that a distinction must be made between Moses' freedom of speech and action and the stage at which he wrote the Torah down word for word from God's mouth. In parallel, in the past 150 years, the rise of biblical criticism led several thinkers and sages to diminish Moses' literary participation in the writing of the Torah. This development acted as a constraint, the method questioning the very divinity of the Torah. In this climate, some Jewish scholars preferred to sacrifice the tenet that Moses wrote the whole Torah, although remaining firm that it was nonetheless divine.

It thus appears that various polemics constituted the primary cause behind the new answers given to the question regarding Moses' role in the writing of the Torah throughout Jewish history—the pagan polemic in the ancient world, the polemic with Islam in the Middle Ages, and the polemic with biblical criticism in the modern era. We also see that some of these new ideas were so significant and influential that more than once later generations found it impossible to assume that their predecessors had believed anything else. Thus, from the moment the Torah was attributed to Moses, it was no longer possible to understand the phrases “the Teaching of Moses” and “the book of the Teaching of Moses” as referring to anything other than the whole Torah. Likewise, the minute Maimonides formulated his eighth principle, it was no longer possible to accept the idea that the sages prior to him had believed differently regarding Moses' part in the writing of the Torah.

Notes

¹ See, e.g., Uriel Simon, “The Bible and Us: Preface” [Hebrew], in *The Bible and Us*, ed. Uriel Simon (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1979), 9; Moshe Greenberg, “A Faith-ful Jewish Critical Interpretation of the Bible,” in *Judaism and Modernity: The Religious Philosophy of David Hartman*, ed. Jonathan W. Malino (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 211; Menahem Haran, *The Bible and Its World: Selected Literary and Historical Studies* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2009), 544–6.

² *Torah min ha-shamayim be-aspaqlaryah shel ha-dorot* (London and New York: Soncino Press, 1965); for English translation see, *Heavenly Torah as Refracted through the Generations*, translated and edited with commentary by Gordon Tucker and Leonard Levin (New York: Continuum, 2005); see also idem, “Did Moses Incorporate into the Pentateuch Pre-Sinaitic Laws?” [Hebrew], *Studies on Jewish Themes by Contemporary American Scholars* 1 (1972): 308–317.

³ Moses' ascent to heaven to receive the Torah, the possibility that Moses wrote some passages at his own initiative, and the order in which the Torah was written.

His working method was mainly programmatic or thematic: he classified these statements by topic and organized them under separate rubrics. In each section he collected the relevant statements he had found and examined them briefly.

⁴ This may be linked to Heschel's own ideological and theological positions, which have been studied by a number of scholars; see among others Tamar Kolberg, "From Research to Theology in *Torah Min Hashamaim* by A.J. Heschel" [Hebrew], *Da'at* 31 (1993): 65–82; Ari Bursztein, "'Depth Theology' and Biblical Criticism According to Abraham Joshua Heschel: Educational Implications" [Hebrew], *Studies in Jewish Education* 9 (2004): 183–92. On Heschel's life and thought see most recently, Shai Held, *Abraham Joshua Heschel: The Call of Transcendence* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

⁵ For collections of relevant statements see also Menahem Mendel Kasher, *Torah Shelemah* (Complete Torah): *Talmudic-Midrashic Encyclopedia of the Pentateuch* 19 (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Beit Torah Shelemah, 1992), 328–79; Yehuda Cooperman, *The Plain Meaning of the Bible* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Michlalah Yerushalaim, 1988), 1:113–40, 2:308–18; and the apologetic work by Shmuel Rosenblum, *Torah from Heaven* (Hebrew; Warsaw: R.Y. Goldmann, 1865); and see most recently, Norman Solomon, *Torah from Heaven: The Reconstruction of Faith* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012). Like Heschel's work, none of these cover all the relevant and significant sources, especially those from the medieval period—such as Rav Sa'adia Gaon, Rashi and Rashbam, some of Radak's and Ibn Ezra's important comments, and Abravanel's question/Joseph Hayyun's answer.

⁶ For a detailed bibliography, see below.

⁷ Other studies have described the traditional stand on fundamental questions closely related to the composition of the Torah in general and Moses' role in writing it in particular—such as divine revelation, the human element in biblical prophecy, and the canonization of the Holy Scripture; see especially Louis Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology* (New York: Behrman House, 1973), chap. 14; Moshe Greenberg, "Jewish Conceptions of the Human Factor in Biblical Prophecy," in *Jewish Bible Theology: Perspectives and Case Studies*, ed. Isaac Kalimi (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 63–77; Sid Z. [Shnayer Zalman] Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrash Evidence* (Hamden, Conn.: Published for the Academy by Archon Books, 1976). Also relevant are studies devoted to the relationship between the traditional Jewish view of the Bible and its composition, on the one hand, and modern critical scholarship, on the other; see especially Jon Douglas Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), chap. 3; Haran, chap. 37. Some works that treat of the traditional view about the relationship between the Written Torah and the Oral Law are also relevant for the question of the composition of the Torah; see especially Ephraim Elimelech Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1969), chap. 12; Jay Michael Harris, *How Do We Know This?: Midrash and the Fragmentation of Modern Judaism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Shalom Rosenberg, *Not in Heaven* (Hebrew; Alon Shevut: Tvunot, 1997); Yohanan David Silman, *Voice Heard at Sinai* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999). The attitude toward the Torah in the mystical literature and kabbalah has also been the subject of important studies, some of which are relevant to the present topic; including Moshe Idel, "The Concept of the Torah in Heikhalot Literature and Kabbalah"

[Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 1 (1981): 23–84 ; idem, *Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988); Joseph Dan, *On Sanctity: Religion, Ethics and Mysticism in Judaism and other Religions* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1998), chap. 5. But because the issue of Moses role in writing the Torah does not stand at the core of these works, their conclusions are of limited relevance for this paper.

⁸ Some of the traditions contained in the Torah may not be regarded as divine in early periods, however. The modern distinction between sacred and secular literature—whose source some view as lying in Christian thought (see Dan, chap. 1)—is of no aid here, traditions we consider “secular” (such as the genealogy of the Hurrites in Gen 36:20–30 or the data relating to the Zamzumites in Deut 2:20) not necessarily having been perceived as such in the biblical period and vice versa. The most that can be said with certainty is that as early as the biblical period the traditions in the Torah served a role(s) in the people’s life—it being difficult to explain why they would have sought to remember them had they not been significant. See e.g., James L. Kugel, “The Rise of Modern Biblical Scholarship” [Hebrew], in *The Literature of the Hebrew Bible: Introductions and Studies*, ed. Zipora Talshir (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2011), 3.

⁹ Baruch Jacob Schwartz, “The Torah: Its Five Books and Four Documents” [Hebrew], in Talshir, 163, 171.

¹⁰ *Torah* refers here to an instruction or collection of instructions rather the Pentateuch. The term occurs in this meaning elsewhere in Deuteronomy, cf. Deut 28:58; see Schwartz, “The Torah,” 162–163, and the bibliography listed there.

¹¹ This holds true whether Deuteronomy resembled our extant text or was an earlier stage of its formation.

¹² Josh 8:30–35 (“as is written in the Book of the Teaching of Moses [*sefer torat Moshe*])”—thus appears to allude to Deut 29:1–13; Josh 23:5–6 (“the Book of the Teaching of Moses”) to Deut 6:7; 1 Kgs 2:1–3 (“the Teaching of Moses”) to Deut 11:1, 29:8; 2 Kgs 14:5–6 (“the Book of the Teaching of Moses”) to Deut 24:16; and 2 Kgs 23:25 (“the Teaching recorded in the scroll”) to Deut 6:5. See Alexander Rofé, *Introduction to the Literature of the Hebrew Bible* (Jerusalem: Simor, 2009), 160–62.

¹³ Neh 8:1, 14–15, 18 thus appears to refer to the laws of the Feast of Tabernacles described in Lev 23:39–44 (“written in the Teaching that the LORD had commanded Moses”). The phrase “the Teaching of Moses (*torat Moshe*)” also appears in Ezra 3:2 and 2 Chr 23:18, 30:16. Here, too, the reference appears to be Leviticus. See Rofé, 59.

¹⁴ In Malachi—also dated to the Second Temple period—the phrase “the Teaching of Moses (*torat Moshe*)” appears to allude to Deuteronomy: “Be mindful of the Teaching of My servant Moses, whom I charged at Horeb with laws and rules” (Mal 3:22).

¹⁵ Cf. also the phrase “the commandments by the hand of Moses.” This data was culled from an Accordance search for “Torah” and “Moses.” See Avi Hurvitz, *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 193–5. For the possible polemic background of the phrases “the Teaching of Moses,” “the book of Moses” (instead of “the Teaching of God”), see Daniel R. Schwartz, “God, Gentiles, and Jewish Law: On Acts 15 and Josephus’ Adiabene Narrative,” in *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion:*

Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag, ed. Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 1:263–82.

¹⁶ Cf. e.g., Luke 24:27, “And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”; Acts 15:21, “For from early generations Moses has had in every city those who preach him, for he is read every sabbath in the synagogues.”

¹⁷ Steve Mason, ed., *Flavius Josephus Translation and Commentary, Volume 10: Against Apion*, trans. John M. G. Barclay (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 29.

¹⁸ Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974–1984), s.v., “Moses: Legislator of Jews” (3:137). Some of these statements were not directed against the Jews (or only against them) but against Christians, who also believed in the Bible’s sanctity and Moses’ prophecy (see below); cf. apud Macarius (Stern, 2:479–480, §465e), and see David Rokéah, *Judaism and Christianity in Pagan Polemics* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Dinur Center, 1991), 18–21, and the bibliography listed there. Moses was not only the subject of controversy between Jews and non-Jews during the Second Temple period but also formed one of Judaism’s “attractions”; see Louis Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 233–87.

¹⁹ See especially “‘The Lord our God spoke to us at Horeb’ [Deut 1:6]. Moses said to them: I am not speaking on my own, what I am saying to you comes from the mouth of the Holiness” (*Siphre* Deuteronomy [Eliezer Finkelstein, ed., New York and Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary, 2001], 5); “‘Moses spoke to the children of Israel’ [Deut 1:3]. Asks the question: Did Moses prophecy only the Ten Commandments? How do we know that he prophesied all the words of the Torah? Scripture says, ‘[Moses spoke to the children of Israel] according to all that the Lord had given him in commandment to them’” (*Siphre* Deuteronomy, 3); “It used to be proper to recite the Ten Commandments every day. Why then do they not recite then now? Because of the claim of the *Minim*, so that they may not say, only these were given to Moses on Sinai” (*p. Ber.* 1:4, 3c). In some places, the heretics are identified with Korah and his congregation, perhaps intimating that there were those within the Jewish community who questioned Moses’ prophecy (such as Philo; see below); e.g. “Korah exclaimed: The Torah is not from Heaven and Moses is not a prophet” (*p. Sanh.* 10:1 [28a]); “God has given us only the Ten Commandments. Of dough-offering, heave-offering, tithes and fringes we have not heard except from yourself. You have spoken in order to establish rulership for yourself and glory for Aaron your brother” (Elazar Gruenhut, ed., *Sefer Halikkutim* [Jerusalem, 1967], IV:41a, §5); and see Géza Vermès, *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 169–77. For the possibility that Jews sought to diminish Moses’ status during the Second Temple period, see Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998)—who suggests that Moses’ diminution may have been linked to the desire to magnify Enoch.

²⁰ Or Deuteronomy and some other texts attributed to Moses, see e.g., John Strugnell, “Moses-Pseudepigrapha at Qumran: 4Q375, 4Q376, and Similar Works,” in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 221–56. For the claiming of authority for compositions by attributing to them to

Moses, see Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

²¹ According to the Hebrew text found at Qumran (4QJub^a), see Harold Attridge et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4. VIII: Parabiblical Texts. Part 1* (DJD 13; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 11; James C. Vanderkam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Louvain: Peeters, 1989), 6. Herein (1:27), VanderKam adduces all the verses in *Jubilees* that relate to the way in which the book was written—either by the hand of Moses or by the hand of an angel. See also idem, “The Putative Author of the Book of Jubilees,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 26 (1981): 209–17.

²² Cf. David Syme Russell, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Patriarchs and Prophets in Early Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 108–10; Rokeah, 173 (§68) and n. 308.

²³ Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1983), 1:71–3; Moshe Weinfeld, “Not on My Own [...]” [Hebrew], in *Haim M.I. Gevaryahu Memorial Volume*, ed. Benzion Lurie (Jerusalem: World Jewish Bible Center, 1991), 63–4; cf. Stern, 1:171–2 (§58) and *Siphre Deuteronomy*, 5 (above n. 19). For studies of how Moses was regarded by the Qumran community, see Axel Graupner and Michael Wolter, eds., *Moses in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Traditions* (BZAW 372; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007). For inner-Jewish debates concerning Moses' stature, see David Flusser, “Messianology and Christology in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), 246–79.

²⁴ See Yehoshua Amir, *Die hellenistische Gestalt des Judentums bei Philon von Alexandrien* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983), 77–106—who discusses the hellenistic philosophy upon which Philo's views rest and the apologetic and misleading manner in which scholars present his ideas regarding Moses' role in the writing of the Torah. Cf. also Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Studies in Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora*, trans. Robyn Fréchet (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 145–9.

²⁵ “But that he himself [Moses] is the most admirable of all the lawgivers who have ever lived in any country either among the Greeks or among the barbarians, and that his are the most admirable of all laws, and truly divine, omitting no one particular which they ought to comprehend ...” (Philo, *Mos.* 2.10, 12; e.g. Francis Henry Colson, *Philo with an English Translation* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935], 454–7).

²⁶ See Acts 7:38: “He is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living oracles to give to us” (cf. Mark 12:26; Luke 24:44; John 1:17, 45, 5:46; Acts 15:21, 21:21, 28:23; Rom 5:14, 9:15, 10:5, 19; 2 Cor 3:15). Christians also alleged that the Jews censured the extant text of the Pentateuch, deleting clear statements referring to Jesus and events relating to the New Testament. No one who took this stance argued that the Torah as we have it now is not divine, however, or that Moses' prophecy should be doubted; cf. Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 169–73. The New Testament defines “Scripture (*pasa grafé*)” as “inspired (*theopneustos*) by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16). Christian theologians have, of course, engaged in much debate over this issue as well; see, for example, I. Howard Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College, 2004); John Morrison, *Has God Said?: Scripture, the*

Word of God, and the Crisis of Theological Authority (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); Paul Achtemeier, *Inspiration and Authority: Nature and Function of Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998).

²⁷ See e.g., Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire 135–425*, trans. H. McKeating (Oxford: Littman Library, 1986); James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (New York: Meridian, 1961); David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1979); Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), 172–201.

²⁸ See above n. 19.

²⁹ See below about Mishnah *Sanh.* 11:1.

³⁰ See e.g., “They [the angels] said to Him, ‘That secret treasure [the Torah], which has been hidden by You for nine hundred and seventy four generations before the word was created, You desire to give to flesh and blood!’” (*Shabat* 88b); “The Torah preceded the creation of the world by two thousand years” (*Song of Songs Raba* 5:11).

³¹ See e.g., “At first, Torah was in heaven [...] Afterward, Moses arose and brought it down to earth to give to humanity” (*Prov Raba*, 8); “There was a time for a certain thing to be found above the heaven, and now it was to be found beneath the heaven. What was it? The Torah” (*Ecc Raba* 3:1).

³² Jer 36:18 serves as the archetype for the technical act of writing unaccompanied by human discretion in other places as well; cf. *p. Meg.* 4:1 (74d). We cannot conclusively determine what led the *baraita*’s author to assume that Moses could not have written the final eight verses of the Torah. R. Simeon’s proposal that Moses wrote them “with tears” seems to indicate that he found it difficult to accept that human beings could describe their own death because of the emotions involved—Moses’ cast being compounded by the fact that he died without entering the Promised Land (cf. Rashi on *b. Menah.* 30a).

³³ Or R. Meir; see *Midrash Tanna'im* on Deut 34:5 (David Zvi Hoffmann, ed. [Berlin: Itzkowski, 1909], 224).

³⁴ Cf. the parallel passage in *p. San.* 10:1 (27d), *Gen Raba* 8:8, “R. Samuel ben Nahman said in R. Jinathan’s name: When Moses was engaged writing the Torah, he had to write the work of each day. When he came to the verse, ‘And God said: Let us make man’ etc [Gen 1:26], he said: ‘Sovereign of the Universe! Why do you furnish an excuse to heretics?’ ‘Write’ replied He; ‘whoever wishes to err – may err’” (Theodor-Albeck, eds., 361); for the heretics’ (Christians’) claim, cf. e.g., R. Joseph B. R. Nathan Official, *Sepher Joseph ha-Mekane* (Judah Rosenthal, ed.; Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1970), 31.

³⁵ R. Simeon’s statement indicates that the author of the *baraita* believed that Moses refrained from recording his own death. If he is correct, the *baraita* intimates that Moses acted on his own judgment, choosing not to write things he found uncomfortable. The verb “wrote” here therefore refers to the physical act of writing rather than copying, as earlier scholars have suggested; see Jed Wyrick, *The Ascension of Authorship: Attribution and Canon Formation in Jewish, Hellenistic, and Christian Traditions* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2004), 74–5 (“Who copied down the scriptures? Moses copied down his book” [72–3]). I concur with Wyrick, however, in understanding the continuation of the *baraita* to say that the act of writing attributed to the Men of the Great Assembly and Hezekiah and his court was copying.

³⁶ For “formulated in the plural” (*lashon rabim*) and “formulated in the singular” (*lashon yahid*), cf. Rashi on *b. Meg.* 31b (Aaron Ahrend, ed. [Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 2008], 268). Abaye may be influenced here by the common meaning of the phrase “formulated in the singular,” which denotes the view of a Sage that is not an accepted tradition; cf. *m. Ed.* 1:5; *b. Pesah.* 84a; *b. Hul.* 55b, 77a, 122b, 134a. “Formulated in the plural” similarly signifies a much more important tradition—or the plural of respect.

³⁷ Abaye states that “Moses said (*amar*),” without observing whether or not he “wrote” the curses. As we shall see below, towards the end of the Middle Ages this fact was exploited in order to blur the separate status Abaye appears to give the curse sections. The *baraita* in *Sanhedrin* discussed below, which contradicts Abaye’s dictum, also employs the root *’a-m-r*. This usage attests to the fact that the Sages do not distinguish between the time at which the events occurred and that in which they were written. The Bible being timeless (eternally present), the happenings it describes take place in uninterrupted sequence. Their recording in writing is thus not regarded as a later act; see Jacob Neusner, “Paradigmatic Versus Historical Thinking: The Case of Rabbinic Judaism,” *History and Theory* 36 (1997): 353–77.

³⁸ For Moses’ literary independence, cf. also *Exod Raba* 4:13: “God revealed unto Moses the plague He would bring upon them, and Moses in his record gave a hint of it in the words, ‘and that you may recount [in the hearing of your son]’ (*Exod* 10:2) which refers to the plague of locusts” (Avigdor Shinan, ed. [Tel Aviv: Devir, 1984], 258). The midrashist here understands Moses’ words to Pharaoh in *Exod* 10:3–6 as being detailed and containing a description of the plague of the locusts while God’s words to him (*ibid.*, 1–2) are only general, Moses choosing to write them “allusively” (*be-remez*)—i.e., greatly abbreviated or merely the gist. He thus possessed a certain amount of creative liberty. While other midrashim also address the discrepancy between God’s commands to Moses and Moses’ acts (cf. *Tanh.* Bo 17; Shlomo Buber ed. [Vilna: Ra’am, 1885], 51), they are not relevant to the discussion of who wrote the Torah, Moses’ freedom taking expression when the events described in the Torah occurred and not being directly related to its writing.

³⁹ Cf. *p. Hag.* 1:8 (76d); *Lev Raba* 22 (Mordechai Margulies, ed. [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993], 497), and see *b. Meg.* 19b.

⁴⁰ Cf. the parallel in *p. Sanh.* 10:1 (27d): “Even one who denies one verse, one rendering, one *ad majus* deduction: this is ‘[Because he has spurned] and violated His commandment’ (*Num* 15:31). One verse—‘Lotan’s sister was Timna’ (*Gen* 36:22). One rendering—‘Laban named it Yegar-sahadutha, but Jacob named it Galed’ (*Gen* 31:47). One *ad majus* deduction—‘If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-fold’ (*Gen* 4:24).” The first case exemplifies verses the reason for whose inclusion in the Torah may be debated; see Eran Viesel, *The Commentary on Chronicles Attributed to Rashi* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2010), 257. Laban’s words appear to be understood as insignificant (cf. *Gen Raba* 74:14 [Theodor-Albeck, eds., 871]). Lamech’s words are based on an erroneous *ad majus* deduction, thus raising the question of why they were included (cf. *Gen Raba* 23:4 [Theodor-Albeck, eds., 225]). These examples thus all demonstrate that just as Moses wrote these verses word for word from God’s mouth, so too he wrote all the other verses in the Torah.

⁴¹ For a useful survey, see Moshe Greenberg, ed., *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, vol. 8 (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1982), 641–737; Magne Sæbø, ed., *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation, Vol. I: From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300), Part 2: The Middle Ages* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2000), esp. chaps. 25, 32–3.

⁴² Cf. e.g., Israel Moshe Ta-Shma, *Studies in Medieval Rabbinic Literature* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar, 2004), 1:273–313; Robert A. Harris, “Awareness of Biblical Redaction among Rabbinic Exegetes of Northern France” [Hebrew], *Shnaton: An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 12 (2000): 289–310; Richard Cecil Steiner, “A Jewish Theory of Biblical Redaction from Byzantium: Its Rabbinic Roots, Its Diffusion and Its Encounter with the Muslim Doctrine of Falsification,” *Jewish Studies Internet Journal* 2 (2003): 123–67.

⁴³ See especially his commentaries on Prov 1:8; 8:30–31; Job 28:23–24, 27; cf. Sara Japhet, *The Commentary of Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir (Rashbam) On the Book of Job* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2000), 154–7; and cf. Abraham Meir Habermann, *Piyute Rashi* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1941), *piyut* 3:3, 8, 13–14; *piyut* 6:1; and see Yehoshua Granat, “Before ‘In the Beginning’: Preexistence in Early *piyyut* against the Background of Its Sources” (Hebrew; PhD Diss., Hebrew University), 115–8.

⁴⁴ Rashi on Deut 1:9, 12, cf. Num 17:13 (based on Midrash *Tanhuma Tezaveh* 15).

⁴⁵ Rashi on Deut 28:23; and for Rashi's commentary on *b. Hull.* 100b see my paper “The Formation of Some Biblical Books, according to Rashi,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 61 (2010): 35–36.

⁴⁶ Rashi on Deut 34:5; Josh 24:26.

⁴⁷ Moshe Zucker, ed. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1984), 15. Sa'adia's opinion that God dictated the Torah to Moses can be indirectly adduced from other places in which he notes that it was God who wrote the Torah and that it is His book: cf. the introduction to his translation to the Torah (the *Tafsir*; Josef Qafih, ed. [Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1984], 10), and the introductions to his commentaries on Isaiah and Proverbs (Yehuda Razabi, ed. [Kiryat Ono: Machon Moshe, 1994], 152; Josef Qafih, ed. [Jerusalem: Ha-Va'ad le-Hotsa'at Sifrei Rasag, 1976], 15).

⁴⁸ E.g., Robert Brody, *Rav Se'adya Gaon* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2006), 161–8.

⁴⁹ For Moses as the *mudawwin* of the Torah in the commentary of Jacob Qirqisani, Sa'adia's contemporary, see Haggai Ben-Shammai, “On *Mudawwin*, the Redactor of the Hebrew Bible in Judaeo-Arabic Bible Exegesis” [Hebrew], in *From Sages to Savants: Studies Presented to Avraham Grossman*, eds. Joseph R. Hacker et al (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2010), 76–85; for the possibility that Sa'adia's polemic was with this Karaite view, see *ibid.*, 106–10. For reference to the *mudawwin* in Karaite commentaries, see Meira Riva Polliack, “Major Trends in Karaite Biblical Exegesis in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,” in *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources*, ed. eadem (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 398–410; eadem, “Karaite Conception of the Biblical Narrator (*Mudawwin*),” in *Encyclopaedia of Midrash: Biblical Interpretation in Formative Judaism*, eds. Jacob Neusner, Alan Jeffery Avery-Peck (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 350–374.

⁵⁰ Shlomo Buber, ed. (Vilna: Ra'am, 1880), 1–2.

⁵¹ See Israel Moshe Ta-Shma, *Studies in Medieval Rabbinic Literature* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar, 2006), 3:265–77.

⁵² Reference to the *mudawwin's* literary activity is also made in the Byzantine exegesis prior to the publication of Tovia's *Leqah Tov*; see Nicholas Robert Michael de Lange, *Greek Jewish Texts from the Cairo Genizah* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 227. For the commentators' religious identity (rabbinic or Karaite), see Richard Cecil Steiner, "The Byzantine Biblical Commentaries from the Genizah: Rabbanite vs. Karaite," in *Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, Its Exegesis and Its Language*, eds. Moshe Bar-Asher et al (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2007), 243–62.

⁵³ See especially R. Abraham Ibn Ezra, *Sefer Ha-Hagana al Rav Sa'adia Gaon*, Yigal Oshri, ed. (M.A. Thesis, Bar Ilan University), #89, and the introduction of his Commentary on Isaiah (read with MS Rome, Angelica, Or. 80), and see the detailed discussion in my paper, "The Divine Content (*te'amim*) and the Words (*milot*) of Moses: R. Abraham Ibn Ezra on Moses' Role in Writing the Torah" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 80 (2012): 387–407.

⁵⁴ See especially R. Abraham Ibn Ezra, *The Foundation of Reverence and the Secret of the Torah* 1:8 (Uriel Simon and Josef Cohen, eds. [Jerusalem: Bar Ilan University, 2007], 84–5) and his commentaries on Gen 5:29; Exod 20:1; Long commentary on Exod 11:5; 32:9; Deut 5:5; Is 36.

⁵⁵ Cf. Ibn Ezra on Deut 32:39.

⁵⁶ Ibn Ezra on Exod 20:1.

⁵⁷ See Ibn Ezra on Gen 12:6; 22:14; Deut 1:2; cf. Uriel Simon, "Spain's Exegetes" [Hebrew], in Greenberg, "Encyclopaedia Biblica," 677–8; for reference to those commentaries of Ibn Ezra through the generations, see Heschel, "Torah min ha-shamayim," 409–12; Ta-Shma, 1:276–7; Uriel Simon, "Interpreting the Interpreter: Supercommentaries on Ibn Ezra's Commentaries between 1275 and 1400" [Hebrew], in *The Bible in the Light of Its Interpreters: Sara Kamin Memorial Volume*, ed. Sara Japhet (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994), 367–411.

⁵⁸ See my paper, "The Divine Content," 401–6.

⁵⁹ Cf. Rashbam on Gen 1:1, 5, 27; 37:2; Exod 16:15; Num 24:14; 30:3; Deut 2:5; 4:41. Cf. also an anonymous exegete (North France, end of the 12th century) on Gen 3:17: "The Holy One blessed be He did not say 'the Tree of Knowledge' but Moses who wrote the Torah called it that" (Shlomo Buber, ed., *Agadischer Commentar zum Pentateuch* [Wien: Druck und Verlag, 1894], 6); an anonymous exegete (North France, 12th century?) on Gen 2:24: "'For this reason you shall leave': 'leave'—this is Moses' word" (Abraham Berliner, *Pletath Soferim* [Breslau: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1872], 4); R. Eliezer ben Nathan (Mainz, 1090–1170): "The whole Torah came from the mouth of the Almighty and there is no earlier or later but Moses, who ordered [= wrote (*sider*)] Deuteronomy portion by portion, did so solely for the purpose of explication" (Shalom Albeck, ed., *Sefer Ra'aban Sefer Even ha-Ezer* [Warsaw: Ephraim Boymritter, 1904], 27, #34); On the various senses of *s.d.r* in medieval Hebrew, see Aharon Mondschein, "Additional Comments on *hasadran* and *hamesader*" [Hebrew], *Lěšonenu* 67 (2005): 331–46; and my paper, "The Formation," 23, 36.

⁶⁰ See the detailed discussion in my paper, "Rashbam on Moses' Role in Writing the Torah" [Hebrew], *SHNATON: An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* XXII (2013): 167–88.

⁶¹ Cf. Sara Japhet, 160–208; eadem, *The Commentary of Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir (RASHBAM) on the Song of Songs* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: World Union Jewish Studies, 2008), 127–163.

⁶² R. Moshe Zaltman on Gen. 48:20–22; Lev. 2:13; Deut. 2:8; see *Perushe ha-Torah le-R. Judah ben Samuel he-Hasid First Published on the Basis of the Cambridge and Moscow Manuscripts and Other Manuscripts and Printed Volumes Which had been Published with References and Notes*, by Isaac Samson Lange (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Wurzweiler, 1975), 64–5, 138, 198.

⁶³ For a detailed discussion concerning the commentary on Gen. 48:20–22 see Baruch Jacob Schwartz, “R. Judah Hehasid’s Commentary on Genesis 48:20” [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 60 (2012): 29–39, and for the three commentaries cited and the attribution to R. Moshe Zaltman, see my forthcoming paper, “R. Judah HeHasid or R. Moshe Zaltman: Who Proposed that Torah Verses Were Written After the Time of Moses?,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* (in press).

⁶⁴ Josef Qafih, ed. (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1965), 214; cf. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Sefer ha-Mada’*, *Hilchot Teshuvah*, 3:8.

⁶⁵ Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1992); and see Maimonides’ letter to Yemen, in which he refutes Muslim claims; Avraham Yaakov Finkel, *Rambam: Selected Letters of Maimonides* (Scranton, Pa.: Yeshivath Beth Moshe, 1994), 27–39.

⁶⁶ Kalman P. Bland, “Moses and the Law According to Maimonides,” in *Mystics, Philosophers, and Politicians: Essays in Jewish Intellectual History in Honor of Alexander Altman*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Daniel Swetschinski (Durham: Duke University, 1982), 49–66; see also Alfred L. Ivry, “The Image of Moses in Maimonides’ Thought,” in *Maimonides After 800 Years: Essays on Maimonides and His Influence*, ed. Jay Michael Harris (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2007), 113–34.

⁶⁷ Isadore Twersky, “Did Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra Influence Maimonides?” [Hebrew], in *Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra: Studies in the Writings of a Twelfth-Century Jewish Polymath*, eds. idem and Jay Michael Harris (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 21–48.

⁶⁸ E.g. Marc B. Shapiro, *The Limits of Orthodox Theology: Maimonides’ Thirteen Principles Reappraised* (Oxford: Littman Library, 2004), 115–21.

⁶⁹ E.g. Radak, the introduction to his commentary on Genesis (see below) and his commentaries on Gen 2:14; 5:29; 7:24; 22:1; Ps 119:1; Nahmanides, the introduction to his commentary on Genesis and his commentaries on Exod 28:30; Num 33:1–2; Joseph Caspi, the introduction to his commentary on the Torah (Isaac Halevi Last, ed., *Tirat Keseph* [Jerusalem: Mekorot, 1970], 2) and his commentaries on 2 Kgs 2:1; Is 9:5–6; Ez 7:6; 1 Chron 1:5; Gersonides on Lev 25:1; Num 18:8; 25:9; Deut 1:1 (*to’eloth*), 3; 31:26; Prov 3:1.

⁷⁰ For the question of the order in which Radak wrote his works, see Yechiel Tzeitkin, “The Characteristics of Biblical Exegesis in the Works of Peshat Commentators of the Maimonidean School of Provence in the 13th and 14th Centuries” (Hebrew; PhD diss., Ramat Gan, Bar Ilan University, 2011), 37–8.

⁷¹ See my forthcoming paper, “God’s revelation to the Biblical Authors in the Writings of R. David Kimhi” [Hebrew], *SHNATON: An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies*, XXIV (in press). See also Yitzhak Berger, “Radak on Genesis and the Meaningfulness of the Pentateuchal Text” [Hebrew], in “*To Settle the Plain Meaning of the Verse*”: *Studies in Biblical Exegesis*, eds. Sara Japhet and Eran Viezel (Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 2011), 180–92.

⁷² See Yitzhak Berger, “Radak on Chronicles: Critical Edition, Translation and Supercommentary” (PhD diss., Yeshiva University, New York, 2003), 8. The middle sentence lends itself to two interpretations, depending upon the two different

versions of the text of the commentary. The printed version and a few manuscripts read "before people [*lifney*] with either a *dalet* or a *resh*"—thus, the ancient sources that lay before the biblical authors included corrupt versions of names. The reading in the other manuscripts is "pronounced by people [*be-fi*] with either a *dalet* or a *resh*"—the corruption occurred only in the reading traditions of these sources. See also my forthcoming paper, "Context, Harmonization, and the Uniqueness of the Commentaries to the Book of Chronicles," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* (in press).

⁷³ His introduction to the commentary on Genesis.

⁷⁴ Cf. e.g., Louis Jacobs, *Principles of the Jewish Faith* (London: Basic Books, 1964), 223–5; Haviva Pedaya, *Nahmanides: Cyclical Time and Holy Text* (Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2003), 127–30, 148–50.

⁷⁵ Cf. Bernard Septimus, "'Open Rebuke and Concealed Love': Nahmanides and the Andalusian Tradition," in *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity*, ed. Isadore Trewski (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1993), 11–34.

⁷⁶ MS Oxford Bodleian, Neubauer Catalogue 226, Mich. 313 (e.g. 8a, 11a, 55b, 78a, 90a).

⁷⁷ Isaiah Berlin, *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and Their History* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), 127.

⁷⁸ Cf. Menahem Marc Kellner, *Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought: From Maimonides to Abravanel* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1986), 179–95, 278–83.

⁷⁹ Abraham Gross, *Rabbi Joseph ben Abraham Hayyun: Leader of the Lisbon Jewish Community and His Literary Work* (Hebrew; Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press), 231.

⁸⁰ Several talmudic commentators prior to Abravanel also compared Abaye's dictum with the *baraita* in *Sanhedrin*, the overt discrepancy leading them to choose to misrepresent Abaye's statement; cf. David Metzger, *The Commentary of Rabbenu Hananel ben Hushiel to the Talmud: Megilla* (Jerusalem: Machon Lev Same'ach, 1995), 71, and n. 67, and cf. the Tosafists on *Meg.* 31b.

⁸¹ This is implied by the following comment: "In [*Sanh.* 99a] our rabbis taught that 'Because he has spurned the word of the Lord' refers to those who say that the Torah is not from heaven. [...] The great rabbi [Maimonides] wrote in his commentary on the Mishnah, in his statement of the principles in the Eighth Principle that the Torah is from heaven" (Abravanel, *Sefer Rosh Amanah* §23; see Menachem Marc Kellner, ed. [Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982], 194–200; cf. the introduction to his commentary on Jeremiah ([Jerusalem: Benei Arabel, 1979], 279). For the way in which Maimonides' legacy influenced Abravanel and its manifestations in the latter's writings, see, David Ben-Zaron, "Don Isaac Abravanel and the Authority of Maimonides" [Hebrew], in *Spiritual Authority: Struggles over Cultural Power in Jewish Thought*, eds. Howard Kreisel et al (Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 2009), 193–206; Eric Lawee, "'The Good We Accept and the Bad We Do Not': Aspects of Isaac Abravanel's Stance toward Maimonides," in *Be'erot Yitzhak: Studies in Memory of Isadore Twersky*, ed. Jay Michael Harris (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2005), 99–117.

⁸² Gross, 232–40; see my paper, "The Question of Moses' Literary License in Writing the Torah: Joseph Hayyun's Response to Isaac Abravanel" [Hebrew], in *Zer Rimomim: Studies in Biblical Literature and Jewish Exegesis Presented to Professor*

Rimon Kasher, eds. Michael Avioz et al (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature), 603–19.

⁸³ Gross, 238.

⁸⁴ Thus stating “Moses said” rather than “Moses wrote;” but see above n. 37.

⁸⁵ Abravanel's introduction to his commentary on Deuteronomy is replete with traces of Hayyun's answer. For example, “This entire book of Deuteronomy, even though our teacher Moses said it when he was speaking to Israel, was written at divine dictation and not by Moses himself” (Avishai Schotland, ed. [Jerusalem: Horeb, 2012], 9; see Gross, 26–7). Abravanel applies this solution to texts that Hayyun did not mention in his answer. E.g., “this song was composed by our teacher Moses but it was written down in the Torah at God's dictation” (comm. on Exodus 15 [ibid., 215]). Abravanel accepted Hayyun's solution in its general outline, but rejected certain details. For example, he dismisses Hayyun's conjecture that God chose to incorporate different laws in each of the books of the Pentateuch in order to avoid creating a hierarchy among them as “a weak exposition that should not be accepted” (introduction to Deuteronomy, ibid., 7). He maintains that Deuteronomy does not contain any new precepts (ibid., 8). This disagreement may explain Abravanel's assertion that despite all the answers he received from the scholars, “their courses, paths, and thoughts were not sweet to me” (introduction to Deuteronomy, ibid., 3).

⁸⁶ Gross, 238.

⁸⁷ Avraham Shoshana, Moshe A. Zipor, *The Book of Ezekiel with the Commentary of Rabbi Joseph Hayyun* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Machon Ofek, 2006), 49–53.

⁸⁸ See e.g. Abraham Korman, *Ha-Torah u-Ketavah* (Tel Aviv: Yorshe ha-Mechaber, 2003), 74–5; Cooperman, 1:113–40, 2:308–18, and the rabbinic sources adduced therein.

⁸⁹ Cf. “There can be no doubt that our Master Moses of blessed memory, heard all the words of the Torah from the mouth of the Almighty” (Moses Mendelssohn, *Sefer Netivot ha-Shalom* [Wien: F. Edler von Schmidt, 1846], 9); “In consequence of the foundation of my belief, I am unable to arrive at the conclusion that the Pentateuch was written by anyone other than Moses” (David Hoffman, *Das Buch Leviticus: übersetzt und erklärt* [Berlin: Poppelauer, 1905], vii); “The Torah is a divine act and reached us through prophecy from the mouth of the Most High to Moses our Master, of blessed memory” (Isaac Samuel Reggio, *Katuv Yosher* [Krakow: Yosef Fischer, 1902], 18).

⁹⁰ Cf. Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Weiser (Malbim), *Sefer ha-Tora ve-ha-Mitzva* (Tel Aviv: Mefarshei ha-Tanach, 1960), 1662.

⁹¹ For Jewish attitudes towards biblical criticism, see Ran HaCohen, *Reviving the Old Testament: How Wissenschaft des Judentums Dealt with High Bible Criticism in 19th Century Germany* (Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2006).

⁹² For a useful surveys see, Shalom Rosenberg, “Study of the Bible in Modern Religious Jewish Thought” [Hebrew], in Simon, “The Bible and Us,” 86–119; Baruch Jacob Schwartz, “The Pentateuch as Scripture and the Challenge of Biblical Criticism: Responses among Modern Jewish Thinkers and Scholars,” in *Jewish Concepts of Scripture: A Comparative Introduction*, ed. Benjamin D. Sommer (New York: New York University, 2012), 203–29; Tamar Ross, “Orthodoxy and the Challenge of Biblical Criticism: Some Reflections on the Importance of Asking the

Right Question," *Report of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies* (2012–2013): 115–23; Solomon, parts III–IV.

⁹³ In the modern age, some Jewish scholars and thinkers who regard themselves as religious also maintain that the Torah as we have it today cannot represent full divine revelation. This stance is associated most closely with Louis Jacobs, whose writings gave rise to a fierce theological controversy; see Jonathan Wittenberg, "Louis Jacobs: Our Rabbi and Teacher," *European Judaism* 39 (2006): 160–9; Elliot N. Dorff, "Louis Jacobs," in *Interpreters of Judaism in the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Washington: B'nai B'rith, 1993), 167–87; *Report of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies* (2012–2013), 27ff. For this direction in Christian circles, see Samuel Rolls Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Meridian Library, 1956), vii, ix, xi. The distinction between divine revelation and the Torah we now possess has received its fullest and most extensive treatment in Baruch Jacob Schwartz, "Biblical Scholarship's Contribution to the Concept of *Matan Torah* Past and Present" [Hebrew], in *Jewish Thought and Jewish Belief*, ed. Daniel J. Lasker (Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 2012), 21–31.

⁹⁴ This direction can already be discerned, in fact, in the works of Baruch Spinoza and Jean Astruc, regarded as the earliest proponents of biblical criticism. Spinoza suggests that Ezra composed the Torah, Astruc that Moses wrote Genesis and the first two chapters of Exodus, basing himself on the sources at his disposal; see Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Amsterdam: Apud Henricum Künraht, 1670), chap. 8; Jean Astruc, *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paraît que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse* (Bruxelles: Fricx, 1753). Although both figures were heavily influenced by intellectual processes unassociated with Judaism (see most recently Kugel, 18–22), they started from the same point, in rabbinic Judaism. While Spinoza based his comments on Ibn Ezra, his arguments and conclusions were very close to those of Abravanel with respect to the authors of the Former Prophets and in particular with regard to the composition of Joshua; cf. Eric Lawee, "Don Isaac Abarbanel: Who Wrote the Books of the Bible," *Tradition* 30 (1996): 65–73. Astruc's point of departure was the variation in the divine names as noted in the rabbinic midrashim, his ultimate goal being to demonstrate that Moses had written the Torah and weaken Spinoza's position.

⁹⁵ See the detailed discussion in Eran Viesel, "The Composition of the Torah and the Consolidation of Its Text in the Writings of David Kahana: A Chapter in the History of Orthodox Jewish Biblical Criticism in the Eastern European Enlightenment" [Hebrew], in idem and Sarah Japhet, 248–74.

⁹⁶ Kahana thus denounces Jean Astruc's method as "distorted," "boorish," and "corrupt"; see David Kahana, *Sefer Masoret Syag la-Mikra* (reprint Jerusalem: Makor, 1970 [Wien, 1882]), 23, 112, 116; idem, *Introduction to Parashat Balaam* (Hebrew; Lemberg: Druck von Anna Wajdowicz, 1882), 4.

⁹⁷ Eliezer Schweid, *Democracy and Halacha: Studies in the Thought of Rav Chaim Hirschensohn* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997); David Zohar, *Jewish Commitment in a Modern World: R. Hayyim Hirschensohn and His Attitude Towards the Moderna* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2003).

⁹⁸ Chaim Hirschensohn, *Malki ba-Kodesh* (Saint Louis: Moinester, 1928), 2:244–5, 259; David Zohar ed., *Malki Bakodesh Responsa* (Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2012) 2:478–88.

⁹⁹ Louis Jacobs, for example, who regarded himself as a link in the chain of the Jewish study of the Bible, referred to Hirschensohn as one of the important figures in this tradition; see idem, *We Have Reason to Believe: Some Aspects of Jewish Theology Examined in the Light of Modern Thought* (5th ed.; London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004), 73–4 (the sources that shaped Jacob's ideas have yet to be fully researched). In my opinion, Hirschensohn's influence is also evident beyond the Orthodox Jewish world; thus, for example, the statement by the Reform scholar Jakob Josef Petuchowski that "The 'Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch' ... was not at all what really mattered to Judaism. What was emphasized was the fact that the Torah came from God!" appears to me to reflect Hirschensohn's halakhic distinction; idem, *Ever Since Sinai: A Modern View of Torah* (New York: Scribe, 1961), 83.

¹⁰⁰ See Yosef Ofer, ed., *The "Aspects Theory" of Rav Mordechai Breuer: Articles and Responses* (Hebrew; Alon Shvut: Tvunot, 2005).

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 307.

¹⁰² Ibid, 306, 311–312.

¹⁰³ The most recent rabbinic thinker I have found who alludes to the distinction between the tenet that the Torah is divine and Moses' role in writing it is R. Shlomo Aviner, one of the most influential figures in the religious world in Israel in the last generation: "Our starting point is that the Torah and the Bible are heavenly, from a divine source ... there is no problem in saying that some books contain verses added from another prophet." However, from this point, he proceeds to relate solely to the Prophets and Writings, concluding: "The Bible [the Prophets and Writings] underwent editing ... the editors inserted the words of a prophet [i.e., added to the words of one prophet those of another]. Is this a problem? These and these are the words of the living God, the King of the Universe"; see his response on *Ba-ma'ale ha-reshet* (16.05.2011).

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