

2b. The Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32— Logotechnical Analysis

Guidelines

- Please read the [General Introduction](#) and the Introduction to the [Embedded Poetry](#).
- For common features found in the numerical analysis charts, see the "[Key to the charts](#)".

Special Features of the Song within its Framework

- The defining characteristic of the Song of Moses is the fact that it is composed as a Song in which Moses is the speaker who recites it, but parts of his recital are explicitly or implicitly attributed to YHWH and formulated as spoken by YHWH. Precisely as in the wider framework, 31:1-30 and 32:44 – 34:12, where the structure of the text is fundamentally determined by YHWH's and Moses' addresses, the Song is structured by such speeches. The Song was obviously composed along with the Framework and should be studied in relation to it. In fact, the Book of Deuteronomy as a whole is composed as a literary 'mosaic' of speeches. In my view, this is where the key is to be found to the understanding of the compositional structure of the Song.
- In terms of its literary setting and in comparison with other embedded hymns, the Song of Moses is unique. Other major poetical compositions embedded elsewhere in the Old Testament, e.g., the Song at the Sea in Exodus 15, the Song of Deborah in Judges 5, the Song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2, are introduced by means of a short introductory statement, but the Song of Moses is embedded in an extensive Framework (31:1-30 and 32:44-34:12). The Framework, in particular what I call the Interior and Inner Framework (31:14-23 and 24-30), explicitly alludes to the Song and contains comments on its origin, content and function in the context. Conversely, the Song contains elements which clearly allude to what is said in the Framework.

In short, the Song and its Framework are so intimately interwoven that it cannot possibly be lifted from its context as though it were an inset hymn. In my opinion, it was not inserted as an existing hymn into an extant account but was clearly woven from the same fabric as the material surrounding it to function as the poetical high point in the series of concluding speeches by Moses and YHWH in the Book of Deuteronomy from Chapter 31 onwards. See Observation 2 below.

Therefore I cannot imagine an earlier context for the Song from where it was 'transferred' to its present position. The Song is definitely a product of the author(s) of the Book of Deuteronomy, deliberately composed for this particular context. In my view, there is nothing in the Song that suggests an earlier *Sitz im Leben*.

For the latest effort to determine a presumed earlier compositional period – in line with the (in my view) misguided traditional view of the Song as an inset hymn – see M. Leuchter, “Why is the Song of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy?”, VT 57 (2007), pp. 295-317. He argues for a compositional period well before the mid-8th century.

My analysis is based on the Masoretic Text as it stands in the major manuscripts. I have deliberately refrained from emending the text in light of other text traditions, such as the para-masoretic tradition to be found in LXX and the Qumran fragments. The MT reading is supported by the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Version, Vulgate and Targum Onkelos. The relevant verses where I maintain MT are vs. 8 and 43. Some scholars and modern translations prefer the reading in the LXX, c.q. in 4QDeut (marked in the chart). For my arguments, I refer the reader to my commentary, *Deuteronomium* (De Prediking van het Oude Testament, Baarn, 1997), Volume III, pp. 230ff. and 260f. I consider the LXX and Qumran reading as representing a para-masoretic tradition. A. Van der Kooij calls the Qumran reading a pre-masoretic version – see his article “The Ending of the Song of Moses: On the Pre-Masoretic version of Deut. 32:43”, *Studies in Deuteronomy in Honour of C.J. Labuschagne on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. by F.Garcia Martinez, et. al., E.J. Brill: Leiden – New York – Köln, 1994, pp. 93-100.

Strophic Structure - Canto/Sub-canto/Cycle boundary: || Canticle boundary: |

- Labuschagne: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6 || 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14 || 15-16, 17-18 || 19-21, 22-24, 25-27 || 28-31 || 32-33, 34-36 || 37-39, 40-42 || 43. The canto structure of the Song is primarily determined by the words spoken by Moses excluding the words attributed to YHWH (vs. 1-18, 19, 28-31, 36 and 43) and the words presented as spoken by YHWH (in vs. 20-27, 32-35, and 37-42). In vs. 1-18 the text divides into 3 cantos (vs. 1-6, 7-14 and 15-18), clearly delimited by the sudden use of the 2nd person in a 3rd person context in vs. 6, 14 and 18. This means that there are hard caesurae between vs. 6||7, 14||15, 18||19, 27||28, 31||32, 36||37, and 42||43, which warrant a division of the text into 7 cantos and a coda. Following MT, I find 17 strophes, with 70 verselines and 142 cola, taking v.14 as 3 bicola and v. 39 as 2 tricola. It is important to note that v. 39 is the only verse in the entire poem that has tricola, which makes it stand out. This is obviously a rhetorical technique to focus special attention on the crucial idea of YHWH's incomparability and uniqueness. Compare Exod. 15:11 in the Song at the Sea and 1 Sam. 2:2 in the Song of Hannah, where YHWH's incomparability also features prominently. In MT v. 43 has 2 bicolic verselines, but the Qumran reading has 3 bicolic verselines, which would bring the number of verselines to 71, with 144 cola.

- Pieter van der Lugt (private communication, 2007): 1-2, 3-4 || 5-6; 7, 8 | 9-10, 11; 12-13, 14 || 15, 16-17; 18-20b, 20c-21 | 22, 23-24, 25 || 26-27, 28-29, 30-31 | 32-33, 34-35; 36, 37-38 || 39, 40-41; 42, 43 (5 cantos, 27 strophes with 69 verselines and 140 cola, following MT in v. 43 and taking with Fokkelman vs. 14c-f and 39c-f as tricola).
- Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12* (Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 6b, Nashville, 2002): 1-6 | 7-14 || 15-18 | 19-25 | 26-29 || 30-35 | 36 | 37-42 | 43.
- Jan Fokkelman, *Major Poems of the Hebrew Bible* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica, Van Gorcum: Assen, 1998, Volume I, pp. 54-149): 1-2, 3-4, 5-6 || 7, 8-9 | 10-11 | 12-13, 14 | 15-16, 17-18 || 19-20, 21 | 22, 23-24, 25 | 26-27, 28-29, 30-31, 32-33, 34-35 || 36, 37-38, 39 | 40-41b, 41c-42, 43. He divides the text into 4 sections, 11 stanzas, 27 strophes, 69 verselines and 140 cola, following MT in v. 43 and taking vs. 14c-f and 39c-f as tricola.
- Paul Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy*, (Brill: Leiden - New York - Köln, 1996): 1, 2 | 3, 4 | 5, 6 || 7, 8-9 | 10, 11 | 12-13, 14 || 15, 16-17, 18 | 19, 20, 21 | 22, 23-24, 25 || 26, 27, 28-29, 30, 31 | 32, 33-34, 35 | 36, 37-38b, 38c-d || 39, 40, 41 | 42, 43a-b*, 43c-f*. He finds 5 sub-cantos, 14 canticles and 38 strophes, with 70 verselines and 143 cola, taking v. 39c-f as a tricolon, and including two cola from 4QDEUT in v. 43.
- Hans Nobel, *Gods gedachten tellen. Numerieke structuuranalyse en de elf gedachten Gods in Genesis – 2Koningen* (Diss. Groningen, 1993): 1-6; 7-19; 20-36; 37-42; 43 (vs. 19 and 36 have a hinge function).
- J.A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (Interpretation, Louisville, 1990): 1-6, 7-14, 15-18, 19-25, 26-38, 39-43.
- P.C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1976): 1-3; 4-9; 10-14; 15-18; 19-22; 23-27; 28-33; 34-38; 39-43.
- G. von Rad, *Das fünfte Buch Mose* (ATD 8, 1964): 1-7; 8-14; 15-18; 19-25; 26-35; 36-38; 39-43.
- C. Steuernagel, *Deuteronomium und Josua* (Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, Göttingen, 1900): 1, 2-6, 7-12, 13-18, 19-24, 25-32, 33-39, 40-43.
- F. Perles, "Zur althebräischen Strophik" (*WZKM* 10 (1896), 103-114): 1-3, 4-6 || 7-9, 10-12 || 13-14, 15-17 | 18 || 19-21, 22-23, 24-26 || 27-28, 29-30, 31, 32-33, 34-35 || 36-38, 39, 40-42 | 43 (6 main parts).
- A. Dillmann, *Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua* (Kurtzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament 13, Leipzig 1886): 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, 13-14 || 15-18, 19-21, 22-24, 25-27 || 28-30, 31-33, 34-36, 37-39, 40-42, 43 (3 main parts).

Logotechnical Analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words spoken by Moses outside the speeches; **d**: words attributed to YHWH.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	הֲאִזְנִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָהּ [^]	3	3		3	
	וְחִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־פִי:	4		4	4	
2	יַעֲרֹף כַּמָּטֵר לְקִוִּי	3	3		3	
	תִּגַּל כַּטַּל אִמְרֵתִי [^]	3	3		3	
	כַּשְׁעִירָם עַל־דָּשָׂא	3		3	3	
	וְכַרְבִּיבִים עַל־עֵשֶׂב:	3		3	3	
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 1-2	19	= 9	+ 10	= 19	+ 0
3	כִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא [^]	4	4		4	
	הִבִּינֵה גְדֹל לֵאלֹהֵינוּ:	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 1-3	26	= 13	+ 13	= 26	+ 0
4	YHWH's 7 characteristics הַצֹּרֵחַ¹ תְּמִימֵי פָעֻלוֹ²	3	3		3	
	with his faithfulness at כִּי כָל־דַּרְכָּיו מִשְׁפָּט³	4	4		4	
	the centre of the menorah אֵל אֱמוּנָה⁴ וְאִין עֹלָם⁵	4		4	4	
	וַיֵּשֶׁר הוּא⁶ וַיֵּשֶׁר הוּא⁷	3		3	3	
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 3-4	21	= 11	+ 10	= 21	+ 0
5	שַׁחַת לוֹ לֹא בָנִיו מוֹמֵם [^]	5	5		5	
	דוֹר עֲקָשׁ וּפְתִלְתֵּל:	3		3	3	
6	* See the note below תִּלְיֵהוָה תִּנְמְלוּ־זֹאת	4	4		4	
	at the end of the chart עִם נֶבֶל וְלֹא חֲכָם[^]	4	4		4	
	Sudden change to הַלּוֹא־הוּא אֲבִיךָ קִנְיָךְ	4		4	4	
	2 nd person in a 3 rd הוּא עֲשֵׂה וַיִּכְנַנְךָ:	3		3	3	
	person context Strophe 3 Total, v. 5-6	23	= 13	+ 10	= 23	+ 0
	Canto I Total, v. 1-6	63	= 33	+ 30	= 63	+ 0
7	זָכַר יְמוֹת עוֹלָם	3	3		3	
	בֵּינֵנוּ שְׁנֹת דוֹר־וְדוֹר [^]	4	4		4	
	שָׁאַל אֲבִיךָ וַיַּגִּדְךָ	3		3	3	
	זִמְנֶיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְךָ:	3		3	3	
8	בְּהִנְחֵל עֲלֵינוּ גּוֹיִם	3	3		3	
	בְּהַפְרִידוּ בֵּנֵי אָדָם [^]	3	3		3	
	יִצְבּ גְּבֻלַת עַמִּים	3		3	3	
	* LXX, Q אֱלִים / אֵל לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:	3		3	3	
	See note below Strophe 4 Total, v. 7-8	25	= 13	+ 12	= 25	+ 0
9	כִּי חִלַּק יְהוָה עַמּוֹ [^]	4	4		4	
	יַעֲקֹב חֶבֶל גְּחֻלָּתוֹ:	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 7-9	32	= 17	+ 15	= 32	+ 0
	Total, v. 5-9	55	= 30	+ 25	= 55	+ 0

10	יִמְצְאוּהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר וּבְתֵהוּ יִלְל יִשְׁמֹן [^] יִסְבְּכְנֶהוּ יִבְוַנְנֶהוּ יִצְרְנֶהוּ כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינָיו:	3	3	3	
		3	3	3	
		2		2	2
		3		3	3
	Strophe 5 Total, v. 9-10	18	= 10	+ 8	= 18 + 0
11	כְּנֹשֶׁר יַעִיר קִנּוֹ עַל-גִּזְזָלוֹ יִרְחֹף [^] יִפְרֹשׁ כְּנֹפֵיו יִקְחֶהוּ יִשְׁאָהוּ עַל-אַבְרָתוֹ:	3	3	3	
		3	3	3	
		3		3	3
		3		3	3
	Total, v. 10-11	23	= 12	+ 11	= 23 + 0
	Total, v. 7-11	55	= 29	+ 26	= 55 + 0
12	יִהְיֶה בְּיַד יִנְחַנּוּ [^] וְאִין עִמּוֹ אֵל נִכְרָ:	3	3	3	
		4		4	4
	Strophe 6 Total, v. 11-12	19	= 9	+ 10	= 19 + 0
13	יִרְכְּבֶהוּ עַל-בְּמוֹתָי אֶרֶץ וַיֹּאכַל תְּנוּבַת שְׂדֵי [^] וַיִּנְקֶהוּ דָבֶשׁ מִסֵּלַע וַיִּשְׁמֵן מִחֶלְמִישׁ צוּר:	4	4	4	
		3	3	3	
		3		3	3
		3		3	3
14	חֶמְאָת בְּקָר וּחֶלֶב צֹאן עִם-חֶלֶב כְּרִים וְאֵילִים בְּגִי-כֶשֶׁן וְעֵתוּדִים עִם-חֶלֶב פְּלִיּוֹת חֹטָה [^] וְדָם יַעֲנֵב	4	4	4	
		4	4	4	
		4	4	4	
		3	3	3	
		4	4	4	
		2		2	2
	Sudden change to 2nd person in a 3 rd person context; cf. also v. 15b	2		2	2
	Strophe 7 Total, v. 13-14	32	= 22	+ 10	= 32 + 0
	Total, v. 11-14	51	= 31	+ 20	= 51 + 0
	Canto II Total, v. 7-14	94	= 54	+ 40	= 94 + 0
15	וַיִּשְׁמֵן יִשְׂרוּן וַיִּבְעֹט שְׂמֹנֶת עֲבִית כְּשִׁית [^] וַיִּטֹּשׁ אֱלֹהֵי עֲשָׂהוּ וַיִּנְבֵּל צוּר יִשְׁעָתוֹ:	3	3	3	
		3	3	3	
		3		3	3
		3		3	3
16	יִקְנֶאֱהוּ בְּזָרִים [^] בְּתוֹעֵבַת יִכְעִסֶהוּ:	2	2	2	
		2		2	2
	Strophe 8 Total, v. 15-16	16	= 8	+ 8	= 16 + 0
17	יִזְבְּחוּ לַשְּׂדִים לֹא אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִדְעוּם [^] חֲדָשִׁים מִקְרָב בָּאוּ לֹא שְׁעָרוּם אֲבִתֵיכֶם:	4	4	4	
		3	3	3	
		3		3	3
		3		3	3
18	Sudden change to 2nd person in a 3rd person context	3	3	3	
	Strophe 9 Total, v. 17-18	19	= 10	+ 9	= 19 + 0
	Canto III Total, v. 15-18	35	= 18	+ 17	= 35 + 0
	Total, v. 1-18	192	= 105	+ 87	= 192 + 0

19	Moses comments	וַיִּרְא יְהוָה וַיִּנְאֹץ	3	3	3	
	and introduces	מִפְּעֵס בְּנֵיו וּבְנֹתָיו:	3		3	3
20	YHWH's	וַיֹּאמֶר אֶסְתַּיְרָה פָּנַי מֵהֶם	4	4		1 3
	First Speech	אַרְאֶה מָנָה אַחֲרֵיהֶם	3	3		3
		כִּי דָוָר תִּהְיֶהפֶּלֶת הַמָּה	4		4	4
		בָּנִים לֹא־אֲמַן בָּם:	4		4	4
21	Vs. 21-22 constitute	הֵם קִנְאוּנִי בְּלֹא־אֵל	4	4		4
	the 4 middle verselines:	כַּעֲסוּנִי בְּהַבְלִיתֶם	2	2		2
	70 = 33 + 4 + 33	וְאֲנִי אֶקְנִיאֶם בְּלֹא־עֵם	4		4	4
	Meaningful centre	בְּגוֹי נָבֵל אֶכְעִיסֶם:	3		3	3
	Strophe 10 Total, v. 19-21		34	= 16	+ 18	= 7 + 27
22	Middle words	כִּי־אֵשׁ קָדְתָה בְּאֶפְי	4	4		4
	of the Song:	וַתִּקַּד עַד־שְׁאוֹל תַּחֲתֵיתָ	4	4		4
	462 = 226 + 10 + 226	וַתֹּאכַל אֶרֶץ וַיִּבְלָה	3		3	3
		וַתִּלְהַט מוֹסְדֵי הָרִים:	3		3	3
23	The 7 disasters,	אֶסְפָּה עָלֵימוּ ¹ רַעוֹתָי	3	3		3
	with ravaging plague	חֲצִי ² אֶכְלֶה־בָּם:	3		3	3
24	at the centre	מִזֵּי רַעַב ³ וְלַחֲמוֹי רֶשֶׁף ⁴	4	4		4
		וְקָטַב מִדִּירָי ⁵	2	2		2
		וְיָשׁוּ־בְהִמּוֹת ⁶ אֲשַׁלַּח־בָּם	4		4	4
		עִם־חֲמַת זַחְלֵי עֶפְרָי:	4		4	4
	Strophe 11 Total, v. 22-24		34	= 17	+ 17	= 0 + 34
25		מִחוּץ תִּשְׁכַּל־חֶרֶב	3	3		3
		וּמִחֲדָרִים אִימָה	2	2		2
		גַּם־בְּחוּרֹגִם־בְּתוּלָה	4		4	4
		יוֹנֵק עִם־אִישׁ שִׁיבָה:	4		4	4
26		אָמַרְתִּי אֶפְאַיֶהֶם	2	2		2
		אֲשַׁבִּיתָה מֵאֲנוּשׁ זָכָרִם:	3		3	3
27		לוֹלֵי כָעֵס אוֹיֵב אֲנֹר	4	4		4
	YHWH quotes a presumed	פְּוִי־נִכְרֵי צָרִימוּ	3	3		3
	claim by Israel's enemies	פְּוִי־אֲמָרוּ יִדְיִנוּ לְמָה	4		4	4
		וְלֹא יְהוָה פָּעַל כָּל־זֹאת:	5		5	5
	Strophe 12 Total, v. 25-27		34	= 14	+ 20	= 0 + 34
	First Divine Speech, v. 20-27		96	= 44	+ 52	= 1 + 95
	Canto IV Total, v. 19-27		102	= 47	+ 55	= 7 + 95
28	Interjection:	כִּי־גוֹי אֶבְדַּ עֲצוֹת תִּמְהָ	5	5		5
	Moses	וְאִין בָּהֶם תִּבּוֹנָה:	3		3	3
29	interrupts	לוֹ חֲכָמוֹ יִשְׁפִּילּוּ זֹאתָ	4	4		4

	and	וַיְבִינֵנוּ לְאַחֲרֵיהֶם:	2	2	2	
30	comments	אֵיכָּה יִרְדֹּף אֶחָד אֶלֶף	4	4	4	
	on	וּשְׁנַיִם יִנְיִסוּ רִבְבָּהָ	3	3	3	
	the	אִם־לֹא כִי־צִוְּרָם מְכָרָם	5	5	5	
	first	וַיִּהְיֶה הַסִּגְרָם:	2	2	2	
31	divine	כִּי לֹא כְצִוְּרֵנוּ צִוְּרָם	4	4	4	
	speech	וַאֲיַבִּינוּ פְּלִילִים:	2	2	2	
		Total, v. 29-31	<u>26</u>	= 15 + 11	= <u>26</u>	+ 0
	Canto V	Strophe 13 Total, v. 28-31	<u>34</u>	= 20 + 14	= <u>34</u>	+ 0
		Total, v. 20-31	<u>130</u>	= 64 + 66	= <u>35</u>	+ 95
		Total, v. 19-31	<u>136</u>	= 67 + 69	= <u>41</u>	+ 95
32		כִּי־מִגִּפְן סֹדִם נִפְּנָם	4	4	4	
	YHWH's Speech continued	וּמִשְׁדָּמַת עֲמֻדָּה	2	2	2	
		עֲנֹבְמוֹ עֲנִי־רוּשׁ	3	3	3	
		אֲשֶׁכֶּלֶת מִרְרַת לָמוֹ:	3	3	3	
		Total, v. 28-32	46	= 26 + 20	= 0 + 46	
33		חֶמֶת תַּנְיָנִים יִיגָם	3	3	3	
		וְרֹאשׁ פְּתָנִים אֶכְזָר:	3	3	3	
		Strophe 14 Total, v. 32-33	<u>18</u>	= 9 + 9	= 0 + 18	
		Total, v. 28-33	<u>52</u>	= 29 + 23	= <u>34</u>	+ 18
34		הֲלֹא־הוּא כָּמֶס עֲמֻדָּי	4	4	4	
		חָתָם בְּאוֹצְרֹתַי:	2	2	2	
35		לִי נֶקֶם וְשָׁלֵם	3	3	3	
		לְעֵת תְּמוּשׁ רִגְלָם	3	3	3	
		כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם אֵילָם	4	4	4	
		וְחָשׁ עֲתֵדֶת לָמוֹ:	3	3	3	
		Continued Divine Speech, v. 32-35	<u>37</u>	= 19 + 18	= 0 + 37	
36	Comment	כִּי־יִדְּוִן יִהְיֶה עֲמוֹ	4	4	4	
	by	וְעַל־עֲבָדָיו יִתְנַחֵם	3	3	3	
	Moses	כִּי יִרְאֶה כִּי־אֵזֶלֶת יָד	5	5	5	
	on	וְאָפֶס עֲצוּר וְעֹזוֹב:	3	3	3	
	continued	Strophe 15 Total, v. 34-36	<u>34</u>	= 17 + 17	= <u>15</u>	+ 19
	divine	Canto VI Total, v. 32-36	<u>52</u>	= 26 + 26	= <u>15</u>	+ 37
	speech	Total, v. 20-36	<u>182</u>	= 90 + 92	= <u>50</u>	+ 132

37	and introduction to	אָמַר אֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ	3	3	1	2
	YHWH's Final Speech	צוֹר חֲסִיו בּוֹ :	3		3	3
38		אֲשֶׁר תִּלָּב זְבַחֵינוּ יֹאכְלוּ	4	4		4
	The introductory formula	יִשְׁתּוּ יַיִן נְסִיכֶם	3	3		3
	stands apart from the speech:	יָקוּמוּ וַיַּעֲזְרְכֶם	2		2	2
		יְהִי עֲלֵיכֶם סִתְרָה :	3		3	3
39	The <i>paseq</i> slash divides	רֵאשׁוּ עִתָּה	2	2		2
	the 18 words in v. 39	כִּי אֲנִי אֲנִי הוּא	4	4		4
	into 1 + 17,	וְאֵינְ אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי	3	3		3
	V. 39 is the only verse	אֲנִי אֲמִית וְאֲחִיָּה	3		3	3
	with <i>tricola</i> in the Song!	מִחֲצֵתִי וְאֲנִי אֲרַפָּא	3		3	3
		וְאֵינְ מִיַּדִּי מִצִּיל :	3		3	3
		v. 39	18	= 9	+ 9	= 0 + 18
	Strophe 16	Total, v. 37-39	36	= 19	+ 17	= 1 + 35
		Total, v. 36-39	51	= 26	+ 25	= 16 + 35
40		כִּי־אֲשָׂא אֶל־שָׁמַיִם יָדַי	5	5		5
		וְאֶמְרָתִי תִּי אֲנַכִּי לְעֵלָם :	4		4	4
41		אִם־שְׁנוֹתַי בְּרַק חֲרָבִי	4	4		4
		וְתֹאחֲזוּ בְּמִשְׁפַּט יָדַי	3	3		3
		אָשִׁיב נַקְם לְצַרִּי	3		3	3
		וְלִמְשַׁנְאֵי אֲשֵׁלֵם :	2		2	2
42		אֲשַׁכֵּיר חֲצִי מַדְם	3	3		3
		וְחֲרָבִי תֹאכַל בְּשָׂרִי	3	3		3
		מַדְם חֲלָל וְשִׁבְיָה	3		3	3
		מִרְאֵשׁ פְּרַעוֹת אוֹיֵב :	3		3	3
	Strophe 17	Total, v. 40-42	33	= 18	+ 15	= 0 + 33
		Total, v. 39-42	51	= 27	+ 24	= 0 + 51
	Canto VII	Total, v. 37-42	69	= 37	+ 32	= 1 + 68
	Third Divine Speech, v. 37-42		69	= 37	+ 32	= 1 + 68
		Total, v. 20-42	251	= 127	+ 124	= 51 + 200
43*	Coda	תִּרְנִינוּ גוֹיִם עִמּוֹ	3	3		3
	Moses	כִּי דַם־עֲבָדָיו יִקּוּם	4	4		4
	summons	וְנִקְם יֹשִׁיב לְצַרִּיו	3		3	3
	the nations	וְכִפֵּר אֲדַמְתּוּ עִמּוֹ :	3		3	3
		Total, v. 43	13	= 7	+ 6	= 13 + 0
		Total, v. 39-43	64	= 34	+ 30	= 13 + 51
		Total, v. 36-43	97	= 51	+ 46	= 29 + 68
		The Song, Total, v. 1-43	462	= 242	+ 220	= 262 + 200

* V. 6: The interrogative particle *h* is written apart from the next word in MT (Codex L), the Damascus Pentateuch and Codex Aleppo and stands on its own as a separate word. In Codex L it is followed by a *maqgef*. My explanation of this phenomenon is that the Masoretes missed a word

and, for logotechnical reasons, created an extra word without disturbing the content. They obviously failed to see that there was a scribal error in v. 5a which caused the loss of one word. In my opinion, the present 3-word reading in MT, לֹא בְנָיו מוֹמָם, 'not his children but a blemish' (?), is the result of haplography of the original 4-word phrase לֹא-בְנֵי יוֹם וַיּוֹם. This gives perfect sense to v. 5a: 'His no-child has dealt corruptly with him, day by day'. For 'no-child', compare the terms 'not-wise' (6a), and 'no-god' and 'no-nation' (21).

* V. 43: The para-masoretic form of the text found in 4QDeut has שָׁמַיִם, 'heavens', instead of גּוֹיִם, 'nations', in the first colon, and בְּנָיו, 'his sons', instead of עֲבָדָיו, 'his servants', in the second colon. Moreover, it has six extra words: a 4-word colon after the first colon, כָּל אֱלֹהִים, 'and bow down, all you gods, before him', and 2-word colon before the last colon in MT, וְלִמְשַׁנְּאוֹ יִשְׁלַם, 'he will punish those who hate him'. In my opinion there is no cogent reason to emend MT, which is in fact strongly supported by the numerical evidence.

Observations

1. The meaningful centre of the Song

In terms of words, the arithmetic middle falls in v. 22 (462 = 226 + 10 + 226), but it is unlikely that the author has designed these words as the meaningful centre:

כִּי-אֵשׁ קָדְתָּהּ בְּאַפִּי וַתִּיקַד עַד-שְׁאוֹל תַּחְתִּית וַתֹּאכַל אֶרֶץ

Fire is set ablaze by my anger; it burns to the depths of Sheol and devours the earth.

These words, expressing YHWH's terrible wrath, are of course meaningful in themselves, but in terms of content, vs. 21-22 are a better candidate for a deliberately designed meaningful centre which represents the quintessential idea of the Song.

The pivotal position of vs. 21-22 is undergirded on verseline level: they constitute the 4 middle verselines, that is, if my colometric division is correct (70 = 33 + 4 + 33):

הֵם קִנְאוּנִי בְּלֹא-אֵל כַּעֲסוּנִי בְּהַבְלִיָּהֶם²¹
 וְאֲנִי אֶקְנִיאֶם בְּלֹא-עָם בְּנֹוֹי נֹכַל אֶכְעִסֶם:
 כִּי-אֵשׁ קָדְתָּהּ בְּאַפִּי וַתִּיקַד עַד-שְׁאוֹל תַּחְתִּית²²
 וַתֹּאכַל אֶרֶץ וַיִּבְלָה וַתִּלְהַט מוֹסְדֵי הַרְיָם:

²¹They roused my jealousy with a no-god, provoked me with their false gods;
 But I, I shall rouse their jealousy with a no-people,

with a foolish nation I shall provoke them.

²²Fire is set ablaze by my anger; it burns to the depths of Sheol
 And devours the earth and its increase; it scorches the foundations of the mountains.

What makes vs. 21-22 particularly meaningful is that they give the reason for YHWH's wrath: Israel's apostasy. This is the leading theme not only of the Song but also of the Framework to the Song - compare YHWH's speech in 31:16-21 and Moses' charge to the Levites and the Israelites in 31:26-29.

The meaningful centre falls precisely within YHWH's major speech in Canto IV, vs. 19-27, which constitutes, as I shall show below, the central focal point of the menorah structure of the Song.

2. The Setting of the Song in its Framework

In terms of the caesurae caused by the various speeches, the text of the Song within its wider framework shows the following microstructure:

- 31:1-6 Moses addresses Israel in regards his imminent death and succession
- 31:7-8 Moses encourages and emboldens Joshua in view of the settlement
- 31:9-13 Moses charges the Levites and elders concerning the law
- 31:14-15 YHWH directs the coming events
- 31:16-18 Part 1 of YHWH's First Speech: he foresees Israel's apostasy
- 31:19-21 Part 2 of YHWH's First speech: he orders Moses to write the Song
- 31:22-23 Moses complies and YHWH gives Joshua his commission
- 31:24-29 Moses instructs the Levites and warns Israel of the imminent apostasy
- 31:30 Redactional note to introduce the recital of the Song
- 32:1-43 The Song of Moses**
- 32:44 Redactional Postscript to the Song: Recapitulation
- 32:45-47 Moses' valedictory address, urging the people to take the Song to heart
- 32:48-52 YHWH's Final Address to Moses on the eve of his death
- 33:1 Redactional note to introduce the Blessing of Moses
- 33:2-29 The Blessing of Moses (secondarily incorporated)
- 34:1-12 The death of Moses and the acceptance of Joshua as leader, whereby the stage is set for the continuation of the story in the Book of Joshua.

The macrostructure of the Song excluding the Blessing of Moses - which was added in the final stage of the redactional process of the book - can be outlined in a perfect menorah pattern, with the Song at the centre:

- 31:1-13 Outer framework: Moses' final provisions in view of his imminent death
- 31:14-23 Interior framework: YHWH charges Moses and Joshua in the tent
- 31:24-30 Inner framework: Moses' provisions regarding the Song
- 32: 1-43 The Song of Moses**
- 32:44-47 Inner framework: Moses' final charge to 'all Israel'
- 32:48-52 Interior framework: YHWH commands Moses to climb the mountain
- 34: 1-12 Outer framework: Moses' death and funeral as well as his necrology

For particulars in greater detail, consult the Analysis of the [Framework](#).

The Song itself is also composed in a menorah pattern

This is based on the hard caesurae noted above in the rubric “Strophic Structure”:

Canto I vs. 1-6 Introduction: YHWH’s faithfulness set against Israel’s infidelity

Canto II vs. 7-14 History attests to YHWH steadfast faithfulness

Canto III vs. 15-18 Israel’s behaviour demonstrates their apostasy

Canto IV vs. 19-27 YHWH judges his people with restraint

Canto V vs. 28-31 Moses describes the outrageous behaviour of the enemies

Canto VI vs. 32-36 YHWH charges the apostates and announces their doom

Canto VII vs. 37-42 YHWH challenges the no-gods, exposing them as futile, and proclaims his uniqueness and his sovereignty over life and death

Coda v. 43 Moses summons the nations to praise Israel for what YHWH did.

Cantos I-III, vs. 1-18, the first part of Moses’ speech before he cites YHWH’s speeches, divides into 3 sections, which are clearly demarcated by the rhetorical device of the sudden change to the 2nd pers form of address in a context in which Moses speaks *about* the Israelites in the 3rd person. In the chart I have marked the 2nd person forms at the end of the three strophes in **brown** (in vs. 6, 14 and 18).

Canto 1, vs. 1-6 divides into 3 strophes of 3 verselines each:

vs. 1-2 Exhortation to listen to the words of the Song

vs. 3-4 Declaration of intent: to proclaim YHWH’s name and character

vs. 5-6 Moses characterizes the Israelites as unfaithful

Canto II, vs. 7-14, has 4 strophes:

vs. 7-8 Israel must remember what happened when Elyon partitioned the world

vs. 9-10 Israel became YHWH’s allotted portion which he found in the desert

vs. 11-12 YHWH lovingly cared for them like an eagle that guards its nest

vs. 13-14 He enabled them to occupy the land and enjoy its fruits.

Canto III, vs. 15-18, has 2 strophes:

vs. 15-16 Having become rich, Israel committed adultery and provoked YHWH

vs. 17-18 The nature of the foreign no-gods the Israelites served.

Canto IV, vs. 19-27, is the central canto at the focal point of the menorah, containing YHWH’s major speech. Seeing its positioning, it deserves special attention. It is very skiffully designed, being made up of **102** (6 x **17**) words, which divide into three exactly equal strophes of **34** (2 x **17**) words each:

vs. 19-21, Strophe 10 YHWH decides to punish Israel **34** (2 x **17**) words

vs. 22-24, Strophe 11 The nature of the **seven** disasters **34** (2 x **17**) words

vs. 25-27, Strophe 12 YHWH’s restraint by the prospect of war **34** (2 x **17**) words.

The middle strophe, [Strophe 11](#), with its striking, meticulously designed compositional formula $34 = 17a + 17b$, contains YHWH's reaction to Israel's apostasy: his decision to punish them with all kinds of disasters: $\boxed{7}$ in total – see the chart.

Within Canto IV, this 34-word strophe, [Strophe 11](#), flanked by 34 words on either side, constitutes the meaningful centre of the canto. It opens with [v. 22](#), which contains, as we have seen above, the meaningful central words of the poem and also 4 of the 8 meaningful middle cola– see Observation 1.

Canto IV, vs. 19-27, is demarcated in v. 27 by a significant rhetorical device: YHWH cites a presumed claim by Israel's enemies in which they speak about YHWH in the 3rd person. This marks the transition to the next section, Canto V, vs. 28-31, in which Moses speaks about YHWH in the 3rd person. This is an important insight for delineating this part of YHWH's speech correctly. The speech in vs. 20-27 has 95 words, in vs. 32-35 the speech has 37, and in vs. 37-43 68, giving altogether 200 words in YHWH's speeches. Fokkelman regards the 28 words of vs. 28-30 as spoken by YHWH and finds altogether 228 words (95 + 65 + 68) - *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60;). In my view, it is very unlikely that YHWH speaks about himself in the 3rd person in this poem (v. 30)! As in the Framework, the divine speeches in the Song are strictly phrased as spoken by YHWH, in which he refers to himself in the 1st person. This also argues against Nobel's view that all 34 words of vs. 28-31 are to be taken as spoken by YHWH (*op. cit.*, p. 259; for a discussion of the matter, cf. Sanders, *op. cit.*, pp. 212f.).

Canto V, Strophe 13, vs. 28-31, consists of one 5-line strophe, which is an interjection by Moses who interrupts the flow of YHWH's words to comment on his decision to judge his people. In vs. 30-31 it becomes abundantly clear that Moses is not quoting YHWH but speaks *about* him in the 3rd person. This interjection is significantly made up of 34 words, showing the close connection between the interjection and YHWH's speech with its three 34-word strophes.

Canto VI, vs. 32-36, has 2 strophes:

Strophe 14, vs. 32-33 Description of the nature of the apostate Israelites

Strophe 15, vs. 34-36 YHWH has disasters in store: Moses comments.

Strophe 15, vs. 34-36, is conspicuously composed in exactly the same way as Strophe 11, in the pattern $34 = 17a + 17b$. In Canto VI, the continued speech of YHWH (vs. 32-35) is followed and concluded by a short comment (v. 36), in which Moses expresses the hopeful perspective for YHWH's just and compassionate judgement of his people. Canto VI, stands out, being significantly made up of 52 (2 x 26) words. It marks the end of YHWH's judgement of his people – he does justice to them (v. 36). From now on his wrath turns against the no-gods and Israel's enemies.

Canto VII, vs. 37-42, has 2 strophes. It contains YHWH's final speech and has exactly **68** (4 x **17**) words. Strophe 16 is made up of 5 verselines, of which the last two (v. 39a-c and 39d-f) are conspicuously designed as tricola to focus special attention on the content – compare my remark in the rubric “Strophic Structure” above.

Strophe 16, vs. 37-39 YHWH challenges the no-gods, exposing them as futile, and proclaims his uniqueness and his sovereignty over life and death

Strophe 17, vs. 40-42 YHWH's resolve to wreak vengeance on Israel's enemies

The Coda, v. 43 Moses summons the nations to praise Israel for what YHWH did.

Contrary to what I found in the Book of Psalms, where the coda as a rule forms part of the last strophe or canto, this coda clearly stands on its own. There is a strong caesura between YHWH's speech in 37-42 and these words attributed to Moses.

Additional Observations

3. The use of the number of fullness, 7

The Song divides into **7** cantos arranged in a menorah pattern and is deliberately made up (in MT) of **70** (10 x **7**) verselines, with **462** (66 x **7**) words. For **70** as the number of the 'sons of Israel' compare 32:8, 10:22, Gen. 46:26-27 and Exod. 1:1-5. There are two series of **7** items: the **7** characteristics of YHWH in v. 4, with his faithfulness at the centre, and the **7** disasters in vs. 23-24, with the ravaging plague at the centre. Note also that **צִיָּוָה**, 'Rock', occurs altogether **7** times (5 times explicitly of YHWH), deliberately so designed to express the fullness of the idea of YHWH as a rock, which signifies his reliability in contrast to Israel's unreliability.

4. The special position of v. 39

Because of its content, YHWH's declaration of his incomparability and uniqueness, v. 39 has a special position in the Song. This is demonstrated by the fact that it is the only verse in the poem with **tricola** - see the chart. Moreover, the Masoretes have used the *paseq* slash to divide its 18 words into 1 + **17**, creating in this way an extra divine name number **17** to 'seal' its important content. This setting apart of the first word has a close parallel in the preceding verse, v. 37, where the introductory formula **וַיֹּאמֶר**, 'and he will say', stands apart from YHWH's speech, dividing the **69** words of Canto VII, vs. 37-42, into **1** + **68** (4 x **17**), generating an extra multiple of **17**. Significantly, in 31:24-29 we find a perfect parallel to this device: there the *paseq* slash after the first word divides the 103 words of the passage in 1 + **102** (6 x **17**). See the note at the end of the chart, on p. 5 of my Analysis of the [Framework](#).

5. Overview of the words in the speeches

The speeches by Moses in the Framework should be understood as the words attributed to him addressing *the Israelites* (31:2-6), *Joshua* (31:7-8), *the Levites and the Elders* (31:10-13), and *the Levites and the Israelites* (31:26-29). This means that the words in the narrative are excluded, since they fall in a different category, being spoken *about* Moses. This distracts nothing from the general conception of the book as words spoken by Moses on the eve of the occupation of the land.

The Framework and Song	Verses	Moses	YHWH
Outer Framework 1 (31:1-13)	vs. 1-6	78 (3x26)	
	vs. 7-8	34 (2x17)	
	vs. 9-13	75	
	Total 1-13	187 (11x17)	
Interior Framework 1 (31:14-23)	v. 14		11
	vs. 16-18		67
	vs. 14-18		78 (3x26)
	v. 23		16
	Total vs. 16-23		156 (6x26)
	Total vs. 14-23		167
Inner Framework 1 (31:24-30)	vs. 24-30	82	
The Song of Moses	32:1-43		200
Inner Framework 2 (32:44-47)	vs. 44-47	42 (6x7)	
	68 (4x17) w.		
Interior Framework 2 (32:48-52)	vs. 48-52		77
	85 (5x17) w.		
	Total vs. 44-52		77 (7x10)
	153 (9x17) w.		
Outer Framework 2 (34:1-12)	34:1-12		15
Grand total (Deut. 31-34*)		311	459 (27x17)
All Moses' and YHWH's words	770 (11 x 70)		

For particulars in more detail, consult the Analysis of the Framework. From a logotechnical point of view, the multiples of the divine name numbers **17** and **26** clearly stand out. The most intriguing ones are the **187 (11 x 17)** words spoken by Moses in the Outer Framework, and the **459 (27 x 17)** words spoken by YHWH in the entire Framework including the Song. This may be interpreted as additional evidence for my delineation of YHWH's speeches in the Song, in which I find **200** words. This is in contrast with Fokkelman's 228 words, who regards 32:28-30 as spoken by YHWH – see my discussion of Canto IV above. Finally, there are altogether **770 (11 x 70)** words in Moses' and YHWH's addresses. This number is deliberately designed to refer to **70** as the number of the 'sons of Israel' (v. 8) – see Observation 3.

6. YHWH's name and other designations

There are altogether **17** explicit references to **YHWH** in the Song. The name יהוה occurs **8x** (3a, 6a, 9a, 12a, 19a, 27d, 30d, 36a), אֱל, 'God', 2x (4c, 18b), אֱלֹהִים, 'God', 1x (3b), אֱלֹהֵי, 'God', 1x (15c) and צוּר, 'Rock', 5x (4a, 15d, 18a, 30c, 31a).

The epithet עֶלְיוֹן, 'Most High', in v. 8a, which refers primarily to the High God as Creator, is only *by implication* to be identified with YHWH.

Most intriguing to note is that the name YHWH occurs **26** times in the Framework, which give together with the **8** occurrences in the Song a total of **34** (2 x 17).

This buttresses my supposition that the Song was composed integral to the Framework and that the concluding narrative in Deut. 31-34 - excluding the Blessing, which was secondarily incorporated – was designed as a coherent literary unit.

7. The sacred numbers woven into the Song

32:1-3	26 words in total
32:5-6	23 words in total (<i>kabod</i> number)
32:7-9	32 words in total (<i>kabod</i> number), with 17 before <i>atnach</i>
32:10-11	23 words (<i>kabod</i> number)
32:7-11	55 words with 26 after <i>atnach</i>
32:13-14	32 words in total (<i>kabod</i> number)
32:11-14	51 (3 x 17) words in total
32:15-18	17 words after <i>atnach</i>
32:19-21	34 (2 x 17) words in total
32:22-24	34 (2 x 17) words in total, with 17 before, and 17 after <i>atnach</i>
32:25-27	34 (2 x 17) words in total
32:20-27	52 (3 x 26) words after <i>atnach</i>
32:19-27	102 (6 x 17) words in total
32:29-31	26 words in total, with 15 (YH) before, and 11 (WH) after <i>atnach</i>
32:28-31	34 (2 x 17) words in total
32:20-31	130 (5 x 26) words in total
32:20-36	182 (7 x 26) words in total
32:37-39	17 words after <i>atnach</i> and 17 words after the <i>paseq</i> slash in v. 39
32:36-39	51 (3 x 17) words in total, with 26 before <i>atnach</i>
32:39-42	51 (3 x 17) words in total
32:37-42	68 (4 x 17) words in YHWH's final speech (Column d)
32:20-42	51 (3 x 17) words outside the divine speeches (Column c)
32:39-43	34 (2 x 17) words before <i>atnach</i>
32:36-43	51 (3 x 17) words before <i>atnach</i>
32:1-42	68 (4 x 17) verselines in the poetical body of the poem
32:1-43	68 (4 x 17) <i>bicolit</i> verselines in the poem as a whole
32:1-43	462 (66 x 7 or 42 x 11) words in total in MT
32:1-43	468 (18 x 26) words, including the 6 extra words of 4QDeut in v. 43

Bibliography Please consult the detailed Bibliography in Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12* (Word Biblical Commentary 6B, Nashville, 2002), pp. 783-784.

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