

## Literary Critical Studies of Deut 4: Some Criteriological Remarks

Knut Holter - Stavanger

In the literary critical study of Deuteronomy, chapter 4 has played, and still continues to play, an important role. This chapter seems to invite its readers to methodological considerations on the criteriology of a literary critical reading of a text, and in recent years there are several scholars who have chosen to use this particular chapter as the textual basis for different kinds of methodologically oriented literary critical studies of Deuteronomy. In the present article I would like to focus on the criteriology of some of the positions of these current literary critical contributions.<sup>1</sup> First, I will briefly outline three different approaches in the current literary critical study of Deut 4. Then, I will more critically review the three major criteria of these literary critical studies. And finally, I will make some few comments as for the future of such studies.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Three different literary critical approaches Deut 4

The literary critical approaches to Deut 4 can roughly be divided into three groups; (1) an atomistic approach, which emphasizes a literary diversity of this chapter and reads it as a mixture of often fragmentary sources or layers, (2) a holistic approach, which emphasizes a literary unity of this chapter and reads it as a sophisticated and well organized structure, and (3) as a *via media*, a block approach, which acknowledges a literary diversity of this chapter, but recognizes the different "hands" in longer thematic units, rather than in shorter fragments.

<sup>1</sup> For broader surveys of literary critical studies to Deut 4, cf. e.g. C. BEGG, "The Literary Criticism of Deut 4,1-40. Contributions to a Continuing Discussion", *ETHL* 56 (1980) 10-55, and D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4. Literarische Analyse und theologische Interpretation*. Göttingen (1987) 3-20 (GTA 35).

<sup>2</sup> For the sake of convenience I will restrict my examples to Deut 4:1-40, and in the following the term "Deut 4" refers to vv. 1-40 in this chapter.

## 1.1. The atomistic approach

From a research historical point of view, the first group is the major one, as the different atomistic approaches which have dominated Old Testament scholarship in general, obviously have made a strong influence also on its reading of Deuteronomy. For a century or so there has been a major tendency among scholars to take this book as a mixture of different sources or layers, and much attention has been given to those kinds of textual features which are believed to reflect the growth of the book, the so-called textual unevenness as e.g. duplication, contradiction, thematic or terminological variation, and not least the change of number between second-person singular and plural.

As far as Deut 4 is concerned, the major contribution following this traditional literary critical lead, is S. MITTMANN's study from 1975, but MITTMANN has obviously both predecessors - as e.g. R. MERENDINO (1969), and successors - as e.g. R. STAHL (1982).<sup>3</sup> MITTMANN investigated Deut 1,1-6,3, seeking to establish its literary structure and history of composition. He finds a homogenous *Grundschrift*, addressing Israel in second-person singular, which is expanded, first by two narrative layers using second-person plural, then by three layers using second-person singular, and finally by some "nicht klassifizierbare Ergänzungen".<sup>4</sup> Five of these layers, that is all except the *Grundschrift*, are then attested also in Deut 4. The first, addressing Israel in second-person plural (vv. 1a. 10aβ[from בְּחֹרֵב]. 11-14. 22-23bα. 25aα[= כִּי]. aβbα. 26a), refers to "the decrees and laws you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess" (v. 14), but it also points out the result of disobedience, "you will quickly perish from the land" (v. 26a). Then comes a second layer, also this addressing Israel in second-person plural (vv. 1b. 3a. 4-8. 15-18. 26b-28. 44. 46aα). This layer focuses upon the possibility of apostasy, as an experienced past (v. 3a), as a possible future (vv. 26b-28), and especially with regard to idolatry (vv. 15-18). These two major layers are then, according to MITTMANN, more fragmentary supplemented by two layers addressing Israel in second-person singular, and finally also by some minor fragments.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> S. MITTMANN, *Deuteronomium 1,1-6,3 literarkritisch und traditionsgeschichtlich untersucht*. Berlin (1975) 115-128 (BZAW 139), R. MERENDINO, *Das deuteronomische Gesetz. Eine literarkritische, gattungs- und überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*. Bonn (1969) 57-60 (BBB 31), and R. STAHL, *Aspekte der Geschichte deuteronomistischer Theologie. Zur Traditionsgeschichte der Terminologie und zur Redaktionsgeschichte der Redekompositionen*. Diss. Jena (1982) 128-141.

<sup>4</sup> For a survey, cf. S. MITTMANN, *Deuteronomium 1,1-6,3* (1975) 183-184.

## 1.2. The holistic approach

In more recent years such atomistic approaches have been challenged by more holistic approaches. As far as Deut 4 is concerned, the major contribution following this lead, is G. BRAULIK's study from 1978,<sup>6</sup> but also BRAULIK has both predecessors - he is especially inspired by N. LOHFINK (1964),<sup>7</sup> and, to a certain degree, also successors - as e.g. A.D.H. MAYES (1981),<sup>8</sup> cf. also more recent commentaries, as those by D.L. CHRISTENSEN (1991) and M. WEINFELD (1991).<sup>9</sup>

BRAULIK focuses upon features binding Deut 4 together, and he finds that the chapter is a unity. Much of the attention is also here given to those kinds of textual features which by the atomistic approach are taken as textual unevenness, reflecting the growth of the

<sup>5</sup> The two layers addressing Israel in second-person singular. I: vv. 9. 10a $\alpha$  [including אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה]. 21b $\beta$  $\gamma$  $\delta$ . 25a $\alpha$  [without כִּי]. 29. 31. 36ab $\alpha$ . 37 [without cj. for MT וְתַחַת]. 38-43. 45. 46a $\beta$ -49. II: vv. 3b. 23b $\beta$ -24. 25b $\beta$ . 30. 32-34a. 35. 36b $\beta$ . 37a $\alpha$  [only cj. for MT וְתַחַת]. Finally, the "nicht klassifizierbare Ergänzungen": vv. 2a. b. 20. 21ab $\alpha$ . 34b. A comparison between these literary critical findings of MITTMANN and e.g. those of STAHL, turns out to show correspondence as far as the major lines are concerned, although there of course are some minor differences. MITTMANN's first layer then corresponds with what STAHL finds to be a major *legal* redaction (DtrN<sup>2</sup> = vv. 1. 2. 10a $\beta$  $\beta$ . 11-14. 21-23a. 25a. 26-28), i.e. a layer focusing especially upon the law, while MITTMANN's second layer corresponds with what STAHL finds to be a major *theological* redaction (DtrTh<sup>1</sup> = vv. 5-8. 15-18. 23b $\alpha$  [?]. 25b $\alpha$  [?]), i.e. a layer deepening the understanding of God. The other layers attested in Deut 4 are DtrN<sup>3</sup> (vv. 30. 40), DtrTh<sup>2</sup> (vv. 9-10a $\alpha$ . 29. 31. 36ab $\alpha$ . 37 [without cj. for MT וְתַחַת]. 38), DtrTh<sup>3</sup> (vv. 23b $\beta$ . 24. 25b $\beta$ . 32-34a. 36b $\beta$ . 37 [= cj. for MT וְתַחַת]), DtrTh<sup>4</sup> (vv. 35. 39); cf. R. STAHL, *Aspekte* (1982) 116-118, 128-141.

<sup>6</sup> G. BRAULIK, *Die Mittel deuteronomischer Rhetorik. Erhoben aus Deuteronomium 4,1-40*. Roma 1978 (AnBib 68); cf. also his "Literarkritik und archäologische Stratigraphie. Zu S. Mittmanns Analyse von Deuteronomium 4,1-40", *Bib.* 59 (1978) 351-383, and *Deuteronomium 1-16,17*. Würzburg (1986) 38-47 (NEB.AT).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. N. LOHFINK, *Das Hauptgebot. Eine Untersuchung literarischer Einleitungsfragen*. Roma 1963 (AnBib 20), cf. further LOHFINK's more seminal application of the same principles on Deut 4 in "Auslegung deuteronomischer Texte IV. Verkündigung des Hauptgebots in der jüngsten Schicht des Deuteronomiums (Dt 4,1-40)", *BiLe* 5 (1964) 247-256, republished in an expanded version in *Höre Israel! Auslegung von Texten aus dem Buch Deuteronomium*, Düsseldorf (1965) 87-120 [= *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur I*, Stuttgart (1990) 167-191 (SBAB 8)].

<sup>8</sup> A.D.H. MAYES, "Deuteronomy 4 and the Literary Criticism of Deuteronomy", *JBL* 100 (1981) 23-51; cf. also his *Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids (1981) 148-158 (NCBC).

<sup>9</sup> D.L. CHRISTENSEN, *Deuteronomy 1-11*. Dallas (1991) 71-95 (WBC 6A), and M. WEINFELD, *Deuteronomy 1-11*. New York (1991) 193-230 (AncB 5).

text; here, however, these are interpreted as stylistic means, serving to emphasize or to contrast certain points. In his dissertation from 1978 BRAULIK organizes the chapter in six stylistic units (vv. 1-4, 5-8, 9-14, 15-22, 23-31, 32-40), showing little interest for structures of content, while he in his commentary from 1986 focuses more upon the content, organizing the chapter in three major parts, vv. 1-8 as a prologue, vv. 9-31 as a nucleus of the law, warning against worship of idols, and finally vv. 32-40 as an epilogue.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.3. The block approach

Now, this polarization between an atomistic approach, which tends to see literary critical significance in most kinds of textual features, and a holistic approach, which tends to see stylistic significance in the same, obviously leads to the quest for a *via media*, an approach giving attention to both sides. For the moment, the most important contribution heading in this direction, although it clearly is closer to the atomistic approach than to the holistic one, is D. KNAPP, in his dissertation on Deut 4 from 1987.<sup>11</sup> KNAPP maintains the basic idea of the atomistic approach, that the textual features often referred to as unevenness, could be explained as reflecting a textual growth. However, at the same time he realizes that such features also could have other kinds of explanations. And he therefore admits that not every example of textual unevenness necessarily reflects the growth of the text.<sup>12</sup>

According to KNAPP, the different "hands" of Deut 4 should be identified in longer thematic units, rather than in shorter fragments.<sup>13</sup> KNAPP then finds three major blocks, each with a new theme. In addition comes that each of these three major blocks subsequently were expanded by some additional texts, developing their message. KNAPP is also able to point

<sup>10</sup> G. BRAULIK, *Deuteronomium 1-16,17* (1986) 38-47. As for the more recent commentaries by CHRISTENSEN and WEINFELD, both being inspired by BRAULIK's holistic reading of Deut 4, WEINFELD follows BRAULIK's organizing of the chapter, while CHRISTENSEN organizes it into vv. 1-10, 11-24, and 25-40; cf. D.L. CHRISTENSEN, *Deuteronomy* (1991) 71-73, and M. WEINFELD, *Deuteronomy* (1991) 221-223.

<sup>11</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987). KNAPP's major conclusions soon got some scholarly support, cf. e.g. C. DOHMEN, *Das Bilderverbot. Seine Entstehung und seine Entwicklung im Alten Testament*. Frankfurt a.M. (1987<sup>2</sup>) 200-230 (BBB 62), and also O. KAISER, *Grundriß der Einleitung in die kanonischen und deuterokanonischen Schriften des Alten Testaments. Band 1: Die erzählenden Werke*. Gütersloh (1992) 94-95.

<sup>12</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 19-25.

<sup>13</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 21.

out, although more briefly, that the development of the three themes in Deut 4, has a parallel in Deut 29,1-14, 15-27, and 30,1-10; thus witnessing a threefold framing of the Deuteronomic law.<sup>14</sup> In ch. 4 he finds that vv. 1-4+9-14 constitute the oldest block, a block challenging Israel to obey the *words* (cf. vv. 9. 10. 12) they heard at Horeb, i.e. the *ten words* (v. 13); vv. 5-8 were here later added. Vv. 15-16a\*+19-28 then constitute the second block, chronologically speaking, a block focusing upon one particular of these *ten words*, i.e. the prohibition against idols; vv. 16b\*-18 were here later added. The third block is constituted by vv. 29-35, a block challenging Israel to search Yahweh; vv. 36-40 were here later added.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Three different criteria in the literary critical study of Deut 4

The very different results of these three approaches to Deut 4 is obviously related to the different criteria governing their textual work, and we should therefore take a closer look at three of the major criteria utilized in those literary critical studies; that is (1) change of number, (2) change of terminology, and (3) change of theme.

### 2.1. Change of number

The peculiar and apparently accidental change of number in Deuteronomy's addressing of Israel, from second-person plural to second-person singular - or vice versa, can probably be said to be *the* classical criterion in all literary critical study of Deuteronomy. From the seminal studies by C. STEUERNAGEL and W. STAERK a century ago,<sup>16</sup> and up till studies from our own decade, such as e.g. R. ACHENBACH's study of Deut 5-11 (1991) and E. REUTER's study of Deut 12 (1993),<sup>17</sup> this change of number has been given literary critical significance; although from somewhat varying concepts of its meaning and importance.

<sup>14</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 128-163.

<sup>15</sup> For a survey, cf. D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 112-114, and 205-206.

<sup>16</sup> C. STEUERNAGEL, *Der Rahmen des Deuteronomiums. Literarische Untersuchung über seine Zusammensetzung und Entstehung*. Halle 1894; W. STAERK, *Das Deuteronomium. Sein Inhalt und seine literarische Form*. Leipzig 1894. For a general research historical survey, cf. S. LOERSCH, *Das Deuteronomium* (1967) 28-45; for the time before 1894 LOERSCH should be supplemented by C.T. BEGG, "The Significance of the *Numeruswechsel* in Deuteronomy. The 'Pre-history' of the Question", *ETHL* 55 (1979) 116-124.

<sup>17</sup> R. ACHENBACH, *Israel zwischen Verheißung und Gebot. Literarische Untersuchungen zu Deuteronomium 5-11*. Frankfurt a.M. 1991 (EHS:T 422), and E. REUTER, *Kultzentralisation. Entstehung und Theologie von Dtn 12*. Frankfurt a.M. 1993 (BBB 87).

This textual feature is by all means present also in Deut 4. There is a slight preponderance of plural forms in vv. 1-28, and a somewhat stronger tendency of singular forms in vv. 29-40, but one nevertheless gets the impression that Deut 4 is a real mess, as far as the change of number is concerned. S. MITTMANN's study from 1975 provides an illustrative example of how this change of number in Deut 4 can be taken as having literary critical significance. As pointed out above, he finds not less than five different layers in this chapter. And although also other criteria get some attention, it is clear that his major criterion is the change of number.<sup>18</sup>

MITTMANN's approach could be, and has certainly also been, challenged from different points of view. First, on principle, one could ask if this usage of the change of number as a literary critical criterion actually presupposes another redactional concept of Deuteronomy than MITTMANN's growth model does. STEUERNAGEL, STAERK, and their generation proceeded from a source model, and then it obviously makes sense to take the change of number as a literary critical criterion, but that is not necessarily the case with a growth model. One could at least, as G. BRAULIK has done, ask why the supposed later "hands" of Deut 4, on the one hand proceeded from the existing terminology, while they, on the other hand, did not care about the existing number.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, also MITTMANN's practical application of this criterion is problematic. One could point out several examples of how his different layers destroys the inner logic of the text, such as e.g. when the Horeb theophany in v. 12 and the parenthesis of the Second commandment in vv. 23\* and 25\* are said to belong to the same layer, while the explicit combination of these two topics in vv. 15-16 is said to belong to a later layer. And thirdly, as KNAPP and several of his other critics have pointed out, MITTMANN's model gets so complicated and sophisticated that its historical probability fails to convince.<sup>20</sup> So, when MITTMANN gives the frequent change of number in Deut 4 literary critical significance, he fails to convince. However, that is actually also the case with the attempts given by MITTMANN's critics at explaining this textual feature.

<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, I would here like to note that MITTMANN also gives some weight to other criteria, cf. below, 2.2.; and I find that G. BRAULIK, "Literarkritik" (1978) 351-383, exaggerates MITTMANN's dependence on change of number; cp. e.g. BRAULIK p. 382 with MITTMANN, (1975) 121.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. G. BRAULIK, "Literarkritik" (1978) 379; cf. also A.D.H. MAYES, "Deuteronomy 4" (1981) 28.

<sup>20</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 19.

As for BRAULIK, he explains the frequent change of number as a stylistic means, used to point out the climax of the units.<sup>21</sup> This explanation is reflected in several subsequent commentaries,<sup>22</sup> but, although it should be admitted that it makes sense in some cases, it is not satisfactory as a general explanation. BRAULIK's comments on the very frequent change of number in vv. 23-26 (v. 23: pl-sg, v. 25: sg-pl-sg, v. 26: pl), which he takes as a means that "... die Aufmerksamkeit intensiviert und eine Atmosphäre gespannter Erwartung schafft",<sup>23</sup> can serve as an illustrative example of how accidental and subjective this explanation can be.

As for KNAPP, he maintains that change of number can have literary critical significance in some cases, but in general he explains it as reflecting older Deuteronom(ist)ic writings.<sup>24</sup> According to KNAPP, Deut 4 is a very late text, which consciously alludes to, or sometimes even quotes, older Deuteronom(ist)ic material, and, following a suggestion of C.T. BEGG,<sup>25</sup> he argues that the authors of this chapter just inherited the number of the texts they alluded to or quoted.<sup>26</sup> This explanation, however, is contradicted by the theologically and even numerically most significant quotation of older material in Deut 4, the three times repeated parenthesis of the Second commandment. The singular form of the Second commandment, **לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל כָּל-תְּמוּנָה** (Deut 5,8), is in all three cases replaced by plural forms **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם פִּסְלֵי תְמוֹנֹת כָּל-** (vv. 16, 23, 25). Now, BEGG shows some awareness of this problem. He mentions the first quotation (v. 16), and claims that "the number has been transposed into the plural of the context".<sup>27</sup> This is of course a reasonable argument, although it destroys the quotation model. More problematic,

<sup>21</sup> Cf. G. BRAULIK, *Mittel* (1978) 146-150.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. e.g. D.L. CHRISTENSEN, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (1991) 71, and M. WEINFELD, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (1991) 222-223.

<sup>23</sup> G. BRAULIK, *Mittel* (1978) 150.

<sup>24</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 23.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. C.T. BEGG, "The Literary Criticism of Deut 4,1-40" (1980) 28-45.

<sup>26</sup> This means that the literary critical significance of the change of number varies: "Ob im Dtn ein Numeruswechsel ein für literarkritische Scheidung relevantes Kriterium ist, hängt also zuerst einmal von dem literarhistorischen Ort der betreffenden Passage ab"; KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 169, n. 161. Accordingly, in late Deuteronomistic text as Deut 4, the change of number is a weak literary critical criterion, while it is a stronger criterion in older Deuteronom(ist)ic texts, cf. e.g. R. ACHENBACH, *Israel* (1991) 2-3 and E. REUTER, *Kultzentralisation* (1993) 99.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. C.T. BEGG, "The Literary Criticism of Deut 4,1-40" (1980) 34.

and not mentioned by BEGG, are the two remaining quotations, where one hardly can say that "the number has been transposed into the plural of the context", since the plural **וְעֲשִׂיתֶם** in both v. 23b and v. 25b introduces the singular **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ**. When it comes to KNAPP, he does not even mention this problem,<sup>28</sup> which I find that somewhat peculiar, since this is the major explanation he offers to the problem of the change of number.

As for a possible function of the very frequent change of number attested throughout Deut 4, I would therefore be inclined to argue that we are not yet in a position which enables us to draw any positive conclusions. We simply do not possess any generally convincing explanation.

## 2.2. Change of terminology

Also change of terminology has been a frequently utilized criterion in literary critical studies of Deut 4, and two examples should be presented to demonstrate this.

The first example is again taken from MITTMANN's analysis of this chapter. Although change of number is his major criterion, he tries to show that the results of that criterion also corresponds with the results of other criteria, and important here is the change of terminology. Negatively, MITTMANN is then able e.g. to point out how a singular text as v. 9 uses a terminology as **כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ** and **לְבַנְיָד וְלְבַנֵּי בְנֵיךָ**, while a plural text as v. 10b\* expresses some of the same, however, with the slightly different terminology **וְאֶת-בְּנֵיהֶם** and **כָּל-הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם חַיִּים עַל-הָאָדָמָה**. And positively, MITTMANN is also able e.g. to demonstrate that the terminology of a singular text as v. 25a\*, **תּוֹלִיד בְּנִים וְבָנֵי בְנִים**, corresponds with the terminology of another singular text, v. 9, **לְבַנְיָד וְלְבַנֵּי בְנֵיךָ**.<sup>29</sup> Now, it should be admitted that MITTMANN is right in pointing out these terminological patterns. However, when he gives them literary critical significance, he obviously faces the danger of reading too much out of what could be normal terminological variations.

Another example of how change in terminology can be taken as having literary critical significance, can be demonstrated from the list in vv. 16b-18. Several scholars have noted that its terminology seems somewhat alien in this context; it seems to reflect a

<sup>28</sup> Cf. D.KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 69, 78-79, 82.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. S. MITTMANN, *Deuteronomium 1, 1-6, 3* (1975) 119-121.



terminology one would expect to find in the Priestly, rather than in the Deuteronom(ist)ic tradition.<sup>30</sup> The most comprehensive analysis of this question is presented by KNAPP. In his study of Deut 4, he delimits vv. 16b-18 as a separate unit, and since there is no indication of number in these verses, and since they thematically fit perfectly together with the preceding vv. 15-16a, his major criterion for delimiting these verses is the change of terminology.<sup>31</sup> Focusing on the general Old Testament distribution of some of this terminology, i.e. the noun תִּבְנִית, the word pair אוֹ נִקְבָּהּ / זָכַר, and the series בְּהֵמָה, צֶפֶר, רֶמֶשׂ, and דְּגָהּ, he concludes that vv. 16b-18 are the product of "[einem] im Bereich der priesterschriftlichen Literatur beheimateten Ergnzer".<sup>32</sup>

Now, KNAPP is obviously right in pointing out the peculiar terminology of vv. 16b-18. But does that necessarily lead to his conclusions? First, one could argue that KNAPP exaggerates the Priestly character of these verses. Some of the terminology is probably not as typical Priestly as he argues,<sup>33</sup> and one should also note that these verses contain typical Deuteronom(ist)ic expressions.<sup>34</sup> Secondly, one could also take the change of style and terminology in vv. 16b-18 as stylistic means. BRAULIK is of course right when he claims that the five times repeated תִּבְנִית serves to emphasize, and also when he points out that "Der Aufzhlung der einzelnen krperhaften Wesen entspricht die Redefigur der Asyndese als besonders effektvolles Stilmittel, zumal in einem Text, fur den sonst die

<sup>30</sup> Cf. already W. STAERK a century ago, *Deuteronomium* (1894) 79, and more recently the same idea is reflected e.g. in M. WEINFELD, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*. Oxford (1972) 180-181.

<sup>31</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 88-91.

<sup>32</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 90.

<sup>33</sup> One example is the Old Testament distribution of תִּבְנִית, where the 5x occurrences in Deut 4 should be compared, not only with the 3x in the Tetrateuch (Ex 25,9.9.40 - all P), but also with the 2x in the Deuteronomistic history (Josh 22,28 and 2 Kgs 16,10). Another example is the listing of creatures in vv. 16b-18, which of course resembles the list in a typical P-text as Gen 1,26, but where a close reading would demonstrate that also a text as 1 Kgs 5,13 can come up with the same list (except the important reference to the word pair (זָכַר / נִקְבָּהּ), and here even in the same order as in Deut 4 (הַבְּהֵמָה, הָעוֹף, הָרֶמֶשׂ, הַדְּגָיִם))

<sup>34</sup> Cf. e.g. the three אֲשֶׁר-sentences in vv. 17-18, clearly referring to the Second commandment, Deut 5,8.

Syndese charakteristisch ist."<sup>35</sup>

However, KNAPP's emphasizing of change of style and terminology as having literary critical significance still deserves to be considered. It also corresponds with the major concern of H. SEEBASS, who more recently, in an attempt at simplifying the criteriology of literary critical studies of Deuteronomic law, has pointed out precisely a different literary style - as e.g. the Priestly - as one of the still remaining criteria in literary critical analyses of Deuteronomic texts.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, as I have pointed out, KNAPP's practical usage of this criterion demonstrates some of its problems.

### 2.3. Change of theme

Finally is also change of theme a criterion attested in most literary critical studies of Deut 4. A major example is the change of theme between vv. 9-14 - focusing upon the theophany at Horeb and the Decalogue in general, and vv. 15 ff. - focusing upon one particular of the commandments, the prohibition against idols. Typical is G. von RAD's comment upon this change of theme: "Das kann nicht ursprünglich sein."<sup>37</sup> And similar judgements are reflected in most atomistic approaches to Deut 4.<sup>38</sup>

In more recent years, it is especially D. KNAPP who has emphasized the literary critical significance of change of theme in Deut 4. As mentioned above, KNAPP takes this chapter as a late Deuteronomistic work consciously alluding to older Deuteronom(ist)ic material. This homogeneity of the material, however, complicates the traditional criteriology, and change of theme then remains KNAPP's major criterion. In other words, KNAPP delimits thematic unit, claiming these to be literary critical units as well.

<sup>35</sup> G. BRAULIK, *Mittel* (1978) 42.

<sup>36</sup> H. SEEBASS, "Vorschlag zur Vereinfachung literarischer Analysen im dtn Gesetz", *BN* 58 (1991) 83-98.

<sup>37</sup> G. von RAD, *Das fünfte Buch Mose. Deuteronomium*. Göttingen (1964) 36 (ATD 8).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. S. MITTMANN, *Deuteronomium 1,1-6,3* (1975) 119-120, and also older interpretations as e.g. M. NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I*. Darmstadt (1963) 38.

As pointed out above, KNAPP argues that vv. 1-4+9-14 constitute the oldest block in Deut 4, and that the next block, chronologically speaking, is found in vv. 15-16a\*+19-28. What happened, KNAPP claims, is that the author of the second block took up a minor motive in the first block (v. 12), "You heard the sound of words but saw no form (תְּמוּנָה)", and developed this into a major motive in the second block (vv. 15-16a), "You saw no form of any kind (כָּל-תְּמוּנָה) ... do not make an image in the form of any (תְּמוּנַת כָּל-) figure".<sup>39</sup>

Now, there are serious problems connected also with this criterion. First, on principle, one could question KNAPP's assumption that an introduction of a new theme gives signals of a new author. Why is it necessarily so, that the ancient author was capable of dealing with only one theme at a time? Secondly, one could list a series of cases exemplifying that also KNAPP's practical usage of this criterion is problematic. Why is it so that the thematic transition from KNAPP's first block - focusing on the Decalogue, to his second block - focusing on one particular of the commandments, necessarily should be explained as due to a new author, while there are just as important thematic variations within each of the two blocks (cf. e.g. the reference to Baal Peor in the first block, v. 3, and the reference to Exodus in the second block, v. 20), where such explanations are not even discussed? And further, as for KNAPP's major example, the development of the תְּמוּנָה of the first block (v. 12) into the כָּל-תְּמוּנָה / תְּמוּנַת כָּל- in the second block (vv. 15-16a): What is the function of the תְּמוּנָה in v. 12, if not to introduce the double תְּמוּנָה in vv. 15-16a? The noun תְּמוּנָה occurs only ten times in the Old Testament, and of these not less than six times in Deuteronomy, i.e. the occurrence in the Second commandment of the Decalogue (Deut 5,8), and then five times here in Deut 4. Of these five occurrences, three are explicit allusions to the Second commandment (vv. 16, 23, 25), one acts as an introduction to these allusions (v. 15), and then remains only the occurrence in v. 12, which I find very difficult to interpret independently of the others. Even KNAPP admits that the תְּמוּנָה in v. 12 represents a new accent within the first block, but he nevertheless claims that it is the author of the second

<sup>39</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 68.

block who relates this accent to the prohibition against idols.<sup>40</sup>

The examples could of course be multiplied, but let these serve to demonstrate how difficult it is to ascribe literary critical significance to a supposed change of theme. It will always face the danger of destroying the inner logic of the text.

### 3. Some concluding remarks

The preceding pages should suffice to illustrate the (obvious!) fact that different literary critical approaches, with their different criteriological preferences, turn out to give just as different exegetical results. Facing this criteriological diversity, one could of course become quite pessimistic. That would, however, at least as far as the situation of literary critical studies of Deut 4 is concerned, be somewhat hasty. I would, on the contrary, argue that the different positions outlined previously in this article ought to serve as an impetus to further literary critical study of this chapter. Each of the approaches, and each of their criteriological preferences, have provided valuable contributions to the understanding of Deut 4. In all literary critical studies there ought to be a mutual and fruitful relationship between a more theoretical criteriology and the practical application of its criteria; and the three approaches outlined here represent major steps forward with regard to both.

As for the future of literary critical studies of Deut 4, I would, on this background, argue that two aspects will need to be focused. First, a focusing upon genetic aspects, as here has been represented by the atomistic approach of MITTMANN and the block approach of KNAPP. I believe they are both basically right in assuming (i) that the text known to us as Deut 4 is the final product of a longer period of growth, and (ii) that this growth may have left traces in the text. MITTMANN and KNAPP should therefore be credited for daring to go into the extremely difficult, but obviously necessary area of interrelating literary and genetic questions; BRAULIK avoids this, by focusing on literary questions alone, and that does not make his case any stronger. As the contributions of MITTMANN and KNAPP surely demonstrate, the identification and interpretation of the traces possibly reflecting the growth is a very problematic task. And their contributions also demonstrate how easy it is to end up

<sup>40</sup> D. KNAPP, *Deuteronomium 4* (1987) 53, 179, n. 291.

with positions arguing in a circle. Nevertheless, their efforts at tracing the genesis of the text, reflects a textual concept which is inevitable for a scholarship acknowledging the historical aspects of its material.

Secondly, however, this focusing upon genetic aspects should be balanced by a focusing also upon stylistic aspects, here especially represented by the holistic approach of BRAULIK. I believe he is basically right, when he emphasizes that a literary critical study of a text should include sensitivity also to stylistic aspects. And he should be credited, not only for bringing this aspect so strongly into consideration, but also for doing the practical analysis of the text with such care and cautiousness. Now, also BRAULIK faces the danger of arguing in a circle; as he points out literary features, claiming them all to be stylistic means. Nevertheless, his contribution is of great importance for a scholarship acknowledging the literary aspects of its material.

Accordingly, I believe that the time has now come for a conscious interrelating of genetic *and* stylistic aspects of the text in Deut 4. Too long these two sides of literary critical studies have existed side by side, without being interrelated. KNAPP's attempt at elaborating a new criteriology is clearly a step in the right direction; however, he does not go far enough. It is sadly symptomatic that he, at least as far as his textual analysis is concerned, almost ignores BRAULIK's major concern. It is also symptomatic, or perhaps one could say that it is an example of the irony of fate, that KNAPP in his block approach actually ends up with not less than six different "hands" in Deut 4, while MITTMANN in his atomistic approach finds only five!

However, Deut 4 continues to invite its readers to methodological considerations on the criteriology of a literary critical reading of this text. Such considerations will hopefully, in the future, lead to a criteriology enabling us to find a way in between the two extremes seeing literary critical significance *or* stylistic significance in every surprising feature in the text.