



# How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel

*William M. Schniedewind*

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For the past two hundred years biblical scholars have increasingly assumed that the Hebrew Bible was largely written and edited in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. As a result, the written Bible has dwelled in an historical vacuum. Recent archaeological evidence and insights from linguistic anthropology, however, point to the earlier era of the late-Iron Age as the formative period for the writing of biblical literature. *How the Bible Became a Book* combines these recent archaeological discoveries in the Middle East with insights culled from the history of writing to address how the Bible first came to be written down and then became sacred Scripture. This book provides rich insight into why these texts came to have authority as Scripture and explores why Ancient Israel, an oral culture, began to write literature, challenging the assertion that widespread literacy first arose in Greece during the fifth century BCE.

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