



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 usually assumed that the Hebrew Bible was essentially written and edited in the Persian and Hellenistic periods (the fifth-through-second centuries BCE). Recent archaeological evidence and insights from linguistic anthropology, however, point to the earlier era of the late-Iron Age (eighth-through-sixth centuries BCE) as the formative period for the writing of biblical literature. *How the Bible Became a Book* combines recent archaeological discoveries in the Middle East with insights culled from the history of writing to address how the Bible was written and evolved into sacred Scripture. Written for general readers as well as scholars, the book provides rich insight into how these texts came to possess the authority of Scripture and explores why Ancient Israel, an oral culture, began to write literature. It describes an emerging literate society in ancient Israel that challenges the assertion that literacy first arose in Greece during the fifth century BCE. William M. Schniedewind is Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA. He is the author of *The Word of God in Transition* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) and *Society and the Promise to David*.

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