

The Ketef Hinnom scrolls are likely to be plotted along the early stages of a trajectory of innovation toward the primary textual—which is not to say immaterial—presencing of deity, an innovation born of circumstance and rhetorical utility, more fully realized in the Achaemenid, Greco-Roman, and Late Antique periods.¹² It appropriated for certain texts some of the features of larger-scale divine images known from elsewhere in early Southwest Asia, including the use of precious metals and the incantational employment of the divine name. Several texts from the Hebrew Bible betray similar attempts at appropriation, but instead of being understood as a means of renegotiating the meaning of materialization, they are frequently misunderstood through the Reformation and Enlightenment lenses of scripturalization precisely as a means of *dematerialization*. This is not only a presentistic understanding of textualization, but it also ignores the constraints of cognition and of mnemohistory. The sociomaterially embedded memories of these media and practices are not so easily abandoned, particularly in light of their foundation upon universal principles of intuitive cognition. Where scholars have posited the rejection of this or that fundamental ideology, a renegotiation of their nature and function is a conclusion far more in line with what we know about how communities engage with their past. This is the case for Sommer's (2009, 58–79) discussion—addressed above—of the “rejection of the fluidity model,” which, I have argued, was no rejection at all. The Ketef Hinnom silver scrolls overlap with and underline an even more significant example of renegotiated presencing media that is frequently overlooked in the scholarship, namely that of the Torah itself.

THE LAW

Portions of the texts now known collectively as the Torah or the “law of Moses” have likely existed in some form or another since the eighth century BCE, but the corpus does not seem to have achieved its status as Judah's preeminent charter myth and principal identity marker until the reforms of Ezra in the Achaemenid period at the earliest (Watts 2011; 2017; Collins 2017; cf. Honigman and Ben Zvi 2020). While P and D repeatedly assert the unilateral authority of the laws their texts consolidate, and command the people to give them priority, as Collins (2017, 26) notes, “official recognition of these laws is not clearly attested before the time of Ezra.” That official recognition may have been achieved much quicker had the laws been composed with the intent of constituting the basis of a legal system, but that does not seem to have been their primary purpose.¹³ Rather, as Collins (2017,

¹² For some fascinating Aramaic bowl spells from Late Antiquity that appeal to a wide variety of divine names and roles, see Shaked, Ford, and Bhayro 2013.

¹³ As Collins (2017, 43) notes, the consolidation of the Pentateuch did not involve ironing out differences or creating a univocal text. “Rather, they created a composite document, in