In the days of King David the Lord spoke to him these words:

1. "I have established you as king over Israel. You shall be a shepherd to My people Israel.

2. You shall shepherd My people Israel and shall do them right by Me forever. I will be their God and they shall be My people.

3. You shall also be a shepherd to My flock of Israel, to My people. You shall also be their shepherd, and they shall obey you.

4. You shall care for My people, and they shall love you. You shall also be their shepherd, and they shall obey you.

5. You shall be a shepherd to My people, and they shall obey you. You shall also be their shepherd, and they shall love you.

6. You shall be a shepherd to My people, and they shall love you. You shall also be their shepherd, and they shall obey you.

7. You shall be a shepherd to My people, and they shall love you. You shall also be their shepherd, and they shall obey you.

8. You shall be a shepherd to My people, and they shall love you. You shall also be their shepherd, and they shall obey you.

9. You shall be a shepherd to My people, and they shall love you. You shall also be their shepherd, and they shall obey you.
The most ancient manuscript evidence for this passage, 4QDeut\textsuperscript{c} and 4QDeut\textsuperscript{d}, indicates that by the second century BCE the Song of Moses was arranged on the scroll stichometrically.

32:2 מ [ M ] ה [ SP G (και καταβήτω) sim T] S (+ conj, assim v 1a)

The textual history of Deuteronomy tends toward expansion, especially in the addition of the conjunction. This type of expansion also occurs in verses 3, 6, and 9.

32:3 מ G (ονομα) [ M ] מ [ SP T (השם) (theol)]

The addition of the preposition ב in SP distances the speaker from the deity.

ג [ M SP ] רד[4QDtb] (syn)

ג is a more common synonym of נדב; the less common form is preferable.

32:4 The G translation makes two theological changes from its Hebrew Vorlage, substituting θεός for θέος and κύριος for θεός. The latter is also an explication.

32:5 ש שחתו [ M V (peccaverunt) ] מ [ M (assim num)]

M V (ei non) [ M ] שחתו אל לב [ SP G (ούκ αυτῷ) T (סכסא) S (in sordibus) (gram)]

M V (fiili eius) [ M ] שחתו אל לב [ SP G (τέκνα) T (סכסא) S (gram)]

M V (metath) [ M ] שחתו אל לב [ SP G (实施意见) T (סכסא) S (gram)]

Verse 5 presents a text-critical challenge: its first clause is almost hopelessly corrupt. The reading of each version displays different errors and subsequent attempts to make sense of the result. M reads: שחתו אל לב מום, literally “He has dealt corruptly with him, not his sons their blemish.” G reads: ημαρτοσαν ουκ αυτῳ τεκνα μωμητα, indicating a Vorlage שחתו אל לב מום, “They have sinned (dealt corruptly), not his, blemished children.” SP also has שחתו אל לב מום, “They have dealt corruptly, not his, blemished children.” The minor versions attempt to make sense of this. The commentaries all make suggestions, reaching no consensus. The following examples give an indication of the variety of proposed solutions.
Dillman proposes, “His children have dealt corruptly towards him; there is a blemish in them.”\(^1\) He has chosen the plural verb of G and SP. Deciding that לָא לְוָא, in whatever order, is a dittography, he chooses the preposition as a complement to the verb. Last, he tries to sort out the corruption at the end of the phrase by positing the loss of waw on the end of הבִּית in G and SP, and the loss of a bet in all three versions, with subsequent loss of mem in G and SP.

Tigay suggests two possibilities:\(^2\)
1. “His children violate against him loyalty.”
2. “His non-children violated loyalty.” Both these possibilities posit an aleph-mem confusion, with further corruption, including dittography.

Craigie offers an imaginative reconstruction:\(^3\)

I have adopted the reading suggested here–/stretch out with three dots/–for the following reasons, the order of which is important. The phrase לָא בְּנֵי, “not-my-children,” echoes similar phrases throughout the poem: לָא חַכם, “not-wise” (v. 6), לָא אֱלֹהִים, “not-a-god” (v. 17), and לָא אֵל, “not-god” (v. 21). Once that phrase is retained, the verb must be plural (שָחתו); the singular of M is assimilation to other singular verbs nearby (e.g. v. 7) or is a case of haplography. Since לָא בְּנֵי is a “frozen phrase,” the order לָא לְוָא must be correct; the order לָא לְוָא displayed by SP G T S is the result of metathesis. Finally, the word מום or a form thereof is an explicating plus added to clarify the corruption; once it was added the construct phrase בְּנֵי מום (SP G S) crept in, brought about by loss of ו by haplography (perhaps), then retained because it made better grammatical sense. There is, however, no versional support for the omission of מום.

32:6 מָשֶׁשׁ SP ] מַדְנַדוֹת M (gram); מֵלָדְיוֹת מָשֶׁש (gram); cf ταυτα κυριῳ G (prps explic)

Verse 6 presents differences in letter spacing; I have selected the one that represents ancient practice.

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2 J. Tigay, Deuteronomy (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia/Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 301.

In verse 7 we have a difference in number in the verb in the various versions; the singular and plural alternate throughout this passage, and in this case I have retained the reading of the copy text, suggesting that the secondary reading is by assimilation.\footnote{For the definition of a copy text and a defense of its use, see R. Hendel, “The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition.”}

In 1954 Patrick Skehan revealed 

\begin{equation*}
\text{בָּנִי אֲלֹהִים}
\end{equation*}

as a Hebrew variant found at Qumran in 4QDeut\textsuperscript{1} (the correct reading is 

\begin{equation*}
\text{בָּנִי אֲלֹהִים}
\end{equation*}

), and suggested that this reading was the probable \textit{Vorlage} for the Septuagint variant.\footnote{P. Skehan, “A Fragment of the ‘Song of Moses’ (Deut. 32) from Qumran,” \textit{BASOR} 136 (1954), 12-15.} The reading given here, 

\begin{equation*}
\text{בָּנִי אֲלֹהִים}
\end{equation*}

, while not occurring in any extant Hebrew witness, is preferred as making the best sense of the evidence. My reconstruction of what took place in the transmission of the text, resulting in the present variants, is as follows. First, the G reading, \(υἱῶν \thetaεοῦ\), may be retroverted as either 

\begin{equation*}
\text{בָּנִי אֲלֹהִים}
\end{equation*}

or 

\begin{equation*}
\text{בָּנִי אֲלֹהִים}
\end{equation*}

)\( (= 4QDeut\textsuperscript{1}).\) If the former is chosen, then it is easy to suppose that the \textit{Vorlage} of M SP, wishing to change a polytheistic text to monotheistic orthodoxy, inserted the consonants \(יִשְׁרָאֵל\) before \(אֲלֹהִים\), thus creating the reading \(בָּנִי יִשְׁרָאֵל\). Finally, 4QDeut\textsuperscript{1}‘s \(אֲלֹהִים\) is simply a scribal change, employing the more common term for “God.”