

PREFACE

This edition, the third in English, is formally a sequel to the second edition (2002).¹ However, in many ways, it is a rewriting of the first edition (1992) since, in the preparation of the second edition, I needed to limit myself to the existing camera-ready page format, thereby not permitting extensive omissions or additions. Thus, for the present edition, I covered two turbulent decades of research in an area that is developing very rapidly. When reviewing the literature of these twenty years, I was amazed by the number of studies written on each of the areas covered by the umbrella term “textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible.” The many studies quoted in this book that date between 2005 and 2011 bear witness to this abundance. The study of Greek Scripture is a prime example of the advancement in learning. During these two decades, the publication of the biblical Judean Desert scrolls has been completed and their impact is felt in almost every chapter of *TCHB*³. The description of these scrolls (ch. 2Ic) has been greatly enriched and, equally important, the status of the Masoretic Text (MT = מ), the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP = ס), and the Septuagint (LXX = Σ) is now much clearer in the wake of the new discoveries. The newly found scrolls also greatly enriched the description of the technical aspects of the textual transmission in ch. 4B, necessitating a complete rewriting.

At the same time, I also had to cover two decennia of my own evolving views on large and small matters.² I can safely say that no stone was left unturned. Even if the book appears to resemble the previous edition due to the only slightly modified tables, a closer perusal of the text will reveal many changes in every paragraph, including their expansion or even deletion, as well as completely novel sections, and, in one case, a new chapter. Six plates were altered, while most have been improved. The larger scope of this edition is not immediately obvious as many sections are presented in a smaller font.

Extensive changes include:

- Addition of a *glossary* (pp. 417–23). Words and concepts that are explained in the glossary are indicated with a petite “+” sign (e.g. Masorah⁺) in the running text, though not in all their occurrences.

¹ The sequence of the editions is as follows: Hebrew (Bialik Institute, 1989); first English edition (1992); German (Kohlhammer, 1997); Russian (Biblisko-Bagaslovski Institut Sv. Apostola Andrjeya, 2001); second English edition (2001).

² See the studies included in the second volume of my collected writings: *HB, GB, and Qumran* (2008) and my monograph *Scribal Practices* (2004). For both, see below, p. lii.

- Addition of a *didactic* guide (pp. lvii–lviii).
- Major rewriting of ch. 3 (“History of the Biblical Text”), especially 3B-C (“Shape of the Biblical Text in Early Periods, Development of the Biblical Text”), including new sections: A4 (“Central Position of מ in Tradition and Research”) and C2 (“The Myth of the Stabilization of the Hebrew Scripture Text”).
- Expansion of ch. 9 (“Scholarly and Non-Scholarly Editions”) from 9 pages in *TCHB*² to 35 pages. This chapter provides a detailed review of these editions and offers practical guidance for their use. The chapter includes an appendix describing “Modern Translations as Bible Editions.”
- Addition of ch. 10 (“Computer-Assisted Tools for Textual Criticism”). This chapter describes the advantages of computer-aided research in the 21st century. In addition, the bibliographies in chapters 1–8 are expanded with sections listing “Electronic tools.”

Smaller changes include:

- New notations: מ+ and מ-group (see p. xix).
- Shortening of the theoretical introductions, e.g. the one to ch. 7.
- Omission of 1.D (Definitions and Concepts) and addition of new sections D-E (Text, Canon, and Sacred Status, Subjectivity of This Book).
- Major rewriting of ch. 2IA1b (“Development of the Consonantal Text”) (pp. 22–36 in *TCHB*²).
- Addition of ch. 2ID5 (“Non-Biblical Sources: Quotations and ‘Rewritten Scripture’ Texts”).
- Expansion of ch. 2IB1–2 (“Greek Scripture”) from 14 pp. in *TCHB*² to 21 pp.
- Change in concept: Chapters 3B and 7B are no longer focused on מ. Textual witnesses later than מ are also taken into consideration in the textual-literary analysis.
- The closeness of ו and מ is stressed on pp. 82 and 136.
- Detailed recording of the evidence for ט, ש, ו in the “examples.”
- The number of pericopes in the textual witnesses that deviate significantly from מ and which contribute to our understanding of the growth of the biblical literature has grown from 15 in ch. 7B in *TCHB*² to 23.

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The decisive stages in preparing the revision were carried out during my tenure as fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (2010) and at the Lichtenberg-Kolleg in Göttingen (2010–2011). Both institutions are to be thanked for their hospitality, assistance, and pleasant work environment.

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Emanuel Tov

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