A MATTER OF CHOICE:
ON THE FEASIBILITY AND UTILITY OF AN ECLECTIC TEXT OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

by

David J. Sigrist

A Senior Thesis Submitted to

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Master of Divinity degree

Professor Kenneth Cherney, Advisor

Approved at Mequon, Wisconsin, on _____*March 29 2012*_____

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Advisor's Signature

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ABSTRACT

The exegesis of any biblical text is only as good as the text it examines. This thesis will lay out the case for the *feasibility* and *utility* of an *eclectic* text of the Hebrew Bible.

First it explains the *necessity* and *goal* of textual criticism, while noting the unique challenges that textual critics of the Hebrew Bible face.

It then surveys the *methodologies* that have been proposed for producing critical editions of the Hebrew Bible. This is followed by an analysis of the three main Hebrew Bible critical editions currently in progress, namely, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta,* the *Hebrew University Bible*, and the *Oxford Hebrew Bible*. Therein the methodology of each project is examined. These examinations serve to highlight the weaknesses and inadequacies of a diplomatic text, which in turn serve to highlight the utility of an eclectic text.

After showing the utility of an eclectic text, it briefly surveys the extant textual witnesses and principles that need to be exercised in order to make an eclectic text *feasible*. Much of this advancement is due to the discoveries in the Judean desert and the maturity of the discipline of Hebrew Bible textual criticism, which can overcome, at least in part, the unique challenges Hebrew Bible textual criticism faces.

Next a sample eclectic text is given using the previously laid out principles and methodology in order to demonstrate the utility and feasibility of an eclectic Hebrew Bible text.

In conclusion this thesis summarizes arguments for the utility and feasibility of an eclectic Hebrew Bible Text. It argues that despite the unique challenge a textual critic of the Hebrew Bible faces, an eclectic critical text is *preferable* to a diplomatic one for getting closer to the most pristine text. Therefore, endeavors such as the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* should be embraced.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

A	Aleppo Codex
α	Aquila
T(O;J;N)	Aramaic Targums (O=Onkelos; J=Pseudo-Jonathan; N=Neotifi)
BH	*Biblia Hebraica*
BHK	*Biblia Hebraica Kittel*
BHQ	*Biblia Hebraica Quinta*
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
HUB	*Hebrew University Bible*
L	Leningrad (St. Petersburg) Codex
MT	Masoretic Text
NT	New Testament
OHB	*Oxford Hebrew Bible*
Q(A)	Witnesses from Qumran (A=1QIs[a])
RB2	Rabbinic Bible 2
SAP	Samaritan Pentateuch
LXX	Septuagint (B=Vaticanus, S=Sinaiticus, A=Alexandrinus, Compl=Complutensis, C=Ephrami rescr., Q=Marchalianus Vat. gr.2125, L=Purpureus Vindobonensis)
SYP	Syriac Peshitta
σ	Symmachus
τ	Theodotian
VT	Vetus Latina
Vul	Vulgate

INTRODUCTION

Ecclesiological Underpinnings

While the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod confesses the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments to be God's *inspired* and *inerrant* word, this paper is not a *confessional* statement. Instead it is meant to address the *scholarly* discussion of textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. For this reason the term "Hebrew Bible" will be used throughout instead of "Old Testament" without implying any confession or lack thereof on my part, the WELS, or Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

In addition, theories concerning the transmission and preservation of the *Urtext* will be treated without necessarily making reference to their impact on the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration.

Statement of Purpose

This paper will argue that producing an eclectic critical text of the Hebrew Bible is *preferable* to a diplomatic one. In doing so it will demonstrate how such an undertaking is both *useful* and *feasible*.

Proposal

The dominant texts used for both scholarly and religious study of the Hebrew Bible have been *diplomatic* texts based on Masoretic manuscripts such as the Leningrad Codex and the Aleppo Codex. However, in Greek New Testament, Septuagint, and Classical studies, for example, *eclectic* texts have become commonplace. The reason generally given for not producing an eclectic text of the Hebrew Bible has been the *complexity* of the textual situation, namely, the heavy use of retroversion and the paucity of Hebrew manuscripts - which are, for the most part, quite late. So the question, by and large, has not been whether or not an eclectic text *ought* to be done, but whether or not we yet have a sufficient grasp of the textual evidence needed to justify such an attempt.

I propose, then, laying out the case that at this time we *do* have a sufficient grasp of the textual evidence to warrant such an endeavor. In doing so I'll highlight especially how the maturity of the discipline of textual criticism and the discoveries in the Judean desert make such an endeavor feasible.

After this I'll lay out the fundamental *principles* for constructing an eclectic Hebrew Bible text, along with a sample text developed using such a method. In doing so I intend to consult not only *BHS*, but also *BHK*, the Leningrad Codex, the Aleppo Codex, the Göttingen Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Aramaic Targums, and Latin versions.

For my sample eclectic text I will use Isaiah 7. The length isn't substantial because the sample text isn't meant to be the definitive word on the Hebrew *Vorlage*, but instead to show the *utility* and *feasibility* of an eclectic text. The apparatus therein will contain sufficient information for the readers to follow my reasoning and decide for themselves if my decisions are justified. I will also give a commentary afterwards for the variants that warrant such treatment.

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

The Necessity of Textual Criticism

The text of the Hebrew Bible has evidently not been preserved on indestructible plates or divinely engraved tablets stored at a central location for all to consult and use,[1] nor have any original manuscripts of the ancient literary works that comprise the Hebrew Bible survived to this day.

Instead what has been preserved is the meticulous work of scribes from various backgrounds who worked in various situations throughout the ages. In other words, the only access we have to the original text are copies of copies from somewhere down the line of textual transmission, and these copies are not in full agreement. This is why textual criticism is necessary. In order to get closer to the original text from which exegesis and translation is to be done, we need to first judge (hence critical) to the best of our ability which readings (hence textual) are original and which are corruptions or derivative. This is why McCarter says: "Textual criticism is the oldest and in many respects the most fundamental method of biblical scholarship."[2]

Textual criticism has been defined in a number of ways. Emanuel Tov says textual criticism is "the art of defining the problems and finding arguments for and against the originality of readings. Indeed, the quintessence of textual evaluation is the formulation and weighing of these arguments."[3] Ralph Klein defines textual criticism as "the discipline that tries to recover the original copy (autograph) of a piece of literature by comparing its available copies..."[4] It cannot be stressed enough that any meaningful study of the Hebrew Bible, whether academic, theological, or casual, *requires* the fruits of textual criticism. Gene Tucker puts it well:

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[1] Akin to the scenario in Deuteronomy 31

[2] McCarter, Kyle, Jr. *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible*. Fortress Press, 1986. p. 7

[3] Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Augsburg Fortress, 1992. p. 309-10

[4] Klein, Ralph. *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: The Septuagint After Qumran.* Fortress Press, 1974. p. vii

The importance of textual criticism cannot be doubted. Every reader of any translation of the Bible stands on the shoulders of this discipline, for translators must resolve - either poorly or well - questions concerning which text to translate. In one sense, translator and interpreter alike must always view textual criticism as their first and most basic step. *Which* text of a book, chapter, or verse will be translated? Which interpreted? The discipline speaks directly to the question, which words comprise the Bible. So textual criticism is not just another game which scholars play. It affects all who read that book, whether as an authoritative document of faith, as a mirror to self-understanding, or as a rich literary legacy from the ancient world.[5]

Textual criticism is one of many disciplines necessary for proper biblical exegesis and translation. However, as Klein points out, few have "leisure to devote full time to this enterprise."[6] This is why it's necessary to have *professional* editors produce critical texts.

It's perhaps worth noting here that most of those interested in biblical exegesis or translation don't have a *purely* academic interest. Ernst Würthwein says: "It would be wrong to regard the present account of the vicissitudes of the Old Testament text in its transmission as though it were written solely as a matter of academic interest in things past, or even as an attempt to expose the imperfections of the text incurred in its transmission by human beings."[7] This is because any theology which considers the Hebrew Bible to be Scripture depends on the fruits of textual criticism to furnish such Scripture. Würthwein puts it this way: "The history of the text, as well as the textual criticism which is based on it, is inseparably a part of any Old Testament scholarship that is consciously theological."[8] Of course, a theological interest is not in and of itself an impediment to academic scholarship, nor is it an excuse for dishonest or sloppy work. In fact, theological concerns should serve as a strong impetus for proper scholarship, whether academic or religious.

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[5] Klein, Ralph. *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament.* p. iv

[6] Ibid. p. 83 Klein in his entirety says, "Textual criticism is only one of the methods necessary for understanding the message of the Bible. In addition, the student must learn the techniques of translation and lexicography, of form, tradition, and redaction criticism, of word study, of historical reconstruction. Most exegetes do textual criticism as only one of their interests; few have the leisure to devote full time to this enterprise. No exegete, however, dare ignore it."

[7] Würthwein, Ernst. *The Text of the Old Testament.* Eerdmans, 1995. p. 121

[8] Ibid. p. 121

The Goal of Textual Criticism

Simply put, the goal of textual criticism is to recover the original reading by producing a critical text. In order to produce these critical texts, editors must first aim to determine which text led to the subsequent copies.

Now, here a useful distinction should be made between the *Urtext* and the archetype text. The *Urtext* is the source or original text from which all subsequent copies were made. There is a scholarly consensus that the process of determining the *Urtext* of the books of the Hebrew Bible with *absolute* certainly is difficult and complex given the assumed prehistory (oral and written sources, multiple versions, periodic redactions, etc.).[9] For example, Ronald Hendel says:

> In the case of the Hebrew Bible it is difficult to define what the "original" means, since each book is the product of a complicated and often unrecoverable history of composition and redaction. The "original text" that lies somewhere behind the archetype is usually not the product of a single author, but a collective production, sometimes constructed over centuries, perhaps comparable to the construction of a medieval cathedral or the composite walls of an old city.[10]

However, accepting such difficulties for the sake of argument, Tov points out that "even if this aim can be accomplished in only a few details, it would at least appear to be correct on a theoretical level, and must therefore be adhered to."[11]

So determining the *Urtext* begins with assumptions about origin of the text and works ahead from there, whereas determining the *archetype* text goes about this the other way. To determine the archetype text, you first look at what actual evidence is extant, and then work backwards in the process of transmission to determine which readings[12] are original. The archetype text has been defined as "the earliest inferable state of the text from which all of the extant witnesses stem."[13]

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[9] For an overview of the discussion on defining the Hebrew Bible *Urtext*, see Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. p. 173-177

[10] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition." *Vetus Testamentum* 58 (2008). p. 332

[11] Tov. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. p. 180

[12] or possibly conjectures. Conjectural emendation is addressed in Part 3.

[13] Hendel, Ronald. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 334

Unique Challenges for Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism

Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible faces unique challenges which are addressed below.

Limited Evidence

First and foremost, the main challenge is the *paucity* of evidence, something which makes Hebrew Bible textual criticism quite different from, e.g., New Testament textual criticism. Until the discoveries in the Judean desert, the only extant Hebrew manuscripts were the medieval Masoretic texts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and isolated fragments. Even with the addition of the Qumran biblical scrolls, the evidence is still quite fragmentary.

Late Evidence

Second, the majority of extant Hebrew witnesses are considerably *late*. The earliest *complete* Hebrew manuscript is the Leningrad Codex, which dates some 1500-2500 years after the initial composition of most of the books.[14] Even the earliest evidence from Qumran or the Septuagint still dates centuries after the composition of the more recent books, and perhaps more than a millennium after the earliest ones. In addition to this, the *gaps* in the transmission period

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[14] Dating schemes, of course, ranges by several centuries. But the point still remains no matter which conventional dating scheme, from liberal to conservative, is used.

are quite large, which adds another level of obscurity to the transmission and history of the text since the evidence is evidently mixed and controlled.[15]

Use of Versions

Due of the paucity of Hebrew texts and the considerably late date of most of the Hebrew witnesses, there's a rather heavy reliance on retroversion, most notably, from the Septuagint, Aramaic Targums, Syriac Peshitta, and Latin versions for textual criticism. This is again why the situation of Hebrew Bible textual criticism shouldn't be compared to that of, e.g., New Testament textual criticism, for which there is a great abundance of *original language* witnesses from a much earlier period in the transmission process.

Add to this the uncertainty behind many *hapax legomena*, the paucity of extra-biblical Hebrew literary material for philological comparison, the sheer scope of the task, the various scripts and dialects scribes have used resulted in differing orthography, the late vocalization, peculiar grammatical forms, etc., and the task seems rather daunting.[16]

Addressing the Use of the Masoretic Text

For a variety of reasons, Hebrew Bible textual criticism has come to be dominated by the use of the Masoretic Text. The MT is the result of the meticulous scholarship of Jewish scribes called Masoretes, most notably from Tiberias, between roughly the 7th and 11th centuries AD. They left behind a more or less fixed version of the Hebrew Bible text which includes vocalization, the Ketiv-Qere readings, cantillation marks, and the Masora. As Kahle says:

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[15] It's mixed in that it's often difficult to discern where a variant reading is an independent witness and where it's merely influenced by another witness. The Masoretic text is by and large controlled since the Tiberian Masoretes, in their quest for scribal precision, controlled the state of the text by excluding non-authorized readings, thus making many then extant variants fall into disuse.

Kahle described the situation this way: "[The Tiberian Masoretes] secured the abolition or adaptation of all the texts provided with a different kind of punctuation, such as the Babylonian text of the Prophets from Leningrad, or the Yemenite manuscripts. Vocalized texts independent of the text of the Tiberian Masoretes are found only in the fragments of the Geniza, in the texts retranscribed in Greek or Latin letters transmitted by Christians, in the form in which the Samaritans still read the Hebrew text in their synagogues, and in the ancient Hebrew texts found recently in the caves near the Dead Sea...The text fixed by the Tiberian Masoretes has been almost the only one considered in the preparation of our Hebrew grammars. Now we know that this text was altered by the Masoretes." Kahle. *The Cairo Geniza.* Basil Blackwell, 1959. p. 185-186

[16] Not to mention the variations of stichographic arrangement, accentuation, and other Masoretic additions! However, note that these difficulties will be addressed in Part 3.

The Tiberian Masoretes...created a corrected Hebrew text...The Masoretes of Tiberias emphasize with all their energy that the form of the text of the Bible which they had fixed was transmitted to them in the most reliable way from the time of Ezra by the men of the Great Synagogue; that they had neither concealed anything to what was transmitted to them. What they had intended to do was to make the Scriptures great and powerful, to establish them with explanatory accents and clear pronunciation with sweet palate and beauty of speech.[17]

However, the admittedly excellent and monumental work done by the Masoretes has led many to assume, perhaps even unconsciously, "Isn't the Masoretic text *good enough*?" For any textual critic who wants to get as close as possible to the original text the answer is an emphatic, "No!"[18] Ronald Hendel, the founder and general editor of the Oxford Hebrew Bible Project, says: "To use one such text without acknowledging other important texts and manuscripts is either a sign of romantic involvement with a single text or a sign of ignorance of the fact of textual multiplicity."[19] Kahle even goes so far as to say:

[The Masoretic understanding] has only the same value as, for instance, the statement that the Law codified in the Mishna is identical with the Oral Law revealed, together with the Written Law, to Moses on Sinai. Both are articles of faith to the pious Jew. But science cannot be based on such principles; it must be established on the data of history.[20]

In his book *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible,* McCarter succinctly addresses several common ideas about the Masoretic text in Hebrew Bible textual criticism which warrant a look at this point. His arguments against the following sentiments are summarized below.

Is textual criticism necessary when the MT is clear?

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[17] Kahle, Paul. *The Cairo Geniza*. p. 185

[18] Curiously enough, and at the expense of making an inaccurate analogy, it's hard to not see a parallel between advocates of the nearly exclusive use of the Masoretic text for Hebrew Bible textual criticism and advocates in New Testament studies of the nearly (or completely) exclusive use of the so-called *Textus Receptu*s for textual criticism.

[19] Hendel, Ronald. *The Text of Genesis 1-11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition.* Oxford University Press, 1998. p. 4

[20] Kahle. *The Cairo Geniza*. p. 188

McCarter states that "[such a view] implies an *a priori* preference for the Massoretic tradition over other textual traditions."[21] While the MT may be the most reliable witness, this doesn't mean that in every reading where a variant occurs, the MT is to be preferred *a priori*.[22] McCarter says: "Textual criticism is mandatory whenever more than one reading is found among the various witnesses to the text. And even when there is only one reading, the scholar must reckon with the possibility that it is corrupt."[23]

In cases where the MT has a sensible reading, but there are significant variants, he points out that:

> A copyist who inadvertently strays from his text is much more likely to write something familiar to himself-something he frequently writes-than something unfamiliar. It is the nature of scribal error that it tends to produce the ordinary, commonplace, or "easy" reading. Corrupt texts, therefore, often read quite smoothly.[24]

Even when the MT seems corrupt, doesn't it usually preserve the original reading?

A more extreme view of this might be stated as follows: "If the MT can possibly be understood without recourse to other witnesses, it's to be preferred." McCarter states what such MT advocates are prone to say:

> It is pointed out that many features of the ancient Hebrew language (lexical, grammatical, etc.) were unknown to the scribes and translators who passed the text down. The ancient translations and interpretations of the text-including its vocalization by the Massoretes - are not, therefore, trustworthy. Often authentic ancient[25] features of the text were lost when translators distorted them in "correction" toward the narrower confines of a too-limited view of the language.[26]

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[21] McCarter. *Textual Criticism.* p. 13

[22] If this were so, the repercussions for New Testament textual criticism would be substantial, given the many citations of the Hebrew Scriptures in which the New Testament demonstrably does not agree with the MT.

[23] Ibid. *Textual Criticism.* p. 13-14. Dealing with the rare occasions where emendation might be considered is addressed in Part 3.

[24] Ibid. p. 14. A clear example of this would be Isaiah 49:24 in which a confusion of similar looking letters led to the repetition of the more common צדיק instead of the well attested but less common עריץ.

[25] Presumably referring to philological, syntactical and lexicographical features

[26] Ibid. *Textual Criticism.* p. 14

When judging any given reading it's absolutely essential to take into account the long and complex *history of transmission*, especially for versions, which are heavily used for Hebrew Bible textual criticism. We should always strive to further develop our lexical and grammatical resources, and incorporate the historical development of Hebrew in our editorial judgments. However, this should be done with caution. McCarter points out that:

> ...the application of the data of Northwest Semitic philology to the biblical text must be undertaken with great care and reserve. The broader one casts his philological net, the greater the number of linguistic phenomena he can count among his catch-and the more difficult the problem of responsible selection becomes.[27]

Klein suggests that the editors of the *BHS* themselves have such a MT bias when he says:

> The apparatuses [of BHS] do not cite all synonymous readings or all the evidence for shorter or longer readings. The reason for omitting some of the evidence for variants in LXX or the other versions may be related to the assumption that the MT is correct except where it is obviously difficult or corrupt.[28]

So whether or not the MT usually preserves to best reading, every variant of it must nevertheless be considered and the MT not be given preference *a priori.*

Isn't textual criticism really of minimal importance since we have the Masoretic Text?

First off, to say textual criticism is of minimal importance is to beg the question because such an attitude assumes from the outset that no substantial gain can be made from using sources beyond the MT. Second, people might ask the question in a form similar to this: "Does textual criticism really change the meaning?" Or perhaps even more crassly put, "Does it really matter if our Bible's just a little messed up?" To be sure, certain books (e.g., Samuel) require more careful textual criticism than others. Hendel says, "Some books of the Hebrew Bible are more amenable

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[27] McCarter.*Textual Criticism.* p. 15

[28] Klein. *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament.* p. 62

to the production of critical texts than others."[29] Every variant must be considered, whether seemingly significant or not. In regards to larger or more significant variants McCarter states:

> I did not suppose that anyone would think it trivial that a scroll of Samuel from Qumran (4QSamᵃ) has a paragraph about Saul's Ammonite war missing from all other extant witnesses, that the Septuagint has a longer reading from 1 Samuel 14 providing considerable detail on the otherwise obscure institution of the Urim and Thummim, or that some witnesses deny that "the sons of David were priests" (cf. 2 Samuel 8:18)?[30]

But even less substantial variants are valuable enough, especially for the careful scholar or faithful theologian.[31] In regards to such variants McCarter says:

> I did wonder, however, whether I might be accused of triviality for reporting my choice between *wayyō'mer dāwīd, "*and *David* said" and *wayyō'mer hammelek*, "and *the king* said," a report I made many times in *II Samuel*. Is this a trivial decision? In a given passage it may seem so, but the **sum of such passages** might say something about courtly style or literary history of **something else impossible to anticipate**. I assume that no one acquainted with modern source criticism thinks the choice between *wayyō'mer yahweh*, "and *Yahweh* said," and *wayyō'mer hā'ĕlōhîm*, "and *God* said," in a Pentateuchal passage is a trivial matter. And finally, how trivial is the integrity of the text itself?[32]

As illustrated above, McCarter makes the point that "textual-critical progress is made in small steps, not in great leaps."[33] It goes without saying that one word in a text can have vast implications for a text's exegesis.[34] Finally, he says, "...how trivial is the integrity of the text itself?"[35]

Isn't textual criticism too arbitrary and biased to be trusted?

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[29] Hendel. *The Text of Genesis 1-11.* p. 112

[30] McCarter. *Textual Criticism.* p. 15

[31] Not to mention that defining what is significant and what isn't for literary, theological, etc. purposes can be quite subjective.

[32] McCarter. *Textual Criticism.* p. 17. Emphasis mine

[33] Ibid. p. 16

[34] An example of this might be Isaiah 45:7. Is Yahweh the source of טוב and רע, or שלום and רע?

[35] Ibid. p. 17

Even if textual criticism were deemed too immature of a discipline and therefore not to be trusted, what would be the alternative? It would be quite arbitrary to then give one family of medieval Rabbinic manuscripts[36] *a priori* preeminence over all other witnesses uncritically.

McCarter makes the point that many long accepted maxims of textual criticism such as, *Lectio difficilior praeferenda est* or *Lectio brevior praeferenda est* should not be rigidly applied. However, it should be noted that such rules were never meant to be applied rigidly in the first place. So all in all, perhaps a fairer statement might be, "The shorter or more difficult reading is to be preferred, unless the longer or simpler one is better."[37]

In conclusion, in no way does a recognition that the MT is, at least in general, a fairly reliable witness obviate the necessity of textual criticism.

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[36] Or just one manuscript like the Leningrad Codex!

[37] Silva, Moisés and Karen Jobes. *Invitation to the Septuagint.* Baker Academic, 2000. p. 129

CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL EDITIONS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

Survey of Types of Critical Texts

Since the advent of Gutenberg's movable type printing press, numerous printed editions of the Hebrew Bible have been produced. The obvious advantage a printing press has over even the most diligent scribe is that exact copies can be produced, and *en masse*. Now the various methodologies proposed for producing printed critical editions of the Hebrew Bible will be surveyed briefly before analyzing the three major critical editions of the Hebrew Bible currently in progress.

Diplomatic Texts

A diplomatic critical text attempts to reproduce the text of one manuscript, called the base text, as accurately as possible, and then to print variants in an apparatus, sometimes with editorial judgments, sometimes not. So even if the editor has determined a variant from the base text to be original, it's *not* included in the main text itself, but rather cited in some fashion in an apparatus.

This type of critical text is well suited for the study of specific manuscripts or traditions, such as the Masoretic tradition. Nearly all editions of the Hebrew Bible are diplomatic reproductions of a single Masoretic manuscript. Rafael Zer says, "Most modern critical editions of the Bible are diplomatic, based upon one manuscript. Thus the various editions of *Biblia Hebraica* (BHK, BHS, BHQ), and the edition of the Bible prepared by A. Dotan, are all based on MS L."[38]

One obvious advantage a diplomatic text has is that it represents solid evidence for the text. It's not an artificial or subjective conjecture created by textual critics. At the same time, however, this is its intrinsic weakness since it's only as accurate as the manuscript reproduced. In other words, flawed manuscripts are reproduced in their flawed state.

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[38] Zer, Rafael. "Preparation of the Base Text of the Hebrew University Bible Where It Is Missing in the Aleppo Codex." *Textus* 25 (2010): 49-71 (English section). p. 51 The goal of the *HUB* is to reproduce the Aleppo Codex, though to be sure, the *HUB* is to some degree a hybrid of diplomatic and eclectic since not all of the Hebrew Bible is extant in the Aleppo Codex, so eclectic copy-text techniques are used to reconstruct what's missing.

The Leningrad Codex, for example, which serves as the base text for *BHS*, isn't even a flawless representative of the Masoretic tradition. The *BHS* editors rearranged the order of the *Kǝṯûḇîm* in L to match their standard order.[39] Beyond this, Dotan notes several other peculiarities found in L which are *not* representative of the majority Masoretic tradition. Several of them are the exceptional poetic stichometry, archaic "open" and "closed" section divisions and weekly reading portions, unique scribal habits such as the distinctive use of *ḥataf pataḥ* and *dagesh forte*, and inconsistent Masora readings. More errors could be listed. This serves only to illustrate the point that, while L may be the best manuscript available to use as a base text, it's certainly not perfect.

A diplomatic version is also well-suited for texts that are not well-attested, or where there's little consensus of what to make of the textual evidence. Many textual critics have chosen to produce diplomatic texts of the Hebrew Bible due to the unique challenges facing Hebrew Bible textual criticism, namely, the paucity of manuscript evidence, the late witnesses, the relative difficulty of retroversion, and the weight given to the Masoretic tradition.[40]

Purely Eclectic Texts

A purely eclectic text attempts to reconstruct the archetype text by collating all the various readings, and then reproducing what's deemed to be original. Eclectic texts have dominated New Testament textual criticism since the time of Erasmus, and have been used for Septuagint and Classical studies as well. A purely eclectic text doesn't give any *a priori* preference to any particular manuscript or type of witness, though, of course, certain ones will be considered generally more reliable than others. As opposed to a diplomatic text, no one manuscript or tradition serves as the base text, and no one manuscript is the default source for decisions. All the preferred readings which are deemed to be original are given in the main text instead of the apparatus. Hendel defines an eclectic text as "a critical text with an apparatus presenting the evidence and justifying the editorial decisions."[41] Tanselle declares:

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[39] The order of the Kǝṯûḇîm in L is Chronicles, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

[40] These challenges are addressed in Part 3.

[41] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 325

The most useful text is an eclectic text, accompanied by an apparatus containing the evidence for variant readings with a claim to be considered as serious alternatives to those adopted in the text, and ideally accompanied by a textual commentary explaining the reasons for the selection of the preferred readings.[42]

Moisés Silva show how an eclectic text, at least in theory, gets closer to the text of the original documents than a diplomatic one when he explains how an eclectic text is produced:

Instead of printing the entire text of one manuscript, an editor or editorial committee examines the textual variants and decides which reading is most likely original. This approach produces a reconstructed text, often referred to as eclectic, because the resulting printed text is not identical to any manuscript in its entirety. Although the text that appears on the printed page of such an edition is not found in any one surviving manuscript, it preserves the best readings selected from among all of them and is therefore closer to the text of the original documents. This is the approach used for most classical works, including the Greek New Testament in editions such as the United Bible Societies and Nestle-Aland.[43]

Purely eclectic texts are well suited for texts in which there's a plethora of textual evidence, and also when there are significant variants which would undeniably be obscured by limiting the readings to one text as a diplomatic edition does.

There have been some attempts at eclectic editions of the MT, such as the Second Rabbinic Bible,[44], Ginsburg, Baer-Delizsch, etc. However, besides the in-progress Oxford Hebrew Bible Project, there haven't been any eclectic editions of the Hebrew Bible which incorporate textual evidence *outside* the MT. Silva points the potential problem inherent in the dominant use of diplomatic texts based on the MT when he says:

In the attempt to establish the text of the Hebrew Bible, most scholars use the MT as their point of departure. Some argue that such a method prejudges the issue, and that the problem is aggravated by the reality that all modern publications of the Hebrew Bible, timidly bowing to the tradition, consist of diplomatic editions (i.e., they simply reproduce a specific manuscript) instead of providing an eclectic, critically reconstructed text.[45]

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[42] Tanselle, G.T. *Textual Criticism and Scholarly Editing.* Charlottesville, 1990. p. 188

[43] Silva, Moisés and Karen Jobes. *Invitation to the Septuagint.* p. 74

[44] an *eclectic* text which interestingly enough, served as the base text for the first two editions of the *diplomatic Biblia Hebraica* series.

[45] Ibid. p. 151

Copy-Text Eclectic Texts

A close match to a purely eclectic text is a type of critical text developed by English Renaissance scholar W. W. Greg.[46] In a copy-text eclectic text, first a superior manuscript is chosen as a base text, similar to diplomatic texts. This manuscript is then followed where there are no substantive[47] variant readings deemed to be original or no evident corruptions. Then in cases where substantive variants do occur or corruptions are assumed, all available textual evidence is evaluated, and the base text is emended if a variant is deemed to be original or a conjecture is deemed satisfactory.

The key to developing an eclectic *copy-text* is distinguishing between substantive and accidental variants. Substantive variants are those which alter the text's meaning, and accidental variants are those which do not alter the text's meaning (such as variations in orthography, added punctuation and accents, etc.).[48] So if the variant readings are accidental, no changes are made to the base text. This is an especially useful distinction for the Hebrew Bible, a document which covers centuries of communities with a variety of dialects and orthography from the time of Moses onward.[49] It's well suited for handling the *matres lectionis* and spelling variations which could quite easily superfluously fill an apparatus.

This method is especially appropriate for texts with limited textual evidence that yields little to no substantive variants. A signal advantage is that it maintains much of the accuracy of a purely eclectic text, while maintaining the simplicity of a diplomatic one. Currently the Oxford Hebrew Bible Project is underway to produce such an eclectic text.

Of course, a weakness is the subjective nature of determining what's truly accidental and what's truly substantive. Also the hybrid nature of the final form in comparison to other manuscripts or editions that may reflect different dialects and orthography could make textual criticism more complex, though certainly not impossible.

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[46] Greg, W. W. "The Rationale of Copy-Text." *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950-51): p.19-36

[47] as defined by W.W. Greg

[48] Ibid., p. 21

[49] Tov, Emanuel. *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint.* Leiden: Brill, 1999. p. 20-24

Textual Commentaries

Another method widely used in scholarly circles is a textual commentary. In a textual commentary the editor gives the text he deems to be original, typically followed by a translation and comments on significant variants.

Interestingly enough, H.G.M. Williamson has critiqued the Oxford Hebrew Bible Project by saying that scholars should focus their efforts on producing textual commentaries *instead* of producing a new eclectic edition of the Hebrew Bible.[50] I'm not sure many, if any, textual critics would question the contributions that detailed commentaries give, but I, at least, fail to see why such commentaries should be mutually exclusive with eclectic editions. There's no compelling reason why critical editions of whatever type cannot include extended commentaries, such as Bruce Metzger's textual commentary for the UBS Greek New Testament,[51] something which the *BHQ* and *OHB* fascicles that have already been published do.

So while textual commentaries are extremely useful supplements to any critical editions, they certainly won't replace them.

Multi-column Texts

Producing a multi-column text is one of the oldest forms of textual criticism and deserves mention. In Hebrew Bible studies the *Hexapla* of Origen was such a creation, in addition to other modern polyglot editions (e.g., Antwerp, London, Paris, Complutensian).[52] In a multi-column text, various witnesses are listed diplomatically in parallel columns. So there is no emendation or conjecture, and no readings are preferred or rejected by the editors.

This method is well suited for texts which have well established multiple editions of the same work. However, if you have a mix of reliable and unreliable witnesses represented, a multi-column text could give the impression that each is of equal, or at least close to equal,

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[50] Williamson, H.G.M. "Do We Need a New Bible? Reflections on the Proposed Oxford Hebrew Bible." *Biblica* 90 (2009): p. 170-175

[51] Metzger, Bruce. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament.* Hendrickson Pub, 2006.

[52] Roberts, Bleddyn J. *The Old Testament Text and Versions: The Hebrew Text in Transmission and the History of the Ancient Versions.* Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1951. p. 86

reliability. Or if you have an abundance of witnesses worth consulting, presenting all of them in parallel columns would, of course, quickly prove clumsy and unusable. It would also be clumsy in cases of lengthy additions or deletions. So this method is only well-suited for texts which have very few witnesses which are more or less equally reliable. In biblical textual criticism, then, it falls quite short of the goal of textual criticism, given the various witnesses extant and their ranging reliability.

Now that the various proposed methods for printing critical editions of the Hebrew Bible have been surveyed, an analysis of the three major Hebrew Bible textual critical projects currently underway will be examined.

Examination of Biblia Hebraica Quinta

Arguably the greatest advancement of Hebrew Bible textual criticism took place when Rudolf Kittel began the *Biblia Hebraica* series.[53] The first edition of *BH*, printed in 1905, reproduced the Ben Hayyim Second Rabbinic Bible and gave extensive apparatuses. The second edition, printed in 1913, continued this same practice. For the third edition, finished in 1937, Paul Kahle joined Kittel, and under Kahle's influence the base text used was the Leningrad Codex instead of RB2, which was considered to be a groundbreaking departure at the time.[54] *BHK*'s latest revision took place in 1951 to include an additional third apparatus for variants from some of the recently discovered Qumran texts. For these editions, Kittel stated that the *proper goal* was an eclectic text, but a diplomatic text was more *practical*.[55] Hendel gives another reason Kittel decided on producing a diplomatic text: "To attempt a 'corrected' set of accent marks where the critical text differs from [MT] is a daunting and probably impossible

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[53] Goshen-Gottstein, Moshe. "Editions of the Hebrew Bible- Past and Future." *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon.* Eisenbrauns, 1992. p. 228-229

[54] Ibid. p. 232

[55] Kittel, Rudolf. *Über die Notwendigkeit und Möglichkeit einer neuen Ausgabe der hebräischen Bibel.* Leipzig, 1902. p. 77-78. "**Im Prinzip** wird man also dieser Anordnung **[eine eklektische Text]** als der allein richtigen unbedingt zustimmen müssen, die Frage kann nur sein, ob sie **praktisch** ebenso leicht durch fürbar wäre, wie die andere grundsätzlich minderwertige." Emphasis mine.

task. Since Kittel prudently regarded the Masoretic accents as too important to omit in a critical edition, he resolved to produce a diplomatic critical edition."[56]

The next significant revision took place under new editors W. Rudolph and K. Elliger for the fourth edition of the series, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1967-77).[57] In it the Masora's accuracy and completion was greatly improved, all three of the BHK apparatuses were combined into a simpler one which included much more evidence from the Cairo Geniza and Qumran, and it was less prone to conjectural emendations.[58] These improvements helped make *BHS* the standard critical edition for academic and religious study of the Hebrew Bible.

Even though Kahle made the strong case for an eclectic text, the *BHS* nevertheless insisted on printing a diplomatic text based on the oldest complete manuscript in its entirety regardless of the evidence or obvious scribal errors,[59] and the editors themselves do admit to printing such obvious errors in the text.[60] It seems that a significant reason to reproduce L as the base text was the desire to show the scholarship of the Masora.[61] It's just as Klein says, "The text printed in *Biblia Hebraica*, one of the most popular editions of the Hebrew Bible, is merely an unchanged reproduction of a manuscript from the eleventh century A.D."[62]

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[56] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 336

[57] Tov, Emanuel. "Hebrew Scripture Editions: Philosophy and Praxis." In *From 4QMMT to Resurrection-Mélanges qumraniens en hommage à Émilie Puech.* Edited by García Martínez et al., 281-312. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 61. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006. p. 287

[58] Tov, *Textual Criticism.* p. 375-376

[59] Elliger, Karl, Rudolph, Willhelm. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: editio quinta emendata.* Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart, 1997. p. III. "Es bedarf keiner Begründung, daß es immer noch sinnvoll ist, die Leningrader Handschrift B 19ᴬ (L) zur Grundlage einer Ausgabe der hebräischen Bibel zu machen, ganz gleich, wie man über deren Verhältnis zum Ben-Asher-Text denkt. Was P. Kahles eigene Meinung betrifft, so wäre jetzt sein Werk The Cairo Geniza , Oxford ²1959...zu vergleichen. Auf jeden Fall ist L immer noch «die älteste datierte Handschrift der vollständigen hebräischen Bible»."

[60] Ibid. p. IV. "Wir haben es für richtig gehalten, den Text konsequent so wiederzugeben, wie ihn die letzte Hand vor L bietet. Es ist also verzichtet auf die «Beseitigung offerbarer Schreibfehler».

[61] Ibid. p. V-VI. "In dem aus seinem Todesjahr datierenden Vorwort zum ersten Heft der dritten Auflage der BHK kündigte Rudolf Kittel an, daß die Zugrundelegung der aus dem Jahre 1009 oder 1008 stammenden Handschrift L für masoretischen Text es zugleich ermögliche, «auch der gelehrten Welt zum erstenmal die Masora selbst, die große und die kleine, in neuer Gestalt vorzulegen»."

[62] Klein. *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament.* p. vii

Even though *BHS* is an improvement over *BHK,* this doesn't mean it hasn't been criticized, especially in regards to the apparatus. It does contain less evidence than BHK, most notably in Job, where the apparatus contains about one third of BHK's. To be sure, though, much of this "evidence" is nothing more than conjectural emendations.[63] There are also cases of inaccurate notations and printing errors.[64] Other criticisms include often citing superfluous Cairo Geniza and medieval manuscripts,[65] a poor selection of variants at times (e.g., 1 Samuel 14:41),[66] inconsistent approaches of the various editors (e.g., Samuel has no evaluations despite *BHS* policy), and not taking into consideration the Samaritan Masora, Greek New Testament, or Second Temple quotations.[67] More can certainly be said, but this serves to illustrate that more work still needs to be done. And to be sure, work *is* currently being done on a fifth edition of *BH* aptly called the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta.*

BHQ will be another diplomatic edition based on L which strives to implement the advances in textual criticism and more of the evidence from Qumran. So the apparatus will contain fewer medieval manuscripts and extraneous details. In addition, "*BHQ* plans to include readings from the Cairo Genizah that date before 1000 C.E.," rather than the non-critical inclusion of various Geniza readings found in *BHS*.[68] A significant improvement will be the detailed textual commentary which will explain the editor's decisions. *BHQ* also employs a much more cautious and conservative approach to conjectures, and a more cautious citation of versions for comparison, rather than as direct support. Tov concludes, "On the whole, *BHQ* is

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[63] Barr, Review of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia." Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1979); 212-216. p. 214-215

[64] Tov, *Textual Criticism.* p. 376

[65] Barr, Review of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.* p. 213-14; Tov, *Textual Criticism.* p. 239-94. These manuscripts are generally regarded as preserving quite late and derivative variants.

[66] Ibid. p. 214.

[67] Tov, *Textual Criticism.* p. 294. Examples of Second Temple Quotations would be pseudepigraphal works.

[68] Sanders, James A. "The Hebrew University Bible and Biblia Hebraica Quinta." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999): 518-26. p. 521

much richer in data, more mature, judicious and cautious than its predecessors. It heralds a very important step forward in the *BH* series."[69]

So *BHQ* is still diplomatic, but an eclectic critical text is *still* said to be preferable *in theory*. Schenker says, "Es scheint uns in der Tat verfrüht, einen kritischen Text der hebr. Bibel herzustellen. **Die Komplexität der Textsituation** erlaubt im derzeitigen Zeitpunkt eine solche Rekonstruktion **noch nicht**."[70]

Examination of the Hebrew University Bible

The Hebrew University Bible began in 1955. The theoretical groundwork has been presented in the journal *Textus*. The *HUB* presents the Aleppo Codex in a diplomatic form and seeks to reconstruct A where it is missing. Zer says, "The new edition of the Rabbinic Bible edited by Menahem Cohen, whose publication is still underway, is based upon one manuscript, namely MS A, but in places where the manuscript is incomplete, the editor reconstructs its orthographic foundation using the method of the majority of manuscripts..."[71] Although, differently from *BH*, the Masora will not be reproduced. Zer says, "There is no practical way to reconstruct the marginal *Masora* in the missing sections, since the masoretic notes were not recorded systematically, and there is no way to know when a masoretic note will appear in the manuscript, and when it will be left out."[72]

In reproducing A where it is extant and reconstructing the sections missing from A, the *HUB* will attempt to include all relevant data, including Qumran, the Cairo Geniza, Rabbinic literature, etc.[73] Some believe it to be too biased towards MT and other Jewish sources by neglecting New Testament citations and Origen's Hexapla.[74] Conjectures are rejected, except in rare cases

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[69] Tov, *Textual Criticism*. p. 303

[70] Schenker, Adrian. "Eine Neuausgabe der Biblia Hebraica," *ZAH* 9 (1996). p. 59. Emphasis mine

[71] Zer, Rafael. "Preparation of the Base Text of the Hebrew University Bible Where It Is Missing in the Aleppo Codex." p. 52

[72] Ibid. p. 63

[73] Tov, "Hebrew Scriptures Edition." p. 292

[74] Sanders, "The Hebrew University Bible." p. 521

cases where a proposed emendation can be shown to be the (likely) cause of an existing variant.[75] And similar to *BHQ*, there are plans to publish a supplementary textual critical commentary to expand on the fifth and six apparatuses.[76] What's unique, though, is that value judgments or preferences are not to be given among the variant readings. This makes it an unviable resource for non-specialists.

Goshen-Gottstein states that the goal of the *HUB* is "to present nothing but the facts."[77] Hendel, however, argues that this claim of virtually complete objectivism is an overreaction to the subjective minimalism and subjective textual decisions which plagued previous generations of textual scholarship. He says:

> It is arguable, however, that it is a category mistake to think that textual criticism should strive to be objective and to eschew as far as possible the exercise of text-critical judgment. The HUB, in this respect, is not only a reaction against the unsystematic practices of earlier textual critics, but is also clearly colored by the positivism and 'scientism' of the early post-WWII era.[78]

Hendel's point is that raw data needs to be explained if it is to be used correctly. No "fact," in this sense, is unbiased. Hendel remarks: "The textual critic is one who exercises an educated judgment concerning the textual data, not an antiquarian collector presenting the reader with a bewildering plethora of 'facts.'"[79] So this epistemological problem (namely, our inability reach the *Urtext* with 100% certainty) is made into an ontological problem (namely, saying there

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[75] Sanders, "The Hebrew University Bible." p. 519

[76] Ibid. p. 523. The textual evidence for the HUB appears in six separate apparatuses. 1) Variants from the ancient versions, 2) Variants from Second Temple Hebrew witnesses, 3) Consonantal variants in medieval Bible manuscripts, 4) Differences in Masoretic details (vowels, accents, etc.), 5) Subjective judgments of the editors in Modern Hebrew, 6) Subjective judgments of the editors in English.

[77] Goshen-Gottstein, Moshe. *The Book of Isaiah: Sample Edition with Introduction.* Jerusalem, 1965. p. 7

[78] Hendel, Ronald. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 338-339

[79] Hendel, Ronald. *The Text of Genesis 1-11.* p. 109

is no *Urtext*).[80] Tov himself says that "one's inability to decide between different readings should not be confused with the question of the original form of the biblical text."[81]

Uninterpreted data is useful only for the specialist who can make their own informed editorial judgments. Why engage in the process of evaluation without incorporating your conclusions? Is not the practice of textual *criticism* more than compiling data, but also evaluating the evidence? This is why McCarter says "textual criticism is as much an art as it is a science."[82] Hendel argues that "textual criticism is not a science. It is a type of historical inquiry into the past states of a text and a form of philological critique. It strives to be methodologically rigorous and self-critical, but requires the exercise of educated judgment."[83] However, despite this positivistic weakness, the *HUB* is a work of great erudition, and promises to be a welcome wealth of invaluable data.

Examination of the Oxford Hebrew Bible

A more recent development has been headed by Ronald Hendel from the University of California at Berkeley. He has decided that the time is right to attempt a complete eclectic text of the Hebrew Bible which incorporates all the textual evidence available. He points out that eclectic critical texts have been the long-standing practice in exegetical commentaries and scholarly circles, so the *OHB* is merely the outworking of these principles in one project.[84] So the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* is to be an eclectic *editio critica maior* in which each book or set of books is printed in a separate volume. As opposed to the *HUB* which lists the evidence without evaluation, the editors will evaluate the variants, record their justification, and produce it in the *base text*. This leaves editorial decisions with the editors and not the reader who presumably has

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80 Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 341. He says: "Talmon has taken a methodological or epistemological problem (our inability to know which is the archetypal reading) and made it into a statement of essence or ontology (there is no archetypal reading)."

81 Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. p. 174

82 McCarter. *Textual Criticism.* p. 18

83 Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 339

84 Ibid. p. 329

less expertise and knowledge of the witnesses.[85] And similarly to *BHQ*, a textual commentary at the end of each volume will explain the editor's decisions. Michael Fox, the editor for Proverbs, says, "The purpose of the OHB...is to provide an eclectic text of the Bible, together with an introduction describing the textual resources and special problems of each book and followed by a commentary devoted to text-critical matters."[86]

What's also unique is that the *OHB* adopts the copy-text method developed by W.W. Greg. So it uses the Leningrad Codex as the base copy-text for the printing of accidentals, and when substantive variants are deemed to be original, the accidents of L are abandoned and an unaccented and unvocalized text is printed.[87] Hendel argues that scribes were primarily concerned with substantive readings anyway, with accidentals receiving little attention.[88] So the *OHB* method is actually in line with much scribal practice.

Hendel argues that the copy-text method is well-suited for the project since it's nearly impossible to restore the original orthography with any degree of certainty, anyway.[89] He says it avoids the methodological problems of printing an eclectic text since it ignores minor details and focuses on significant differences. This, in turn, enables accuracy without bogging the reader down in the mass of Masoretic minutiae. And then in cases where the evidence is evenly divided, out of convenience the editors will give preference to the copy-text reading.[90]

Another feature of the *OHB* is that if the editors of their particular book should decide that multiple literary editions gave rise to the variants (rather than corruption in transmission), then they're free to produce parallel columns. This is because Hendel sees great difficulty in determining the *Urtext* with absolute certainty. He states that the project is instead content with

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[85] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 325

[86] Fox, Michael. "Editing Proverbs: The Challenge of the Oxford Hebrew Bible." *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 32 (2006); 1-22. p. 1

[87] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 343-346

[88] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 334. He says, "biblical scribes in antiquity were more careful in transmitting substantive readings than they were in transmitting 'accidental' matters such as spelling or paragraphing."

[89] Ibid. p. 344

[90] Ibid. p. 345-346.

recovering the archetype text, defined as "the earliest inferable state of the text from which all of the extant witnesses stem."[91] This archetype text seems to also be what Tov refers to when he says that "textual criticism attempts to reconstruct details from both the preserved evidence and suggested emendations . . . [of] a textual entity . . . which stood at the beginning of the textual transmission stage."[92] Fox sums it up well when he says, "The OHB seeks to reconstruct the archetype of a book, understood as 'its earliest inferable textual state.' This ideally approaches the *Urtext*, the text-form subsequent to its composition but prior to its corruption. This is a feasible goal for many biblical books, at least as a heuristic guide."[93]

Critics, though, such as Tov himself have expressed doubts about the project's feasibility given this difficulty of defining the *Urtext*, and the complication involved in reconstructing multiple editions of a book.[94] Critic H.G.M. Williamson wrote a caustic critique of the *OHB* in an article in *Biblica*, so a solid scholarly consensus still hasn't been reached as to whether or not the *OHB* and such eclectic texts are feasible.[95]

So whereas both *BH* and *HUB* in their own ways are committed to a diplomatic text, the *OHB* is unique in committing itself to constructing an eclectic text.

The Utility of an Eclectic Hebrew Bible Text

John Wevers, editor of the Göttingen Septuagint, says, "The printing of a critical text...is the presentation by an editor after weighing all the textual evidence at his disposal of the earliest reconstruction of the text possible, an approximation to the original insofar as that is reasonable."[96] This is why, at least in theory, an eclectic text is preferable to a diplomatic one. In

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[91] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 334

[92] Tov. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. p. 180

[93] Fox. "Editing Proverbs." p. 5

[94] Tov. "Hebrew Scripture Editions." p. 304-306

[95] Williamson. "Do We need a New Bible?" p. 153-175. As stated earlier, he makes the conclusion that the scholarly community would be better served by more textual commentaries than such an eclectic edition. A response by Hendel can be accessed as of November, 2011 here: http://ohb.berkeley.edu/Hendel,%20Reflections%20on%20a%20New%20Edition.pdf

[96] Wevers, John. *Text History of the Greek Genesis*. Göttingen, 1974. p. 186

view of what's been surveyed and analyzed, various reasons for the preferred utility of an eclectic text of the Hebrew Bible are summed up below.

Considers All the Evidence

The main reason an eclectic text is useful is that it forces editors to consider *all* the evidence, as well as the reader. A diplomatic text can easily create textual "myopia," with the base text receiving undue attention.

Closer to the Archetype

Diplomatic texts by definition reproduce the errors of the manuscript reproduced. Eclectic texts, on the other hand, implement the discipline and discoveries of textual criticism to reverse the corruption caused during transmission.

In fact, in a certain sense, an eclectic text does the opposite of being "eclectic," that is, picking something out, since by definition it attempts to remove the additions and changes added over time which lay admittedly extant in diplomatic texts. Therefore, I find myself in agreement with Hendel who remarks, "In the field of the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, few scholars adhere to this goal [that is, developing an eclectic text in the true sense]. The exceptions are notable."[97]

More Usable for the Average Reader

An eclectic text is more useful for the average reader than a diplomatic one. As is evident with the *HUB*, it's rather daunting for unqualified readers to sift through mountains of unfiltered data. It's preferable that professionals and experts make those decisions, while leaving the justification in the apparatus, or if warranted, in a textual critical commentary.[98] Hendel says, "It is arguable that textual critics ought to take up the burden of such decisions and not leave them to others."[99] And for the readers who will benefit from the work of textual criticism who are

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[97] Hendel, Ronald. *The Text of Genesis 1-11.* p. 109

[98] Ibid. p. 325-326

[99] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 325

interested in exegesis, it's worth stating that exegesis is only as good as the text it examines. A purer text means purer exegesis.

Promotes Collaboration and Accountability

An eclectic text keeps the editors accountable since judgments are placed in the text, rather than being relegated to terse comments in the apparatus (as is often done in diplomatic texts) which are only understood by the astute reader. In addition to a textual commentary following the text, it lays out the justification for all to see and interact with. Hendel says in regards to the *OHB*, "The decisions and analyses will then be available for discussion, refinement, and refutation—the normal process of scholarship."[100] Of course, the fact that one text isn't given undue or *a priori* privilege helps as well since editors are constantly forced to determine which reading is original. Tov addresses this point when he says:

> I see a conceptual problem in the focusing of all editions on MT. I am afraid that the editions we use, despite the fullness of data in the *HUB* and *BHQ* apparatuses, perpetuate the perception that MT is *the* Bible. The systems employed in the present editions do not educate further generations toward an egalitarian approach to all the textual sources.[101]

An eclectic text may serve to break the "spell" of MT by putting textual realities into the forefront, that is, the base text. This reduces undue bias.

Perhaps it's worth noting here that the Masoretic text has been an invaluable bulwark against rampant corruption of the Hebrew text. In addition, the Tiberian vocalization, Masora, and accent system has given us invaluable information for understanding the Hebrew language. However, those who take the task of textual criticism seriously cannot stop at good, but must always strive for better.

Multiple Editions

As stated in the analysis of the *OHB,* an eclectic text much more easily lends itself to producing multiple editions (if there are deemed to be) of a biblical book than a diplomatic one.

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[100] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 326

[101] Tov, "Hebrew Scriptures Editions." p. 307-308

Such multiple editions might, for example, help us better compare systematically what's deemed to be the archetype text with the Samaritan Pentateuch, or better determine what *Vorlage* certain versions used. It might serve to highlight updates made by later scribes to adapt the text due to antiquated place names, terms, grammatical forms, etc. It might reveal that shortened or lengthened versions were also produced, perhaps for pedagogical or liturgical use. An eclectic text better enables such questions to be examined in a less subjective way than deciphering bits and pieces from the apparatus of a diplomatic text.

Now, it must be stressed that determining whether or not multiple editions existed is indeed quite difficult. Hendel says, "Textual decisions regarding the nature and history of multiple editions are often difficult. There are no clear guidelines to pinpoint where a group of scribal revisions is sufficiently systematic to constitute a new edition, and the stemmatic relationships among multiple editions are sometimes difficult to ascertain."[102] Nevertheless, an eclectic text serves as a better guiding tool than a diplomatic one since variants can be displayed in the open with their justification. This is also why the archetype/*Urtext* distinction[103] is quite useful. The archetype text lets us deal with the evidence we actually have, and so reduces subjective speculation and conjecture.

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[102] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 326

[103] As addressed in Part 1 in *The Goal of Textual Criticism*

CHAPTER 3: PRINCIPLES FOR CONSTRUCTING AN ECLECTIC HEBREW BIBLE TEXT

There will now be an overview of the principles which make an eclectic text of the Hebrew Bible *feasible.*

Brief Survey of Available Witnesses

The witnesses used for Hebrew Bible textual criticism tend to be grouped into two categories: major witnesses, which carry great weight, and minor witnesses, which carry less weight. The major witnesses are generally considered to be the Masoretic Text, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, and the Qumran Scrolls. The Aramaic Targums, Syriac Peshitta, Latin versions, and Cairo Geniza are generally considered to be the minor witnesses.

The Fundamentals of Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism

By and large, textual criticism is nothing but common sense applied. McCarter said textual criticism's "'rules' are but the application of common sense, and they must not be applied rigidly but with judgment and insight."[104] The most basic question to ask when looking at variants is *Utrum in alterum abiturum erat?* Silva puts it this way, "...the criterion known as transcriptional probability asks the obverse question: What is a scribe most likely to have done? Or more specifically: Which of the variants is most likely to have originated, consciously or unconsciously, in the work of a copyist?"[105]

So most of textual criticism is comparing variants to determine which one caused the other(s). One might summarize the method as 1) trace the history, 2) determine why the variant appears, 3) construct the archetype. Cross says, "The sole way to improve a text, to ferret out error, is to trace the history of readings, to determine an archetype which explains or makes

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[104] McCarter. *Textual Criticism.* p. 7

[105] Silva, Moisés and Karen Jobes. *Invitation to the Septuagint.* p. 128

transparent the introduction of error or corrupt."[106] McCarter quotes A. E. Housman speaking to the Classical Association about the textual study of ancient Greek and Roman literature when he writes:

> A man who possesses common sense and the use of reason must not expect to learn from treatises or lectures on textual criticism anything that he could not, with leisure and industry, find out for himself. What the lectures and treatises can do for him is to save him time and trouble by presenting to him immediately considerations which would in any case occur to him sooner or later. And whatever he reads about textual criticism in books, or hears at lectures, he should test by reason and common sense, and reject everything which conflicts with either as mere hocus-pocus.[107]

Würthwein defines this process in terms of probability and plausibility when he says:

> ...the goal of textual criticism is not to establish the text of a particular time in history. It should be seen rather as editing a text which has the greatest degree of probability of originality based on the review of the textual witnesses and the scholarly principles of textual criticism...Such a text would explain most plausibly the emergence of variant and corrupt readings and confirm best to its context in both the strict and broader senses.[108]

This is why textual criticism is not a mechanical process. As Würthwein says, "...whenever an error is suspected, the conditions that could have given rise to such an error should be considered."[109]

This is why much of the task of textual criticism is determining which manuscripts tend to be reliable, and which tend to not be reliable. Hendel quotes Reynolds and Wilson in saying, "Since the best manuscript is that which gives the greatest number of correct readings in passages where there are rational grounds for decision, it is more likely than others to give the correct reading in passages where no such grounds exist."[110] Gene Tucker speaks to determining a manuscript's reliability when he says:

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[106] Cross, Frank M., "Problems of Method in the Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible" in *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts*. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, ed. Berkley Religious Studies 2; Berkley, CA: Graduate Theological Union, 1979. p. 50

[107] McCarter. *Textual Criticism*. p. 18-19

[108] Würthwein, Ernst. *The Text of the Old Testament*. p. 106

[109] Ibid. p. 120

[110] Hendel. *The Text of Genesis 1-11*. p. 111

As the textual critic pursues his task, the question is not whether a particular text or manuscript is reliable or not, but **wherein its reliability lies**. Every text is conditioned by its historical circumstances and by the fact that it stands at a particular point in the process of transmission. Even the King James version is a reliable translation for understanding a very late stage in this history...[111]

It's outside the scope of this essay to survey all the different types of errors that copyists tend to produce.[112] However, perhaps it's useful to at least mention here that whereas most errors are simple scribal errors, a minority are deliberate scribal changes. In regards to this Hendel says:

The majority of text-critical decisions belong to type 1, adjudicating among variants, following the prime rule of textual criticism, *utrum in alterum abiturum erat?,* 'which reading is the more liable to have been corrupted into the other'. Most variants are generated by simple scribal error, i.e. graphic confusion, haplography, dittography, word misdivision, etc. A less frequent cause of variants is deliberate scribal revision, in which the secondary revision reveals something of scribal hermeneutics.[113]

Now, in *rare* cases reconstruction or conjecture might be necessary when none of the extant readings are deemed to be satisfactory. This needs to be considered as a possibility since the extant manuscript is quite fragmentary and so the original reading could have conceivably been lost or corrupted, at least for a time.[114] This is similar to archaeology in that the evidence shows what *was,* but doesn't eliminate what *wasn't* due to the evidence's fragmentary nature.

For example, if someone saw this sentence printed in a newspaper, "She was born in Ohio's capital, Colunbus," they could safely conjecture there is a graphical error. Why? The form "Colunbus" never appears as the capital of Ohio in any other resource. However, the name *Columbus* does appear, and it's quite easy to type an "n" instead of an "m" on a keyboard, and both do look alike. Of course this is simplistic, but it serves to illustrate.

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[111] Klein. *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament.* p. iii. Emphasis mine.

[112] Having said this, I'd recommend "McCarter, Kyle, Jr. *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible.* Fortress Press, 1986." as a suitable introduction to textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible.

[113] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 330

[114] This is to say, if textual critics deem a passage to be corrupt, they shouldn't eliminate the possibility that future discoveries might yield evidence for their reconstructions or conjectures (nor should they, for that matter, eliminate the possibly that future discoveries could prove the supposed corruption to be original).

This is how Hendel defines reconstruction, "By reconstruction I mean instances where one can infer a prior form that was liable to have been corrupted or changed into the existing reading(s)."[115] So reconstruction is often complex and difficult. Fox says:

> Of all the historical activities of textual study, the effort to reconstruct the texts of works as intended by their creators takes us deepest into the thinking of interesting minds that preceded us. We must respect the documents that make our insights possible, but we cannot rest there if we wish to experience the works created by those minds.[116]

This is how Hendel defines conjecture, "By conjecture I mean instances where one cannot plausibly reconstruct the prior form but can only make an educated guess where the text is clearly corrupt. Though conjecture should be held to a minimum, careful conjecture is an important part of text-critical method."[117] In case someone would deny the validity of *ever* using conjecture, it should be noted that many previous conjectures that had no manuscript evidence were later vindicated by Qumran. Tov says, "Many past reconstructions which weren't extant were validated in Qumran."[118]

The Prudent Use of Retroversion

Proper textual criticism takes all the evidence into account and doesn't just use one type of witness, such as the MT, but all witnesses, even translations. Having said this, it's important to lay out what constitutes a proper use of retroversion, that is, deducing the Hebrew *Vorlage* from which a translation was supposedly made.

First off, the admitted difficulty of retroversion has caused many to question whether an eclectic text of the Hebrew Bible is feasible at all. Tov remarks:

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[115] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 331

[116] Fox. Editing Proverbs. p. 9

[117] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 331

[118] Tov. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. p. 351-69. It's worth also stating in Klein wrote, "The [Dead Sea Scrolls] have confirmed the idea that many departures from the Hebrew text in the LXX rest on real Hebrew variants rather than merely on the freedom allegedly exercised by the translators." Klein. *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament*. p. viii

It is evident that the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible differs from the textual criticism of other compositions, for there have been relatively few attempts to reconstruct the original text of a biblical book, for theoretical as well as practical reasons: the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the ancient translations cannot be reconstructed satisfactorily, and often it is impossible to make a decision with regard to the originality of the readings. Because of these problems, most of the existing critical editions are diplomatic...[119]

However, even in 1959 Kahle felt confident enough to declare, "But now, given the material found in the Geniza and having learned to consider other pre-Masoretic material, it should be possible to arrive at a truly historical understanding of [the Masoretes'] work."[120]

Now, Ronald Troxel says, "The co-existence of 'excellent free renderings and helplessly literal, Hebraistic renderings of one and the same Hebrew expression' within a single book (as is found in LXX-Isaiah) evidences that translators 'had no conscious method or philosophy of translation.'"[121] So it is often quite difficult to determine what the *Vorlage* was. Troxel again says, "As is always the case with retroversions, incontrovertible proof that one's reconstructions recover the *Vorlage* is unavailable...On the other hand, there are times it is impossible to convince oneself of what lay before the translator, and the honest course is to offer completing arguments without advocating a solution."[122] Indeed, he later adds, "Reconstructing a translator's *Übersetzungsweise* would be a simple matter if the translation were consistently transparent to the MT, but that is seldom the case..."[123]

This is why it's absolutely necessary to first look at the translation document as a whole and get to know the translator's setting and style before attempting retroversion. Troxel quotes Ziegler's work *Untersuchen* which says, "um das Verhältnis der JS-LXX zum MT recht zu würdigen, muss zunächst **die ganze Persönlichtkeit** des Übersetzters vor uns erstehen."[124]

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[119] Tov. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. p. 289

[120] Kahle, Paul. *The Cairo Geniza*. p. 188

[121] Troxel, Ronald L. *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation.* Brill, 2008. p. 74

[122] Ibid. p. 80. In his own footnote he does add, "Fortunately, most of the time-even when the Hebrew behind a particular word resists recovery-the context allows a measure of certainly about how the translator proceeded."

[123] Ibid. p. 74

[124] Ibid. p. 80

Sometimes this is achievable, at other times it isn't. Troxel says, "Thus, some readings in LXX-Isaiah seem best explained as reflecting a Hebrew variant, while others are amenable to observation of the translator's perplexity or his overall conception of the meaning of the verse of passage."[125] Sometimes the text has been updated to make it readable. Van Der Kooij says, "LXX Isaiah contains passages where the ancient text of Isaiah has been actualized...in the sense of the updating of a prophecy or oracle of Isaiah."[126]

Something else to be taken into account is whether or not the document or passage was meant to be read aloud to listeners, or only read and studied by professional scribes. Van Der Kooij says, "...to reconstruct the 'reading' (ἀνάγνωσις) of the Hebrew on which the translation is based, as well as the 'interpretation,' may account for striking differences between the parent text and the Old Greek version."[127]

At other times a translator's own exegesis affects their translation or even transmission. Troxel says that "the discoveries of a multitude of previously unknown variants in the DSS does not eliminate the possibility that a distinctive lexeme or phrase reflects the translator's exegesis."[128]

So retroversion *is* a useful tool in Hebrew Bible textual criticism, but it must be used with care and prudence. Anneli Aejmelaeus, director of the Septuaginta-Unternehmen in Göttingen, says, "...the scholar who wishes to attribute deliberate changes, harmonizations, completion of details and new accents to the translator is under the obligation to prove his thesis with weighty arguments and also to show why the divergences cannot have originated with the *Vorlage.*"[129] In other words, the burden of proof falls on those who claim a different *Vorlage* produced the variant, than those who attribute such variants to a different *Übersetzungsweise.* In any case, though, Troxel remarks, "In my view, there is no substitute for plunging into the complex and

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[125] Troxel. *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation.* p. 80

[126] Van Der Kooij. *The Oracle of Tyre.* Brill, 1998. p. 11

[127] Ibid. p. 119

[128] Troxel. *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation.* p. 77

[129] Aejmelaeus, Anneli. "What Can We Know About the Hebrew Vorlage of the Septuagint?" *ZAW* 99 (1987) 58-89. p. 71

messy task of juggling the LXX, the MT, the Peshitta, the Targum, the Vulgate, and all witnesses from the DSS at the same time one wrestles with how to describe the translator's *Übersetzungsweise*."[130]

All in all, retroversion, though difficult and often precarious, is a useful and necessary tool for textual criticism. In order to demonstrate practically what questions and steps could be taken to prudently use retroversion, I offer the succinct criteria which Moisés Silva lays out when discussing the use of the Septuagint for Hebrew Bible textual criticism.

> In order to use the LXX critically against the MT text this needs to happen
> • We need to assure ourselves that the LXX reading is not the result of interpretative thought or carelessness in the process of translation.
> • The proposed retroversion (i.e., the translation of the Greek back to the presumed Hebrew or Aramaic that lies behind it) should confirm to rigorous criteria.
> • We should have good reason to believe that the presumed Hebrew/Aramaic reading truly existed in a manuscript and not only in the mind of the translator (whether by a mistake or by a conscious emendation.)
> • If we decide that we are indeed dealing with a genuine variant, we ought to make a general assessment regarding the textual quality of both the MT and the LXX's *Vorlage* for that particular book.[131]

The Feasibility of an Eclectic Hebrew Bible Text

Now that the fundamentals of textual criticism that are to be used for producing an eclectic Hebrew Bible text have been elucidated, the *feasibility* of such an endeavor will now be addressed.

New Evidence

Textual criticism underwent a dramatic rebirth in the twentieth century. The discoveries in the Judean Desert have opened a new world to scholarship. Hendel says, "The discovery, analysis, and publication of the roughly two hundred biblical manuscripts (mostly fragmentary) from Qumran have ushered in a new era in the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible."[132]

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[130] Troxel. *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation.* p. 85

[131] Silva, Moisés and Karen Jobes. *Invitation to the Septuagint.* p. 153

[132] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 324

Scholars have been brought back centuries to something perhaps unimaginable to earlier generations of scholars. Hendel says, "Among the many issues now facing textual critics is how best to integrate the knowledge gained in the post-Qumran era with the aims and procedures for constructing new scholarly editions of the Hebrew Bible."[133] Now we are able to implement the Qumran material into an eclectic critical text. Boyles affirms, "...most of the Qumran texts have either been published or are known in some form or other..."[134]

Also, many ancient versions now have corresponding Hebrew witnesses, many corruptions have been restored and are no longer left to simple conjecture, ancient scribal habits are better understood, ancient translation practices have been analyzed, and the history of the MT has been made clearer.[135] Stuhlman says, "While we are not going to change our biblical text based on a manuscript, the scrolls are an important source to help us understand the original text. Sometimes the texts give us a clue to an obscure text in our Bible; sometimes the scrolls just prove what we already know."[136] So although some of the meaning of this new evidence is still debated and developing, the new plethora of data makes an eclectic text much more feasible than in years past.

Advances in the Discipline of Textual Criticism

This new evidence, as stated above, has also contributed to advances in the discipline of textual criticism. There are now critical editions available for most of the versions. Ancient translation styles are now better understood. Retroversion, as explained above, is more cautious and nuanced.

This is why now the deficiencies of a diplomatic edition *outweigh* the difficulties of producing an eclectic edition. Hendel says concerning the *OHB:*

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[133] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 325

[134] Broyles, Craig C., Evans, Craig A. *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition.* 496

[135] Goshen-Gottstein, Moshe. "The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: Rise, Decline, Rebirth." *JBL* 102 (1983), 204-213.

[136] Stuhlman, Daniel D. "A Variant Text from the Isaiah Scroll." *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 25 (1997): 177-184. p. 184

We cannot have unmediated access to the master text; it is beyond our evidence and our capabilities. The dream of a **perfect** text is unreal, counterfactual. The best we can do is to make a good text, a useful and competent edition, one that takes account of the evidence we have and the acumen we can muster. It will, however, open up a richer understanding of the grounds for its imperfection, which is to say, the complexities of the Bible's textual condition. The OHB does not presume to escape this limitation, but to engage it forthrightly, to make the best of it that we can, and to invite others to continue the work.[137]

Copy-Text Method

The implementation of the copy-text method has intriguing applications for producing an eclectic text of the Hebrew Bible. The substantive/accidental distinction allows textual critics to focus on variant readings of significance instead of getting bogged down in details of orthography, *matres lectionis*, and other minutiae which are largely the result of the practice of scribes in various places and situations throughout different ages, and that in any case cannot be definitively resolved.[138]

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[137] Hendel. "The Oxford Hebrew Bible." p. 350. Emphasis mine.

[138] Ibid. p. 343 Hendel concludes that such an attempt would be "wholly conjectural." However, it should be noted that such variations could *still* be addressed in an eclectic edition.

CHAPTER 4: SAMPLE ECLECTIC HEBREW TEXT

Sample Eclectic Text of Isaiah 7

Simply to illustrate what a copy-text eclectic text *might look like* in practice and how a useful and logical apparatus *might look* in practice, and therefore not to be the definitive word by any means,[139] a sample eclectic text of Isaiah 7 will now be given.

The vocalization scheme will be that of the Tiberian Masoretes used for the Leningrad Codex, even though at least some have advocated developing a new vocalization system to reconstruct the ancient pronunciation(s) more accurately.[140] In regard to this, I, at least, see no compelling reason why the Tiberian system can't simply be tweaked in some fashion and used for a reconstructed vocalization in the future. To do this would represent, as Fox says, "ideally the way the authors *would have* vocalized the text had they been using the Tiberian phonemic system and vocalic graphemes."[141]

I have omitted the accents found in the Leningrad Codex since the Masoretic notes were not recorded systematically, and the system itself is a quite late addition to the text. Beginning to intermediate readers, though, benefit from having an accent to guide pronunciation as far as stress goes, so perhaps a symbol could be used or adapted for this purpose. This sample text will not include one only due to the technical difficulty of producing it with the software currently available to me.

At least as far as textual criticism goes, pronunciation really isn't the issue.[142] The issue is what was *meant* by what was written. This is why leaving the text completely unpointed

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[139] Especially since I can't claim competency in the use of *all* pertinent versions, such as the Syriac Peshitta.

[140] Kahle's words are worth noting here from *The Cairo Geniza*. p. 186-7 "The Masoretes therefore corrected and changed the pronunciation of the Hebrew text in three different ways, and they seem to have done so under Arabic, ancient Hebrew, and Syriac influence. Consequently we shall have to subject the whole system of Masoretic punctuation to a careful examination. The system has certainly lost much of its authoritative value. What we need are vocalized Hebrew texts independent of the work of the Tiberian Masoretes."

[141] Fox. "Editing Proverbs." p. 10

[142] If exact pronunciation directly changed the meaning, what implications would that have for passages like Judges 12:6, or understanding who YHWH is?

wouldn't solve much. For example, if I were retroverting a LXX reading that read, ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀπέκτεινεν, as המלך קטל, would I really have done my job as a textual critic? Could not that Hebrew *Vorlage* read as "the king killed," "O king, kill!" or, "Did a king kill?"? However, I will leave the tetragrammaton unpointed since we aren't absolutely certain how it was pronounced,[143] and doing so won't affect the *meaning* since readers will recognize what it is.[144] Again, pronunciation isn't the issue.

The apparatus will implement a grading system for each significant variant[145] from L, my copy-text, *whether I adopt the reading or not,* since editors should give their readers as much information as reasonably possible to justify and explain their decisions. The variants will be highlighted with a superscript Roman letter. The four levels will be A, B, C, and D. [A] means I'm quite certain this is the original reading. [B] means I'm almost certain this is the original reading. [C] means I had difficulty deciding which reading was original. [D] means I had great difficulty arriving at a decision, and so out of convenience gave the reading from L. So for each significant variant I will give a grade, and then list the witnesses in favor of the base text reading, *followed* by a list of all other pertinent readings and their witnesses for comparison. These list of witnesses will be separated by "//".

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[143] Though my opinion is that it was pronounced as יַהְוֶה.

[144] Plus this allows readers pronounce it as they wish.

[145] That is, significant according to W.W. Greg's copy-text methodology as discussed in Part 2.

Apparatus of Significant Variants	Reconstructed Text
7:1ᵃ [A] LXX Ιερουσαλημ, Vul Jerusalem // MT יְרוּשָׁלֵַם	1 וַיְהִי בִּימֵי אָחָז בֶּן־יוֹתָם בֶּן־עֻזִּיָּה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה עָלָה רְצִין מֶלֶךְ־אֲרָם וּפֶקַח בֶּן־רְמַלְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל יְרוּשָׁלֵַםa לַמִּלְחָמָה עָלֶיהָ וְלֹא יָכֹלb לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ: 2 וַיֻּגַּד לְבֵית דָּוִד לֵאמֹר נָחָה אֲרָם עַל־אֶפְרָיִם וַיָּנַע לְבָבוֹ וּלְבַב עַמּוֹ כְּנוֹעַ עֲצֵי־יַעַר מִפְּנֵי־רוּחַ: 3 וַיֹּאמֶר יהוה אֶל־יְשַׁעְיָהוּ צֵא־נָא לִקְרַאת אָחָז אַתָּה וּשְׁאָר יָשׁוּב בְּנֶךָ אֶל־קְצֵה תְּעָלַת הַבְּרֵכָה הָעֶלְיוֹנָה אֶל־מְסִלַּת שְׂדֵה כוֹבֵס: 4 וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו הִשָּׁמֵר וְהַשְׁקֵט אַל־תִּירָא וּלְבָבְךָ אַל־יֵרַךְ מִשְּׁנֵי זַנְבוֹת הָאוּדִים הָעֲשֵׁנִים הָאֵלֶּה בָּחֳרִי־אַף רְצִין וַאֲרָם וּבֶן־רְמַלְיָהוּ: 5 יַעַן כִּי־יָעַץ עָלֶיךָ אֲרָם רָעָה אֶפְרַיִם וּבֶן־רְמַלְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: 6 נַעֲלֶה בִיהוּדָה וּנְקִיצֶנָּה וְנַבְקִעֶנָּה אֵלֵינוּ וְנַמְלִיךְ מֶלֶךְ בְּתוֹכָהּ אֵת בֶּן־ טָבְאֵלa: 7 כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה לֹא תָקוּם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה:
7:1ᵇ [C] Q(A) יכלו, LXX ἠδυνήθησαν, Vul potuerunt // MT יָכֹל	
7:6 ᵃ [B] MT Ezra 4:7 reads טָבְאֵל, LXX Ταβεηλ, Vul Tabeel // MT טָבְאַל perhaps pausal form	

Apparatus of Significant Variants	Reconstructed Text
7:10 ª [A] MT יהוה, LXX κύριος, Vul Dominus // T(J) נבייא 7:11 ª [A] LXX εἰς βάθος, Vul in profundum inferni // MT שְׁאָלָה (or perhaps pausal or locative form of שְׁאוֹל) 7:14 ª [A] LXX ἡ παρθένος, Vul virgo, T(J) עולימתא // α νεᾶνις, τ νεᾶνις, σ νεᾶνις 7:14 ᵇ [B] MT וְקָרָאת, T(J) ותקרי, LXX(B,A,C) καὶ καλέσεις // Vul et vocabitur, Q(A) וקרא, LXX(S) καλέσει // LXX(Q,L) καλέσετε // LXX(Compl) καλέσουσι	8 כִּי רֹאשׁ אֲרָם דַּמֶּשֶׂק וְרֹאשׁ דַּמֶּשֶׂק רְצִין וּבְעוֹד שִׁשִּׁים וְחָמֵשׁ שָׁנָה יֵחַת אֶפְרַיִם מֵעָם: 9 וְרֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם שֹׁמְרוֹן וְרֹאשׁ שֹׁמְרוֹן בֶּן־רְמַלְיָהוּ אִם לֹא תַאֲמִינוּ כִּי לֹא תֵאָמֵנוּ: 10 יוֹסֶף יהוהa דַּבֵּר אֶל־אָחָז לֵאמֹר: 11 שְׁאַל־לְךָ אוֹת מֵעִם יהוה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַעְמֵק שְׁאָלָהa אוֹ הַגְבֵּהַּ לְמָעְלָה: 12 וַיֹּאמֶר אָחָז לֹא־אֶשְׁאַל וְלֹא־אֲנַסֶּה אֶת־יהוה: 13 וַיֹּאמֶר שִׁמְעוּ־נָא בֵּית דָּוִד הַמְעַט מִכֶּם הַלְאוֹת אֲנָשִׁים כִּי תַלְאוּ גַּם אֶת־אֱלֹהָי: 14 לָכֵן יִתֵּן אֲדֹנָי הוּא לָכֶם אוֹת הִנֵּה הָעַלְמָהa הָרָה וְיֹלֶדֶת בֵּן וְקָרָאתb שְׁמוֹ עִמָּנוּ אֵל: 15 חֶמְאָה וּדְבַשׁ יֹאכֵל לְדַעְתּוֹ מָאוֹס בָּרָע וּבָחוֹר בַּטּוֹב: 16 כִּי בְּטֶרֶם יֵדַע הַנַּעַר מָאֹס בָּרָע וּבָחֹר בַּטּוֹב תֵּעָזֵב הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה קָץ מִפְּנֵי שְׁנֵי מְלָכֶיהָ:

Apparatus of Significant Variants	Reconstructed Text
	17 יָבִיא יְהוָה עָלֶיךָ וְעַל־עַמְּךָ וְעַל־בֵּית אָבִיךָ יָמִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־בָאוּ לְמִיּוֹם סוּר־אֶפְרַיִם מֵעַל יְהוּדָה אֵת מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר׃ 18 הָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִשְׁרֹק יְהוָה לַזְּבוּב אֲשֶׁר בִּקְצֵה יְאֹרֵי מִצְרָיִם וְלַדְּבוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ אַשּׁוּר׃ 19 וּבָאוּ וְנָחוּ כֻלָּם בְּנַחֲלֵי הַבַּתּוֹת וּבִנְקִיקֵי הַסְּלָעִים וּבְכֹל הַנַּעֲצוּצִים וּבְכֹל הַנַּהֲלֹלִים׃ 20 בַּיּוֹם
7:20 ᵃ [C] LXX τῷ ὠ̃ρ‹υ̃ // MT בְּתַעַר	הַהוּא יְגַלַּח אֲדֹנָי בְּתַעַרᵃ הַשְּׂכִירָה בְּעֶבְרֵי נָהָר בְּמֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר אֶת־הָרֹאשׁ וְשַׂעַר הָרַגְלָיִם וְגַם אֶת־הַזָּקָן תִּסְפֶּה׃ 21 וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְחַיֶּה־אִישׁ עֶגְלַת בָּקָר וּשְׁתֵּי־צֹאן׃ 22 וְהָיָה מֵרֹב עֲשׂוֹת חָלָב יֹאכַל חֶמְאָה כִּי־חֶמְאָה וּדְבַשׁ יֹאכֵל כָּל־הַנּוֹתָר בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ׃ 23 וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם
7:23 ᵃ [B] MT יֶהְיֶה, T(J) יהי, LXX(L,C) εσται // LXX lacking, Q(A) lacking	הַהוּא יִהְיֶהᵃ כָל־מָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה־שָּׁם אֶלֶף גֶּפֶן בְּאֶלֶף כָּסֶף לַשָּׁמִיר וְלַשַּׁיִת יִהְיֶה׃ 24 בַּחִצִּים וּבַקֶּשֶׁת יָבוֹא שָׁמָּה כִּי־שָׁמִיר וָשַׁיִת תִּהְיֶה כָל־הָאָרֶץ׃ 25 וְכֹל הֶהָרִים אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּעְדֵּר יֵעָדֵרוּן לֹא־תָבוֹא שָׁמָּה יִרְאַת שָׁמִיר וָשָׁיִת וְהָיָה לְמִשְׁלַח שׁוֹר וּלְמִרְמַס שֶׂה׃

Commentary on Significant Variants

Since as Tanselle says, "it is [the editor's] responsibility to furnish all the information required for evaluating and rethinking his textual decisions,"[146] I give here my brief commentary on significant variants to justify and explore my editorial decisions.

The only variants noted here are those found in Isaiah 7:14. In 7:14ᵃ we find the much discussed word עַלְמָה. Now, it's not my purpose here to determine its lexical meaning, or the lexical meaning of παρθένος in the LXX. As far as the *text* goes, עַלְמָה is beyond dispute. However, it is of note that after the Greek New Testament was written, the newer non-Christian Greek translations of Aquila, Theodotian, and Symmachus rendered it as νεᾶνις instead of παρθένος, presumably to combat any idea that the word could refer to a *virgo intacta*, as is clearly the case in the quotation of Matthew 1:23.

In the MT for 7:14ᵇ we find the disputed form וְקָרָאת. Some have considered this to be a rare archaic third singular feminine form and thus rendered, "she will call." However, I read it as a second person feminine singular form which would be rendered, "you will call," and addressed to the עַלְמָה. This second person sense is attested in the majority of Septuagint manuscripts (which are admittedly varied), has Targum support, and this is the sense in the three other passages where this form occurs (Genesis 16:11, Isaiah 60:18 and Jeremiah 3:4 [Qere]). Also, the only other three occurrences of the third singular feminine all have the form קָרְאָה (Genesis 29:35, Genesis 30:6, 1 Chronicles 4:9).

Now, one could see the form קָרָאת in Deuteronomy 31:29 and Jeremiah 44:23 as evidence for the third singular feminine sense. However, in these two passages it's the homonym קרא, usually rendered "meet" or "encounter," that appears, not the verb for "calling" that occurs in Isaiah 7:14.

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146 Tanselle. *Textual Criticism and Scholarly Editing.* p. 123

CONCLUSION

Textual criticism is an absolute necessity for any translator, exegete, or even casual reader of the Hebrew Bible. This is because you much first decide *which* text will be used, and so the exegesis or interpretation of any biblical text is necessarily only as good as the text it examines.

The goal of textual criticism is to produce a critical text which takes us as close as possible to the original text. To be sure, textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible faces unique challenges, such as the limited and late evidence, and the necessity of a heavy use of retroversion. However, this thesis has demonstrated how advances in the maturity of textual criticism, the implementation of new evidence such as Qumran, and the copy-text methodology have made an eclectic text *feasible*.

This thesis has also surveyed and examined the various methodologies used for printing critical editions, laid out the principles for constructing a copy-text eclectic edition of the Hebrew Bible, and given a brief sample of how such a copy-text eclectic text might be produced. In doing so this thesis has demonstrated how such an eclectic text is *preferable* to a diplomatic one based on the Masoretic tradition and more *useful* since it considers all the evidence, brings us closer to the archetype text, is more usable for the average reader, student or pastor, promotes collaboration and accountability, and allows for easier production of multiple editions.

Unfortunately, the current state of critical editions of the Hebrew Bible has indeed left exegetes and translators without the *best* that current textual critical scholarship has to offer. Instead, textual critics have been content with reproducing corrupted and late manuscripts, with their evaluations found only in terse apparatuses and commentaries. So the *OHB* and any project like it should be anticipated with eager expectation, and recognized as a worthy complement as well to the upcoming diplomatic texts in production, namely, the *HUB* and *BHQ*. Now is the time to embrace eclectic texts of the Hebrew Bible, if only to get the process started.

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POSTSCRIPT

First of all, I'm thankful that Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has given me this opportunity to learn and grow in an area of my specific interest. There is no doubt that these Senior research projects will not only benefit the Seniors, but also the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod as a whole and the Holy Christian Church.

I wonder if this type of critical work could assist in paving the way for a reconstructed ancient vocalization (at least of the Second Temple Period) which properly handles the historical development of Hebrew. The insights gleaned not only from historical grammar, but also the *Secunda* of Origen's Hexapla, other vocalizations, and other transliterations would prove invaluable for a systematic attempt at this, as Kahle argues for.

If not done or being worked on already, and given the capabilities of more and more powerful software and cloud computing, could a near exhaustive list of variants, fitted with searchable transcriptions and high resolution images be compiled to fully democratize, in a sense, textual criticism?

This type of textual work would also help highlight how, if at all, the Masoretes' exegesis and theology affected their vocalization, or even consonant choice.

All in all, I hope that the WELS worker training schools embrace the *OHB* as it is developed, and in the meantime take seriously the use of the *BHS* apparatus (especially when it reads, "sic L..."), despite how painful and laborious it might be at times.