HEBREW SCRIPTURE EDITIONS:
PHILOSOPHY AND PRAXIS*

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1. *Background*

The hundreds of different Hebrew Scripture editions[1] and thousands of modern translations in various languages are more or less identical, but they differ in many large and small details. Yet, in spite of these differences, all these sources are known as "the Bible." The differences among the Hebrew editions pertain to the following areas: (1) the text base, (2) exponents of the text presentation, and (3) the overall approach towards the nature and purpose of an edition of Hebrew Scripture. In this study, we will evaluate the philosophies behind the various text editions and outline some ideas for a future edition.

Behind each edition is an editor who has determined its parameters. Usually such an editor is mentioned on the title page, but sometimes he acts behind the scenes, in which case the edition is known by the name of the printer or place of appearance.

The differences among Hebrew editions pertain to the following areas:

(1) The text base, sometimes involving a combination of manuscripts, and, in one case, different presentations of the same manuscript.[2] These differences pertain to words, letters, vowels, accents, and

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[1] For surveys, see C.D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (London 1897; repr. New York: Ketav, 1966), 779–976; C. Rabin, "מקרא, דפוסי המקרא," *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (Heb.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1968), 5:368–86; N.H. Snaith, "Bible, Printed Editions (Hebrew)," *EncJud* (Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica Jerusalem, 1971), 4:836–41.

[2] Codex Leningrad B19ᴬ is presented differently in the following editions: *BH* (1929–51), *BHS* (1967–76), Adi (1976), Dotan (2001), and *BHQ* (2004–). *BH, BHS*, and *BHQ* are referred to as "the *BH* series."

Ketiv/Qere variations. Usually the differences between the editions are negligible regarding Scripture content, while they are more significant concerning the presence or absence of *Ketiv/Qere* variations. Equally important are differences in verse division (and accordingly in their numbering).[3] In the case of critically restored texts ("eclectic editions"),[4] differences between editions are by definition substantial. In addition to these variations, most editions also introduced a number of mistakes and printing errors, reflecting an additional source of divergence.[5]

(2) The exponents of text presentation, partly reflecting manuscript evidence: the presentation of the text in prose or poetry (in the *BH* series often against codex L),[6] details in the chapter division,[7] the sequence of the books,[8] the inclusion of the Masorah and details in the Masoretic notation (inter alia *Ketiv/Qere*, sense divisions).[9]

(3) Editorial principles pertaining to small details in the text,[10] as well as to major decisions: the inclusion of the traditional Jewish commentators,[11] of ancient or modern translations, and of a critical apparatus of variants. Editorial principles are also reflected in liber-

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[3] See J.S. Penkower, "Verse Divisions in the Hebrew Bible," *VT* 50 (2000): 378–93.

[4] See below, 2f.

[5] For some examples, see my see my *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2d rev. ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press and Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2001), 7–8 (henceforth: *TCHB*) and the study by Cohen and Freedman quoted in n. 29. Many mistakes are found in the 1477 edition of the Psalms quoted in n. 20.

[6] The presentation of the text as either prose or poetry bears on exegesis, for example in the analysis of Jeremiah (cf. the prophecies in prose in most of chapter 7 as opposed to v 29 in that chapter and the surrounding chapters, all presented as poetry).

[7] E.g., Gen 30:25 appears in some editions as 31:1, 31:55 appears as 32:1, and Ezek 13:24 as 14:1. Likewise, the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments appear sometimes as one verse (Exod 20:12 or 13; Deut 5:17), and sometimes as three verses (Exod 20:13–16, Deut 5:17–20). For details, see *TCHB*, 4–5 and J.S. Penkower, "The Chapter Divisions in the 1525 Rabbinic Bible," *VT* 48 (1998): 350–74.

[8] Editions differ regarding the place of Chronicles and the internal sequence of Job-Proverbs-Psalms and the Five Scrolls.

[9] For some examples and bibliography, see my *TCHB*, 3–8.

[10] For example, the presentation of the *ga'yot* (secondary stresses) and the presentation of some elements as either one or two words, such as Gen 14:1 כדרלעמר (*Miqra'ot Gᵉdolot*, Ginsburg 1926; Koren 1966; Adi) as opposed to כדר־לעמר (Letteris, Ginsburg after 1926, Breuer, *BH*, *BHS*).

[11] These commentators are included in the Rabbinic Bible (see below) as well as some additional editions.

ties taken in small changes in the base text(s) or the combination of base texts.[12] Some of these conceptions are closely connected with the intended readership (confessional/scholarly). The major decision for a modern editor pertains to the choice of base text, which could be a single manuscript, a group of manuscripts, or the adherence to "tradition," which implies following in some way or other the Second Rabbinic Bible (RB2). The principle of accepting a base text of any type is considered conservative when compared with "eclectic" editions in which readings are deliberately chosen from an unlimited number of textual sources, and in which emendation is allowed (section 2e below). With most editions being either Jewish or scholarly, one's first intuition would be to assume that the difference between the two would be that the former adhere to tradition, and the latter to scholarly principles, among them the precise representation of a single source. However, precision is not necessarily a scholarly principle, just as adherence to tradition is not necessarily linked with religious beliefs. Thus, not only Jewish editions but also several scholarly editions (among them the first edition of the *Biblia Hebraica*)[13] follow RB2, while among the modern Jewish (Israeli) editions several are based on a single codex.[14]

As a result of these divergences, there are no two editions that agree in all their details,[15] except for photographically reproduced editions or editions based on the same electronic[16] (computer-encoded) text.

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[12] See, among other things, below, section 2c.

[13] Leipzig 1905, ed. R. Kittel.

[14] Adi (1976) and Dotan 2001 (both: codex L). See also below regarding the editions of Breuer and the *Jerusalem Crown*.

[15] Some editions differ from each other in their subsequent printings (which sometimes amount to different editions), without informing the reader. Note, for example, the differences between the various printings of the editions of Letteris and Snaith resulting from the removal of printing errors.

[16] Computerized versions of Hebrew Scripture, usually accompanied by a morphological analysis of all the words in the text, are almost always based on codex L or *BHS* which in principle should be identical, but in practice are not (among them: Accordance, Bible Works, Jewish Classical Library, Quest, Logos, WordSearch, Gramcord, Stuttgart Electronic Study Bible) and in one case on the Aleppo Codex (*Tokhnit "HaKeter"—Ma'agar HaTanakh*, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan; part of the *Miqraot Gedolot "HaKeter"* Project). For details, see my paper "Electronic Resources Relevant to the Textual Criticism of Hebrew Scripture," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 8 (2003) [http://purl.org/TC], updated in my paper "The Use of Computers in Biblical Research," in *Festschrift E.C. Ulrich* (ed. P.W. Flint et al.), forthcoming.

Modern translations differ from one another in many of the text base parameters mentioned above[17] and much more. Thus, the interpretations and styles of the translations differ greatly, and their language may be solemn, modern, or even popular.

2. *Development of Editorial Conceptions*

Editorial concepts have changed over the course of the centuries.[18] The following approaches are presented more or less in chronological sequence.

a. *No Exact Indication of the Source*

Virtually all Jewish[19] editions of Hebrew Scripture, with the exception of eclectic editions, are based on manuscripts of MT,[20] more precisely TMT[21] (the Tiberian MT).[22] As the Masoretic manuscripts differed from one another, the very first editors and printers needed to decide on which source(s) their editions should be based (see below). The perception that an edition should be based on a single manuscript, and preferably the oldest one, had not yet developed,

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[17] These translations usually follow MT with or without a selection of readings from other sources. For an analysis, see my paper "The Textual Basis of Modern Translations of the Hebrew Bible: The Argument against Eclecticism," *Textus* 20 (2000): 193–211 (with bibliography).

[18] For an insightful description of the thinking process behind several editions, see M. Goshen-Gottstein, "Editions of the Hebrew Bible—Past and Future," in *"Sha'arei Talmon": Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (ed. M. Fishbane, E. Tov, and W. Fields; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 221–42.

[19] This definition excludes the Samaritan Pentateuch.

[20] Even the first edition of the Psalter ([Bologna?], 1477) should be described as reflecting MT, although it lacks 108 verses often from MT in words and letters. See Ginsburg, *Introduction*, 789.

[21] The term was coined by M.H. Goshen-Gottstein. See *Mikraot Gedolot, Biblia Rabbinica, A Reprint of the 1525 Venice Edition* (with introduction by M.H. Goshen-Gottstein; Jerusalem: Makor, 1972), 5–16.

[22] Some editions are based on the Masoretic Text according to the Babylonian tradition. Thus the Yemenite "Tag" of the Torah, ספר כתר תורה, contains for each verse MT, Targum Onkelos, and Saadya's Arabic Translation (Jerusalem, 1894). In practice the content of the Yemenite Torah tradition is identical to that of the Aleppo Codex. See J.S. Penkower, *New Evidence for the Pentateuch Text in the Aleppo Codex* (Heb.; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1992), 62–73.

as had not the understanding that the choice of readings from several manuscripts requires the indication of the source of each reading. When the first editions were prepared, based on a number of relatively late Masoretic manuscripts, the earlier manuscripts that were to dominate twentieth century editions (codices L and A) were not known to the editors or recognized as important sources.

The first printed edition of the complete biblical text appeared in 1488 in Soncino, a small town in the vicinity of Milan. Particularly important for the progress of subsequent biblical research were the so-called Polyglots, or multilingual editions,[23] followed by the Rabbinic Bibles (later to be called *Miqra'ot Gᵉdolot*, "folio edition"), which included traditional Jewish commentaries and Targumim.[24]

These editions were based on several *unnamed* manuscripts, to which the editors applied their editorial principles. The editors of RB1 and RB2 derived their base text from "accurate Spanish manuscripts" close to the "accurate Tiberian manuscripts" such as L and A.[25] In the words of Goshen-Gottstein, "[w]ith a view to the fact that this is the first eclectic text arranged in the early sixteenth century, it seems amazing that, until the twentieth century, this early humanistic edition served as the basis for all later texts."[26]

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[23] The later Polyglot editions present in parallel columns the biblical text in Hebrew (MT and SP), Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, Latin, and Arabic, accompanied by Latin versions of these translations and by grammars and lexicons of these languages, while the earlier ones present a smaller range of texts. The first Polyglot is the Complutensum prepared by Cardinal Ximenes in Alcala (in Latin: Complutum), near Madrid, in 1514–17. The second Polyglot was prepared in Antwerp in 1569–72, the third in Paris in 1629–45, and the fourth, the most extensive of all, was edited by B. Walton and E. Castellus, in London, in 1654–57.

[24] The first two Rabbinic Bibles (RB) were printed at the press of Daniel Bomberg in Venice, the earlier one (RB1, 1516–17) edited by Felix Pratensis and the later (RB2, 1524–25) by Jacob Ben-Ḥayyim ben Adoniyahu. For a modern edition of the *Miqra'ot Gᵉdolot*, see M. Cohen, *Miqra'ot Gedolot 'Haketer'—A Revised and Augmented Scientific Edition of Miqra'ot Gedolot Based on the Aleppo Codex and Early Medieval MSS*, parts 1–7 (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1992–2000).

[25] Thus J.S. Penkower, *Jacob Ben-Ḥayyim and the Rise of the Biblia Rabbinica*, unpubl. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1982 (Heb. with Eng. summ.); idem, "Rabbinic Bible," in *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (ed. J.H. Hayes; Nashville: Abingdon Press), 2:361–4 (363).

[26] Goshen-Gottstein, "Editions," 224.

b. *Adherence to the Second Rabbinic Bible (RB2)*

Because of the inclusion of the Masorah, Targumim, and the tradi-
tional Jewish commentaries in RB2, that edition was hailed as *the*
Jewish edition of the Hebrew Bible. RB2 also became the pivotal
text in scholarly circles since any text considered to be central to
Judaism was accepted as authoritative elsewhere. Consequently, for
many generations following the 1520s, most new editions reflected
RB2, and deviated from it only when changing or adding details on
the basis of other manuscripts, editorial principles, or when remov-
ing or adding printing errors.

Ever since the 1520s, many good, often precise, editions have been
based on RB2.[27] The influence of RB2 is felt to this day, as the edi-
tion of Koren, probably the one most frequently used in Israel, is
based on that source.

The aforementioned Polyglot editions, though influential for the
course of scholarship in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, did not
continue to influence subsequent Bible editions or Bible scholarship.

c. *Adherence to the Ben-Asher Tradition*

RB2 became the leading edition because of its status within Judaism
and the scholarly world, not because of its manuscript basis which
remains unknown (although its type has been recognized). The uncer-
tainty regarding the textual base of these editions is problematic for
precise scholarship, and therefore several new editions have tried to
improve upon RB2 in various ways.[28] Sometimes readings were
changed according to specific Masoretic manuscripts (e.g., J.D.
Michaelis [1720] and N.H. Snaith [1958] following B.M. Or 2626–8).[29]

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[27] The most important are those of J. Buxtorf (1618), J. Athias (1661), J. Leusden
(2d ed. 1667), D.E. Jablonski (1699), E. van der Hooght (1705), J.D. Michaelis
(1720), A. Hahn (1831), E.F.C. Rosenmüller (1834), M.H. Letteris 1852), the first
two editions of *BH* (Leipzig 1905, 1913), C.D. Ginsburg (1926), and M. Koren
(1962). The dates mentioned refer to the first editions, subsequently followed by
revisions and new printings.

[28] See Goshen-Gottstein, "Editions," 221–26.

[29] However, the Snaith edition did not follow the British Museum manuscript
exactly, as pointed out in detail by M.B. Cohen and D.B. Freedman, "The Snaith
Bible: A Critical Examination of the Hebrew Bible Published in 1958 by the British
and Foreign Bible Society," *HUCA* 45 (1974): 97–132.

At the same time, since all these editions reflect the Ben-Asher text, the centrally accepted text in Judaism, the recognition developed that any new edition should involve an exact representation of that tradition. Thus S. Baer and F. Delitzsch attempted to reconstruct the Ben-Asher text on the basis of, among other things, Ben-Asher's grammatical treatise *Diqduqqê ha-Tᵉamim*,[30] particularly with regard to the system of *ga'yot* (secondary stresses). C.D. Ginsburg (1926) tried to get closer to the original form of the Ben-Asher text on the basis of his thorough knowledge of the notations of the Masorah. At the same time, the edition itself reproduces RB2. Cassuto (1958) hoped to reach the same goal by changing details in an earlier edition (that of Ginsburg) on the basis of some readings in the Aleppo Codex which he consulted on the spot.

Only in later years did the search for the most precise Bible text lead scholars to use manuscripts presumably vocalized by Aaron ben Moshe ben Ben-Asher *himself* (the Aleppo Codex = A), or those corrected according to that manuscript (Codex Leningrad B19^A = L), or codex C, there being no better base for our knowledge of the Ben-Asher tradition.[31]

The first single manuscript to be used for an edition was codex L[32] from 1009 that was used for the third edition of *BH* (1929–37, 1951),[33] *BHS* (1967–77), two editions by A. Dotan (Adi [1976] and

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[30] S. Baer and F. Delitzsch, *Textum masoreticum accuratissime expressit, e fontibus Masorae varie illustravit, notis criticis confirmavit* (Leipzig, 1869–94).

[31] For a good summary of these tendencies among editors, see J.S. Penkower, "Ben-Asher, Aaron ben Moses," *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, 1:117–9. The colophon of codex C states that the manuscript was vocalized by Aharon Ben-Asher's father, Moshe Ben-Asher. However, recent scholarship suggests that this colophon was copied from the original manuscript which was indeed vocalized by Moshe Ben-Asher. See J. Penkover, "A Pentateuch Fragment from the Tenth Century Attributed to Moses Ben-Asher (Ms Firkowicz B 188)," *Tarbiz* 60 (1991): 355–70.

[32] Facsimile editions: D.S. Loewinger, *Twrh nby'ym wktwbym, ktb yd lnyngrd B19^A* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1970); *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition* (ed. D.N. Freedman; Grand Rapids, Mich. and Cambridge/Leiden, New York and Cologne: Eerdmans/Brill, 1998). This text is also used in the Hebrew Scripture module in the computer programs *Accordance*, *Bible Works*, and *Tokhnit "HaKeter"—Ma'agar HaTanakh*, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan.

[33] *Biblia Hebraica* (1st and 2nd editions; ed. R. Kittel; Leipzig 1905, 1913; 3rd ed.; ed. R. Kittel and P. Kahle, 1929–37; "7th ed.", ed. R. Kittel, P. Kahle, A. Alt and O. Eissfeldt, 1951; all Stuttgart: Württembürgische Bibelanstalt). The term "seventh edition" (see title page and p. XXXIX) is misleading, as the earlier *BHS* is considered to be the fourth edition and *BHQ* the fifth. The term probably refers to the seventh printing of the third edition.

Dotan [2001]), and *BHQ* (2004–). The great majority of computer programs using a biblical text are also based on this manuscript (see n. 16).

The second manuscript used for an edition is the Aleppo Codex[34] (vocalized and accented in approximately 925 C.E.),[35] used for the *HUB*.[36] The lost readings of this manuscript (in the Torah) have been reconstructed on the basis of new evidence by J.S. Penkower[37] and had previously been included in the editions of Breuer (1977–82)[38] on the basis of Yemenite manuscripts. The *Jerusalem Crown* (2000) follows the Breuer edition.[39]

d. *Representation of a Single Manuscript*

The search for the best Ben-Asher manuscript involved the use of a single manuscript rather than a combination of sources. This development coincided with one of the leading ideas in *Editionstechnik* of producing a diplomatic edition on the basis of a single manuscript, not "improved" upon by readings from other sources. Soon enough, the use of a single manuscript became a leading principle in Hebrew

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[34] For some literature: A. Shamosh, *Ha-Keter—The Story of the Aleppo Codex* (Heb.; Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1987), which includes, inter alia, a thorough discussion of the question of whether its vocalization, accentuation, and Masorah were really inserted by Aaron Ben Asher himself (with much literature). M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, *"ktr''rm swbh whlkwt spr twrh l-RMB''M," Spr hywbl l-r' y''d Soloveichik* (Heb.; Jerusalem/New York, 1984) II.871–88; M. Glatzer, "The Aleppo Codex—Codicological and Paleographical Aspects," *Sefunot* 4 (Jerusalem 1989), 167–276 (Heb. with Eng. summ.); J. Offer, "M.D. Cassuto's Notes on the Aleppo Codex," ibid., 277–344 (Heb. with Eng. summ.); Cohen, *Miqra'ot Gedolot* (see n. 24).

[35] Facsimile edition by M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, *The Aleppo Codex* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1976).

[36] M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, *The Hebrew University Bible, The Book of Isaiah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995); C. Rabin, S. Talmon, E. Tov, *The Hebrew University Bible, The Book of Jeremiah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997); M.H. Goshen-Gottstein and S. Talmon, *The Hebrew University Bible, The Book of Ezekiel* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2004).

[37] Penkower, *New Evidence*.

[38] In most books, this edition followed codex A, but where this manuscript has been lost, in the Torah among other places, Breuer resorted to reconstruction. In these sections, the edition is based on the majority readings among a limited number of Palestinian manuscripts, which, Breuer claims, are almost completely identical to codex A. See Breuer's introduction and Gosten-Gottstein, "Editions," 240–41.

[39] This edition is described in the title page as "following the methods of Rabbi Mordechai Breuer." See previous note.

Scripture editions, as in the case of some of the editions of the LXX,[40] Peshitta[41] and the Targumim.[42]

e. *Addition of an Apparatus of Variants to the Text of Critical Editions*

The search for an exact representation of a single source (in this case: a Ben-Asher *codex unicus*) often went together with the presentation of a critical apparatus (*BH* series, *HUB*) containing inner-Masoretic and extra-Masoretic variant readings. However, the two procedures are not necessarily connected, as codex L in Dotan's editions (Adi [1976] and Dotan [2001]) is not accompanied by a textual apparatus. These critical apparatuses became the centerpiece of the critical editions.

A critical apparatus provides a choice of variant readings which, together with the main text, should enable the reader to make maximum use of the textual data. Naturally, the critical apparatus provides only a selection of readings, and if this selection was performed judiciously, the apparatus provides an efficient tool.

f. *"Eclectic" Editions*

In the course of critical investigation of the Hebrew Bible, it is often felt that the combination of a diplomatically presented base text (codex L or A) and a critical apparatus do not suffice for the efficient use of the textual data. Consultation of MT alone is not satisfactory since it is merely one of many biblical texts. By the same token, the use of an apparatus is cumbersome as it involves a complicated mental exercise. The apparatus necessitates that the user place the variants in virtual boxes which *may* be used to replace readings of MT.

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[40] The edition of H.B. Swete (fourth edition: Cambridge: University Press, 1907–12) and the volumes of the "Cambridge Septuagint" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906–40) present codex Vaticanus (B).

[41] The first volumes of *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966–98) present codex Ambrosianus diplomatically with a critical apparatus of variants. The volumes appearing since 1976 emend the text of this codex if it is not supported by two other manuscripts from the period preceding 1000.

[42] A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic Based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts*, vols. I–IVa (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959–68).

In practical terms, if the scholar were to implement the recommendations of the apparatus regarding these little boxes, he/she would create a new biblical text that is actually *a* or *the* reconstructed original text. Since each scholar evaluates the data differently, everyone creates in his/her mind a different reconstructed *Urtext*. In other words, the user of the *BH* series constantly works with two sets of data, a real edition (MT) which he/she sees in front of him and a virtual one, which is composed eclectically from the apparatus.[43]

Against this background, it is not surprising that a system has been devised to transform the fragmented and often confusing information of a critical apparatus into a new type of edition, the "eclectic edition." It is no longer necessary to replace in one's mind a detail of MT with a variant reading found in the apparatus, as these preferred readings have actually been incorporated into the running text. Thus, in MT in Gen 1:9, the command ("let the water under the heaven be gathered into one place, so that dry land may appear")[44] is followed by an abbreviated account of its implementation ("and so it was [ויהי כן]"). However, in Hendel's edition of Genesis,[45] the detailed implementation is included in the text itself ("and the water under the heaven was gathered into one place, and dry land appeared), following a harmonizing plus[46] in 4QGen[47] and the LXX. An edition of this type provides a very convenient way of using the textual data together with an expert's evaluation. This procedure is common in classical studies (see the many editions of Greek and Latin Classical texts published by Oxford University Press and Teubner

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[43] The user of the *HUB* does not create his own virtual edition, since that edition does not provide guidance as does the *BH* series. This edition does not provide value judgments, leaving the decision process to the user. This neutral presentation probably is profitable for those who prefer to evaluate the readings themselves during the course of writing commentaries or studies, but most users would prefer to have the data provided together with a learned value judgment.

[44] יקוו המים מתחת השמים אל מקום אחד ותראה היבשה.

[45] R.S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1–11—Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[46] [ויקוו המים מתחת השמים אל מקוידהם] ותרא היב[שה]. The first preserved word is preceded by a wide margin.

[47] The minute fragment consists of a few letters of two words without any context, and its placement as a plus to MT rather than the command of MT itself is not at all certain. For the data, see J.R. Davila in *Qumran Cave 4.VII: Genesis to Numbers* (ed. E. Ulrich and F.M. Cross; DJD XII; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994 [repr. 1999]), 76.

of Leipzig),[48] and also has much to recommend it for the study of
Hebrew Scripture. As a result, several eclectic editions of biblical
books or parts thereof have been published since around 1900.[49] In
modern times,[50] this idea has been revived in the so-called *Oxford
Hebrew Bible* (*OHB*) among other publications, and is described in
R. Hendel's programmatic introduction to that edition.[51] So far, only
individual chapters and biblical books have been presented in this
way, but the complete *OHB* will present a critical eclectic edition of
the whole Bible. The procedure followed is not in disagreement with
that of the *BH* series; in the words of Hendel, "[t]he *BHQ* and *OHB*
are complementary rather than contradictory projects."[52]

3. *Evaluation of Critical Editions*

The needs of the various Bible users differ, but all of them benefit
from a precise representation of Hebrew Scripture based on a sin-
gle manuscript, be it L, A or any other source. Evaluations of tex-
tual readings as in the *BH* series are greatly welcomed by some
scholars, but criticized by others for being intrusive and often mis-
leading. Near-completeness as in the *HUB* is welcomed by some, but
considered cumbersome by others because of the wealth of data.
Finally, many scholars consider the eclectic system of the *OHB* too
subjective, while others consider it helpful for the exegete. In short,
there will never be a single type of edition that will please all users,
partly due to the fact that these editions are used by the specialist

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[48] See the instructive paper of M.L. West, "The Textual Criticism and Editing
of Homer," in *Editing Texts—Texte edieren* (Aporemata, Kritische Studien zur Philo-
logiegeschichte 2; ed. G.M. Most; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998),
94–110.

[49] For a list, see *TCHB*, 372, n. 1.

[50] The following editions have been published since 1990: P.G. Borbone, *Il libro
del profeta Osea, Edizione critica del testo ebraico* (Quaderni di Henoch 2; Torino: Zamorani,
[1990]); G. Garbini, *Il Cantico dei Cantici: Testo, traduzione e commento* (Brescia: Paideia,
1992); A. Catastine, *Storia di Giuseppe (Genesi 37–50)* (Venice: Marsilio, 1994); Hendel,
Genesis 1–11; K. Hognesius, *The Text of 2 Chronicles 1–16, A Critical Edition with Textual
Commentary* (ConBOT 51; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003); cf.
my review of the latter in *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 68 (2003): 208–13.

[51] "The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition." Prof. Hendel
kindly allowed me to read a preview of that introduction.

[52] Hendel, "Introduction," 7.

and non-specialist alike. Being aware of these different audiences, inclinations, and expectations, we will attempt to evaluate the extant editions with an eye to their usefulness, completeness, precision, and the correctness of their data. However, it should be understood that any evaluation is hampered by the fact that the *BH* series is constantly being revised, that only the Major Prophets have been published in the *HUB*, and that none of the volumes of the *OHB* has been published yet. The use of these editions by scholars is uneven since most use the *BH* series, while the *HUB* is probably consulted mainly by specialists in textual criticism, authors of commentaries, and specialists in the intricacies of the Masorah. Our evaluation of the *BH* series will bypass *BH*, focusing on both *BHS* and *BHQ*, of which one fascicle has appeared (2004).[53]

I. We start with the *HUB*, since most scholars are probably in agreement regarding its advantages and disadvantages, as reviewed fairly by Sanders.[54] This edition is not meant for the average Bible scholar, but for the specialist.[55] The *HUB* does not present an evaluation of the evidence, considered an advantage by some and a disadvantage by others. Most relevant evidence is covered, and in addition the edition focuses on Jewish and rabbinic sources, but is not matched by an equal amount of attention to biblical quotations in early Christian sources and in the intertestamental and Samaritan literature. However, the third volume published, that of Ezekiel, does cover the non-biblical Qumran writings.[56] The technical explanations in the apparatus realistically reflect the complexity of the evidence (e.g., regarding the LXX), but by letting the reader sense the variety of possibilities, the edition is not user-friendly; in fact, it may be impossible to compose a user-friendly tool in this complex area. At the same time, many of these technical considerations and explanations are located in a special apparatus of notes rather than in the

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[53] *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (ed. A. Schenker et al.), Part 18: *General Introduction and Megilloth* (ed. P.B. Dirksen et al.; Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004).

[54] J.A. Sanders, "*The Hebrew University Bible* and *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*," *JBL* 118 (1999): 518–26.

[55] The edition is also used outside the academic community by Orthodox Jews, who focus on the apparatuses relating to the intricacies of MT (Masorah and medieval manuscripts) and rabbinic literature.

[56] In the earlier editions of Isaiah and Jeremiah this literature was not covered.

main apparatuses themselves. In fact, the reader who is well versed in the languages quoted in the first apparatus may use the more straightforward evidence of that apparatus also without these notes.

The exegetical and translation-technical formulaic explanations attached to translational deviations from MT in the *HUB*, an innovation by the general editor of the HUBP, M.H. Goshen-Gottstein,[57] were influential in the development of other critical editions as well.[58] In this system, in a series of types of differences such as in number, person, verbal tenses, and vocalization of the Hebrew, the apparatus specifies neither the data nor its text-critical value, since in these cases such a decision is impossible according to the *HUB*.[59] Instead, the apparatus describes the versional reading in general terms as e.g., "(difference in) num(ber)".

I hope I can be sufficiently objective in reviewing the *HUB*, to which I have contributed in the past, just as R. Weis, part of the *BHQ* team, is equally objective when comparing that edition with others.[60] The *HUB* is hailed by all as a perfect tool for the specialist, albeit a little too one-sided in the direction of MT and Jewish sources, and less practical for the non-specialist who would like to be spoon-fed with evaluations.

II. *BHS* improved much on *BH* in method,[61] but several aspects remained problematic:

1. Every collection of variants presents a choice, but *BHS* often presents less data than *BH*, filling up the apparatus with less significant medieval variants from the Kennicott collection (1776–80) and the Cairo Genizah.

2. In spite of much criticism voiced against the earlier *BH*, the number of medieval Hebrew manuscripts attesting to a certain variant

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[57] Presented for the first time in M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, *The Book of Isaiah, Sample Edition with Introduction* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1965).

[58] The system was accepted, with changes, in the *BH* series and the *OHB*.

[59] For a description of the system, see my *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged; Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 154–62. To be quoted below as *TCU*.

[60] R.D. Weis, "*Biblia Hebraica Quinta* and the Making of Critical Editions of the Hebrew Bible," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 7 (2002) [http://purl.org/TC].

[61] For my own evaluation of these two editions, see my review "*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*," *Shnaton* 4 (1980): 172–80 (Heb. with Eng. summ.). The differences between the systems of the two editions are described in *TCHB*, 375–76.

is still taken into consideration in *BHS* in such notations as "pc Mss", "nonn Mss", "mlt Mss" (see, e.g. 1 Sam 8–9).

3. Inconsistency in approach among the various books is visible almost everywhere. A glaring instance is the lack of evaluations in Samuel against the policy of *BHS* elsewhere.

4. Versional data is often presented as if unconnected to suggestions by *BHS*, and therefore creates the impression of emendations for those who are not conversant with the ancient languages.[62] This system resulted from the overly cautious approach by the editors of *BHS*, who preferred not to make a direct link between the text of a version and a Hebrew reading actually reconstructed from that version.

5. As in the *HUB*, the *BH* series focuses on the Ben-Asher text and its Masorah. It would have been better had some or equal attention been paid to the Masorah of the Samaritans and the biblical quotations in the New Testament and in Second Temple literature.

The system of *BHQ* substantially improves *BHS*, as shown in the first published fascicle which includes a very instructive "General Introduction" by the Editorial Committee (see note 53):

a. The texts from the Judean Desert are covered in full by *BHQ* (see, e.g., the full coverage of the Canticles scrolls from Qumran). See below, § *e.*

b. *Formulaic explanations.* The apparatus contains a long series of formulaic explanations of the background of the versional deviations from MT in the versions which are explained as exegetical rather than pointing to Hebrew variants. Thus ואמרת לה ("and she said to him") in S in Ruth 3:14 for ויאמר ("and he said") in MT is explained in the apparatus as "assim-ctext" (assimilation to words in the context). Naomi told her two daughters-in-law (1:8) that they should each return to the house of their *mother* (אמה), while in some manuscripts of the LXX they are told to return to the house of their

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[62] E.g. Jer 23:33 את מה משא
    BH: l c GLV אתם המ׳
    BHS l אתם המ׳ cf. GV
Whether or not one should prefer the reading of GV remains to be discussed, but once one decides that a reading other than MT should be read, the reader should know that it is actually based on those versions, and that these versions should not be consulted as merely comparative material.

father (τοῦ παταρὸς αὐτῆς). This detail is explained in the apparatus as "assim-cultur" ("assimilation to the cultural pattern prevailing at the time of the translator or copyist"). Amplifications found frequently in the LXX and Targum of Esther (e.g., 1:4) are described in the edition as "ampl(ification)" or "paraphr(ase)." The apparatus to Esth 1:1 describes the LXX equivalent of Ahasverus, "Artaxerxes," as "substit." The Targum Rishon (T^R) מתנײדין of מתיהדים in Esth 8:17 is described as "lib-seman" ("liberty in respect to semantic matters") and therefore has no textual value.

These notes provide the reader with helpful explanations of the versions, and show the editors' intuition; at the same time they may be criticized as not belonging to a critical apparatus of a *textual* edition. In my view, this type of recording should be left for borderline cases in which it is unclear whether the translational deviation reflects the translator's exegesis or a Hebrew/Aramaic variant, and should not be employed when the editors themselves suggest that the translation reflects content exegesis. In the case of Esther, the paraphrastic character of the LXX and Targum is well established, and therefore these exegetical notes probably should have been far fewer in number. However, *BHQ* decided to break new ground with this novel type of recording. The "General Introduction," XIII, is well aware that the novelty of this type of recording transcends the textual treatment of the Hebrew Bible in the past, but the editors nevertheless decided to include notes illustrating the translators' exegesis.

The principles behind this system have been adopted from the *HUB* (thus Weis, "*BHQ*," paragraph 16) and they improve the information provided but, as in the case of the *HUB*, they make the edition less user-friendly. Besides, *BHQ* contains many instances of exegetical renderings in the versions, while the *HUB* only contains borderline cases between exegesis and the reflection of possible variants in the translation.[63] The notation of *BHQ* is more complicated than that of the *HUB*, since in the latter edition the

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[63] This approach is spelled out as follows in the "General Introduction": "The editors intend that, so far as possible, the apparatus will include all cases of variation in these witnesses that meet two general criteria for inclusion. First, such a variation is judged to be text-critically significant. . . . Second, it is judged to be potentially significant for translation or exegesis" (p. XIII).

explanations are included in a separate apparatus of notes, while in *BHQ* the evidence is adduced *together* with its explanation in a single apparatus.

c. *Textual and literary criticism. BHQ* heralds a major change in approach towards textual data that, according to the editors, should be evaluated with literary rather than textual tools since they involve data that may reflect literary editions of a biblical book different from MT. *BHQ* now absolves such details from textual judgment.[64] In the books published so far, this approach cannot be judged well as these problems do not feature much in the *Megillot*. But Weis, "*BHQ*," gives some examples regarding Jeremiah. Thus, the omission of נאם יהוה in the LXX of 23:1 and אלהי ישראל in 23:2 and the transposition in the LXX of vv 7–8 after v 40 are not evaluated in the apparatus since they are considered part of an overall feature of the LXX in that book, described as being "lit(erary)".[65] However, once this explanation is applied to some details reflecting such a literary layer, it is hard to ascertain whether this system may be applied to all details in that layer. For example, if several details of a typological layer of the LXX are earmarked as reflecting a recension shorter than MT, should not all or most of the evidence

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[64] In the words of the "General Introduction," XII: "The Hebrew Old Testament Text Project committee elaborated and implemented a particular approach to the task of textual criticism which clearly distinguishes between specific text critical matters and the history of the literary development of the text, and thus differentiates between cases proper to other scholarly methods that operate purely on the basis of internal evidence. This approach was adopted by the United Bible Societies as the basis for this new edition of *Biblia Hebraica*." In the words of Weis, "*BHQ*," paragraph 32: "As noted above, *BHQ* also takes seriously the survival of diverse literary forms of the text into the transmissional history of some books of the Hebrew Bible, for example, Jeremiah. This appears in the characterization of variant readings stemming from such diverse forms as "literary" (abbreviated as "lit" in the apparatus), and thus not relevant to establishing the text at hand. The editors' philosophical commitment to keeping that distinction clear is expressed in this particular fashion, however, because it is the only practical option within the limits of a one-volume edition (as opposed to printing two different texts of Jeremiah, for example)." This approach was also advocated in my *TCHB*, 348–50.

[65] This term is explained as follows: "This term indicates that a reading represents a discrete literary tradition (i.e., one of two or more surviving editions for a book) that should not itself be used to correct another text coming from a different literary tradition (i.e., another edition) represented in the reading of another witness. Samuel and Jeremiah, for example, each offer a number of such cases."

for such a recension[66] be described in the same way,[67] with the exception of variants created in the course of scribal transmission?

The application of the principle of "lit," although heralding a novel and positive approach, is admittedly subjective and by definition can never be applied consistently. For some features in the LXX of a book may be considered by its *BHQ* editor to be literary differences, while similar features in another book are not considered literary by the *BHQ* editor of that book. This issue can be examined in the published fascicle of *BHQ* that includes the book of Esther. For in this book the LXX and LXX[AT68] texts are considered by several scholars to reflect a different, even superior, Hebrew text.[69] In the *BHQ* fascicle, however, the major deviations of these two Greek texts, if adduced at all, are never described as "lit(erary)." The only elements that are described as "lit" in the apparatus are details from the so-called Additions to Esther, also described as the noncanonical parts of the LXX (see, e.g., the notes in *BHQ* to Esth 1:1, 3:13, 4:17). However, these Additions cannot be detached from the main Greek texts on the basis of their style, vocabulary, or subject matter,[70] and therefore at least some of the other major discrepancies of the LXX or LXX[AT] could or should have been denoted as "lit." The practice of *BHQ* in Esther is not wrong, as the editor probably espoused a different view. But the editor's view is problematical in some instances in which the Greek deviations are based clearly on Semitic variants constituting a different literary edition of the book.[71]

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[66] That *BHQ* intends to limit remarks of this type to a few details in a literary edition rather than to all or most of them, is clear from the definition on p. XCII of "lit" where the the following sentence is included: "Samuel and Jeremiah, for example, each offer *a number* <my italics, E.T.> of such cases."

[67] I refer to the various types of editorial changes mentioned in my paper "Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah," in *Le livre de Jérémie, le prophète et son milieu, les oracles et leur transmission* (ed. P.-M. Bogaert; BETL 54; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1981; rev. ed. 1997 [1998]) 145–67, 430. Revised version: *The Greek and Hebrew Bible—Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (VTSup 72; Leiden, Boston and Cologne: E.J. Brill, 1999), 363–84.

[68] Also called the Lucianic version.

[69] See the description of these views in my *TCU*, 255.

[70] See my study "The 'Lucianic' Text of the Canonical and the Apocryphal Sections of Esther: A Rewritten Biblical Book," *Textus* 10 (1982): 1–25. Revised version: *The Greek and Hebrew Bible* (1999), 535–48.

[71] Note, for example, pluses in the AT text in 3:5, 6:4 (2), 6:5 (3), 6:13 (10), and see my analysis in "The 'Lucianic' Text," 8–9. Revised version: *The Greek and Hebrew Bible* (1999), 538–39.

On the other hand, perhaps the absence of the term "lit" in the apparatus is due merely to an editorial inconsistency, as Schenker, in the general edition to the book, p. XIII, states that "[v]ersional pluses that are longer than one verse and come from what amounts to a separate edition of the book in question (e.g., Esther) will be indicated (usually with the abbreviation "+ txt"), but not given in full, by reason of limitations of space."[72]

d. *Cautious evaluation. BHQ* presents reconstructed variants from the versions more cautiously than in the past, but stops short of making a direct link between a reconstructed reading, preferred by that edition, and the text of the version (this practice is carried over from *BHS*; see above, 2). The reconstruction (mentioned first) and the versional reading are linked by the reference "see," which leaves room for much uncertainty and does not reflect the real relation between the two elements. In an example given in the introductory material to *BHQ* as "Figure 1" (p. LXXIII), in Jer 23:17 MT *limᵉnaʾaṣay dibber YHWH* (to men who despise me <they say:> "The Lord has said") where the LXX reads τοῖς ἀπωθουμένοις τὸν λόγον κυρίου, reflecting *limᵉnaʾaṣê dᵉvar YHWH* (to those who despise the word of the Lord), the edition does *not* say "read *limᵉnaʾaṣê dᵉvar YHWH* with G" or the like. As in *BHS, BHQ* separates the two sets of information, suggesting that the reading which is actually reconstructed from the LXX is to be preferred to MT: "pref *limᵉnaʾaṣê dᵉvar YHWH* see G (S)." In this and many similar situations, *BHQ* presents the preferred reading almost as an emendation, since the reference to the LXX (phrased as "see") does not clarify that the suggested reading is actually based on the LXX. Users who are not well versed in the ancient languages do not know the exact relation between the suggested reading and the ancient sources. More seriously, by presenting the evidence in this way, injustice is done to one of the basic procedures of textual criticism. It is probably accepted by most scholars that equal attention should be paid to the MT and LXX, and that both the MT and LXX could reflect an original reading. If this is the case, preferable readings from the LXX ought to be presented in the same way as preferable readings from MT, even if the difficulties

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[72] Schenker continues: "Similarly, lengthy readings that are judged to stand in a literary relation to the text represented in the base text (e.g., a parallel text) will be signaled (usually with the abbreviation "differ-txt"), but not given in full."

inherent with the reconstruction complicate their presentation and evaluation.

e. *The manuscripts from the Judean Desert* are fully recorded in *BHQ*,[73] including both significant readings—possibly preferable to the readings of MT and/or the LXX—and secondary variants. The latter type of readings do not contribute towards the reconstruction of the original text of Hebrew Scripture, but merely illustrate the process of textual transmission. Thus, the full recording includes such misspellings in 4QCant[b] as התנאה (MT Cant 2:13: התאנה), בשקתי (MT 3:1: בקשתי), described in the apparatus as "metathesis," אבא (MT 4:8 תבואי) described as "err-graph," and Aramaic forms such as הטללים (MT 2:17: הצללים) and בשמין (MT 4:10: בשמים). At the same time, differences in sense division in these scrolls receive no attention (not mentioned in the "General Introduction," XIV),[74] while the same data from the Masoretic manuscripts are recorded in great detail.[75] On the whole, due to the extensive coverage of the scrolls in *BHQ*, this edition can be used profitably as a source of information for the scrolls. On the other hand, the reader is overwhelmed with the large amount of information on secondary readings in the scrolls. Since *BHQ* provides value judgements on these readings, that edition could have differentiated between the stratum of possibly valuable readings and that of clearly secondary readings. From reading the apparatus of Part 18, one gets the impression that the greater part of the readings belong to this second stratum.

The material from the Judean Desert is rightly recorded more fully than the medieval Hebrew evidence (below, f). At the same time, the apparatus will include all the material for the SP except

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[73] The edition creates the impression that it records all variations, including orthographic and morphological differences, such as אקום in 4QCant[a] for אקומה of MT in Cant 3:2, אתכ[מה] for אתכם of MT in the same verse. Therefore, the reader would have expected to find in the apparatus הראני for הריני in 4QCant[b] in Cant 2:14 and ירושלים for ירושלם in 4QCant[a] in Cant 3:10.

[74] Cant 3:8 has a closed section in *BHQ*, but that edition does not contain a note about the lack of an interval in 4QCant[a]; Cant 4:3 has an interval in 4QCant[b] (open section), but this fact is not mentioned in *BHQ* which has no interval at that point (nor does 4QCant[a] have an interval).

[75] *BHQ* includes only variants in sense divisions that are significant for "translation or exegesis" (see "General Introduction," XIII). On the other hand, a complete table of such intervals in the collated Tiberian manuscripts is included in the introduction to each book.

for orthographic and linguistic variants, all the Cairo Genizah material prior to 1000, and select Tiberian manuscripts (see below).

f. *Medieval manuscripts.* Following the study of Goshen-Gottstein,[76] *BHQ* does not record the content of the individual manuscripts from the collections of medieval manuscripts by Kennicott and de Rossi.[77] On the other hand, eight early Masoretic manuscripts listed in the "General Introduction," XX–XXV are covered. The reduction in the number of medieval manuscripts covered is a distinct improvement.

g. *Textual commentary.* The publication of a detailed textual commentary (pp. 51*–150*) in which difficult readings are discussed, including an analysis of all readings preferred to MT, represents a great step forward from all other editions. The discussion describes all the relevant issues and is usually thorough and judicious. The readings discussed present textual problems, for all of which an opinion is expressed. One of the many advantages of this commentary is that it discusses conjectures such as those suggested for MT שמן תורק in Cant 1:3 regardless of their acceptance by the editors. In the reading quoted from Canticles, the difficulties of the MT wording are analyzed, but the editor (P.D. Dirksen) does not feel that any other reading is preferable to MT.

The strength of a commentary is in the relation between the generalizations and the remarks on details. Indeed, the authors of the commentary constantly deducted generalizations from details, and explained details according to what is known from comparable instances.

h. *Conservative approach to evaluations.* The textual evaluations in *BHQ* are very conservative when compared with earlier editions in the *BH* series. Thus, while in Canticles in *BHS*, 32 variants are preferred to MT,[78] the editor of *BHQ* makes only three[79] such suggestions (phrased as "pref").[80] In all other cases, the text of MT is

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[76] M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, "Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts: Their History and Their Place in the HUBP Edition," *Bib* 48 (1967): 243–90.

[77] Thus "General Introduction," XIV.

[78] Textual suggestions in *BHS* are phrased in different ways, sometimes in conjunction with question marks or words such as "probably." I counted 23 cases of "*lege*," one case of "*prps*," 2 cases of a gloss, two instances of "transpose," one case of "delete," two suggestions of additions, and one of an insertion.

[79] Cant 4:12; 7:7, 10. Preferences of *Ketiv* to *Qere* or vice versa are not included.

[80] In addition, in Cant 2:14, the apparatus mentions a conjecture in vocaliztion.

preferred.[81] By the same token, in Ruth, compared with seven instances of a preference for a non-Masoretic reading in *BHS, BHQ* prefers only one, in 4:4;[82] there are no conjectures in the apparatus. In *BHS* in Lamentations, 49 preferences[83] for readings other than MT are matched with only 7 similar preferences in *BHQ*. No conjectures are recorded in the latter apparatus.

j. *Retroversions.* The apparatus contains a rather full presentation of the textual evidence that is at variance with the main text, MT as represented by codex L. However, the presentation of this evidence in *BHQ* differs from that in all other critical editions[84] in that the versional evidence is presented mainly in the languages of the translations, Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, and Latin. All other editions retrovert many versional readings into Hebrew, while some of them are described as readings preferable to MT (such preferences are not expressed for readings in the *HUB*). However, in the past many such retroversions in the *BH* series were haphazard, imprecise, or unfounded. Probably for this reason, *BHQ* is sparing with retroversions, presenting only one type, as stated in the "General Introduction," XIII: "[r]etroversion will be used only for a reading proposed as *preferable* [my italics, E.T.] to that found in the base text". While these retroversions are thus reduced to a minimum, other types of retroversions are nevertheless found in the apparatus, although for the editors of *BHQ* they are not considered "retroversions":

a. Versional readings that present a shorter text than MT are presented as "<" or "abbrev". This is a form of retroversion, although in the case of an ancient translation the editor wisely does not tell us whether the shortening took place in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the translation or in the translator's mind.

b. Etymological renderings based on a certain Hebrew form ("via . . .") which is reconstructed in the edition, but not named "reconstruction" in the *BHQ* system. For example, the rendering of

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[81] In the words of the editor, "The text of Canticles is well preserved," p. 8*.

[82] In the words of the editor (p. 5*): "The Masoretic Text in M[L] has been very well preserved." The author probably meant: The text of Ruth has been well preserved in MT according to codex L.

[83] I counted 19 cases of "*lege*," 19 of "*prps*," one instance of "transpose," 7 cases of "delete," one of "add," and two of "insert."

[84] That is, previous editions in the *BH* series, the *HUB*, and the *OHB*.

כתימרות in Aquila and La[Ep] in Cant 3:6 as ὡς ὠμοίσις is explained
in the apparatus as "via כתמונת." Further, ἀπόστρεψον of the LXX
in Cant 2:17 for MT סב is explained as "via √שוב". In other cases
the decision between "an actual *Vorlage* (written in a manuscript) or
a virtual *Vorlage* (in the mind of the translator or copyist)"[85] is very
difficult: In Cant 1:10 בתרים ("with plaited wreaths"), the reading of
the LXX (ὡς τρυγόνες) is presented as "via כתרים" ("like plaited
wreaths"). In a similar case later in the verse, "via" is again reserved
for an interchange כ/ב. While for the reader, "via" looks like any
other retroversion in the apparatus, for *BHQ* it has a status different
from that of a retroversion.[86]

In their wish to record no retroversions other than those of pre-
ferred readings, *BHQ* may have gone a little too far, since the nature
of the undertaking requires these retroversions. Thus, loyal to its
principles, *BHQ* retroverts none of the many deviations of the Greek
Esther from MT, not even when reflecting an obvious Semitism as
in Esth 1:4 καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα, preceding the Greek translation of that
verse.[87] However, *BHQ* accepts the idea of multiple textual and lit-
erary traditions in *Hebrew*, and therefore why should these traditions
not be retroverted from time to time? *BHQ* records many secondary
readings (above, § b), thus rendering it in line with its principles to
record, in Hebrew, readings that have the potential of being pri-
mary literary parallel traditions. It seems to us that because of the
lack of these reconstructions, the reader is often deprived of much
valuable information.

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[85] "General Introduction," XCIV.

[86] "This term indicates the Hebrew form that is judged to have served as the
stimulus for a particular extant reading. In so marking a form, no position is taken
as to whether the reading was an actual *Vorlage* (written in a manuscript) or a vir-
tual *Vorlage* (in the mind of the translator or copyist), or even whether one could
properly label the form a *Vorlage*" ("General Introduction," XCIV). It seems to me
that the doubts whether a reading existed on parchment or only in the translator's
mind pertain not only to this category, but to many, if not most categories of recon-
structed variants. See the discussion in my *TCU*, 88–89.

[87] We take issue with the principle, not with the subjective approach which is a
necessary part of the enterprise. We also accept the view that the evidence of trans-
lations that are completely exegetical is excluded from the analysis: ". . . when the
Targum for a book, taken as a whole, is made unreliable as a witness to the Hebrew
text due to extensive paraphrase or haggadic expansion (e.g., the Targum to
Canticles), it will not be cited constantly as a witness since to do so would over-
load the apparatus with matter that is not useful for the textual cases presented
there" (p. XIV).

On the whole, *BHQ* is much richer in data, more mature, judicious and cautious than its predecessors. It heralds a very important step forward in the *BH* series. This advancement implies more complex notations which almost necessarily render this edition less user-friendly for the non-expert.[88]

III. The *OHB* presents critical reconstructions of an original text that while imperfect, as editor-in-chief Hendel realizes, still represent the best option among the various possibilities.[89] The system chosen by the *OHB* editors can easily be examined in the editions mentioned in note 50, and is well covered by the explanations of Hendel, "Introduction." This introduction describes in detail the notes accompanying the readings in the apparatus as opposed to the "original" readings included in the text itself. It also describes at length the shortcomings of the other types of editions. However, what is lacking is a detailed description of the principles of the decision-making process relating to the very choice of these original readings.[90] Hendel's own critical edition of Gen 1–11 includes a discussion of "types of text-critical decisions" (pp. 6–10) as well as valuable discussions of the relations between the textual witnesses, contributing significantly to our understanding of this issue. However, these analyses do not elucidate why the author earmarked specific details as "original" in certain constellations. It would be useful to know whether any

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[88] The juxtaposition in the apparatus of a wealth of exegetical readings and important variants as well as some of the complex explanations in the introduction will be grasped only by the sophisticated scholar. I do not think that *BHQ* can live up to its own ideal: "As was true for its predecessors, this edition of *Biblia Hebraica* is intended as a *Handausgabe* for use by scholars, clergy, translators, and students who are not necessarily specialists in textual criticism . . . specialists in textual criticism should also find the edition of use, even though it is not principally intended for them" ("General Introduction," p. VIII). The commentary and the introductions (see below) go a long way in bridging the gap for the non-specialists, but I do believe the specialist will grasp the finesses of the sophistication better than the non-specialist who will often be confused. Time will tell whether this assessment is correct.

[89] In Hendel's words, "The dream of a perfect text is unreal, counterfactual. The best we can do is to make a good critical text, one that takes account of the evidence we have and the acumen we can muster" ("Introduction," 16).

[90] Hendel merely offers an abstract description of the procedure: "As a *practical* <my italics, E.T.> matter, the textual decisions that constitute the critical texts of the OHB are a collection of arguments for the earliest inferable readings on the basis of the available evidence and the editors' text-critical skills and experience" ("Introduction," 5).

internal or external rules exist for composing the reconstructed orig-
inal text, or whether everything is left to intuition. This also remains
an open question in two similar studies: the reconstruction of the
original text of 2 Chr 1–16 by Hognesius[91] and that of Hosea by
Borbone.[92]

It seems to me that three theoretical problems make the prepa-
ration of eclectic editions a difficult or, according to some, impossi-
ble enterprise:

a. In his theoretical introduction, Hendel says: "The practical goal
for the *OHB* is to approximate in its critical text the textual "arche-
type,' by which I mean "the earliest inferable textual state'" (p. 3).[93]
He further cautions:

> The theory of an eclectic edition assumes that approximating the arche-
> type is a step towards the "original text," however that original is to
> be conceived. In the case of the Hebrew Bible it is difficult to define
> what the "original text" means, since each book is the product of a
> complicated and often unrecoverable history of composition and redac-
> tion. 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 con-
> struction of a medieval cathedral or the composite walls of an old city.

It is a sign of good scholarship that Hendel constantly struggles with
the question of the original text, as seen also in the continued analy-
sis, in which he discusses my views. The same difficulties are rec-
ognized by Hognesius (pp. 28–9):

> It is not the intention of the present author to claim that this edition
> presents *the* text of 2 Chronicles 1–16, but, rather, that it attempts to
> make a contribution to serious scholarly discussion on text-critical mat-
> ters. If eventually, such serious discussion would lead to the publish-
> ing of critical editions of the text of the Old Testament, this would
> be for the benefit of all Old Testament scholars.

However, in spite of the problems encountered, the editors of the
OHB believe that there *was* an original text (or in some cases two),
since otherwise they would not have reconstructed such an entity. I

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[91] Hognesius, *The Text of 2 Chronicles 1–16.*
[92] Borbone, *Il libro del profeta Osea.*
[93] For this statement, Hendel refers to E.J. Kenney, "Textual Criticism," *Encyclopaedia Brittanica* (15th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 18:191.

should therefore counter that now more than ever it seems to me that there never was an "archetype" or "original text" of most Scripture books. True, the composition and transmission history of some units in Scripture was simpler than that of others. As a result, in many individual Psalms, the textual evidence is probably very close to that of the poems created by the ancient poets, that is, they attest to a stage rather close to the original text. For most biblical books, however, scholars assume editorial changes over the course of many generations or even several centuries. If this assumption is correct, this development implies that there never was a single text which may be considered *the* original text; rather, we have to assume compositional stages, each of which was meant to be authoritative when completed. Each stage constituted an entity which may be named an "original text." That text, considered final, may have been available in a single copy at first, but was probably duplicated and distributed in later times.

These compositional stages did not always take the form of a completely new edition of a biblical book, but may have involved the change of what is now a single chapter or an even smaller unit. On other occasions, I have dwelled at length on various aspects of this composition process,[94] and here we ought to ask ourselves which stage, if any, may be presented as original or archetypal in a modern edition.

The point of departure for the *OHB* is the assumption that there was one or, in some cases, two such editions that may be reconstructed. The *BH* series, and *BHQ* in particular, struggles with the same problems (see above), but in that enterprise the difficulties are fewer, since the edition itself always presents MT. In its apparatus, the *BH* series presents elements as original or archetypal, but it can always allow itself the luxury of not commenting on all details, while the *OHB* has to make decisions in all instances.

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[94] "The Place of the Masoretic Text in Modern Text Editions of the Hebrew Bible: The Relevance of Canon," in *The Canon Debate* (ed. L. McDonald and J.A. Sanders; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 234–51; "The Nature of the Large-Scale Differences between the LXX and MT S T V, Compared with Similar Evidence in Other Sources," in *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible. The Relationship between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuaginta Reconsidered* (ed. A. Schenker; SCS 52; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 2003) 121–44; "Literary Analysis, the So-Called Original Text of Hebrew Scripture, and Textual Evaluation," *Festschrift Shalom Paul*, 2005, forthcoming.

b. If the principle of reconstructing an original edition based on evidence and emendation is accepted, it remains difficult to decide which compositional level should be reconstructed. On a practical level, what is the scope of the changes one should allow himself to insert in MT? Small changes are definitely permissible, but why should one stop at verses? An editor of the *OHB* may also decide to exclude the secondarily added hymns of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1–10) and Jonah (Jonah 2). If all scholars agree that these psalms are secondary, I see no reason why an editor of OHB should not exclude them. I am only using this example to illustrate the problems involved; I do not think that an *OHB* editor would actually exclude these chapters (although according to the internal logic of the *OHB* they should, I think). However, I can imagine that someone would exclude Gen 12:6 "And the Canaanites were then in the land," considered secondary by all critical scholars.

In short, innumerable difficulties present themselves in places where complex literary development took place. In fact, the evaluation of the two editions of Jeremiah (see below) seems to be a simple case in comparison with the very complex compositional and transmission stages visible elsewhere.

c. On a closely related matter, the *OHB* proposes implementing a different, more advanced, procedure for "multiple early editions" of biblical books than used in the past:[95]

> The OHB aims to produce critical texts of each ancient edition, which will be presented in parallel columns. The relationship among these editions will be discussed fully in an introductory chapter to each volume. In cases where one edition is not the textual ancestor of the other(s), a common ancestor to the extant editions will be reconstructed, to the extent possible (Hendel, "Introduction," 2).

This is an important step forward, but so many problems will be encountered in the implementation of this procedure that the above description may be considered naive. How can complete editions such as reflected in the LXX be reconstructed? We know some details about the short edition of Jeremiah such as visible in 4QJer[b,d] and the LXX, but in my view the full edition cannot be reconstructed due to our limited knowledge and evidence.

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[95] Both *BHQ* and the *OHB* seem to develop along similar lines. For *BHQ*, see above.

The editors of these editions probably consider them no more than scholarly exercises representing the views of a scholar at a given time, with the understanding that the same scholar's view will be quite different by the following year. Necessarily, several different eclectic editions of the same biblical book are bound to appear. On whose edition, or whose Bible, will scholars focus their exegetical activity?

3. *Some Remarks on All Existing Editions*

1. *The Centrality of MT*. Despite statements to the contrary, all critical and non-critical editions of Hebrew Scripture revolve around MT, which is more central than ever in everyone's thinking.[96] Non-critical editions present MT, or more precisely TMT (see n. 21), while all critical texts present MT together with an apparatus. Furthest removed from MT is the OHB, but even that edition uses MT as its framework, occasionally changing the base text to what is now a variant reading in one of the versions. Even when versions disagree with MT on small details, and possibly reflect superior readings, these readings have not been altered.[97] Other critical editions (the BH series and the HUB) meticulously present the best Ben-Asher manuscripts, including their Masorah and open/closed sections. This precision is absolutely necessary for the study of Tiberian Hebrew and the history of MT, but somehow the readers' focus is moved away from the very important ancient material contained in the LXX and the Qumran Scrolls. Readings from these sources are mentioned—in a way, hidden—in an apparatus to the text of MT rather than appearing next to it. The decision to structure editions around MT is natural; after all, MT is the central text of Judaism, and it is much valued by scholars. Besides, the scrolls are fragmentary, and the LXX is in Greek, not in Hebrew. Notwithstanding, 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

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[96] See my paper "The Place of the Masoretic Text."

[97] According to the system of Hendel, it is not considered worthwhile to include anything but "significant variants," see Hendel, *Genesis 1–11*, 115 and the reaction of Weis, "*BHQ*," paragraph 34.

and BHQ apparatuses, perpetuate the perception that MT is the Bible. The systems employed in the present editions do not educate future generations towards an egalitarian approach to all the textual sources.

In a paper published in 2002 ("The Place of the Masoretic Text in Modern Text Editions" [see n. 94]), I tried to show in detail how the centrality of MT negatively influences research. Although critical scholars, as opposed to the public at large, know that MT does not constitute *the* Bible, they nevertheless often approach it in this way. They base many *critical* commentaries and introductions mainly on MT; occasional remarks on other textual witnesses merely pay lip service to the notion that other texts exist. Many critical scholars mainly practise exegesis on MT. I have given examples from Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, Eissfeldt's *Einleitung*, the commentaries of Gunkel, Dahood, Noth, Westerman, Milgrom, Levine, etc., showing that important remarks and theories by these scholars were based on MT only, although all of them are aware of the LXX.

Since the focus on MT does not advance literary analysis and exegesis, one wonders whether the approach behind these editions can ever be changed. We believe it can, as we think that an edition should be devised in which all textual witnesses obtain an equal status. Details from the LXX and the scrolls are currently lost in the mazes of apparatuses, but if they were to be presented more prominently, they would receive more attention. Under the present circumstances, scholars hold any one of the mentioned editions in their hands, and misleadingly call it "the Bible." All scholars know that our editions do not contain *the* Bible, but merely one textual tradition, but we often mislead ourselves into thinking that it is *the* Bible. However, the text of the Bible is found in a wide group of sources, from MT, through the Dead Sea Scrolls, to the LXX and the Peshitta. Accordingly, the *Biblia Hebraica* is not a *Biblia Hebraica*, strictly speaking, but a *Biblia Masoretica*. So far there is no *Biblia Hebraica* in existence, unless one considers the details in the apparatus of the *BH* series to stand for the larger entities behind them.

2. *Explanations in an apparatus*. In the last half-century, critical editions have developed through constant interaction with one another, much in the direction of the *HUB* system, which has been known since the publication of the *Sample Edition* in 1965 (see n. 57). *BHQ* and

the *OHB* have been influenced by the *HUB* in including descriptions
of types of readings in the apparatus itself, mainly in order to elu-
cidate the *secondary* status of several Hebrew and versional variants.
In *BHQ*, these explanations are even more extensive and diverse
than those in the *HUB*, and they are juxtaposed with the evidence,
while in the *HUB* most of them appear in an apparatus of notes
under the text. The recording of admittedly secondary readings
together with their explanations in the apparatus of *BHQ* itself is a
novelty in biblical editions, and it may deter readers from using a
critical edition rather than attract them to one. It should probably
be noticed that in the extensive literature on the nature of editions
and apparatuses, I have not found parallels for the listing of such
notes in the critical apparatus *itself*.[98] In my view, these notes dis-
turb the flow in an apparatus that serves as an objective source of
information; rather, they should be relegated to a separate appara-
tus of notes, as in the *HUB*. I am afraid that with the attempt to
explain these variants, the main purpose of the apparatus is lost, that
of providing information about non-Masoretic traditions to *be used in
biblical exegesis*. This leads to the next point:

3. *A Multi-column edition?* The existing editions of Hebrew Scripture
present the following options:

a. MT only: all extant non-critical editions of the Hebrew Bible.

   b. MT + variants (and emendations) in an *apparatus*: the *BH* series
and the *HUB*.

   c. MT + variants and emendations in the *text*: eclectic editions.

   In the preceding pages we described the advantages and disad-
vantages of these editions, and I wonder whether a different type of
edition will ever be devised, in which all the evidence will be pre-
sented in an egalitarian way in parallel columns:

   d. A multi-column edition.

The purpose of a multi-column edition would be to educate the
users toward an egalitarian approach to the textual witnesses which

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[98] See the papers in *Editing Texts* mentioned in n. 48 and further: D.C. Greetham,
Textual Scholarship—An Introduction (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1994),
especially 384–417 ("Editing the Text: Scholarly Editing"); M. Mathijsen, *Naar de
letter—Handboek editiewetenschap* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1995); *Scholarly Editing—A Guide
to Research* (ed. D.C. Greetham; New York: The Modern Language Association of
America, 1995).

cannot be achieved with the present tools. Such an edition would present MT, LXX, the SP, and some Qumran texts, on an *equal* basis in parallel columns, with notes on the reconstructed parent text of the LXX, and perhaps with English translations of all the data. The presentation of the text in the parallel columns would graphically show the relation between the plus and minus elements.[99] Only by this means can future generations of scholars be expected to approach the textual data in an unbiased way, without MT forming the basis of their thinking. This equality is needed for literary analysis and exegesis, and less so for textual specialists.

The earliest example of such a multi-column edition, Origen's Hexapla, served a similar purpose when enabling a good comparison of the Jewish and Christian Bible. In modern times, scholars have prepared similar editions in areas other than the Hebrew Bible, when the complexity of the original shape of the composition makes other alternatives less viable.[100]

However, a close parallel is available also in the area of Hebrew Scripture: The *Biblia Qumranica* records the complete texts found in the Judean Desert together with parallel columns containing other textual witnesses.[101] The reader learns more quickly and easily than in all other editions about the differences between the texts from the Judean Desert and the other texts, including in matters of orthography. However, this specific edition provides only a fragmentary picture of the biblical text, as its coverage does not go beyond that of the contents of the scrolls and their counterparts in other witnesses. The use of this edition for the exegesis of the running biblical text is limited, but it does provide a paradigm for other editions.

It may well be that there are too many practicable problems in preparing such an edition of the Hebrew Bible, but the discussion of this option helps us to better understand all other editions. The

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[99] The edition described here would not be a merely formal presentation in parallel columns of blocks of (photographically reproduced) texts, as for example in the following edition of Ben Sira: F. Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico—Testo ebraico con apparato critico e versioni greca, latina e siriaca* (Publicazioni del Seminario di Semitistica; Napoli: Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1968).

[100] P. Schäfer and J. Becker, *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [P. Siebeck], 1991); idem and others, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (TSAJ 2; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [P. Siebeck], 1981).

[101] *Biblia Qumranica, Vol. 3B Minor Prophets* (ed. B. Ego, A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger, and K. De Troyer; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004).

purpose of this paper is not to promote the idea of a multi-column edition, but to review all existing options.

Some Editions of Hebrew Scripture Arranged Chronologically[102]

Letteris
    M.H. Letteris, תורה נביאים וכתובים (London 1852)
BH
    Biblia Hebraica (1st and 2d eds.; ed. R. Kittel; Leipzig 1905, 1913; 3d ed.; ed. R. Kittel and P. Kahle; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1929–37)
Ginsburg
    תורה נביאים כתובים, מדויק היטב על־פי המסרה ועל פי C.D. Ginsburg, דפוסים ראשונים עם חלופים והגהות מן כתבי יד עתיקים ותרגומים ישנים (London 1926; repr. Jerusalem 1970)
Cassuto
    M.D. Cassuto, תנ"ך ירושלים (Jerusalem 1958)
Snaith
    ספר תורה נביאים וכתובים מדויק היטב על פי המסורה N.H. Snaith, (London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1958)
Koren
    M. Koren, תורה נביאים כתובים (Jerusalem: Koren, 1962)
BHS
    Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (ed. W. Rudolph and K. Elliger; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967–77; last printing to date: 1997).
Adi
    A. Dotan, תורה נביאים וכתובים מדויקים היטב על פי הניקוד הטעמים והמסורה של אהרן בן משה בן אשר בכתב יד לנינגרד (Tel Aviv: Adi, 1976)
Breuer
    M. Breuer, תורה נביאים כתובים, מונהים על פי הנוסח והמסורה של כתר ארם צובה וכתבי יד הקרובים לו, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1977–82; 1 vol.: 1989; Jerusalem: Horev, 1993)

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[102] The first publication of each edition is followed by additional printings incorporating changes and corrections of misprints.

Hebrew University Bible (HUB)

M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, *The Hebrew University Bible, The Book of Isaiah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995)

C. Rabin, S. Talmon, E. Tov, *The Hebrew University Bible, The Book of Jeremiah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997)

M.H. Goshen-Gottstein and S. Talmon, *The Hebrew University Bible, The Book of Ezekiel* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2004)

Jerusalem Crown

Pentateuch, Prophets and Writings According to the Text and Masorah of the Aleppo Codex and Related Manuscripts, Following the Methods of Rabbi Mordechai Breuer (ed. Y. Ofer; Basle/Jerusalem: Karger Family/Ben Zvi, 2000)

Dotan 2001

A. Dotan, *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia: Prepared according to the Vocalization, Accents, and Masora of Aaron ben Moses ben Asher in the Leningrad Codex* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001)

BHQ

Biblia Hebraica Quinta (ed. A. Schenker et al.; Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004–), Part 18: *General Introduction and Megilloth* (ed. P.B. Dirksen et al.; 2004)