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Toward a Refined Literary Criticism

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Contents

Abbreviations

AASF	Annales Academiae scientiarum fennicae
AB	Anchor (Yale) Bible Commentary
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
Ant.	Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament deutsch
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BHQ	Biblia Hebraica Quinta
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BSCS	Brill Septuagint Commentary Series
BZABR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
CC	Continental Commentaries
col(s).	column(s)
ConJ	*Concordia Journal*
DCH	Clines, David J. A., ed. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 1993–2016.
DDD	Toorn, Karel van der, Bob Becking, and Pieter van der Horst, eds. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*

ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
ET	English Text
ETL	*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*
ETS	Erfurter theologische Studien
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
frag.	fragment
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HThKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
impf.	imperfect
impv.	imperative
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
Joüon	Joüon, Paul. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. SubBi 14. 2 vols. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993.
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KEH	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
KKAT	Kurzgefasster Kommentar zu den heiligen Schriften, Alten Testament

LEH	Lust, Johan, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie. *Greek–English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2015.
LXX	Septuagint
LXX^{A}	Codex Alexandrinus version of the Septuagint
LXX^{B}	Codex Vaticanus version of the Septuagint
LXX^{L}	Lucianic recension of the Septuagint
MSU	Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens
MT	Masoretic Text
NCB	New Century Bible
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSKAT	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar, Altes Testament
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OG	Old Greek
OL	Old Latin
ORA	Orientalische Religionen in der Antike
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	*Oudtestamentische Studiën*
per.	person
PFES	Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society
pl.	plural
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
SANER	Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records
SAT	Die Schriften des Alten Testaments
ScrHier	Scripta Hierosolymitana
SCS	Seputuagint and Cognate Studies
sg.	singular
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
StC	*Studia Catholica*
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SVTG	Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum

TECC	Textos y estudios del Seminario Filológico "Cardenal Cisneros"
Text	*Textus*
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Edited by Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller. 36 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–2004.
TRu	*Theologische Rundschau* New Series
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZABR	*Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZBKAT	Zürcher Bibelkommentare Altes Testament
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

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Introduction

1.1. Rationale and Aims of This Book

This book seeks to investigate how ancient Hebrew Scriptures were edited before they became unchangeable as part of the canonized Hebrew Bible.[1] In order to understand how the texts developed and were changed in their transmission, the focus is on documented evidence for divergent readings preserved in the ancient textual traditions. Profound understanding of textual developments in the Hebrew Bible is significant for biblical studies at large, but it is crucial for historical criticism (or the historical-critical method), which builds on a diachronic analysis of the text.[2] One of its core

1. We generally use the terms "Hebrew Bible" and "biblical" to refer to the collection of books that *later* became a canonical collection in Judaism and received the title "Old Testament" in Christianity (in this book we will thus not refer to the New Testament when using the term biblical). We acknowledge that there was no Hebrew Bible as a collection during the formative period of these books when most of the significant scribal changes were made. Although referring to these texts as *biblical* can be regarded as anachronistic from a certain historical point of view, it is justifiable to use these terms for practical reasons and with respect to their traditional meaning. Historically it is probable that many of the books of the Hebrew Bible already received a normative and authoritative status during their transmission, beginning with the Pentateuch and followed by the prophetic writings. These books could be characterized as protocanonical in some sense; see discussion in final conclusions.

2. In this book we will primarily use the term historical criticism in reference to the study of the literary history of texts. Whereas biblical criticism is generally understood to include a larger array of methods (especially *Literarkritik* and *Redaktionskritik*), historical criticism more clearly refers to literary criticism (corresponding to German *Literarkritik*) and other methods that are built on literary criticism. The terms "higher" and "lower" criticism will not be used in this book. John Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 1–3, makes

methods, literary criticism (*Literarkritik*), seeks to identify texts written by different scribes in cases where documented text-critical evidence is lacking. This book compares documented scribal changes witnessed by textual variants with hypothetical discussions about how classic literary criticism would detect and reconstruct similar cases. An ultimate question is, can literary criticism reach significant and reliable results, or should it be altogether abandoned as a scientific approach. At stake is thus nothing less than a main area of historical criticism as a scientific method.[3]

We, the authors of this book, hold that documented evidence preserved in the ancient textual traditions indisputably shows multilayered texts throughout the Hebrew Bible that are the result of extensive and repeated scribal editing. We hope to have demonstrated this in our previous studies, but it will become further apparent in the analyses of this investigation.[4] The composite and multilayered character of the Hebrew Bible necessitates a methodologically deliberate position. What should be done with such texts when they are used as sources for historical questions? It would be a grave mistake for any historical investigation to bypass this issue and to apply other methods before one has a clear understanding of the documented textual transmission and a methodologically justifiable position to deal with composite and heavily edited texts. By going to the very core of historical criticism and its methodological cogency, this volume seeks to determine whether the conventional method of dealing with exceptionally

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good arguments for using the term "biblical criticism" instead of "historical criticism." It is certainly the case that the latter may lead to the impression of a historical quest behind the method; it is not our intention to try to have the oldest text as some kind of primary goal of the method. The main contribution of historical criticism lies in its attempt to understand the literary history of texts without giving any preference to older texts over younger additions. The *historical development of the texts* is thus a central goal of historical criticism. On the other hand, the term biblical criticism is not as specific as historical criticism. Since our goal is to investigate the methodological basis of literary criticism, a core part of historical criticism, the use of this term is most appropriate here.

3. In this book we will refer to literary criticism when referring to the specific method of detecting inconsistencies, contradictions, and problems in the text in order to identify different authors. We use the term historical criticism in reference to the broader method of understanding the literary history of texts. Since the terms also overlap to some extent, they are partly used synonymously.

4. See, in particular, Reinhard Müller, Juha Pakkala, and Bas Ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible*, RBS 75 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 219–27.

multilayered texts is useable and scientifically viable. At stake is thus not only historical criticism but also the Hebrew Bible as a historical source, for historical criticism has been and continues to be the only method to unwind those scribal changes that left no traces in textual variants.

The documented editorial changes witnessed by divergent textual traditions mainly illuminate how the texts were edited in the latter parts of the Second Temple period, to which the manuscript evidence goes back at the earliest.[5] However, it is reasonable to assume that the observable changes are organically linked with and comparable to earlier stages of the literary development, at least in the postmonarchic periods. In other words, there is little to suggest a fundamental difference between changes documented in text-critical evidence as variant readings and (mostly earlier) changes not witnessed as variants but that are postulated by literary criticism.[6] Any investigation and theory concerning how the Hebrew Bible was edited should thus begin by studying the documented scribal changes, and on that basis develop theories on the earlier transmission and its editorial techniques.[7]

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5. The oldest preserved biblical manuscripts go back to the third century BCE, and much more material, especially from the Dead Sea Scrolls, dates from the second century BCE to the first century CE. Although the largest portion of manuscript evidence comes from later periods—even from the medieval age and later—it is apparent that the textual variants often reflect earlier scribal changes, largely going back to the Second Temple period, as the changes after the destruction of the Second Temple were very limited.

6. In general, it is fair to assume that later additions are more prone to be preserved as variants in the textual witnesses because in the later transmission of many texts in the Hebrew Bible the text was already transmitted in various contexts and traditions. An addition or other editorial change that was made in one tradition would mostly be unknown in the other transmitting traditions of the same text or literary work. Because a very significant proportion of the notable variants are found between the MT and the LXX, the translation of the works in the Hebrew Bible into Greek is an essential watershed in this respect. After the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek in the last three centuries BCE, any change into one of the traditions automatically becomes a variant, whereas changes in the earlier transmission are much less frequently preserved in divergent textual traditions. Clearly, the variants between the MT and the LXX may also go back to older editorial changes, because the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Old Greek was neither a text of the proto-MT transmission nor necessarily even close to the proto-MT.

7. It would be highly risky to assume a model of transmission that neglects the documented evidence, and if a different mode of transmission is assumed for

Divergent textual readings provide insights into two essentially different phenomena. Some of the variants were caused by accidental scribal errors when manuscripts were copied, while others were occasioned by scribes deliberately revising or editing the transmitted text. Accidental changes, which sometimes had a notable impact on the transmitted text, are usually easy to identify, since they tend to confuse the syntax and logic of the base text. Their nature and occurrence are largely uncontested among biblical scholars. This book focuses on deliberate changes, which potentially altered the text in a more fundamental way, but which are more difficult to detect and are therefore more controversial as a phenomenon. Views on their frequency and impact differ considerably in scholarship—a situation that this book seeks to remedy by systematically investigating the evidence that is documented by divergent ancient textual traditions.

1.2. Assumption of Masoretic Text Priority Untenable

The Masoretic Text has largely been the starting point for most research of the Hebrew Bible, and with some exceptions, such as text-critical studies and Qumran studies, it continues to be. This was partly understandable at the beginning of critical research, as the MT was the only available Hebrew text. Familiarity with the Samaritan Pentateuch had no substantial impact on the position of the MT, as the Samaritan textual tradition was widely regarded as sectarian and its text a secondary version that usually would not preserve original readings against the MT. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls slowly started to change the scholarly discussion, including the perception of the SP, but it is only in recent decades that the scrolls and the SP have begun to receive the attention they deserve.[8] Nevertheless, their study still has rather limited implications for biblical studies at large.

Poor familiarity with and partial neglect of the Septuagint is perhaps more surprising, because its importance for textual history had

undocumented changes than the documented changes, this theory would have to be very well argued. Unfortunately, the documented variants are widely bypassed in historical-critical studies, and far-reaching and complicated models of literary development are often postulated that pay little or no attention to the peculiarities of the textual transmission.

8. For a helpful review of text criticism in biblical studies, see James A. Sanders, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text: Canon as Paradigm* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 127–51.

been acknowledged already in the nineteenth century.[9] While the evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls is sometimes very fragmentary and many manuscripts witness a textual tradition close to the MT, the original Greek translation, the Old Greek, preserves many early readings predating those of the MT. Research in several books has shown that the proto-MT texts were often more extensively edited than the LXX manuscripts after the traditions diverged. This is clearly the case throughout Jeremiah and Samuel, and it is probable in some other books, such as Joshua, Kings, and Ezekiel, as well. Undoubtedly, each reading has to be discussed and argued separately, but a methodological approach that assumes that the MT preserves the most original text unless proven otherwise—apparent in countless studies and commentaries—is methodologically unjustifiable and in the worst case distorts our perception of the evidence.[10]

The reasons for this unfortunate situation are partly understandable. We do not possess any manuscripts of the OG, and its readings have to be established on the basis of existing variants in various manuscripts of much later origin. The main problem lies in the many recensions toward a proto-MT type Hebrew text that have influenced all Greek manuscripts that are preserved. Recensions replaced readings of the original translation and thus make it more difficult to establish what the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the OG translation was. In some cases, also discussed in this volume,

9. To some extent the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship was more familiar with the Septuagint evidence. For instance, commentaries and other studies of this time regularly considered LXX readings in different traditions, and the Old Greek was regularly assumed to preserve more original readings than the MT; e.g., Julius Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1871); Heinrich Holzinger, *Das Buch Josua*, KHC 6 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1901); Charles Fox Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings: With Introduction and Appendix* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903); Samuel R. Driver, *Notes of the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913); Samuel Holmes, *Joshua: The Hebrew and Greek Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914).

10. Countless examples, even from very recent publications could be mentioned. Commentaries of Kings are illustrative, as nearly all fall short of adequately considering readings other than the MT. Very typical is Konrad Schmid, "Outbidding the Fall of Jerusalem: Redactional Supplementation in 2 Kings 24," in *Supplementation and the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Saul M. Olyan and Jacob L. Wright, BJS 361 (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2018), 87–103, who discusses 2 Kgs 24–25 without mentioning any of the important Greek variants (e.g., 24:10), many of which are bound to be older than the MT.

the original Greek translation may only be recovered from an Old Latin (OL) translation of the Greek, while all Greek manuscripts may have been secondarily revised toward a proto-Masoretic text. A case in point is 2 Sam 5:4–5, a passage found in all other witnesses except in the OL witness Codex Vindobonensis and 4Q51 (4QSam[a]). Despite the poor manuscript attestation, it is highly likely that these two witnesses preserve the original text here and that all others are the result of a secondary expansion. Since Codex Vindobonensis and 4Q51 cannot be connected other than through the original reading, it logically follows that Codex Vindobonensis is the only witness that preserves the OG and its *Vorlage* here, albeit in a Latin translation. It is unlikely that this is the only case where the probably most original text is preserved in manuscripts often regarded as marginal.[11]

In addition to broader recensions and translation techniques that differed from book to book, the smaller cross-influences of various manuscripts and manuscript families are a field that only specialists can master, and each book may have had a different history. It is thus also a matter of comfort to begin with the MT rather than be faced with a very complicated situation in the LXX manuscripts, which often requires specialist knowledge. However, this frequently leads to a situation where a theory is established even before significant variants are considered, and thus variants in the LXX or its daughter translations may only receive irregular consideration or may be explained in light of an already existing broader conception of the text in question. Although one can understand why many scholars not specialized in textual criticism shy away from this evidence, it is scientifically an untenable position. In this book we seek to consider the variants without predisposition toward a witness and weigh text-internal considerations when evaluating which variant is most original.[12] The reader will notice that the LXX (or the OG that lies behind the LXX manuscripts) often emerges as the earliest attainable text. This is especially the case in the historical books from Joshua to 2 Kings, while in the Pentateuch the MT seems more often, albeit not always, to preserve a more original version. Because of the rather commonly met doubts about

11. This example highlights the importance of always considering internal criteria as well; the main witnesses may all contain a secondary reading. The history of the manuscripts and readings in many books is not yet well known, and the harmonizations toward the MT or recensions may have secondarily corrupted most main witnesses.

12. This principle is accepted in most introductions and reviews of textual criticism; see, e.g., Sanders, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text*, 134.

the value of the LXX, it is necessary to argue in detail when the LXX probably preserves the more original reading.

The present volume also reacts to the hypothetical assumption that some versions of biblical texts were generally shortened in their transmission, which is especially the case in disregarding the LXX as a significant witness for the textual development of entire books.[13] To be sure, some

13. An extreme position is represented by the Jeremiah commentary of Georg Fischer, *Jeremia 1–25*, HThKAT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005), 39–46. He regards the MT as a reliable basis for studying Jeremiah, while he claims not to have found a single passage where a LXX reading should be preferred (p. 46: "in ganz Jer [gibt es] keine einzige Stelle, an der eine LXX-Lesart gegenüber MT wahrscheinlicher oder zu bevorzugen wäre"). This position boldly contradicts the conclusion by a number of text critics, who have demonstrated with substantial arguments that the Greek version overwhelmingly more often than not preserves the more original text. In fact, Fischer's commentary shows a clear bias against using the LXX as a witness, which is accompanied by a disregard of the textual evidence. An extreme tendency of marginalizing the LXX of Jeremiah, albeit from a somewhat different angle, is also visible in the approach of Jack R. Lundbom, "Haplography in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Jeremiah," *HS* 46 (2005): 301–20, who explains most of the minuses in Jer LXX as resulting from accidental omissions due to haplography. William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 157, seems to imply a similar position, since he assumes "that the book of Jeremiah (as we know it through most English translations from the Masoretic Text) received its final form in the exile and under the general auspices of the exiled royal court of Jehoiachin," but his position is not unambiguous, since he also seems to imply that sometimes the LXX preserves more original readings (see pp. 156–57). Apart from such one-sided positions, there are several scholars who share the assumption that the shorter LXX of Jeremiah is, at least in part, the result of secondary abbreviations of an earlier textual tradition, while the MT would preserve the more original text; see, e.g., Christoph Levin, *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes in ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Zusammenhang ausgelegt,* FRLANT 137 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 69–72; Arie van der Kooij, "Jeremiah 27:5–15: How Do MT and LXX Relate to Each Other?," *JNSL* 20 (1994): 59–78; Shimon Gesundheit, "The Question of LXX Jeremiah as a Tool for Literary-Critical Analysis," *VT* 62 (2012): 29–57. For a review of text-critical approaches to the text, see Rüdiger Liwak, "Vierzig Jahre Forschung zum Jeremiabuch: I. Grundlagen," *TRu* 76 (2011): 131–79; Richard D. Weis, "Jeremiah. 7.1 Textual History of Jeremiah," in *Textual History of the Bible*, ed. Armin Lange and Emanuel Tov (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1:495–513, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2452-4107_thb_COM_0007010000; and esp. Hermann-Josef Stipp, "A Semi-empirical Example for the Final Touches to a Biblical Book: The Masoretic *Sondergut* of the Book of Jeremiah," in *Insights into Editing in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East: What Does Documented Evidence Tell Us*

LXX translations may include deliberate abridgments, but this is also not as clear as often assumed.[14] In largely literal translations it is unlikely that the translator would have omitted meaningful sections of the text. As for the Hebrew tradition, there are some cases that can be explained as intentional shortenings.[15] The SP sometimes simplifies earlier readings by omitting single textual elements, as shown in the chapter on omissions (ch. 8). However, documented evidence for abridgments remains infrequent and it seems that texts were only shortened for substantial reasons. In the textual material reviewed for this volume there is very little, if any, evidence for general abridgment among the books of the Hebrew canon. The assumption that a text is shortened should not be applied generally to a specific witness; instead, such a theory should always be argued and a clear motive or reason for the abridgment should be shown.

A different phenomenon is the creation of entirely new compositions by using another text as a source; a clear example for this is Chronicles in relation to its sources. Such rewriting of a given tradition needs to be distinguished from the textually continuous transmission of the same literary work.[16] The same partly applies to changes made in the translation

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about the Transmission of Authoritative Texts, ed. Reinhard Müller and Juha Pakkala, CBET 84 (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 295–318.

14. The LXX of Esther is a classic example that is assumed to have shortened its Hebrew *Vorlage*. However, even in LXX Esther one should always look closely for what exactly may have been shortened. The Hebrew of Esther is particularly confusing and possibly even corrupted, and quite a number of the probable omissions and shortenings took place where the Hebrew seems problematic or even incomprehensible. E.g., in Esth 6:8 the LXX leaves out the peculiar idea that the royal crown is placed on the head of a horse (וסוס אשר רכב עליו המלך ואשר נתן כתר מלכות בראשו), which is very unlikely to be original. On the other hand, there are also intentional abridgments. Many of the omissions in Esth 8–9 were motivated by the attempt to censor the most brutal details where the Jews are allowed to massacre their enemies. This was probably done in order to make the translation more acceptable to an international audience in Greek Alexandria.

15. There is, indeed, evidence from Qumran and later literature that some older compositions could be paraphrased or rewritten to form entirely new compositions, and in this process parts of the text could have been abridged. The formation of such new compositions should, however, be distinguished from the transmission of essentially the same text.

16. In our previous study, Müller, Pakkala, Ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing*, 205–17, we also considered the evidence from Chronicles in parallel with text-critical evidence from the same book. The present study has indicated that the pro-

process, especially if the translation was generally very free such as LXX Esther. A translation should not be equated with the scribal transmission of the protobiblical manuscripts. Nonetheless, most of the translations of biblical texts were rather faithful, and in such cases it is often possible to reconstruct the *Vorlage* with considerable accuracy. This is to say, any general assumption on the character of a variant version, be it translation or a composition in the same language, should be carefully argued and its nature shown.

1.3. Unevenly Distributed and Unsystematic Changes

The documented textual evidence studied for this book suggests that the emerging biblical Scriptures contain an unevenly and unsystematically distributed mosaic of multiple editorial alterations. The textual divergences imply haphazard unintentional changes, but also deliberate modifications that can be conceptualized as ancient editing. A textual divergence much more often goes back to a deliberate change than to an accidental scribal mistake. While sometimes it is difficult to determine whether the change was done intentionally or unintentionally, in a majority of cases there are strong reasons to assume a deliberate editorial intervention. This is particularly so if the version that appears to be secondary is nevertheless understandable, since an accidental scribal mistake frequently garbled the syntax or grammar, as well as the meaning and narrative logic. Undoubtedly, each case has to be determined separately, as an intentional change may also disturb the syntax or confuse the narrative logic, but intentional changes rarely created meaningless or incomprehensible texts.

Evidence for intentional changes can be found in abundance throughout the Hebrew Bible. Although only a fraction of the evidence can be discussed and analyzed in this book, our selection of case studies seeks to

cess of creating a new composition is different from the transmission of the same composition (or what is regarded as the same composition). Although the author of Chronicles was to some degree faithful to the sources in Samuel and Kings, even large parts of them could still be omitted in the new composition of Chronicles. This kind of freedom cannot be found in the text-critical evidence of the same composition at all. Consequential omissions are rare and done only for compelling reasons, as will be demonstrated in this volume; see also Juha Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted: Omissions in the Transmission of the Hebrew Bible*, FRLANT 251 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 351–60.

be as representative as possible. To some extent the cases are an arbitrary selection, and the prose texts of the historical books in particular would easily yield a large number of additional cases. On the other hand, poetic parts of the Hebrew Bible are somewhat underrepresented because the cases are often very complex and would require a more detailed discussion. Moreover, in some biblical books the preserved text-critical witnesses diverge less than in others. For example, there is clearly less evidence for variants in the Pentateuch than in the historical books from Joshua to Kings. Although the documented evidence is thus altogether unevenly distributed—which is probably due to different stages in the protocanonizing processes of the emerging Hebrew scriptures and also to some extent due to later harmonizations of the Greek translation—scribal modifications can be found in all biblical books.[17]

Despite the uneven distribution of the evidence, the documented scribal changes provide a similar picture on the transmission of texts in different parts of the Hebrew Bible. Ancient scribes made repeated and very similar changes to the texts they were transmitting. There appears to be no fundamental difference in the type of changes, and there seems to be a very similar underlying attitude toward the transmitted text. In other words, although the Pentateuch contains much less documented evidence for scribal changes than Jeremiah, for example, the types of changes we observe are essentially similar in all parts of the Hebrew Bible. Regardless of the book and genre in question, the techniques and motives of scribal change seem to have been more or less the same. This has strengthened our assumption that the text-critical evidence from the late Second Temple period is representative for the nondocumented phase of transmission in the earlier stages of transmission as well.

The scribes mostly added new material by inserting single words and phrases, clauses and sentences, larger passages, sometimes even entire new blocks of text. Under certain circumstances, they could also omit parts

17. With the exception of the final chapters of Exodus, the textual transmission of the Pentateuch appears to be notably stable and does not show large variation in the preserved witnesses, while in Joshua, e.g., the main textual traditions of the MT and the LXX substantially diverge from each other in many places. Clearly, the Samaritan Pentateuch in relation to the MT contains repeated text-critical variants throughout the Pentateuch. It stands to reason that the apparent stability of the Pentateuch is primarily due to the fact that the text-critical witnesses mainly reflect a later stage in their transmission than the evidence from the historical books.

of the transmitted text or replace them with new material. Sometimes they also transposed words, phrases, or passages and thereby created new sequences of the transmitted material. As for their reasons or motives, the vast majority of deliberate changes fulfilled interpretive purposes, sometimes only indirectly and implicitly, but often explicitly. The texts were stylistically amended, crucial parts were updated, theologically difficult passages were revised, and entirely new material was added. Although the scribes seem to have been rather conservative in their dealings with the texts—they usually transmitted the older material as faithfully as possible—the changes betray substantial scribal creativity in shaping the text in a certain direction. Scholarship has only begun to understand how this scribal conservatism relates to scribal creativity and freedom, which is simultaneously attested.[18]

The documented scribal changes seem to have happened in a largely unsystematic way. Although changes are documented throughout the Hebrew Bible, they rarely form patterns that would justify attributing them to comprehensive redactions of entire books or larger textual sequences.[19] When a passage was amended, the scribal change often reacted to or was in dialogue with certain aspects of the immediate context, corresponding passages, and/or central theological concepts. Because of the similarity with which editors related to the older text, a number of scribal changes seem related in content, conceptions, and style. For example, nomistic additions are often similar in emphasizing the obedience to the law in any action or aspect that may be discussed in a given text. Many editors also seem to have updated the language or harmonized a section or paragraph with a related passage elsewhere. Despite these similarities, it is mostly difficult to pinpoint two or more related editorial changes that would go

18. See esp. Sidnie White Crawford, "Interpreting the Pentateuch through Scribal Processes: The Evidence from the Qumran Manuscripts," in Müller and Pakkala, *Insights into Editing*, 59–80.

19. There are some exceptions to this, although they also do not correspond to classic redactions. E.g., the MT of Jeremiah contains a series of additions that refer to Babylon, Babylonians, Babylonian chronology, or the Babylonian king, but there seems to be no clear connecting ideology between the additions. Although many of these additions could potentially derive from a single editor, it is difficult to determine what the intention was. This is distinctly different from the classic redactions where an intention is central when additions are connected with each other to form a redaction. It is evident that more investigation of the documented evidence is needed in this respect.

back to one and the same scribal hand. Although this may partly be due to the contingent nature of the documented evidence—as it is provided by manuscripts from antiquity to the medieval age that were accidentally preserved—the documented evidence gives a picture of uncoordinated and even somewhat spontaneous editing. In other words, the texts were demonstrably changed all over the place, but documented evidence for comprehensive and systematic redactions remains scarce.[20] Prominent and theologically crucial passages (such as the giving of the law at Mount Sinai/Horeb), key events (e.g., the destruction of Samaria in 2 Kgs 17), and theological topics (such as Solomon's sin in 1 Kgs 11 or Josiah's reform in 2 Kgs 23) have clearly attracted scribal changes more often than other passages, and thus such texts are more clogged with repeated scribal changes.

1.4. Challenges to Historical Criticism

Since the beginnings of critical research, scholars have generally acknowledged that the Hebrew Bible has been revised to some extent, and additions are widely acknowledged.[21] Literary critics have conventionally assumed that editorial changes, and especially additions, were so numerous and weighty that it is imperative to identify them and thereby reconstruct the underlying textual development. According to this scholarly tradition, the Hebrew Bible cannot be used as a reliable document or source for the history, religion, and society of ancient Israel and early Judaism unless there is a serious attempt to distinguish texts from entirely different historical, socio-political, and religious contexts. This approach is based on the conviction that it is possible to identify literary historical seams in the biblical texts and reconstruct editorial changes and thus stages in the textual development. Scholars of this tradition have been rather optimistic that much of the textual development can be reconstructed.

20. To be sure, there are exceptions to this rule; see, e.g., Kristin De Troyer, "The History of the Biblical Text: The Case of the Book of Joshua," in Müller and Pakkala, *Insights into Editing*, 223–46, who argues for a kind of very late redaction that took place in the transmission of the proto-MT tradition of Joshua. Nevertheless, the type of changes that she finds in the text-critical evidence of Joshua are much subtler, mostly limited to individual words, than the much more substantial redactions conventionally assumed in redaction criticism.

21. For a discussion of a number of such cases in different parts of the Hebrew Bible, see Saul M. Olyan and Jacob L. Wright, eds., *Supplementation and the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, BJS 361 (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2018).

In recent scholarship classical historical criticism has become increasingly sidelined. Scholars who implicitly or explicitly reject historical criticism and use texts in the Hebrew Bible in their "final" forms (mainly the Masoretic Text) for historical issues in effect question the importance and extent of scribal changes, and thus regard their impact on the preserved final texts as limited. Without denying some editorial interventions, they imply that changes would be small and/or would mainly interpret the received text. Therefore, it would not be necessary to invest into such a labor-intensive, hypothetical, and controversial enterprise. Although this position is rarely argued in a methodologically consistent way, it can be found as the implicit starting point of many studies that effectively bypass questions of textual history and the nature of the texts as historical sources. A large number of histories of Israel, commentaries, and individual studies on specific topics could be mentioned here. Already the a priori preference of the MT is a step in this direction. The weakness of this position is apparent. A lack of methodological deliberation and inadequate understanding of a key source is shaky ground for any scientific approach.[22] Moreover, the assumption that late editing was limited and insignificant in content does not withstand critical scrutiny and clearly contradicts documented scribal changes, as many of the examples discussed in this book show.

1.5. The Question of Reconstructability

Another main challenge to historical criticism is the allegedly poor reconstructability of the literary history. Acknowledging that the Hebrew Bible was extensively revised, some scholars contend that we do not have the tools to identify later additions and other editorial changes with enough

22. Clearly, an approach that merely investigates texts in the Hebrew Bible as literature in their final forms without any attempt to investigate the historical background or development of texts, the so-called synchronic reading, can be perfectly scientific. Nevertheless, in such cases one should clearly acknowledge the methodological starting point that one does not pursue any historical results other than related to the somewhat arbitrary form of a certain textual version that one has selected for investigation, be it the MT, LXX, SP, or something else, including modern Bible translations. One should expect that the reasons for selecting one of these so-called final texts would be clearly stated in synchronic studies, but this does not seem to be done very often.

certainty, let alone reconstruct their long histories of transmission.[23] The biblical texts would not contain enough unequivocal traces of the editorial processes and therefore these processes would remain beyond the reach of modern investigation. In their recent edited volume, Ray Person and Robert Rezetko challenge conventionally used criteria, such as *Wiederaufnahme*, as too uncertain. Jason Silverman is similarly skeptical about the validity and applicability of the criteria used by literary critics to detect additions. Although he acknowledges additions and the possibility of gaining some results, his own studies largely neglect the textual complexity behind the Masoretic Text, which is used as the primary source.[24] Ehud Ben Zvi, who admits that biblical texts were extensively edited, writes: "scholarly reconstructed texts cannot but be hypothetical and unverifiable, and rarely command any consensus."[25] This contention effectively leads him to abandon historical-critical approaches in favor of more synchronic readings. Many others imply a similar position, and it is implied that theories should not be built on this method since its results cannot be confirmed and therefore will inevitably remain controversial.

The consequent conclusion of assuming significant editing that cannot be reconstructed would be to abandon the Hebrew Bible as a historical

23. See, Stephen A. Kaufman, "The Temple Scroll and Higher Criticism," *HUCA* 53 (1982): 29–43; Ehud Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, FOTL 21A (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 6; Ben Zvi, "The Concept of Prophetic Books and Its Historical Setting," in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman, Bible World (London: Equinox, 2009), 73–95; Raymond F. Person and Robert Rezetko, eds., *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism*, AIL 25 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 1–35 (esp. the introduction); some of the contributors of *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism* also imply a skeptical positon toward the possibilities of historical criticism (see, e.g., contributions by Person and Alan Lenzi), but the discussed evidence is hardly representative of the Hebrew Bible. Many of the contributions discuss texts outside the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Maxine L. Grossman, Joseph A. Weaks, Alan Lenzi, and Sara J. Milstein), while those that discuss texts in the Hebrew Bible hardly touch the question of reconstructability (see, e.g., Stefan Schorch or Julio Trebolle). In fact, in his contribution "Division Markers as Empirical Evidence for the Editorial Growth of Biblical Books," 165–216, Trebolle even discusses markers that could reveal editorial interventions.

24. See Jason Silverman's contributions in "Historical Criticism: Essential or Expendable?," by Cynthia Edenburg, Francis Borchardt, Jason M. Silverman, and Juha Pakkala, in *Changes in Sacred Texts and Traditions: Methodological Encounters and Debates*, ed. Jutta Jokiranta and Martti Nissinen, SBL Press, forthcoming.

25. Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 6.

source, at least for a number of historical questions or even completely. However, such a position is rarely represented in biblical studies.[26] Much more common is the continued use of the Hebrew Bible as a witness to ancient Israel and early Judaism without clearly distinguishing between textual elements that derive from different contexts and times. Some scholars who express skepticism toward reconstructing how the texts developed take the biblical texts confidently as sources for remarkably early periods.[27] If one deals with the Hebrew Bible in this way, the view of all historical issues is necessarily so wide and unspecific that the picture is in effect distorted, for the Hebrew Bible is apparently the product of a very long transmission.

Many biblical passages contain vestiges of subsequent hands from different times and socio-political contexts from monarchic times in Israel and Judah to late Hellenistic and even Roman period in the diaspora. For example, in Samuel and Kings as well as in many prophetic books the oldest text may derive from a monarchic context, while the youngest additions are from the late Second Temple period. The book of Samuel was still developing in the Roman period, as implied by its repeatedly differing editions in the MT and LXX. Even in the later books, such as Chronicles or Ezra–Nehemiah, where the transmission history is somewhat shorter, heavy editing is apparent, and contradictory concepts can be found side by side.[28] It thus seems problematic to use such texts as historical sources without distinguishing the different conceptions and historical elements contained in them. Any advocate of an overall methodological skepticism of histori-

26. Perhaps some scholars who primarily focus on the reception and later use of the Hebrew Bible have concluded so, but this is speculative.

27. See, e.g., the somewhat skeptical position of David Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4, toward the possibilities of historical criticism, but his simultaneous confidence in our ability to use the Hebrew Bible as a historical source for the monarchic period (apparent throughout chs. 10–17 on pages 304–490). For criticism of his position and a review of the book, see Juha Pakkala, "Literary Criticism and the Composition of the Hebrew Bible," *Marginalia: Los Angeles Review of Books*, February 10, 2014; https://tinyurl.com/SBL03101d.

28. For Chronicles, see Georg Steins, *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlußphänomen: Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie von 1/2 Chronik*, BBB 93 (Beltz: Athenaum, 1995); for the development of Ezra 7–10 and Neh 8, see, e.g., Juha Pakkala, *Ezra the Scribe: The Development of Ezra 7–10 and Nehemia 8*, BZAW 347 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004).

cal criticism who takes a biblical book as a source for a single historical period—like Ben Zvi, who deduces the concept of the prophetic book from the early Persian period—necessarily has failed to address the obvious historical complexity of these sources.[29] It would be hazardous to use the MT of Samuel or Kings, for example, as a Persian period witness.[30] To which period does the final Samuel bear witness, and which version is regarded as the source or the final text in the first place? Already the comparison of the MT and LXX undermines such a position, since the texts differ so greatly. One could also opt for the latest stages when the texts underwent significant revision, the Roman period, but this is problematic as well, for most of the textual substance is older and the text hardly reflects particular conceptions of the Roman period. In other words, one does not avoid the inevitable source problem by focusing on a later period when the texts had already become more or less stable.[31] It is difficult to see how the final compositions could be reliable witnesses for any late period except as a text that was used and read during this period, but this belongs already to reception history. It stands to reason that without addressing the issue of composite and edited texts the usability of texts in the Hebrew Bible in their final forms would remain limited and highly uncertain. In fact, the resulting uncertainty could thus be even bigger than the uncertainty one seeks to avoid in disregarding historical criticism and addressing only a certain final form. This position

29. See Ben Zvi, "Concept of Prophetic Books," 73–95. Ben Zvi comes to this historical setting of the early Persian period by postulating that the "concept of prophetic book (in its present form) cannot be placed before the end of the monarchic period and its immediate aftermath" and must predate "the composition of both Chronicles and Jonah," which are "both likely from the late Persian period," since Chronicles and Jonah presuppose this concept (79). Apart from the debatable dating of Chronicles and Jonah, this argument seems historically very general and imprecise to understand the factual texts of these books, and it particularly ignores the multiple traits of continuous literary development far beyond the Persian period.

30. E.g., Ehud Ben Zvi, "Memories of Kings of Israel and Judah within the Mnemonic Landscape of the Literati of the Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Period: Exploratory Considerations," *SJOT* 33 (2019): 1–15, uses the book of Kings as evidence for "the Mnemonic Landscape" in the late Persian/early Hellenistic period, but it is not self-evident that the book can be used as any type of evidence for this period. Ben Zvi's approach implies that essential parts of Kings were written or revised exactly during this period, but that has not been shown. It is probable that most of the content in the book was written earlier and that it continued to be revised even later. The late Persian/early Hellenistic background of Kings may be only limited.

31. This is the position of Ben Zvi, "Memories of Kings of Israel and Judah."

also mainly uses the MT as the source text and largely bypasses the differences between the witnesses, which would display evident problems, such as with the two widely differing versions of Samuel. It is difficult to build a solid methodological basis for the study of the biblical texts if variant editions are neglected and one merely uses one text in its final form without any attempt to distinguish its textual and literary history.[32]

Furthermore, an overall skepticism toward reconstructing editorial histories of texts appears one-sided and exaggerated. There are certainly many passages whose development remains difficult to reconstruct, and many samples in this book indeed show that editorial changes often did not leave unequivocal traces to be detected by modern critics. However, this is only one side of the coin. There are many cases indicating the opposite, which should also be taken into consideration in any model. A great number of editorial changes documented by divergent textual traditions would be detectable even without the variant that preserves the older reading. These changes disturbed the syntax, structure, content, and/or narrative logic to such an extent that a careful critic would be able to reconstruct what happened. The documented textual transmission suggests that there is an entire range between nonreconstructability of editorial changes and partial and full reconstructability. To be sure, reconstructions that cover every detail of the literary development without any tentativeness seem exaggerated and untenable. But it is also scientifically unsustainable to only address the unreconstructable cases and use them to justify the complete rejection of historical criticism. At the end of this book, we try to develop criteria for how reconstructable changes can be distinguished from those cases of editing that remain undetectable or largely unreconstructable. Future scholarship should seek to understand what kind of editorial changes left detectable traces in the resulting texts, study such cases among the documented textual transmission, and learn from them how to detect similar changes where no documented evidence is extant.

1.6. Model of Transmission and Textual Fluidity

Benjamin Ziemer fundamentally challenges historical criticism by arguing that its assumed model of textual development is flawed. According

32. We have addressed some of the challenges and concerns raised by Niels Peter Lemche and Ben Zvi in Müller, Pakkala, Ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing*, 12–14. These points need not be repeated here.

to him, the assumption that texts primarily developed through additions is contradicted by documented evidence in textual variants. Discussing a large number of different texts that were preserved in variant editions, he argues that omissions, rewritings, and transpositions were much more prevalent than what is conventionally assumed. These faulty assumptions would undermine the method's approach and lead to distorted reconstructions.[33]

Two significant problems in Ziemer's approach are its heavy reliance on texts from the entire ancient Near East and the assumption that the same scribal or editorial processes were in place in various contexts, cultures, and languages. He largely fails to discuss how scribes perceived the texts they transmitted, and thus much of the evidence may not be directly relevant to the question of how the Hebrew Bible was transmitted. The texts of the Hebrew Bible came to be perceived as holy and authoritative, which influenced their transmission in a crucial way. This is seen in omissions, for instance, which were common in many texts of the ancient Near East, whereas documented evidence from the Hebrew Bible shows that its editors sought to preserve the older text as much as possible even when they changed the text's intention or meaning by additions. Omissions were made in exceptional cases when the text contained something offensive that could not be bypassed by additions.[34] The avoidance of omissions and replacements often resulted in repetitive and inconsistent texts, such as 1 Kgs 8 and 11 or 2 Kgs 23, which have no parallels outside the Hebrew Bible. In most other literature of the ancient Near East, scribes could much more freely smooth texts by replacing and omitting textual segments.

Ziemer's approach contains a number of other problems as well. He relies heavily on free Greek translations, such as Esther, Daniel, and First Esdras, where it is particularly challenging to reach the Hebrew *Vorlage*.[35] Of all the Greek translations that he uses as evidence for Hebrew scribal processes, Jeremiah is perhaps the most relevant, since the translation is rather faithful and thus allows a reliable comparison of the MT and the Hebrew *Vorlage* behind the Old Greek.[36] Ziemer justly comes to the con-

33. Benjamin Ziemer, *Kritik des Wachstumsmodells: Die Grenzen alttestamentlicher Redaktionsgeschichte im Lichte empirischer Evidenz*, VTSup 182 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 697–716.

34. Juha Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted*, 183–252.

35. Ziemer, *Kritik des Wachstumsmodells*, 384–460 (chs. 11–13).

36. Ziemer, *Kritik des Wachstumsmodells*, 273–383.

clusion that omissions and rewritings are rare in Jeremiah. However, he paradoxically assumes that Jeremiah is an exception in ancient literature,[37] while it may in fact be one of the best examples of typical transmission processes in the Second Temple period. A similar picture in many other books, such as Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, corroborates the scribal processes in Jeremiah. The scribal freedom Ziemer argues for is essentially based on other ancient Near Eastern literature and rather free Greek translations, while core texts in the Hebrew Bible that show scribal processes in the Second Temple period are neglected.

Another problem of Ziemer's approach is the blurred difference between new literary works and later scribal editing or *Fortschreibung* of the same literary work,[38] which allows him to use new compositions, such as Chronicles, Jubilees, and the Genesis Apocryphon, as evidence for scribal processes. It is widely acknowledged that new literary works in the Hebrew Bible commonly used sources selectively. However, one should recognize how a new literary composition relates to the older texts that were used as sources. At least Jubilees and Genesis Apocryphon were probably written to supplement their sources in the Pentateuch and not to replace them, and therefore it is apparent that the authors were not concerned about skipping entire sections in their sources. Rewritings and omissions in them should not be likened to omissions in the later transmission of the same composition, such as Exodus, Joshua, or Kings. The use of various types of evidence from the ancient Near East without making a clear distinction between different contexts and perceptions of the transmitted text fundamentally undermines Ziemer's criticism of historical criticism.[39]

For other scholars, the general fluidity and pluriformity of the Hebrew Bible during the Second Temple period is an implicit reason to doubt the feasibility or reliability of historical-critical methods. Variant editions were in circulation in various contexts where they were independently edited, which occasioned constantly increasing plurality, complexity of transmission, and an endless web of interconnections between texts. Therefore, it would be difficult or even impossible to establish the genetic lineage and

37. Ziemer, *Kritik des Wachstumsmodells*, 380–81.

38. Ziemer, *Kritik des Wachstumsmodells*, 13–15.

39. For further discussion of Ziemer's model, see Juha Pakkala, review of *Kritik des Wachstumsmodells: Die Grenzen alttestamentlicher Redaktionsgeschichte im Lichte empirischer Evidenz*, by Benjamin Ziemer, *Bib* 102 (2021): 463–68.

relative ages between variants made in different literary transmissions. According to this line of thought, the idea of a more original text would be elusive or even misleading. Here one should clearly distinguish between *the* original text of literary works—an ideal entity that may remain beyond reach, if such ever even existed—and the comparison of two readings to determine which one is relatively more original than the other. Many critics of historical criticism seem to assume that the former is still a central goal of the method.[40] Undeniably, there are scholars who pursue the original text (or the *Urtext*) in some compositions, but for most of the Hebrew Bible it is hardly possible to reach any original texts.[41] For example, in the study of prophets, the uncertainties become so immense that it would be hazardous to build on any reconstruction that claims to have identified the original text of Hosea, or the very words written by the prophet Jeremiah, for example.[42] In addition to the uncertainty of complicated literary development, the whole concept of the original text may be illusory. More important as a historical task is the later development that provides significant information about the transmitting contexts.[43] On the other hand, the pursuit of the original sources may in some cases be a meaningful historical goal even if one were unable to reach a high degree of certainty about each reconstructed text. The book of Kings is an example, as there

40. This seems to be assumed in the introduction in Liv Lied and Hugo Lundhaug, eds., *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*, TUGAL 175 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 1–6; thus also Sanders, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text*, 127–40.

41. The search for the pentateuchal sources is a notable example of the search for the original text, although current scholarship increasingly sees very fragmentary sources and uncertain development.

42. Hermann-Josef Stipp, "Sprachliche Kennzeichen jeremianischer Autorschaft," in *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah,* ed. Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz, BZAW 388 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 148–86, has developed a remarkable linguistic method for discovering supposedly authentic words of Jeremiah in the book, but there remain doubts about whether such an approach underestimates the complexities of the literary historical developments and is able to produce valid results.

43. For a discussion and review of New Testament discussion concerning the secondary expansions that have become more and more important, see Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 352–62. According to him, in New Testament scholarship the shift from original texts to the work of scribes in the whole transmission "is arguably the most significant development over the past two decades, especially in the English speaking world."

is a rough consensus as to which texts may derive from the royal annals of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Without a literary-critical approach, the highly important information contained therein remains hidden and is in effect useless for historical research.

Although various consequences could be drawn from the undeniable fluidity and pluriformity of transmission, a number of scholars assume that these points essentially undermine the rationale and methods of historical criticism.[44] The fluidity would be further complicated or even confused by the partial orality of transmission. A few examples will suffice.

By using example texts in 1 Kgs 11–14, Frank Ueberschaer has argued that the many variants between the MT, LXX^B, LXX^L, Peshitta, Vulgate, and Old Latin imply a broad fluctuation of the textual transmission ("eine grosse Bandbreite der Textüberlieferung"), and in some cases none of the witnesses may preserve the original text. This would at least in part be the result of an oral-written transmission where several *texts* were transmitted in parallel but where none could be regarded as more original than the others. Although this would not apply to every textual segment, the possibility should be taken into consideration in every analysis. Ueberschaer thus does not categorically reject the quest to determine the relative age of variant readings, but he assumes that there are cases where this is not possible, and two or more readings may simultaneously be original. The reason for this would be the partial orality of transmission: Some pieces of

44. For a review of some challenges to historical criticism, see Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted*, 63–72, and Müller, Pakkala, Ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing*, 9–15. A number of names could be mentioned here, such as Person, but it is very difficult to find a systematic analysis of historical criticism from this perspective. In their recent book, Lied and Lundhaug, *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions*, 2–6, have also voiced criticism of the conventional approach, but other than proposing a fundamental shift in focus to the manuscripts, there is little discussion on the methodological basis of historical criticism. They rightly question the attempt to find the earliest form of biblical texts, and here one can only agree that such a goal would be unrealistic in many cases. However, this does not mean that one should abandon the attempt to understand the textual development that may still contain very significant information. It is also difficult to see how manuscript studies—which the so-called new philology effectively is part of—would exclude historical criticism. In other words, there is no need to see historical criticism and new philology as somehow alternatives that exclude each other. It should also be noted that most of the contributions in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions* do not address the methodological questions discussed here. For new philology, see also Liv Lied in https://www.academia.edu/12026818/_New_Philology_-_in_a_Nutshell_.

tradition were orally transmitted alongside the written texts so that their form and position were not clearly fixed. Later, when the oral traditions were written down, different transmitting traditions could place them in different forms in different places. In favor of this theory, Ueberschaer discusses some examples in detail, such as 1 Kgs 11:1–3; 11:43–12:2, where two textual witnesses place a section in different locations and in slightly different form (see analyses of these verses in ch. 10, "Transpositions").[45] Ueberschaer is certainly right that there are cases where one may not be able to determine which one of the many variants is most original. Nevertheless, there are two aspects here, and both need to be clearly distinguished: orality and textual fluidity.

It is evident that the transmission of the Hebrew Bible was in a constant flux in its formative period before freezing as a canonical text. Repeated scribal changes, and especially additions, will also be underscored in the present study, and it is evident that secondary changes were made in different textual traditions in parallel. For example, the proto-MT and the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX were evidently both edited after they diverged as separate textual strands, and there may have been various textual strands in both of them. Other textual traditions were edited in other contexts, such as the text-type represented by the Samaritan Pentateuch, and some biblical Qumran manuscripts imply nonalignment with the main known traditions. The development was undeniably very complicated. In addition to various changes in parallel literary traditions, some texts were secondarily harmonized toward a text that was regarded as more authoritative and/or more reliable, mostly toward the proto-Masoretic Text. A more original reading may thus have been secondarily altered and harmonized toward a less original reading. Many of the examples in this volume discuss such cases, and often the nonharmonized and more original text has to be found among the textual variants in translations, especially in Greek and Latin. Such recensions thus further complicate the already complex development. Indeed, this investigation underscores the complexities involved with textual or literary histories of the Hebrew Bible. This brings us back to the question of whether historical criticism can reconstruct any of this development reliably enough that it can justify using

45. Frank Ueberschaer, *Vom Gründungsmythos zur Untergangssymphonie: Eine text- und literaturgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1Kön 11–14*, BZAW 481 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 28–36.

the method, which is the main reason for this volume. A general model on how complicated the development was is surely significant and various models should be discussed, but complexity of transmission as a whole does not as such say much about our ability to detect individual scribal changes, which is the focus of historical criticism. The biological evolution of species was also extremely complicated and may never be reconstructed in full, but this does not say anything as such about scientists' ability to investigate individual microlevel evolutionary changes. The reliability of historical criticism needs to be evaluated on the basis of actual documented cases of scribal changes where it is possible to test whether individual scribal changes could be detected or not. This is one of the main goals of the book.

Orality of transmission is a different issue, and its relationship with a complicated literary history should be understood before jumping to far-reaching conclusions. That a critic cannot determine which variant is more original does not inevitably lead to orality as an explanation. It would have to be shown that orality played a role and not merely assumed when a textual explanation fails to convince or remains uncertain. Clearly, scholarship on the role of orality in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible has advanced in recent times. Earlier scholarship assumed that the early transmission of biblical books was oral and that at some stage the traditions were written down as texts, after which the transmission was textual. Such a clear-cut division certainly cannot be maintained.[46] An originally oral transmission also cannot be taken as given, but should always be shown if such is assumed. On the other hand, it is now widely acknowledged that oral dynamics did influence later textual transmission, and can thus explain some phenomena and variants in the texts.[47] However, the impact of orality should not be exaggerated. This is implied by the manuscript evidence (e.g., Qumran) as well as the type of changes that can be observed in the documented evidence. For example, clear tensions and syntactic errors are best explained as the results of textual alteration and would hardly be preserved to such an extent as we have in the Hebrew Bible if the transmission had been essentially oral (see also discussion below).

46. Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Israel* (London: SPCK, 1996), 134.

47. Niditch, *Oral World Written World*, passim; David M. *Carr*, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 287–91.

1.7. Oral Performances or Written Transmission?

In view of the considerable textual plurality in the Second Temple period, Raymond Person has suggested that oral dynamics not only influenced, but played an essential role in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible. Accordingly, he argues that the transmission history cannot be reconstructed with enough certainty to be usable for historical purposes. Each manuscript would only be "an imperfect instantiation of the broader tradition" by scribes who "were performers of their tradition in ways analogous to oral bards."[48] Since hearers were assumed to know the transmitted tradition in full, it was not necessary to write down everything in each written copy of the tradition. Parts could be left out if they were not relevant for the performance in question or for other occasions for which the written copy was made. Familiar with the full tradition, the audience would supplement skipped sections in their mind. Sections could be added, and thus the textual copy used for a performance could include such a new section. On the other hand, Person argues that "different manuscripts containing different readings can … be understood as representing the same literary text" and they all are also "faithful representations of the same broader tradition."[49] As an example he mentions the Deuteronomistic History and the book of Chronicles, which would both be "faithful representations of the same broader tradition." Consequently, the oral aspect or dynamics of transmission would mean that the texts or traditions were even more fluid than conventional textual models assume. Person concludes that the Hebrew Bible can only be used as a rather general source because it cannot provide as detailed information as historical criticism assumes. If Person is right, it would indeed be futile to determine the relative age of variant readings, which would undermine all classic textual and historical studies of the Hebrew Bible, including text criticism.

48. Raymond F. Person, "Text Criticism as a Lens for Understanding the Transmission of Ancient Texts in Their Oral Environments," in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writings: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production*, ed. Brian B. Schmidt, AIL 22 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 197; he writes: "as texts in a primarily oral society like ancient Israel, each manuscript represents the broader tradition as an imperfect instantiation of the broader tradition that existed."

49. Person, "Text Criticism as a Lens," 207, 197.

The model Person suggests is important as an example that is not essentially based on observations in documented textual evidence in the Hebrew Bible. It relies on the assumption that the Hebrew Bible is largely analogous with traditions that were (or are assumed to be) orally transmitted by bards. Person mentions as possible analogies the homeric Iliad, medieval English tales, and A Thousand and One Nights, where one can similarly see variation between the preserved textual witnesses. By using these traditions, Person assumes that the Hebrew Bible was also transmitted orally, which then leads him to assume that the full tradition was a mental text in the collective memory of the people, and therefore the preserved texts would not represent the whole tradition.

However, the documented evidence suggests that the transmission of the Hebrew Bible was much more textual than the supposed analogies. Without denying some influence of orality, parts of the Hebrew Bible refer to the importance of putting down the tradition in writing (e.g., Exod 24:4 and Deut 31:9). Some texts, such as Deut 4:2 and 13:1, emphasize that one may not take out or add anything from the tradition, which fits poorly with Person's model. One should also not underestimate the perception of the Torah as a divine revelation, attested already in the late Second Temple period, which essentially distinguishes it from folk tales used as entertainment. The Torah refers to itself as a written document (e.g., Deut 28:58; 29:20–21; 30:10). That it was understood as a written revelation is mirrored in various other parts of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., 2 Kgs 22:13; 23:3).[50] Some of the same problems can also be seen in Ziemer's criticism of the historical-critical method, as discussed §1.6, and the following discussion undermines his assumed model of transmission as well.

Most important is documented evidence from the Hebrew Bible itself. Some documented cases indeed imply changed word orders, words replaced with synonyms, and other similarly modified textual elements, and some of these variants could be explained by an oral dimension, as shown by Susan Niditch, David Carr, and Person (e.g., as memory variants).[51] This certainly undermines assumptions that every single word

50. The textual background of many other parts can also be shown. E.g., the royal annals, which were used as the main source for Kings, were in all likelihood written texts. Joshua, Samuel, and Kings also contain references to "books" that were used as sources (Josh 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18; 1 Kings 11:41; 14:19).

51. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 41–42; Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 33; Niditch, *Oral World and Written World*; Raymond F. Person, "Formulas and

was always faithfully preserved. However, there is very little evidence that *meaningful* sections of the tradition could easily be added, replaced, or omitted. The present volume discusses several cases where the older text was very carefully preserved although an addition was partly contradictory or in tension with the older text. For example, in 1 Kgs 15:5 a shorter version refers to David as the ideal king, but an expansion found in another version that mentioned David's sin with Bathsheba created an evident contradiction. This would have been easily avoided by omitting or replacing one or two words. The faithful preservation of the various textual elements including contradictory and inconsistent textual sequences suggests that the text was transmitted as an essentially written tradition. Oral transmission would most likely remove contradictions and especially syntactic errors (see Josh 1:7), while the careful preservation of written material better explains their preservation through the centuries. Another related case is the Chronicler's attempt at disguising David's adultery with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel. A sentence of the older narrative ("David remained at Jerusalem" in 2 Sam 11:1) was kept in the new version (1 Chr 20:1), although there it makes little sense (see 1 Chr 20:2).[52] There are also many examples where Chronicles interprets a given *textual* tradition by adducing passages from the Torah, and this is often done in such intricate ways that it is very difficult to imagine this as being due to an oral performance.[53] Phenomena like these cannot be explained as resulting from oral composition of the same tradition.

Ancient Israel was certainly an essentially oral society, as Person stresses, but this does not mean that its normative and authoritative literature, which emerged in historically poorly known circumstances, followed the same rules as other literature of different genres in quite different cultures and times. It would be necessary to demonstrate that traditions

Scribal Memory: A Case Study of Text-Critical Variants as Examples of Category-Triggering," in *Weathered Words: Formulaic Language and Verbal Art*, ed. Frog and William Lamb (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2021), 147–72. An oral dimension of textual transmission is implied in many general studies and introductions; e.g., Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 195–97.

52. Thus already Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: Black, 1885), 178; see also the discussion by Sara Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 361–64.

53. See Lars Maskow, *Tora in der Chronik: Studien zur Rezeption des Pentateuchs in den Chronikbüchern*, FRLANT 274 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019).

performed by bards are indeed close analogies to the Hebrew Bible.[54] One should also distinguish oral performance and oral transmission, which are not inevitably connected.[55] At least since early medieval times the MT has been transmitted as a written text at the same time that it was orally performed in synagogues. Oral performance in synagogues tells little about the early transmission of these texts.

Furthermore, in contrast with Homer's epics, much of the Hebrew Bible is written as prose, which is not as well suited for oral transmission, and thus a close analogy between epics drafted exclusively in hexameters and the biblical prose narratives that contain a variety of forms and literary styles should be demonstrated before assuming it a priori. Person's criticism of historical criticism does not make a clear distinction between the literary forms. Instead of assuming uncertain analogies, documented evidence from the Hebrew Bible should remain the core of any investigation that evaluates or criticizes historical criticism.

1.8. The Prospects and Limits of Historical Criticism

Although the methodological alternatives may not stand on solid ground, the reasons for neglecting and rejecting historical criticism can be understood. Despite using the same methods, there are different and even contradictory models on the history of the same texts. Models range from repeated editing and countless textual layers to those that only identify isolated additions and otherwise assume rather coherent texts. After the critical study of more than a century, there is no consensus on the literary histories of many biblical texts, sometimes even along general lines of entire books (e.g., Joshua, Samuel, Kings). Although there are exceptions

54. This cannot be assumed as given, especially since there is very little evidence or information about oral performance, let alone about the oral transmission of the Hebrew Bible.

55. See Erhard Blum, "Die Stimme des Autors in den Geschichtsüberlieferungen des Alten Testaments," in *Historiographie in der Antike,* ed. Klaus-Peter Adam, BZAW 373 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 107–29, who opts for a model according to which the ancient Hebrew prose narratives of the historical books were drafted and transmitted in writing to be read aloud to audiences (esp. p. 115). Blum also argues that the author's voice in this kind of anonymous "traditional literature" (*Traditionsliteratur*), which can be heard only very indirectly in some parenthetic remarks, is of a completely different nature than in ancient Greek prose historiography and in the epic poetry of Homer and Hesiod (pp. 126–27).

where most scholars who value historical criticism would agree that a passage was added (e.g., Deut 4 or 13), this rarely extends to broader models or the literary histories of larger compositions.[56]

The reasons for lack of consensus in many texts are complicated, but to some extent these problems arise from the basis of historical criticism, which has not been firmly anchored in documented evidence.[57] Its basic assumptions, methodological possibilities, and limits have not been methodologically tested and compared with cases where one can observe how the texts were edited. The actual reconstructability of scribal changes in particular has only been assumed, but how reliable the reconstructions are has not been evaluated with regard to the documented evidence. This is clearly an area where historical criticism has not adequately responded to its critics. The nature of the editorial changes that can be seen in the documented evidence only partly correspond to the changes that are commonly assumed in literary criticism or historical criticism in general. As we will see in the analyses, there is more variety in the actual editorial techniques than is commonly assumed. For example, omissions and replacements took place, although they are often rejected or neglected by literary critics, and this needs to be taken into consideration in implementing the method. The limits and possibilities of historical criticism should therefore be systematically explored and clearly acknowledged. In this book we seek to remedy some of these problems by focusing on the documented evidence, which we believe is *the* springboard for testing and improving the method.

It should finally be stressed that a large majority of biblical scholars take no part in the methodological discussion about historical criticism. Apart from those who practice the method, a growing number of scholars imply that it is not relevant, and to some extent the method becomes

56. Nevertheless, Eckart Otto "Treueid und Gesetz: Die Ursprünge des Deuteronomiums im Horizont des neuassyrischen Vertragsrechts," *ZABR* 2 (1996): 40, assumes that Deut 13 is a core of the book, but he peculiarly also regards the chapter as alien in its context.

57. There are many texts that cannot derive from the same author, but the literary development is complicated beyond reconstruction, e.g., Josiah's reform in 2 Kgs 23; it is clear that attempts to reconstruct such a text remain very hypothetical, and thus it is also difficult to reach consensus. Moreover, there are different conceptions on the extent of later scribal activity, which influences the way a scholar views the analyzed text. Different scholarly traditions also relate differently to the textual witnesses, and there is clearly a lack of familiarity with the LXX and other textual traditions.

more and more silenced by disregard. Although this may not be a conscious process, at the background is the assumption that other approaches and methods are more relevant or provide the expected information about ancient Israel and early Judaism. It is clear that historical criticism requires painstaking and sometimes frustrating textual investigations that may not lead to conclusive results, and therefore this method needs to prove that it can provide important results that justify the historical work put into it.

1.9. Presentation of the Evidence and Technical Issues

The different types of documented editorial changes presented in this book are divided into four main categories: additions, omissions, replacements, and transpositions. Additions will be further subdivided into additions of different sizes, while other main categories need not be subdivided, since they are much less frequently attested and the number of examples is much smaller. Moreover, most of the changes of the other categories are rather short. For example, nearly all meaningful omissions are of one word or one sentence.

The four main categories derive from an essential difference between these editorial techniques. As historical criticism conventionally only assumes additions, it is necessary to discuss the other types of changes separately. Particular attention will be on these changes as a technique and on the attitude of scribes toward them. Additions often explain, clarify, or interpret the older text, while meaningful omissions and replacements can be seen to challenge the older text more than additions. We will thus ask whether the scribes related to the different techniques differently and how the different scribal approaches can be described.

With some exceptions, the analyses are divided into standard sections. After the introduction and presentation of the variants in question, we will propose a theory of what happened to the text and arguments in its favor. This is followed by a discussion of alternative theories and possible counterarguments. The evidence may also be ambiguous, in which case a definite conclusion will be left out. The chapters also include a section on the nature of the observed editorial change. Here we seek to discuss how the editorial change may have been technically made. For example, was it made between the lines or in the margins of an already existing manuscript, or was it made when the entire manuscript was copied? In this section we will also ask if there are any signs of a redaction that the edito-

rial change could be part of, or whether it is more likely to be an isolated addition. Without going into detail, the dating and purpose of the editorial change will also receive some attention here.

As one of the goals of this book is to investigate the methodological basis of literary criticism, an important section of each analysis is a hypothetical discussion on whether the documented editorial change could have been detected without the older or more original version being preserved. It is clear that some subjectivity is inherent in discussing such hypothetical cases, yet we will lay the arguments on the table for any criticism, and in any case we will pursue a critical evaluation. The analyses will be concluded by a brief summary of the results.

Due to the focus and scope of the book, only a selection of secondary literature on individual analyses can be considered here. There is much more scholarly discussion that could have been included for some of the cases analyzed, but this would have inflated the book beyond reasonable limits. We have not pursued the final say for any of the analyzed example texts as such and have considered other literature only as far as is necessary for the goals of this study. In many cases we defend a theory that has already been proposed in biblical studies, in some cases already in the nineteenth century, while in other cases we offer a new theory that has not been proposed before. We also do not seek to solve all text-critical problems in the discussed passage but merely focus on the main scribal change in question and variants directly related to it. In many cases, especially when a Hebrew text is compared with a translation, there are a number of additional small variants that could be discussed.

As for technical markings in the charts and diagrams, the expansions and pluses in the textual witnesses are underlined. Rewritten and otherwise differing parallel texts are displayed in dashed underline. Relocated or transposed sections of text are written in gray. Omitted sections are marked with ~~strikethrough~~. Note that underlined pluses in one witness may be omitted in another witness. Plus is a neutral characterization of a reading that is missing in another witness, while an expansion (or addition) as well as omission is a characterization based on a critical evaluation of the two readings. Parallel or similar sections in two different texts being compared are highlighted with gray background. Because of the scope of the volume, as discussed above, not all variants between witnesses in different languages have been marked. A translation often contains a number of smaller variants, some of which may be related to the translation technique, which do not concern us here.

Most of the English translations of the Hebrew follow the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), while the English translations of the LXX and Old Greek follow the New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS), but both have occasionally been modified. The masoretic vowels and other signs have also been left out of the MT, because they largely reflect later interpretations of the Hebrew text than the textual stages that are compared in this book.

In books where the Göttingen edition of the Septuagint has not yet appeared, we have used the Cambridge sigla in reference to manuscripts and manuscript groups. For the main codices and traditions we have also used superscript as follows: LXX^{A} for Codex Alexandrinus, and so on, and LXX^{L} for the Lucianic or Antiochene group of texts.

List of Passages Investigated in Detail

Additions

Single words and short phrases: Gen 14:22; 31:53; Exod 3:1; Deut 26:17; Josh 1:7; 1 Kgs 17:14; 18:18; 19:10, 14; Jeremiah (epithets, titles, etc.); Ezra 10:3; 1 Esd 8:90; 2 Esd 10:3

Single sentences and expressions: Gen 43:28; Exod 22:19; Deut 1:25, 35, 39; 17:3; Josh 2:12; 4:10; 10:13; 11:19; 19:15, 22, 30, 38; 22:25; 1 Sam 31:6; 2 Sam 22:3; 1 Kgs 11:33–34, 38–39; 15:5, 23; 16:10; 22:28; 2 Kgs 8:27; 16:11–12; Jer 25:1–2; 26:20–23; 28:3, 14; 29:1; 32:30; Psalms headings; Pss 13:6; 18:2; 135:6; 149:9; Neh 9:6

Small sections, clusters of connected sentences: Exod 32:9–10; Deut 34:1–3; Josh 8:7–8; 23:16b; 1 Sam 18:10–11, 17–19; 2 Sam 5:4–5; 1 Kgs 16:34; Jer 27:18–22; Neh 11:20–21

Larger passages: Jer 29:16–20; 33:14–26; 1 Chr 1:11–26

Omissions

Exod 21:18, 21; Deut 1:8, 35; 11:9; Josh 5:14; 1 Sam 4:7; 2 Sam 15:8

Replacements

Gen 2:2; Exod 21:28–29; 24:4; Num 1:47; 2:33; Deut 32:8–9; Josh 24:1, 25; Judg 20:2; 1 Sam 1:23; 2:21; 22:6; 2 Sam 5:21; 6:6–7; 1 Kgs 11:11; 2 Kgs 12:10; Ps 72:1, 5, 7

Transpositions

Gen 31:45–52; 47:5–6; Exod 1:5; Lev 8:10–12; Num 1; 26 (focus on Gad); 1 Kgs 11:1–10; 11:43–12:3; Jer 28:5