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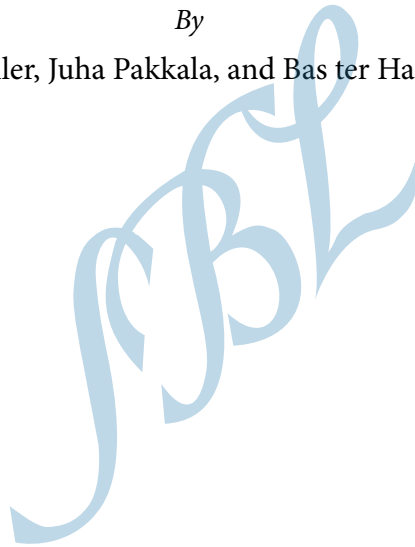
Number 75

EVIDENCE OF EDITING

Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible

By

Reinhard Müller, Juha Pakkala, and Bas ter Haar Romeny



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ABBREVIATIONS

≈	ideas, verses, or passages that roughly correspond with each other.
AASF	Annales Academiae scientiarum fennicae
AB	Anchor Bible
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
ASV	American Standard Version
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten and Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATD Erg.	Das Alte Testament Deutsch Ergänzungsreihe
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
<i>BHK</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica</i> . Edited by Rudolf Kittel. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905–1906. 1925 ² , 1937 ³ , 1951 ⁴ , 1973 ¹⁶ .
<i>BHQ</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</i> . Edited by Adrian Schenker et al. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004–.
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983.
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature

FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HOTTP	The Hebrew Old Testament Text Project
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Altes Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IOSCS	International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
<i>J.W.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KeHAT	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
KJV	King James Version
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEB	New English Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OTL	Old Testament Library
POut	De Prediking van het Oude Testament
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series

SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
ST	<i>Studia theologica</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
TECC	Textos y Estudios «Cardenal Cisneros»
UBS	United Bible Societies
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplement Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBK	Zürcher Bibelkommentare



1862

INTRODUCTION

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS VOLUME

This book seeks to demonstrate that substantial editing took place in the history of the Hebrew Bible. It presents empirical evidence¹ that gives exemplary insight into the editorial processes. The examples show how successive scribes updated the texts to accord with changed historical and social circumstances and with new religious concepts. On the basis of evidence that is collected here it can reasonably be assumed that editorial reworking of the Hebrew Bible continued unabated for centuries before the texts gradually became unchangeable. Their growing religious authority does not seem to have precluded scribes from changing the form, meaning, and content of the texts. On the contrary, for some scribes the religious authority attributed to the texts was reason to update or otherwise improve their wording in order to make sure that no blemish could be found in them. The empirical or documented evidence indicates that editorial modification was the rule rather than the exception, and accordingly signs of editing can be found in all parts of the Hebrew Bible.

Already in the nineteenth century several scholars acknowledged that the texts of the Hebrew Bible are the result of editing, but since then there have always been different perceptions as to how much the biblical texts were edited and to what extent one should take such processes into consideration. There have also been scholars who rejected the idea of editing completely² or assumed that editing was only a marginal phe-

1. The term “empirical” in connection with textual evidence was initially used by Jeffrey Tigay (*Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985]).

2. E.g., John Van Seters, *The Edited Bible: The Curious History of the “Editor” in Biblical Criticism* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 297, 391, 398–401, and passim.

nomenon that did not affect the meaning of the texts substantially.³ In this book we seek to demonstrate that editing has been so substantial and frequent that biblical scholars may not neglect or bypass editorial processes as irrelevant. Instead, one should determine the existence, extent, and impact of editorial changes on the texts of the Hebrew Bible if they are used as sources for historical purposes. This is suggested by empirical evidence that can be found in many parts of the Hebrew Bible itself and in its ancient witnesses.

With the term “empirical evidence” we refer to such cases where the same passage or text is preserved and documented in parallel versions (e.g., the Passover laws in Lev 23 and Num 28, the description of the destruction of Jerusalem in 2 Kgs 25 and Jer 52, or the prophecies concerning Moab in Isa 15–16 and Jer 48). Factual changes that took place in the transmission of the text can be observed by comparing these versions. Another kind of empirical evidence can be found among the manifold variations that occur in the textual traditions. Here we are referring to the differences between the Masoretic Text (MT), the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), biblical manuscripts from Qumran, and the ancient translations, the Septuagint (LXX) in particular.

The evidence that is collected in this volume shows that the distinction between textual criticism and literary or redaction criticism (*Literarkritik*)⁴ cannot be drawn very sharply. If one compares the ancient witnesses of a certain biblical text, one will find not only errors of copyists and different translation techniques but also many deliberate changes of the transmitted texts. The documented evidence of the textual history indicates that editorial processes went on at rather late stages (here one should mention, for instance, the expansion of Judg 6:7–10 that is not yet contained in a manuscript from Qumran, or 1 Kgs 6:11–14, which is not found in several LXX manuscripts). Literary or redaction criticism assumes that similar changes took place at earlier stages, although there is, in most cases, no empirical evidence of such changes. Indeed, literary criticism investigates primarily cases where documented evidence is missing, while textual criti-

3. This is often implied in studies that use the “final” (mainly) MT as the sole object of investigation.

4. In this volume we will use the terms “literary criticism” and “redaction criticism” instead of “source” or “composition criticism.” The term “literary criticism” used in this volume should be clearly distinguished from the literary criticism used in the interpretation and reading of modern literature.

cism investigates cases where the evidence is preserved. Apart from this difference, the two methodologies deal, at least in part, with the same kind of editorial changes.⁵ One of the goals of this book is to bridge the gap between text-critical evidence of late editorial processes, on the one hand, and the literary- or redaction-critical methodology that assumes such processes for earlier stages of the literary history, on the other.

2. THE MT AND OTHER TEXTUAL TRADITIONS

The evidence provided in this book underscores that the MT cannot be the single starting point when investigating the Hebrew Bible.⁶ The option of assuming *a priori* that *one* textual tradition is in some way superior to the other preserved textual traditions is untenable from a scholarly point of view. Yet, one still recurrently finds the underlying or implicit assumption that the MT is in some way superior to the other traditions or even sacrosanct.⁷ To be sure, the MT is a witness of high quality, and in many cases there are good reasons to assume that it represents a relatively old textual tradition. Yet, the Hebrew Bible also contains many passages where the primacy of the MT has been challenged for good reasons. There is empirical evidence in various parts of the Hebrew Bible that the MT contains substantial editorial additions of a very late origin (e.g., in Num 13:33; Judg 6:7-10; 1 Kgs 6:11-14; and throughout the book of Jeremiah). Thus,

5. See the material presented by Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (3d ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 283–326.

6. In effect, this is done in many volumes of the series *Forms of Old Testament Literature* published by Eerdmans; see, e.g., Ehud Ben Zvi, *Hosea* (FOTL 21A.1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 6.

7. See, e.g., Jan P. Fokkelman, *King David (II Sam. 9–20 and I Kings 1–2)* (vol. 1 of *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses*; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981), 448, who writes on the text of Samuel: “the reliability of the Hebrew renders a consultation of the old versions as a source of inspiration or change almost superfluous.” This statement implies that he uses the LXX only in exceptional cases to reconstruct an earlier text. In earlier editions of his *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Emanuel Tov also attached high importance to the canonical status of the MT. Thus the first edition (1992) presented, for instance, the shorter text of Jeremiah as a layer of growth preceding the final composition that was not to be taken into consideration in the reconstruction of the original text, whereas the second edition (2001; see pp. 177, 317) still excluded literary developments later than the MT.

the starting point of investigations should be not the MT alone but the variety of texts. In each case, the textual basis has to be established from all the textual witnesses.⁸ To take the MT as the sole source of historical investigation, as is done in many studies, would seem to be highly questionable or even arbitrary from a scientific point of view. Some of the material in this volume shows that in many cases a more original version of a passage is documented in witnesses other than the MT, while the MT is substantially edited and contains secondary readings.⁹

A clear example of this can be found in 1 Kgs 11:38–39. Compared to the oldest manuscripts of the LXX,¹⁰ the MT of this passage has a considerable plus. The additional text gives a certain theological interpretation of the division of Israel's unified monarchy. However, the version that is represented by the LXX does not refer to this interpretation and can be understood without knowledge of the plus. There is good reason to assume that the shorter text of the LXX goes back to a Hebrew *Vorlage*¹¹ that is more original than the MT reading.¹² It would be difficult to explain why the additional passage should have been secondarily omitted in the LXX.¹³

8. Anneli Aejmelaeus ("What Can We Know about the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint," in *On the Trail of the Septuagint Translators: Collected Essays* [Leuven: Peeters, 2007], 106) has noted that different readings have to be weighed "against one another" when the oldest reading is reconstructed.

9. "Secondary" here refers only to the chronological age of the readings in comparison with more original readings. The content of the readings is by no means secondary, since they may also contain significant historical information and are witness to the further development of the text.

10. Some Greek manuscripts, such as the Lucianic text, follow the MT, but this is probably a later harmonization after the MT.

11. "*Vorlage*" refers to the source text from which the Greek version was translated.

12. Thus, e.g., Immanuel Benzinger, *Die Bücher der Könige* (KHC 9; Freiburg i. B.: Mohr Siebeck, 1899), 84; C. F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings: With an Introduction and Appendix* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 171; Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (WBC 12; Waco, Tex.: Word, 1985), 149; Martin J. Mulder, *1 Kings 1–11* (vol. 1 of *1 Kings*; Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 597.

13. According to Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 342, "the ideas expressed here need not be altogether secondary," but he does not explain why the passage should have been omitted in the LXX. Marvin A. Sweeney, *I and II Kings: A Commentary*

1 Kgs 11:38–39 MT¹⁴

והיה אם תשמע את כל אשר אצוך והלכת בדרכי ועשית הישר בעיני לשמור חקותי ומצותי כאשר עשה דוד עבדי והייתי עמך ובנית לי בית נאמן כאשר בנית לדוד ונתתי לך את ישראל ואענה את זרע דוד למען זאת אך לא כל הימים

³⁸ And if you will listen to all that I command you, and walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you, and will build you a sure house, as I built for David. And I will give Israel to you,³⁹ and I will afflict the seed of David, but not forever.

1 Kgs 11:38(–39) LXX

καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν φυλάξῃς πάντα, ὅσα ἂν ἐντείλωμαί σοι, καὶ πορευθῆς ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς μου καὶ ποιήσῃς τὸ εὐθὲς ἐνώπιον ἐμοῦ τοῦ φυλάξασθαι τὰς ἐντολάς μου καὶ τὰ προστάγματα μου, καθὼς ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὁ δοῦλός μου, καὶ ἔσομαι μετὰ σοῦ καὶ οἰκοδομήσω σοι οἶκον πιστόν, καθὼς ᾠκοδόμησα τῷ Δαυίδ.

³⁸ And if you keep all that I command you, and walk in my ways, and do what is right before me by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David.

It can be assumed that similar additions were made in many texts of the Hebrew Bible, although in most cases no empirical evidence has been preserved.

(OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 158, presupposes the MT without discussion.

14. The following markings are used in this volume: expansions and plusses are underlined, rewritten or slightly modified texts are displayed in dashed underline, parallels between passages are displayed in dotted underline, and relocated texts are displayed in gray. Omitted sections are marked with strikethrough. When three texts are compared (for example, ch. 10), the first stage of expansions is underlined, and the second stage is double underlined.

3. EVIDENCE OF SUBSTANTIAL REWRITING

Editing did not mean just making additions to given texts, as it is conventionally assumed in literary-critical and other methodologies.¹⁵ The empirical evidence preserved in the textual witnesses also shows that editors could replace parts of the transmitted texts with new passages. Such a process of editorial reworking is documented, for instance, in Deut 34. In this passage the MT and the SP contain different descriptions of the boundaries of the land that Yhwh shows to Moses. Although the Samaritan version is shorter than the MT, it is probably secondary, since in this version the boundaries of the promised land are considerably expanded and Moses is able to see the entire territory between the Nile and the Euphrates. This is probably a harmonization with the description of the land in Gen 15:18, which mentions exactly the same boundaries of the promised land (cf. Deut 11:24; Josh 1:4). As a result, the SP contains a substantially different version of this passage from the MT.

Deut 34:1–3 MT

ויעל משה מערבת מואב אל הר נבו ראש הפסגה אשר על פני ירחו ויראהו
 יהוה את כל הארץ את הגלעד עד דן ואת כל נפתלי ואת ארץ אפרים
 ומנשה ואת כל ארץ יהודה עד הים האחרון ואת הנגב ואת הככר בקעת
 ירחו עיר התמרים עד צער

¹ And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and Yhwh showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan, ² all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, ³ the Negeb, and the Plain—the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar.

Deut 34:1 SP

ויעל משה מערבת מואב אל הר נבא ראש הפסגה אשר על פני ירחו
 ויראהו יהוה את כל הארץ מנהר מצרים עד הנהר הגדול נהר פרת ועד
 הים האחרון

15. Thus, among many others, Christoph Levin, *The Old Testament: A Brief Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 27–28; Uwe Becker, *Exegese des Alten Testaments* (3rd ed.; UTB 2664; Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 84.

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and Yhwh showed him the whole land: from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, and as far as the Western Sea.

In this case, the MT very probably preserves a more original version of the passage than the SP.¹⁶ This would seem to accord with the common scholarly tendency to assume that the SP contains many secondary readings in relation to the MT.¹⁷ Yet, the example shows that ancient editors—even those behind the transmission of the Pentateuch—were able to replace one passage with another. There is no reason to assume that this technique would not have been used in the earlier literary history of the biblical texts, that is, prior to the editorial changes that were made in the textual tradition represented by the SP¹⁸ after it diverged from the textual tradition of the proto-MT.

4. EVIDENCE FROM PARALLEL TEXTS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

A different type of evidence that is nonetheless highly relevant with regard to literary- or redaction-critical methodology is provided by Chronicles in relation to its sources. The evidence of Chronicles is distinguished from the text-critical evidence where the same passage or text is preserved in two variant editions. Chronicles shows how a text developed when an editor used an older literary work as a source text in order to create a new composition. In this regard, scholarship has largely ignored Chronicles and

16. This is assumed by virtually all commentators; see, for instance, S. R. Driver, *Deuteronomy* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 421–23; and Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 393–96, who both do not discuss the reading of the SP. An exception is Carmel McCarthy, ed., *Deuteronomy* (vol. 5 of *Biblia Hebraica: Quinta editio*; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007), 168*; according to her, “it is difficult to decide which one [i.e., MT or SP] gives access to the ‘original.’”

17. Thus, many scholars; see, e.g., Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 71. As an *a priori* assumption the secondary nature of the SP should be rejected, however, and the SP should be considered a significant witness when establishing the textual basis of any passage in the Pentateuch.

18. Many of these changes might be of a pre-Samaritan origin, as the investigation of the so-called Reworked Pentateuch manuscripts from Qumran shows; see Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (VTSup 128; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 259–312, with literature, and ch. 1 in this volume.

other works of similar or related genre in relation to their sources (e.g., Jubilees and the Temple Scroll) because they represent entirely new compositions.¹⁹ Nevertheless, these works still show how texts could develop. When we investigate the texts of the Hebrew Bible, the history of which we do not know, it is quite possible that some of them relate to their preceding literary stage in a similar way as Chronicles does to the book of Kings. Concretely speaking, when we reconstruct the literary history of a passage in the book of Kings, we cannot exclude the possibility that its authors related to their sources as the Chronicler did. In fact, much speaks in favor of similarities. Consequently, Chronicles in relation to its sources provides primary evidence for a possible course of editing in the Hebrew Bible. The editorial changes in Chronicles range from small additions, such as the ones conventionally assumed in literary criticism, to substantial changes, rewritings, and replacements. One example suffices to demonstrate the relevance of the material.²⁰

Second Kings 11 describes the rebellion (or *coup d'état*) of Jehoiada to replace Queen Athaliah with Joash as the monarch. Extensive literary connections throughout 2 Chr 23 imply that the Chronicler followed the parallel account in 2 Kings; he has adopted several passages word for word. However, clear ideological or theological tendencies are evident when we look at the differences between the parallel verses. The Chronicler has increased the role of priests and Levites throughout the passage. Moreover, there is a notable interest in the temple. Second Chronicles 23:1–2 in relation to 2 Kgs 11:4 illustrates these motifs.

2 Kgs 11:4 MT

ובשנה השביעית שלח יהוידע ויקח את־שרי המא(י)ות לכרי ולרצים ויבא
אתם אליו בית יהוה

In the seventh year Jehoiada ~~summoned~~ and took the commanders of the hundreds and of the guards and ~~had them~~ come to him in Yhwh's temple.

19. Julius Wellhausen (*Prolegomena to the History of Israel* [Edinburgh: Black, 1885], 228) and many other scholars after him assumed that Chronicles would not be a typical representative of editorial processes. Instead, it would be a midrash or commentary on the texts that were used as sources.

20. See also chs. 9 and 15 for more extensive examples in Chronicles.

2 Chr 23:1–2

ובשנה השבעית התחזק יהוידע ויקח את־שרי המאות לעזריהו בן־ירחם ולישמעאל בן־יהוחנן ולעזריהו בן־עובד ואת־מעשיהו בן־עדיהו ואת־אלישפט בן־זכרי עמו בברית ויסבו ביהודה ויקבצו את־הלויים מכל־ערי יהודה וראשי האבות לישראל ויבאו אל־ירושלם

¹ In the seventh year Jehoiada took courage and took the commanders of the hundreds, Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zichri.

² They went around through Judah and gathered the Levites from all the towns of Judah, and the heads of families of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

Whereas in 2 Kgs 11:4 the (mercenary?) Carian soldiers and the guard play a central role in the coup, they are replaced in 2 Chr 23:1–2 with priests and Levites. The Chronicler was evidently offended by the lack of priests in the events, especially since the coup was against the evil Athaliah to instate a more pious ruler in Judah. One should also note that in the source text the soldiers enter Yhwh's temple, but this would have been an incomprehensible idea in the Second Temple context of the Chronicler. The soldiers entering the temple were thus replaced by the people coming to Jerusalem. The following story contains similar modifications, which form a consistent pattern and show an ideological tendency. Ideological and/or theological concepts have been a central motive for the editorial changes. The editorial changes we can observe in Chronicles should be included in the discussion about how other texts, where similar evidence is not preserved, may have been changed.

5. PROCESSES OF EDITING SHOULD NOT BE NEGLECTED IN STUDIES OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

In contrast to these examples, we do not possess empirical evidence for most of the texts in the Hebrew Bible. It is only in some cases that we have parallels or differing manuscripts that give insights into the editorial processes, but we can assume that these documented cases attest to merely a fraction of the actual changes that have taken place in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible. Although much of the evidence comes from relatively late periods in the development of the texts, there are good reasons to assume that similar editorial processes took place during the earlier peri-

ods of the textual transmission that are largely undocumented by variant editions.²¹

As a consequence, the investigation of the development of the texts of the Hebrew Bible and its possible prehistory cannot be ignored as merely an optional method that can be used but that can also be neglected or entirely skipped.²² The historical investigation of the texts should not be seen as the task of some scholarly traditions only. In other words, the present volume seeks to underline that the quest for editorial processes is a necessary methodological step in *any* use of the Hebrew Bible for historical and scholarly research. Without understanding the history and nature of the source, we cannot reliably use this source at all.

The importance of textual and literary or redaction criticism was already understood in critical research of the nineteenth century. Scholars in this period came to the conclusion that both are necessary methodological steps. The most prominent scholar in this respect is Julius Wellhausen, who started with investigations into the documented textual history. On the basis of his observations from the textual witnesses, especially in the book of Samuel, he also sought to reconstruct the earlier stages of literary growth.²³ He thus recognized the close connection between textual and literary criticism.

However, this kind of historical- and literary-critical approach has not been accepted by all scholars. In some scholarly traditions the use of the so-called final or end text has become popular, particularly since the last decades of the twentieth century. This is seen, for example, in rhetorical and structural analyses that pay little or no heed to questions of textual history and literary growth.²⁴ In many cases these approaches ignore the variety of textual evidence and choose the MT as the starting point without explaining or justifying this decision. By the same token, questions

21. This is especially the case with those texts that received an authoritative status relatively early—the Pentateuch, for instance. On the other hand, for those texts of the Hebrew Bible that were originally created rather late—for example, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Esther—a much earlier stage of their transmission history is preserved. This is reflected in more variety in the textual evidence, which is hardly a coincidence.

22. Many investigations that take no heed of literary criticism use the Hebrew Bible as it was preserved (primarily) in the MT. See below for examples.

23. Julius Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1871).

24. Here one could mention, e.g., Tamara Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah* (SBLMS 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

about the prehistory of the final texts and the editorial processes that the empirical evidence attests to are ignored.

Structural analyses might be able to highlight certain structures in the latest version of the texts, but these versions are often merely random stages of the textual development.²⁵ Observations reached on the basis of one textual stage cannot be extended to include other textual stages that were not investigated in such analyses. Although the methodologies of structural analysis may have their justification in investigating one version, it would be hazardous to ignore the variation of textual evidence, which implies a complicated history of the texts. If one decides to use the MT only, this should be reflected in the conclusions that one draws from the observations. An approach that investigates merely the final text would significantly limit the information that one can deduce from the text. In other words, if the history of the text remains obscure to the scholar, the limits of scientific possibilities have to be acknowledged. To give an example, if one investigates the final text of Ezra-Nehemiah without understanding its complicated prehistory, one can hardly make any historical conclusions or statements by using this text as a historical source. Without a theory about the historical context of a particular section in this composition, one cannot use that section for a historical reconstruction.²⁶ By presenting examples of evidence for constant and substantial changes, we seek to show what the problems inherent in such approaches are.

6. WHY WE SHOULD TRY TO RECONSTRUCT THE LITERARY HISTORY OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

Because literary- and redaction-critical reconstructions vary considerably and no consensus has been reached on many texts, some scholars have given up trying to understand the history of the texts.²⁷ This kind

25. Here one should additionally ask whether the scholar investigating a final text such as the MT is able to determine which period in the development of the text he or she is investigating.

26. An example of such an end-text reading of Ezra-Nehemiah is Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose*. Although she largely ignores the complicated literary history of the text, she makes historical conclusions by using Ezra-Nehemiah as a source. One has to be skeptical about the viability of such an approach.

27. Interestingly, structural analyses have not led to consensus either; thus Marjo Korpel, *The Structure of the Book of Ruth* (Pericope 2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2001), 5–30, presents a survey of twenty structural analyses of Ruth and concludes that they

of methodological skepticism has been advocated by some scholars in recent decades. A prominent voice is Ehud Ben Zvi, who, on the one hand, admits that the texts may have been heavily edited but, on the other, refrains from trying to reconstruct the earlier stages of their literary development. According to him, “scholarly reconstructed texts cannot but be hypothetical and unverifiable, and rarely command any consensus.” He stresses that “redactional and authorial processes may not only bring new material into a source text but may also exclude and completely reshape material as the way in which the Chronicler worked with the books of Samuel and Kings clearly shows.” Therefore he asks, “how can a scholar reconstruct an omitted text?”²⁸ While Ben Zvi is right in stressing the fact that editorial processes comprised not only expanding texts but also substantial rewriting—even omissions, as we have shown above—we cannot agree with the overall methodological skepticism Ben Zvi deduces from that. When he, on the basis of his methodological doubts, treats the prophetic books exclusively in the context of a postmonarchic setting and does not use them as a source for earlier periods,²⁹ we have to ask if this one-sided approach can be justified. The reconstruction of older textual material that is contained in the prophetic books is admittedly difficult, and we have to be aware of the limits of such reconstructions (see also below). However, the attempt to detect the literary history of these books should nevertheless be made, and there are many texts where editorial processes left clearly discernible traces. In many cases the texts provide clues as to how at least parts of the literary prehistory should be reconstructed.³⁰ In addition, the prophetic books contain several concepts that cannot have originated in the postmonarchic period but must predate this period. Thus, we need to explain how these concepts were transmitted from earlier times to the postmonarchic era and how they were transformed during the

present a “bewildering variety of opinion.” In comparison, nineteenth-century source criticism of the Pentateuch was a model of unanimity.

28. Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 6.

29. Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Concept of Prophetic Books and Its Historical Setting,” in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud* (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; London: Equinox, 2009), 73–95.

30. For example, there are good reasons to assume that the oldest material in the first part of Jeremiah comprises in particular a series of lamentations about the enemy from the north that cannot have originated in the postmonarchic period. The attempt to distinguish this material from later editorial layers is not futile altogether, although we may not be able to reconstruct these relatively old lamentations in every detail.

transmission by editorial activity. If we read the prophetic books against the backdrop of only the postmonarchic periods, we would fail to discern these transformations.

One could also mention the recently presented position of David M. Carr. Appealing to the lack of consensus, he notes that “more complicated reconstructions of textual prehistory have not stood and will not stand the test of time.”³¹ The texts would not preserve enough evidence “to reconstruct each and every stage of that [textual] growth.”³² The authors of this volume agree with Carr’s criticism of those reconstructions that suggest a 100 percent reliability of their results. However, the underlying skepticism about the general possibilities of literary-critical reconstructions, evident in Carr’s approach, should be rejected. Carr’s text examples are mainly from texts where the most radical editorial processes have been at work. On the basis of the observation on these texts, he implies that the editorial history cannot be reconstructed when the documented evidence is missing. Regarding this implicit assumption, it is surprising to note that Carr—in stark contrast to Ben Zvi—is nevertheless able to reconstruct much of the history and religion of Israel during the monarchic period. This reconstruction, which results in rather conservative conceptions,³³ seems to derive from Carr’s implicit assumption that the final texts of many biblical books are fairly reliable historical sources. From a methodological perspective, this is not very consistent. The current volume seeks to demonstrate that radical editorial processes represent only part of the evidence and that many examples of the documented evidence in fact accord with the conceptions and methodology of literary and redaction criticism.

Although the frustration over the lack of consensus on several historically central texts (such as 2 Kgs 23) is understandable, and the means to reconstruct the history of the Hebrew Bible are limited because of the variety of the editorial processes, it is doubtful that an overall methodological skepticism as advocated by both Ben Zvi and Carr provides any improved access to understanding the Hebrew Bible. As in Carr’s case, and in contrast to Ben Zvi, the skepticism can result in rather conservative conceptions about the history and religion of Israel. In such cases one receives the impression that since the textual growth is assumed to be so compli-

31. David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.

32. *Ibid.*

33. See esp. *ibid.*, 304–490 (chs. 10–17).

cated, the arduous process of trying to analyze each text in detail may be skipped. If we take the texts as they are and lean simply on conventional conceptions about the history and religion of Israel, we fail to recognize that edited or “final” texts can be rather misleading if we use them uncritically as historical sources. To be consistent, one should then abandon the entire Hebrew Bible as a historical source, but this is not what Carr and many others who share his approach are willing to do.

In this respect, the approach of Niels Peter Lemche may be more consistent. On the basis of observations on the textual or literary growth of the Hebrew Bible similar to those made by Ben Zvi and Carr, Lemche has contended that the Hebrew Bible witnesses to mainly the Hellenistic or even Roman period, the period of the oldest manuscripts.³⁴ The earlier development cannot be recovered anymore. In practice, Lemche denies the value of the Hebrew Bible as a witness to earlier periods, because any reconstruction of the prehistory of the text would be too speculative. However, this radical view fails to convince us either. Although most literary- and redaction-critical reconstructions can never be fully proven but remain hypotheses, it is difficult to see how the texts of the Hebrew Bible would bear witness to only the latest periods. In many cases it is unequivocally clear that conceptions predating the freezing of the texts to changes are preserved in the Hebrew Bible. They should be used as evidence for the period when they were originally written and not for the period when the oldest manuscript was copied.

For example, it has to be asked whether it is justified to regard many of the psalms, commonly assumed to preserve religious conceptions of the monarchic time, as primarily Hellenistic or Roman. Many of these conceptions would be incomprehensible in a Hellenistic or Roman setting, and reading them as witnesses to such a late context would hardly do justice to the evidence. We can observe that many texts that were later edited are still closely related to religious concepts of Northwest Semitic or Levantine origin of much earlier periods, and they should be seen against this background. Even if the texts were finished or their literary development ceased in the Hellenistic or Roman period, we can still see that they contain conceptions that are much older. It is the contention of the

34. Niels Peter Lemche, *The Old Testament between Theology and History* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 379–92, esp. 385. In part, Lemche’s approach is more consequent than that of Ben Zvi, because it is fairly certain that most texts of the Hebrew Bible were finished in the Hellenistic or Roman periods.

authors of this volume that one should always make the attempt to understand the earlier history of the texts as well—despite the difficulties and time-consuming analysis—because it may be the only evidence we have of many stages in the history of ancient Israel, Judah, and Yehud. The evidence should not be rejected altogether on the grounds that it is preserved in complicated and heavily edited sources.

7. THE LIMITATIONS OF LITERARY- AND REDACTION-CRITICAL RECONSTRUCTIONS

The classic methods of literary and redaction criticism also have to be criticized when they suggest that all stages of textual growth can be reconstructed with complete certainty, and here one may agree with Lemche, Ben Zvi and Carr.³⁵ The possibility that some of the processes may be untraceable by critical scholarship has to be taken into account. Some of the examples in this book illustrate that editorial changes may not always have left traces in the resulting text. Moreover, it is gradually becoming more probable that the texts may not have developed exclusively by additions. Some examples in this volume suggest that relocations, rewritings, and omissions may also have taken place. From this it follows that literary and redaction criticisms should not be used as infallible methods. Their results are often hypotheses or abstractions of a development, and they should also be understood as such. It would be a mistake to assume that literary-critical reconstructions are evidence of the same caliber as preserved textual witnesses, for example. However, it has to be stressed that despite their limitations many scholarly reconstructions have often greatly advanced our understanding of the history, culture, and religion of ancient Israel.

It is possible that the development of some texts will never be unlocked by the available methods, but this does not mean that we should abandon the Hebrew Bible altogether as a historical source. More caution is needed than some overly optimistic forms of literary and redaction criticism would imply.

35. E.g., Carr, *Formation*, 4.

8. TOWARD A REFINED METHODOLOGY FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TEXTUAL PREHISTORY

In this book we will present examples of passages that are preserved in more than one version or edition. These examples provide insight into how texts have been factually changed during the process of their transmission. We have taken examples from different parts of the Hebrew Bible and also sought to include various kinds of examples. It is evident that there were different techniques of editing and rewriting by the scribes. This volume therefore also shows that the editors or scribes did not all relate to the older texts in the same way. Different kinds of editing may have been connected to different genres, and the issue of genre has to be taken into consideration when thinking about editorial changes. However, it seems difficult to establish a precise relationship between editorial techniques or the range of editorial freedom on the one hand, and the genre of the edited text on the other.

This volume does not pursue a conclusive explanation for the development of the texts of the Hebrew Bible. Instead, it seeks to contribute to the methodological discussion by taking various kinds of examples that address some of the problems in the use of the Hebrew Bible as a historical source. It seeks to advocate awareness of the substantial changes that took place in the development of the texts. It obviously cannot and does not presume to dictate what should be done, but it provides some suggestions and guidelines that emerge from the empirical evidence. As such, it can function as a practical guide for scholars and students who are grappling with the complexities of the literary history. It furnishes possible models that could provide insight into how other texts were edited and changed.

Besides demonstrating the importance of understanding the history and development of the texts, one of the main goals of this volume is to contribute to the refining of the exegetical methodology of literary and redaction criticism. On the one hand, the examples show that methodological nihilism, as advocated in particular by Ben Zvi and Lemche, is not justified. An attempt should always be made to reconstruct the development of the texts. Some examples indicate that one could come to reliable results even without the extant empirical evidence. In several cases one would be able to detect the main tendencies and developments in the literary history. On the other hand, the examples also show that overextended optimism about the possibilities of reconstructing every detail of the literary growth is unwarranted. In some cases, the processes of editing

have been so substantial that the resulting texts were very different from the older versions. In such cases it would be difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct the literary history accurately.

The empirical evidence that is collected here advocates a middle position between the extremes of abandoning literary analysis altogether and trying to reconstruct every little detail. Because it is impossible to ignore the development of the texts, a reconstruction of the texts' prehistory should always be pursued, but it cannot be pushed to the extreme as to the precision of the results. In some cases, one has to acknowledge that the prehistory of a text cannot be recovered. Accordingly, in the following chapters, in connection with each passage, we will also discuss the question of to what extent reliable reconstructions would be possible without the empirical evidence. We feel that when reconstructions become hypothetical, this should be admitted more frankly than has been done in the past. This is in no way problematic. On the contrary, once the edited nature of the texts is recognized, it becomes the duty of scholars to offer hypotheses, just as it will be the duty of the coming generations to improve on them.

