Text-Critical Studies

Scribal Memory and Word Selection

Text Criticism of the Hebrew Bible

Raymond F. Person Jr.

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AND WORD SELECTION

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Preface and Acknowledgments

I began my exploration of the interdisciplinary work of applying insights from conversation analysis and the comparative study of oral traditions to the Hebrew Bible over thirty years ago as a doctoral student at Duke University. In conversations with English and history doctoral students, I enquired about professors outside of the religion program who could help me learn more about oral traditions; one of my peers suggested that I talk with William (Mack) O'Barr, a linguistic anthropologist. In our first conversation, Mack asserted that I must understand language at its most basic form, everyday conversation, if I wanted to know anything about how language worked in oral traditions or in literature. Trusting in Mack's insight was one of the most productive things I did as a doctoral student, because it started me down a path of research that has been especially productive in generating innovative solutions to interpretive problems. Mack also gave me advice to seek out postdoctoral opportunities to deepen my knowledge in these areas. Again trusting Mack's advice, in 1992 I participated in a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar directed by John Miles Foley entitled "Oral Traditions in Literature," which not only began a mentoring relationship with John, but John introduced me to the guest lecturer who visited the seminar for a week, some of whose publications I had already read, Werner Kelber. Werner continues to be one of my conversation partners. Then in 2001, I audited three doctoral seminars in the Conversation Analysis Sub-Institute of the Linguistic Summer Institute organized by the Linguistic Society of America, directed by Emanuel Schegloff, John Heritage, Gene Lerner, and Don Zimmerman, who are among the first generation of scholars in conversation analysis. These two summer opportunities directly led to some of my past publications and continue to influence my research, including through conversation partners I met while attending these events. Despite my past focus on drawing significant insights from conversation analysis and the comparative study of oral traditions to my work as a scholar of the Hebrew Bible, this is my

first monograph that brings together these three research agendas, the culmination of thirty years of my trusting Mack's insight that he gave me in our first conversation at Duke, an insight that has also been encouraged by others outside of biblical studies, including especially John Foley, John Heritage, Rebecca Clift, Ilkka Arminen, Robin Wooffitt, and John Rae.

Even after almost thirty years of mulling over some of the ideas now developed in this monograph, I must give some significant credit to my friend and colleague, Ian Young. We have been conversation partners for some time, mostly at Annual Meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature. Ian often encouraged me to develop further the application of the comparative study of oral traditions to text criticism. When he recommended that we coauthor a popular book together, my response was that I thought that I needed to work out my ideas more fully in a more technical monograph before I could contribute much to such a project. Therefore, this project moved to the top of my list because of his encouragement. I sincerely thank Ian for his prodding me to complete this project and his comments on the manuscript. Ian was joined by Robert Rezetko, Jonathan Ready, and Shem Miller, all of whom have been among my close conversation partners, reading and commenting on my manuscripts and I on theirs. Werner Kelber and Ron Troxel have also offered encouraging comments on portions of this manuscript. This monograph is better because of the insightful input of all of these colleagues and any remaining deficiencies are mine alone. This monograph has also been enhanced by my gaining access to the work of the following colleagues who have shared offprints and more importantly graciously provided me with unpublished manuscripts of their forthcoming publications: Anneli Aejmelaeus, Lindsey Askin, Charlotte Hempel, Margaret Lee, Adina Moshavi, Daniel Pioske, Jonathan Vroom, Rebecca Schabach Wollenberg, and Molly Zahn. I have worked with many of these colleagues and others in The Bible in Ancient (and Modern) Media section of the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, which continues to nurture my work. Although he and I had interacted with each other for years concerning the Deuteronomistic History, after the publication of *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism*, Juha Pakkala and I have undertaken an intense but cordial and respectful discussion about our disagreements concerning the validity of source and redaction criticism as it is practiced today.[1] We

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1. Raymond F. Person Jr. and Robert Rezetko, eds. *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism*, AIL 25 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016).

share a drive to carefully reassess the validity of historical-critical methods, and I have profited from our conversations, even though we continue to have different opinions about the efficacy of the standard criteria commonly used in source and redaction criticism. This volume continues that discussion in print; Juha's voice has been more present in its writing than the number of footnotes might suggest. He has often pushed me to be clearer concerning what a new model for historical criticism might look like, and this volume moves further in that direction. I look forward to the time when the pandemic has ended enough so that I can once again attend conferences and share meals with these and other colleagues as we continue the conversation concerning the future of biblical scholarship. Hopefully this happens before this monograph is in print.

I am pleased to be publishing with SBL Press again. Supporting a nonprofit press connected to a professional society is important in today's rapidly changing publishing environment, as many presses mostly abandon the scholarly monograph. Moreover, SBL Press has been forward-looking concerning e-publications, open access, and providing access to scholars in countries with lower GDPs than in the United States and European Union, who otherwise may have very limited access to scholarly publications. I want the thank members of the editorial boards for both the Ancient Israel and Its Literature series and the Text-Critical Studies series. I received helpful and encouraging comments from anonymous members of both groups. I want to especially thank Juan Hernández Jr., the series editor of Text-Critical Studies, whose careful editing strengthened the manuscript considerably.

Portions of chapter 2: "Category-Triggering and Text-Critical Variants" are revisions of chapters published in collections of essays as follows:

- ◆ "Formulas and Scribal Memory: A Case Study of Text-Critical Variants as Examples of Category-Triggering." Pages 147–72 in *Weathered Words: Formulaic Language and Verbal Art*. Edited by Frog and William Lamb. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature Series 6. Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2022. Reproduced by permission.
- ◆ "Harmonization in the Pentateuch and Synoptic Gospels: Repetition and Category-Triggering within Scribal Memory," Pages 318–57 in *Repetition, Communication, and Meaning in the Ancient World*. Edited by Deborah Beck. MnSup 442. Leiden: Brill, 2021. Reproduced by permission.

- "Poetics and List-Construction: A Study of Text-Critical Variants in Lists Found in the New Testament, Homer, and the Hebrew Bible," Pages 218–46 in *Bridging the Gap Between Conversation Analysis and Poetics: Studies in Talk-In-Interaction and Literature Twenty-Five Years after Jefferson*. Edited by Raymond F. Person Jr., Robin Wooffitt, and John P. Rae. Research in Language and Communication. London: Routledge, 2022. Reproduced by permission of Taylor & Francis Group.

In all three cases, I provided text-critical examples from both ancient Hebrew and ancient Greek (New Testament and, in two cases, Homeric epic). In this monograph I provide additional text-critical examples from ancient Hebrew, omitting all examples from the New Testament and Homer and some of the Hebrew examples. Therefore, readers of this monograph can find additional evidence for the sections of chapter 2 that are revisions of these chapters in these earlier publications. I thank the publishers of these chapters for the permission to reprint them in revised form and the editors of these three volumes for their helpful comments on these chapters and my methodology in general.

I began this project in earnest during my sabbatical granted by Ohio Northern University in the spring of 2019, for which I want to thank then provost Maria Cronley and then dean Holly Baumgartner for their generous support and Professor Doug Dowland for his covering my responsibilities as Director of Interdisciplinary Studies. The final stages of this project were significantly delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. My wife of over thirty years, Elizabeth Kelly, has supported my academic work for many years while she worked as a hospital chaplain and social worker. In March 2020, she took on the task of COVID coordinator for Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio, the local church-related non-profit that has three skilled nursing facilities and a facility for assisted living and independent living for elders, as she continued in her role as president of the board. Since we live in a small town, we have had connections to the residents and staff for many years, so her work was full of grief and stress that wore on both of us and many others in our community, while at the same time the heroic efforts of many staff and volunteers continues to provide hope. As I finish the first full draft of this manuscript in January 2021, she is coordinating vaccinations for staff and residents and continues to help with testing. Fortunately, we can now begin to see light at the end of the tunnel—at least for those fully vaccinated—even though

I fear that there will continue to be significant tragedy for so many in the world for much too long a time to come. I dedicate this work of esoteric research to Elizabeth, my life partner, who helps keep me grounded.

Note on Transcription Conventions

The early practitioners of conversation analysis, especially Gail Jefferson, developed a transcription system with conventions to represent the sequential aspects of the audible elements of conversation. However, since the development of this early transcription system, conversation analysis has become increasingly sophisticated in its analysis of face-to-face talk-in-interaction, including a fuller examination of prosody and body movement, and, as a consequence, there is now increasingly variety among transcription conventions used in the literature. Since this study draws widely from conversation analysis, disparities exist among the studies concerning what elements in the talk-in-interaction to fully represent and how to represent them. For the benefit of my readers, I have standardized all of the transcribed examples used in this study. Although I may substitute one convention for another for the same features, I never add conventions for features not already represented in the studies used. Furthermore, for the purpose of ease of reading, I have occasionally eliminated the features found in the transcripts when they are not particularly relevant to the issue I am discussing. For those readers interested in learning more about the transcription system(s) used in conversation analysis, I highly recommend Schegloff's transcription module on his website: http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/schegloff/TranscriptionProject/index.html. There readers will find examples of transcription symbols with the audio excerpts illustrating each symbol.

Although these changes serve to aid the ease of reading this study, I realize that for some readers this simplification may have obscured other issues in which they might have an interest. These readers should refer to the secondary literature that is the source for the transcribed examples, where they will find not only fuller transcriptions but more examples.

The following transcription conventions are used in this book:

CAPS   indicates loud speech

underline	indicates higher pitch
° °	indicates that the items bracketed are spoken softer than normal
:	indicates that the previous sound is lengthened
[ ]	indicates that the items bracketed is overlapped by other speech; the first bracket of the second speaker's utterance will be indented
(1.2)	numerals within parentheses indicates the length of pauses in seconds, in this case a pause of 1.2 seconds
( )	verbal items within parentheses indicates that these words are uncertain
(*)	asterick within parentheses indicates that speech items were inaudible; each asterick indicates one syllable of the inaudible speech
,	indicates a pause
=	indicates no gap between the end of one speaker's utterance and the beginning of the next speaker's utterance
.	indicates falling intonation at the end of a word or phrase
?	indicates rising intonation at the end of a word or phrase
-	indicates an abrupt ending
wo(h)rd	laughter within a word
£	smile quality (tone of speech)
↓	indicates that the following syllable has falling intonation
↑	indicates that the following syllable has rising intonation
↑↓	upward arrow followed by downward arrow indicates that the following syllable has rising-falling intonation
(( ))	double parentheses are used to bracket comments made by the analysts within the examples

A few other transcription conventions are used that are specific to some of the examples discussed concerning a particular issue; in these cases, they will be explained just prior to those specific examples.

All examples from literature are given in the form of block quotations with the exact same spellings, punctuation, and font styles (e.g., capitals, italics) as in the text used. Paragraph indentation is also preserved, so that if an example begins in the middle of a paragraph it will not be indented. Also, since elipses are found in the original texts, all elipses that are added are placed in square brackets (i.e., [...]).

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor (Yale) Bible
ABD	Freedman, David Noel, ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
ANEM	Ancient Near Eastern Monographs
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHL	Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics
BHQ	Biblia Hebraica Quinta
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BT	*The Bible Translator*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CW	*Classical World*
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
ET	English text

ex(s).	example(s)
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
fem.	feminine
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
Gen. Rab.	Genesis Rabbah
HBCE	Hebrew Bible Critical Edition
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
Il.	Homer, *Iliad*
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplement
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JHebS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSem	*Journal for Semitics*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
K	*ketiv*
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
LXX	Septuagint
m.	Mishnah
masc.	masculine
MnSup	Mnemosyne Supplements
MT	Masoretic Text
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum

NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OG	Old Greek
OL	Old Latin
OTL	Old Testament Library
PFES	Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society
pl.	plural
Q	*qere*
RBS	Resources for Biblical Studies
RevQ	*Revue de Qumrân*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
ScrHier	Scripta Hierosolymitana
SDSS	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
STDJ	Studies in the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SVTG	Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum
TCS	Text Critical Studies
Text	*Text: Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse*
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Introduction

> But if we want to use the same method on the texts of the O.T., we meet with another difficulty. Here we have practically no divergent texts, for the only recension of the O.T. that has survived is the Masoretic Text.
> —Helmer Ringgren, "Oral and Written Transmission in the O.T.: Some Observations"

> It is time for us to stop thinking so much in terms of the *amount* of reworking in a given text and start looking for new conceptual tools that will provide new frameworks and vocabulary for discussing the various forms early Jewish scriptural rewriting could take.
> —Molly Zahn, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture*

I begin with these two epigraphs—the first from Helmer Ringgren's 1950 essay and the second from Molly Zahn's 2011 monograph—because they represent a paradigm shift that is occurring.[1] Although he represents the dominant paradigm (what I will call the MT-priority paradigm), Ringgren was a part of the Scandinavian school that emphasized the importance of oral tradition on the biblical text, an approach that is beginning to have a significant influence on the now emerging paradigm (what I will call the text-critical paradigm). In his essay, he described the significant variation found between different copies of the same ancient Egyptian literary texts, pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, and the Quran that led him and others in the Scandinavian school to conclude that "oral and written transmission should not be played off against another: they do not exclude each other, but may be regarded as complementary."[2] Nevertheless, he concluded that

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1. Helmer Ringgren, "Oral and Written Transmission in the O.T.: Some Observations," *Studia Theologica* 3 (1950): 34–59, here 35; Molly M. Zahn, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture: Composition and Exegesis in the 4QReworded Pentateuch Manuscripts*, STDJ 95 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 241, emphasis original.

2. Ringgren, "Oral and Written Transmission," 34.

MT is the "only recension of the O.T. that has survived." He was somewhat aware of the growing importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls; he mentioned 1QIsaᵃ as "the Jerusalem Scroll," which provided him with "instances of oral variants" and "slips of memory."[3] But despite this awareness, Ringgren and others of his generation did not have the benefit of access to the wealth of information that the Dead Sea Scrolls have brought to the field, and as such he continued to work under the MT-priority paradigm. Nevertheless, he provided a careful study of numerous parallel texts in MT, especially Ps 18 // 2 Sam 22, as an empirical control somewhat analogous to the text-critical evidence he reviewed in other ancient Near Eastern literature.[4] Based on this analysis, he concluded as follows:

> I only want to state my opinion that it is probable that there existed an oral tradition along with the written one—concerning the correct way of reading the consonantal text—and that this oral tradition has survived up to the time of the Masoretes.[5]

Thus, although Ringgren clearly represents the MT-priority paradigm, we can also see hints in his insightful work that the text-critical evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls combined with the comparative study of oral traditions will result in challenges to this paradigm made by those of us who are now advocating for the text-critical paradigm, including Zahn. In the epigraph from Zahn, we hear her appropriately complaining about others' arguments concerning "the *amount* of reworking" so that we can distinguish biblical from extrabiblical literature or Scripture from rewritten Scripture. Rather, she insisted that we need "new conceptual tools that will provide new frameworks and vocabulary," so that we can begin to make sense of text-critical variants but from the perspective of a new paradigm that takes text criticism seriously.[6]

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3. Ringgren, "Oral and Written Transmission," 51, 54, 57–58.

4. Other parallel texts he analyzed are: Ps 14 // Ps 53; Ps 40:14–18 // Ps 70; Pss 57, 60 // Ps 108; Pss 105; 96; 106:1, 47 // 1 Chr 16:8–36; Isa 2:2–4 // Mic 4:1–3; Isa 16:6–12 // Jer 48:29–36; Isa 37:22–25 // 2 Kgs 19:21–34; Obad 1–6 // Jer 49:14–16, 9–10; Jer 6:12–15 // Jer 8:10–12; Jer 6:22–24; 49:19–21 // Jer 50:41–46; and Jer 10:12–16 // Jer 51:15–19.

5. Ringgren, "Oral and Written Transmission," 59.

6. See also Molly M. Zahn, *Genres of Rewriting in Second Temple Judaism: Scribal Composition and Transmission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). This new monograph continues this line of argument in ways that are consistent with the

This volume is one attempt to provide such new conceptual tools. Below I will draw extensively from text criticism and the comparative study of oral traditions, building upon earlier work on scribal performance and scribal memory, in ways that are really an extension of the direction to which Ringgren's essay points, leading up to Zahn's call for new conceptual tools. In both text criticism and the comparative study of oral traditions, the following important questions have emerged: What is a word? and How are words selected? I will demonstrate that these questions can best be answered when we draw extensively from insights made in conversation analysis on how word selection works in everyday conversation and in institutional talk. That is, these questions—What is a word? and How are words selected?—are questions that require a cognitive-linguistic approach to finding answers. I contend that conversation analysis provides an excellent (if not the best) cognitive-linguistic approach to the question about word selection, because it is based on a rigorous methodology of studying naturally occurring linguistic data.[7] I will argue throughout the volume that many text-critical variants can be well explained from the perspective of word selection in everyday conversation, so that when scribes are copying manuscripts the same cognitive-linguistic processes of word selection are activated as they produce new manuscripts that have what we perceive as variants. To use Zahn's terminology, word selection as understood when we combine the insights of both the comparative study

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text-critical paradigm advocated in this volume. Unfortunately, its publication came so late in my writing process that I have not drawn extensively from it. She discusses some of the same examples and I am certain that I could have found additional examples in her work that would have illustrated my conclusions as well.

7. I am aware that most recent applications of cognitive studies to biblical texts have not used conversation analysis, but draw more from cognitive psychology and other social science approaches. E.g., see the essays in István Czachesz and Risto Uro, eds., *Mind, Morality and Magic: Cognitive Science Approaches in Biblical Studies*, Bible World (Durham: Acumen, 2013). My limiting insights to conversation analysis is not meant to dismiss these other arguments; however, I have not engaged in a discussion of the value of these other applications of cognitive studies in this project because of the complexity of the argument in the volume due to my assumption that most of my readers will be completely unfamiliar with conversation analysis. That is, I am deliberately limiting my discussion primarily to conversation analysis for the sake of (1) illustrating its value to the discussion and (2) simplifying my argument so that my readers do not have to distinguish between conversation analysis and other approaches in my argument. However, in a few places I review how some of these other cognitive approaches have been used by text critics in my adaptation of their discussions.

of oral traditions and conversation analysis provides us with new conceptual tools, including new frameworks and vocabulary, for reimagining text-critical variants for the emerging text-critical paradigm.

Below I will elaborate on the emerging text-critical paradigm by discussing recent insights in the text criticism of the Hebrew Bible and how these insights relate to discussions of scribal performance and scribal memory, both within biblical studies and in the study of other ancient and medieval literature.[8] I will then state more explicitly my own proposal for a new cognitive-linguistic approach to reimagining text-critical variants.

Text Criticism of the Hebrew Bible

Above I asserted that a paradigm shift may be underway from what I am calling the MT-priority paradigm to the text-critical paradigm, adapting what Ian Young has labeled as a shift from "the MT-only paradigm" and

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8. Although my primary interest is in the canonical Hebrew Bible, I am well aware that this term is anachronistic when applied even to the late Second Temple period. I also agree with those who assert that the distinction of *biblical* and *non-biblical* for Second Temple literature is not only anachronistic but too often leads to assumptions about how biblical texts differ from the nonbiblical texts in ways that distort the evidence (e.g., Charlotte Hempel, "Pluralism and Authoritativeness: The Case of the S Tradition," in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Mladen Popović, JSJSup 141 [Leiden: Brill, 2010], 193–208; and Hempel, "The Social Matrix That Shaped the Hebrew Bible and Gave Us the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Studies on the Text and Versions of the Hebrew Bible in Honour of Robert Gordon*, ed. Geoffrey Khan and Diana Lipton, VTSup 149 [Leiden: Brill, 2012], 221–37). Therefore, even though most of my examples come from canonical literature, I also include insights from those who specialize in the sectarian documents of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Therefore, in this monograph my use of *Hebrew Bible* should not be understood as limited to canonical literature, even though most of my examples come from canonical literature. In fact, I am confident that my conclusions in this volume generally apply well to all ancient and medieval literature. Nevertheless, this is one instance in which the language I continue to use reflects the difficulty of working in the midst of what is likely to be a paradigm shift. I agree with Hans Debel that (1) "it does not suffice, however, to merely switch terms" from "Bible"/"biblical" to "Scripture"/"scriptural" and that (2) "authoritativeness did not necessarily imply textual immutability" ("Anchoring Revelations in the Authority of Sinai: A Comparison of the Rewritings of 'Scripture' in *Jubilees* and in the P Stratum of Exodus," *JSJ* 45 [2014]: 473–74). That is, we need to rethink all of the terms that we are using in our effort to establish a new paradigm, including Hebrew Bible.

"the Text-Critical paradigm."[9] Ironically, as I will argue below, even many text critics continue to operate under assumptions that are connected to what Young identified as the MT-only paradigm, even when they engage in discussions of other textual traditions. That is, as he is fully aware, even though Young labeled the reigning paradigm as "MT-only," this label does not mean that most biblical scholars completely ignore other textual traditions in their current research. It simply means that the methodological assumptions that they operate under continue to be informed by those same assumptions that arose when the vast majority of scholars did use only the MT as the biblical text. Thus, the text-critical paradigm is the challenging or emerging paradigm that significantly undercuts these long-held assumptions and advocates for a new set of methodological assumptions. Nevertheless, I will avoid Young's label of MT-only paradigm and use instead MT-priority paradigm to avoid giving the perception that scholars who continue to operate under the current paradigm completely ignore text-critical evidence. Like Young, however, I think that they have not yet

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9. Ian Young, "Ancient Hebrew Without Authors," *JSem* 25 (2016): 972–1003; Young, "Starting at the Beginning with Archaic Biblical Hebrew," *HS* 58 (2017): 99–118. Other text critics have explicitly called for a paradigm shift. E.g., Eugene Ulrich wrote: "a paradigm shift is needed in the textual criticism and editing of the Hebrew Bible" ("The Evolutionary Production and Transmission of the Scriptural Books," in *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Hanne von Weissenberg, Juha Pakkala, and Marko Marttila, BZAW 419 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011], 48). I should note that any time that a paradigm shift is underway a lot of incommensurate language necessarily occurs in discussions. Sometimes the same scholar may be using the framework and vocabulary of one paradigm, while advocating for another, within the same publication. Furthermore, the same scholar may have publications that contain incommensurate frameworks when compared to each other. This is descriptively what happens when the reigning paradigm is being challenged significantly, but no new paradigm has (yet?) replaced it. Therefore, the illustrations I give in the introduction for these two paradigms in quotations by individual scholars should *not* be understood as an accurate characterization of an individual scholar's collective work, but simply an extract from that scholar's work that illustrates the point I am making at the time about biblical scholarship as a collective. This is especially the case when such a quotation comes from scholars' earlier work, when it is possible that they have changed their mind in later publications. Therefore, my quotation of an individual scholar's work is best understood as representing a paradigm shift that may be occurring within the guild understood collectively, rather than my assessment of an individual scholar's collective publications. This observation also applies to my own earlier work; i.e., I would nuance my own conclusions better now.

reimagined text criticism (and historical criticism in general) sufficiently on the basis of the extant text-critical evidence, remaining far too influenced by the past emphasis on only using MT. That is, they have not yet accepted that the text-critical evidence demands a new paradigm, the text-critical paradigm.

The title of Ronald Troxel's 2016 article, "What Is the 'Text' in Textual Criticism?," at first may appear to be an odd question, especially when one is working within the MT-priority paradigm that assumes that the original text divides the composition process from the transmission process.[10] Nevertheless, Troxel's question is critical to help us see that the foundational concepts associated with lexemes such as *word*, *text*, and *variant* are culturally constructed in ways to which text critics must be sensitive, so that their own cultural constructs do not adversely affect their analysis of literary texts and the variants they discern within them. As a needed corrective, Troxel concluded that "textual criticism must comprehend textual materiality and its sociological entailments."[11] Below I will explore the differing social constructs of text and variant between the MT-priority paradigm and the text-critical paradigm, including the various dichotomies that sustain the MT-priority paradigm.

Since the time of Karl Lachmann in the nineteenth century, most scholars of literature have understood text primarily as "original text" with the assumption that the original text should be equated with the literary text.[12] The task of text criticism was, then, to rediscover this original text of the literary text by stripping away the variants, that is, those readings that varied from the original text in its transmission history. Within the

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10. Ronald L. Troxel, "What Is the 'Text' in Textual Criticism?," *VT* 66 (2016): 603–26. A similar question is raised in New Testament studies in Eldon Jay Epp, "The Multivalence of the Term 'Original Text' in New Testament Textual Criticism," in *Perspective on New Testament Criticism: Collected Essays, 1962–2004*, NovTSup 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 551–93.

11. Troxel, "What Is the 'Text'?," 611.

12. For excellent reviews of the secondary literature on Lachmann and his influence, see Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, ed. and trans. Glen W. Most (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Bernard Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*, trans. Betsy Wing, Parallax (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). For an excellent review of the text-critical search for the original text especially in biblical studies, see Gary D. Martin, *Multiple Originals: New Approaches to Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism*, TCS 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 12–61.

study of the Hebrew Bible, Lachmann's ideas became closely connected to the nineteenth-century scholar Paul de Lagarde. De Lagarde argued that the variety of evidence among manuscripts in the MT recension is the result of a long process that descended from one manuscript. Although de Lagarde's position was challenged in the early twentieth century by Karl Kahle, de Lagarde's arguments continued strongly among many text critics up to the present, including Emanuel Tov and Ronald Hendel.[13] As the general editor of The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition (hereafter HBCE), Hendel has significant influence in the text criticism of the Hebrew Bible. In his 2008 prologue to this project (previously announced as the Oxford Hebrew Bible [OHB]), Hendel quoted from the 2001 edition of Tov's widely influential *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*:

> Tov offers a cogent definition of the "original text" for the books of the Hebrew Bible which is compatible with the position of the OHB:
>> At the end of the composition process of a biblical book stood a text which was considered authoritative (and hence also finished at the literary level), even if only by a limited group of people, and which at the same time stood at the beginning of a process of copying and textual transmission.[14]

This construction of the original text is closely connected to assumptions about how scribes operated once the composition process ended and the

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13. For a good review of de Lagarde–Kahle debate, see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 169–74. Tov acknowledged his debt to de Lagarde (171). For an excellent discussion of the influence of Lachmann's idea of an original text on Tov and Hendel and text criticism more generally, see Hans Debel, "Rewritten Bible, Variant Literary Editions and Original Text(s): Exploring the Implications of a Pluriform Outlook on the Scriptural Tradition," in *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Hanne von Weissenberg, Juha Pakkala, and Marko Marttila, BZAW 419 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 65–91.

14. Ronald Hendel, "The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition," *VT* 58 (2008): 333, quoting Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 177. Both Tov and Hendel may have softened their views to some degree in later works, but in my opinion they continue to work under the assumption of an original text, *even if* they have backed off on reconstructing the original text as a goal of text criticism. That is, even though I think that they represent the MT-priority paradigm better than many other contemporary text critics, I also see evidence that they too are struggling with the anomalies of that paradigm.

process of copying and textual transmission began. This construction of what scribes do as copyists extends beyond text criticism into many other approaches of historical-critical study of the Hebrew Bible, as is illustrated in this quotation from Aaron Hornkohl's work in historical linguistics:

> The scribes responsible for copying these DSS manuscripts, like those responsible for copying others, may have succeeded in doing exactly what copyists are generally supposed to have been capable of doing, i.e., producing a manuscript identical or at least very similar to its source text.[15]

What these two quotations illustrate is that some text critics (like Tov and Hendel) and other biblical scholars whose work is influenced to some degree by text criticism (like Hornkohl) too often are unaware of recent scholarship concerning what Troxel referred to as "sociological entailments" *or* for some reason have dismissed this scholarship, because of the assumptions they have based on the MT-priority paradigm. For example, although I can agree with Hornkohl that ancient scribes were supposed to copy texts that were considered authoritative in ways that produced "identical or at least very similar" texts, all of these terms must be clearly understood not on our own terms from the perspective of biblical scholars living after the Gutenberg press was invented (that is, as defined in the MT-priority paradigm), but on the terms of the ancient scribes themselves for whom everything was hand-written and remembered.[16] If we define these terms in ways that apply to our own modern standards as producers of academic literature, then the ancient scribes were regularly tremendous failures. Of course, we all know that such a conclusion is extremely anachronistic, so we must strive to better understand ancient texts and the scribes that copied them on their own terms, something a growing number of text critics and other biblical scholars have struggled with as they clearly see the failure of the MT-priority paradigm to address such sociological entailments.

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15. Hornkohl, "Diachronic Exceptions in the Comparison of Tiberian and Qumran Hebrew: The Preservation of Early Linguistic Features in Dead Sea Scrolls Biblical Hebrew," in *The Reconfiguration of Hebrew in the Hellenistic Period*, ed. Jan Joosten, Daniel Machiela, and Jean-Sébastien Rey, STDJ 124 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 68.

16. For an excellent discussion of the role that the invention of the printing press had on biblical studies, see Werner Kelber, "The 'Gutenberg Galaxy' and the Historical Study of the New Testament," *Oral History Journal of South Africa* 5 (2017): 1–16.

As noted above, Ringgren's insights and those of his Scandinavian colleagues hint at problems with the MT-priority paradigm as they insist on the importance of oral traditions to the composition of the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, the influence of Lachmann and de Lagarde was challenged by Kahle, who argued that there was more variety behind the MT tradition, so that the MT recension represents a long process of reducing that variety. Although most Dead Sea Scrolls scholars and text critics of the twentieth century followed de Lagarde, an important exception was Shemaryahu Talmon, who more closely aligned with Kahle's ideas. As noted above, Zahn represents those contemporary Dead Sea Scroll scholars and text critics who are challenging the MT-priority paradigm in the tradition of Kahle and Talmon. Another contemporary text critic advocating for the text-critical paradigm is Young, who has expressed how scribal performance can enable us to understand the textual fluidity and textual plurality that is evident when we look at the text-critical evidence we now have:

> each manuscript of a biblical book in antiquity was a performance of a community tradition where the exact wording was not as important as the effective conveying of what was understood to be the meaning of the tradition. Thus, ancient literary manuscripts were not the repositories of fixed texts of compositions. Rather, each one of them contained a representation of what was understood to be the essential meaning of the tradition as reflected in the written composition.[17]

When we abandon the idea of an original text that supposedly determined what future copies of the literary text should have been, then we can understand that a faithful copy depends less on verbatim reproduction and more on the transmission of the meaning of the tradition.

Below I will review how various dichotomies that are extensions of Lachmann's method—that is, they are closely based on the idea of an original text—are being challenged by text critics of the Hebrew Bible as they identify the failings of the MT-priority paradigm. However, before I do that I want to review how similar paradigm shifts are occurring in the study of other ancient and medieval literature.[18]

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17. Ian Young, "Manuscripts and Authors of the Psalms," *Studia Biblica Slovaca* 8 (2016): 131.

18. For an excellent recent critique of the application of a literary paradigm focused on the *Urform* based on ethno-nationalist assumptions within folklore studies, see Dorian Jurić, "Back in the Foundation: Chauvinistic Scholarship and the

One of the most important voices in biblical studies for the application of media studies is Werner Kelber, whose work in gospel studies has earned him recognition beyond the guild of biblical scholarship so that he is widely respected in media studies in general.[19] Building upon the work of Elizabeth Eisenstein, Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, and other media critics, Kelber has concluded that "print was the medium in which modern biblical scholarship was born and from which it has acquired its formative methodological tools, exegetical conventions, and intellectual posture."[20] This print-based way of thinking led to Lachmann's method with its emphasis on the original text and the higher-critical methods that are dependent upon lower criticism's reconstruction of the original text. As Kelber states, "the historical-critical paradigm appears culture-bound and beholden to modern media dynamics that are many centuries removed from the ancient communications culture."[21] However, due to the easier availability of a much wider range of ancient and medieval manuscripts, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Ptolemaic papyri of Homer, and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, a growing number of scholars of ancient and medieval literature are questioning such distinctions.[22] This includes

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Building Sacrifice Story-Pattern," *Oral Tradition* 34 (2020): 3–44. I.e., the emphasis on an original text within literature has also had a negative influence in the study of oral traditions and folklore.

19. E.g., Kelber was awarded the Walter J. Ong Award for Career Achievement in Scholarship by the Media Ecology Association in 2019 at their annual conference in Toronto. For a recent review of the secondary literature on media studies as applied to biblical literature (including Kelber's significant role), see Raymond F. Person Jr. and Chris Keith, "Media Studies and Biblical Studies: An Introduction," in *The Dictionary of the Bible and Ancient Media*, ed. Tom Thatcher et al. (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 1–15.

20. Kelber, "'Gutenberg Galaxy' and the Historical Study of the New Testament," 3.

21. Werner H. Kelber, *Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory: Collected Essays of Werner Kelber*, RBS 74 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 2.

22. On the Ptolemaic papyri of Homer, see Graeme D. Bird, *Multitextuality in the Homeric Iliad: The Witness of the Ptolemaic Papyri*, Hellenic Studies 43 (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2010); and Jonathan Ready, *Orality, Textuality, and the Homeric Epics: An Interdisciplinary Study of Oral Texts, Dictated Texts, and Wild Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). On Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, see Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Joyce Tally Lionarons, ed. *Old English Literature in Its Manuscript Culture* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2004).

some biblical scholars whose work focuses on text criticism (especially influenced by the Dead Sea Scrolls). All of these challenges to the reigning paradigm of higher criticism come from a variety of approaches by scholars who study a variety of literary texts. When he surveys this variety of approaches, Kelber has labeled what he perceives as the emerging, challenging paradigm, "the oral-scribal-memorial-performative paradigm" to reflect the following various approaches: the comparative study of oral traditions, the new philology movement, memory studies, and performance studies.[23] Although this label is somewhat awkward, I nevertheless agree with Kelber that this combination of approaches has the possibility to establish a new paradigm, even though I think that has not yet been achieved, no matter how hard and long some of us have been working toward that goal. I also share Kelber's following concern: "My concern is … that the historical-critical paradigm is not historical enough. What is advocated here is a novel sense of sensibilities that seeks to come to terms with what Foley has called 'an inadequate theory of verbal art.'"[24] That is, what John Miles Foley labels as the "inadequate theory of verbal art" behind current models of historical criticism erroneously assumes the dichotomies that we will explore below that are depend on the anachronistic idea of an original text.[25] To return to Troxel's language, the inadequate theory of verbal art does not take seriously both "textual materiality and its sociological entailments," so that this inadequate theory has created sharp dichotomies that are deeply anachronistic in the context of the communications culture of the ancient world. In the study of the Hebrew Bible, the reigning historical-critical paradigm is the MT-priority paradigm and it is being challenged by the text-critical paradigm, which is certainly consistent with what Kelber called "the oral-scribal-memorial-performative paradigm."

One of the first dichotomies to be challenged remains ironically one of the most persistent—that is, the distinction between higher criticism and lower criticism. Although Dead Sea Scrolls scholars and text critics, who

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23. Kelber, *Imprints, Voiceprints*, 2, 7; see also Werner H. Kelber, "The Work of Marcel Jousse in Context," in *The Forgotten Compass: Marcel Jousse and the Exploration of the Oral World*, ed. Werner H. Kelber and Bruce D. Chilton (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2022), 1–53, esp. 43–49.

24. Kelber, *Imprints, Voiceprints*, 2–3.

25. John Miles Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 5.

have been relegated to lower criticism, have declared the demise of this distinction, many higher critics rely only or primarily on MT, still operating under the MT-priority paradigm.[26] Troxel's view is representative of most text critics:

> Even if the textual and compositional history of each book must be evaluated independently, the evidence of a more variegated origin for different forms of many biblical books creates problems for sustaining any rigid divide between "higher" and "lower" criticism.[27]

No longer is it acceptable to assume that higher critics simply take the results of lower criticism as published in a critical edition as the original text upon which they apply the higher-critical methods *or* that text critics have nothing to contribute beyond textual transmission.[28] Furthermore, as the quotation from Troxel also illustrates, we cannot easily divide composition and transmission, the first as the abode of higher criticism and the second as the abode of lower criticism. The composition-versus-transmission distinction is explicit in the MT-priority paradigm, as illustrated in the quotation I gave above from Hendel as he quoted Tov—"At the end of the composition process … the beginning of a process of copying and textual transmission"—and this dichotomy betrays the continuing influence of the higher criticism-versus-lower criticism dichotomy, even among many text critics.[29] That is, the original text as defined by Tov and accepted by Hendel is the text that defines the transition from compo-

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26. E.g., George J. Brooke, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Demise of the Distinction between Higher and Lower Criticism," in *New Directions in Qumran Studies: Proceedings of the Bristol Colloquium on the Dead Sea Scrolls, 8–10 September 2003*, ed. Jonathan G. Campbell, William John Lyons, and Lloyd K. Pietersen, LSTS (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 26–42; Michael V. Fox, "Text Criticism and Literary Criticism," in *Built by Wisdom, Established by Understanding: Essays on Biblical and Near Eastern Literature in Honor of Adele Berlin*, ed. Maxine Grossman (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2013), 341–56.

27. Ronald L. Troxel, "Writing Commentary on the Life of a Text," *VT* 67 (2017): 111–12.

28. Of course, some biblical scholars have abandoned the higher-critical methods altogether, only applying (at least they assume so) synchronic methods to a critical edition. Although I find real value in some such studies and some of my own publications reflect this method, I refuse to give up on historically informed research into the biblical text.

29. Hendel "Prologue," 333, quoting Tov, *Textual Criticism* (2nd ed.), 177.

sition to transmission and, therefore, justifies for Hendel, as the general editor, the need for HBCE. Nevertheless, HBCE includes text critics as editors of individual forthcoming volumes who distance themselves from this idea of an original text, including Troxel. Thus, the composition/transmission process is probably a better way of understanding that these are not necessarily successive, mutually exclusive stages in the literary history of books that became the Hebrew Bible (or at least the transmission-only phase must be understood to be very late).

Related to the composition-versus-transmission dichotomy that describes the literary process is a dichotomy that divides the tradents in the composition/transmission process into authors and copyists, a dichotomy evident in the above quotation from Hornkohl: copyists are those responsible for "producing a manuscript identical or at least very similar to its source text."[30] As early as 1975, Talmon challenged this distinction based on his study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, rabbinic literature, and apocrypha:

> in this sphere of biblical text transmission the possibility should be considered that the principle of "controlled variation" which was the legitimate right of biblical authors, editors, and likewise of transmitters and copyists, retained a lease on life also in the post-biblical period, and was utilized by writers who employed biblical quotations as building stones in their compositions.[31]

That is, Talmon observed that both authors and copyists employed the same literary techniques of controlled variations. Two more recent versions of this observation are found in the following quotations from Brennan Breed and JiSeong Kwon, respectively: "Scribes were always both copyists and authors, always changing and transmitting to various degrees" and "scribes were possibly the literati of oral-written texts who were equipped to transmit and produce literature."[32] I want to close my discussion of the

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30. Hornkohl, "Diachronic Exceptions," 68.

31. Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Textual Study of the Bible: A New Outlook," in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, ed. Frank Moore Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 376.

32. Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*, ISBL (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 21; JiSeong James Kwon, *Scribal Culture and Intertextuality: Literary and Historical Relationships between Job and Deutero-Isaiah*, FAT 2/85 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 139. In fact, Johann Cook has

author-versus-copyist dichotomy by quoting from the excellent work of
Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg, who demonstrated that in rabbinic litera-
ture there is a notion of continuing authorship that was also a collective
project. This is illustrated in the following quotation:

> If Joshua added a portion to Moses' book and Joshua's own book was
> then added to first by Eleazar and then by Pinchas, and so on through
> the generations, we are left with a portrait of biblical composition
> as a progressive and collective project—an endeavor in which each
> generation completed the work of the previous generation, and indi-
> vidual contributions were transformed by the redactional activities
> of later recipients.[33]

That is, Wollenberg's conclusion illustrates how the author-versus-copyist
dichotomy had no place even in late antiquity, supporting the assertion
that this dichotomy is a post-Gutenberg invention.

The above quotation from Kwon introduces another dichotomy that
continues, probably more than the others—oral-versus-written or
oral-versus-textual—even though Kwon overcomes this dichotomy with
"oral-written." In the traditional understanding of form criticism, oral tra-
ditions may have played an important role in the prehistory of biblical
texts, providing oral sources for the biblical writers; however, the assump-
tion tended to be that once a tradition was written down/composed by
the author, that is, it became a literary text, the oral tradition ceased to
influence the transmission of the text by the copyists. Therefore, oral and
written were understood as successive stages in the composition/trans-
mission process. However, this distinction has long been challenged by
those who have studied oral traditions, as illustrated by the quotation I
gave earlier from Ringgren: "oral and written transmission should not be
played off against another: they do not exclude each other, but may be
regarded as complementary."[34] Talmon made a similar observation: "In
the milieu which engulfed all streams of Judaism at the turn of the era, a

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made a strong argument that even translators can function much like an independent
author. See Cook, "The Relationship between Textual Criticism, Literary Criticism,
and Exegesis—An Interactive One?," *Textus* 24 (2009): 119–32.

33. Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg, "A King and a Scribe Like Moses: The Recep-
tion of Deuteronomy 34:10 and a Rabbinic Theory of Collective Biblical Authorship,"
HUCA 90 (2019): 215.

34. Ringgren, "Oral and Written Transmission," 34.

text was by definition an aural text, a *spoken* piece of writing, a performed story."[35] Daniel Pioske has recently concluded similarly: "written and oral forms of discourse were continually intertwined throughout the centuries in which the Hebrew Bible was composed, with modes of textuality and orality shaping and being shaped by one another among societies in which writing was known but oral communication pervasive and persistent."[36] Despite how the oral-versus-written dichotomy persists, Gary Martin in his monograph *Multiple Originals* suggested that this dichotomy is being overcome, in ways that seem paradoxical from the MT-priority paradigm: "Textual criticism and oral studies are gradually evolving into a unified discipline.… We are moving away from thinking about textuality and orality as entirely separate disciplines toward examining their interconnections."[37]

After reviewing these problematic dichotomies within the MT-priority paradigm, I want to explore further three important interrelated questions: What is a text? What were scribes doing? and What is the role of textual plurality in the work of scribes copying manuscripts? First, what is a text? This is a question some text critics have explicitly asked recently. Troxel entitled an article "What Is the 'Text' in Textual Criticism?," and Hendel entitled a *Festschrift* chapter with a similar question, "What Is a Biblical Book?" In their answers to these questions, both Troxel and Hendel are clearly exploring what they are attempting to do in their participation in HBCE, that is, what is the text that they are attempting to produce in their respective text-critical volumes. Apparently still working out of the older paradigm even though here he avoided the term original text, Hendel used language from the work of philosopher Charles Peirce of "type" and "tokens" in such a way that hints at the original text as the type that is only represented by its tokens: "A literary work is, in this sense, a type, an abstract object. The physical instantiations of a literary work are its tokens."[38] When he applied this to HBCE, he concluded as follows: "the

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35. Shemaryahu Talmon, "Oral Tradition and Written Transmission, or the Heard and the Seen Word in Judaism of the Second Temple Period," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, ed. Henry Wansbrough, JSNTSup 64 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 150.

36. Daniel Pioske, *Memory in the Time of Prose: Studies in Epistemology, Hebrew Scribalism, and the Biblical Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 17–18.

37. Martin, *Multiple Originals*, 2.

38. Ronald Hendel, "What Is a Biblical Book?," in *From Author to Copyist: Essays on the Composition, Redaction, and Transmission of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of Zipi Talshir*, ed. Cana Werman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 289.

concept of a book clarifies that one of the chief goals of a critical edition is to recover, to the extent feasible, the notation of the book at the point when it became a book, that is (in Kant's phrase) when 'someone delivers [it] to the public.'"[39] Here we can see that his formulation of book is essentially the same as the original text that defines the boundaries of the compositional process leading up to the book through the work of the author and the transmission process by copyists that follows the book's publication. In contrast, Troxel answers his question quite differently. First, he wrote "that the notion of an original text is illusory both epistemologically and, given what we know about the composition of biblical literature, ontologically."[40] Clearly Troxel is rejecting the original text as understood in the MT-priority paradigm. He then understood the critical edition of Isaiah that he is working on in a paradoxical manner—that is, his critical edition will be a text that "refers to a critically established verbal form … that entails analysis of meanings"; however, "speaking of 'the text of the Bible' is nonsensical, given its books' disparate origins and their early transmission in discrete scrolls."[41] One of Hendel's and Troxel's colleagues in HBCE who also addresses this question is Sidnie White Crawford. The following shows that for her the text that a text critic seeks is not the original text:

> The work of the text critic begins at the moment when a book reaches its recognizable shape. By "recognizable shape" I am referring to the arc of the book, its beginning, middle and end. Often this arc follows a narrative structure. Thus "Genesis" begins with the Priestly creation account followed by the primeval history, moves through the patriarchal narratives, and finishes with Joseph and the Israelites in Egypt. That is the "recognizable shape" of the book of Genesis. Within that recognizable shape, however, the text was still fluid and subject to change.[42]

That is, the recognizable shape of a book cannot be identified with any single manuscript as the original text, because "the text was still fluid and subject to change." Hendel, Troxel, and Crawford are fully aware that the results of their text-critical work will not reproduce the original text; how-

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39. Hendel, "What Is a Biblical Book?," 301.
40. Troxel, "What Is the 'Text'?," 603–4.
41. Troxel, "What Is the 'Text'?," 622.
42. Sidnie White Crawford, *The Text of the Pentateuch: Textual Criticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2022), 147.

ever, Hendel seems to still think that there was an original text (even when he uses different terms for it), in contrast to Troxel who explicitly rejects the very idea of an original text and Crawford whose idea of a recognizable shape at least undercuts the idea of an original text. All three, however, understand that their task is to produce a critical edition that will provide a text of a biblical book that will be useful to other biblical scholars, especially those who are not text critics. As one who has profited much from my critical reading of the first (and, at the time of my writing, only) volume of HBCE—Michael Fox's *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary*—I look forward to using the future volumes of HBCE, including those edited by Hendel, Troxel, and Crawford.[43]

Despite some differences related to original text, Hendel, Troxel, and Crawford clearly do not equate any individual manuscript with the literary text of the books that they are editing for their critical editions, so I want to explore some other understandings of what individual manuscripts of biblical literature were in relationship to a literary text. Above we looked at Crawford's understanding of "the 'recognizable shape' of the book of Genesis"; here I want to complicate the relationship of an individual manuscript and its relationship to the book of Genesis by drawing from George Brooke's analysis of 4Q4 (4QGen[d]). Brooke's study of 4Q4 led him to the conclusion that "not all of Genesis has to be included on every copy of the scriptural book."[44] Thus, by implication, both of the following observations can be true: on the one hand, no one manuscript that contains its full narrative structure (its beginning, middle, and end; Crawford's recognizable shape) can represent fully the book of Genesis, because of textual plurality and textual fluidity; on the other hand, a manuscript that contains only a portion of its recognizable shape can nevertheless represent metonymically the full narrative structure. This paradox underlines the fluidity of the very concept of literary text and book as they are related to individual manuscripts. No individual manuscript can fully represent the literary text or book, but every individual manuscript, no matter how incomplete, can nevertheless represent the

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43. Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary*, HBCE (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015).

44. George J. Brooke, "4QGen[d] Reconsidered," in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera: Florilegium Complutense*, ed. Andreés Piquer Otero and Pablo A. Torijano Morales, JSJSup 157 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 60.

literary text or book sufficiently for the purpose of transmitting the text. We can complicate this even further. Based on their text-critical study of the Shema Yisrael (Deut 6:4–9), Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold concluded that "some key passages of individual books had in turn textual histories of their own which were mostly unaffected by their book's overall textual transmission."[45] From their analysis of phylacteries and mezuzot, they concluded that Deut 6:4–5 was transmitted in a stable form in contrast to Deut 6:6–9, which exhibits textual fluidity. They assumed, however, that together Deut 6:4–9 was transmitted primarily by memory in the making of phylacteries and mezuzot, especially since it had a prominent role in the liturgy. Therefore, the contrast between the textual stability of Deut 6:4–5 and the textual fluidity of Deut 6:6–9 raises another example of how transmission by memory can vary significantly from one passage to another or even within different sections of the same passage. Thus, Lange's and Weigold's conclusions suggest another paradox: on the one hand, no individual manuscript can fully contain the literary text or book; on the other hand, a manuscript may represent more than one literary text *or* a literary text may exist within a literary text.

So, what is a text? The answer to this question must be complex, allowing for the literary text to never be fully contained in any individual manuscript, but at the same time an individual manuscript may represent more than one literary text. Thus, there is a strong tension between literary text and written text/individual manuscript in ways that require the literary text to include oral texts based on memory as well as written texts. I want to end the exploration of What is a text? here with two quotations that further illustrate the complexity of the answer to this question in ways that broaden the discussion once again. In *Tracking the Master Scribe*, Sara Milstein drew extensively from her study of Mesopotamian literature and concluded the following: "Each tablet or fragment reflects a mere snapshot of a much larger tradition that surely had numerous oral and written expressions. Even when multiple versions of a text are available, it is unlikely that they are related directly."[46] In her discussion of rabbinic and early Christian literature, Wollenberg concluded, "The late antique thinkers quoted in these pages appear to have imagined the extant biblical text

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45. Lange and Weigold, "The Text of the Shema Yisrael in Qumran Literature and Elsewhere," in Otero and Morale, *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies*, 177.

46. Sara Milstein, *Tracking the Master Scribe: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 12.

as a composite work that bore the literary scars of historical corruption and reconstruction."[47] Milstein drew from ancient Near Eastern literature that preceded the Hebrew Bible and Wollenberg drew from a variety of Jewish and Christian literature from the late antique period after the canonization of the Hebrew Bible; nevertheless, their conclusions demonstrate that, in the ancient world in which the Hebrew Bible was formed, individual manuscripts were understood as imperfect instantiations of literary texts preserved within the broader tradition that conceived of the composition/transmission process as a continuing, living, multigenerational project. As such, any answer to the question What is a text? must necessarily allow for a range of meanings from abstract literary texts held within scribal memory to specific manifestations of a literary text or a portion thereof in individual manuscripts with some manuscripts containing more than one literary text.

With this complex notion of text, the question What were scribes doing? must be also addressed with some complexity. Adrian Schenker asked this question in his chapter "What Do Scribes, and What Do Editors Do?" Later he refined his question in a way that clearly struggles with the implications of some of the dichotomies described above: "Did some copyists take the initiative to intervene literarily in the text they were supposed to reproduce faithfully?"[48] That is, intervening literarily seems to be the realm of authors, since copyists should reproduce the text faithfully, so did some copyists cross this boundary? Although he answered affirmatively that some copyists were "creative scribes" (borrowing a term from Eugene Ulrich), Schenker nevertheless asserted that "textual variants are mainly due to scribes and copyists."[49] Here we can see that the language

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47. Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg, "The Book That Changed: Narratives of Ezran Authorship as Late Antique Biblical Criticism," *JBL* 138 (2019): 159.

48. Adrian Schenker, "What Do Scribes, and What Do Editors Do? The Hebrew Text of the Masoretes, the Old Greek Bible and the Alexandrian Philological *Ekdoseis* of the Fourth and Third Centuries B.C., Illustrated by the Example of 2 Kings 1," in *After Qumran: Old and Modern Editions of the Biblical Texts—The Historical Books*, ed. Hans Ausloos, Bénédicte Lemmelijn, and Julio Trebolle Barrera, BETL 246 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 298, 275.

49. Schenker, "What Do Scribes, and What Do Editors Do?," 298. See Eugene Ulrich, "The Canonical Process, Textual Criticism and Latter Stages in the Composition of the Bible," in *Sha'arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. Michael Fishbane and Emanuel Tov (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 276–87.

of the author-versus-copyist dichotomy continues its influence, even as Schenker is struggling with the implications of text-critical variants that undercut this assumption. We see a similar tension, when Brooke concluded, "Few, if any, copyists were just scribal automata," although in contrast to Schenker the tension here is used by Brooke to uncut this dichotomy well.[50] Before addressing this question further, I want to back up and look at the definition of scribe. *Scribe* can have a broader meaning, as illustrated in the following quotation from Eibert Tigchelaar:

> depending on text and context, a "scribe" (*sofer/safar/grammateus*) could be an administrative official; a person who drafts and sometimes also physically writes records and documents; a person who composes or edits literary texts; a sage who studies and teaches wisdom and ancient literature; a scholar who studies torah and legal interpretation of texts; or someone who copies existing texts by hand.[51]

Tigchelaar also noted that "individual scribes may have been involved in multiple activities."[52] Although I agree with his broader definition in general, in this work I am only interested in scribes according to a narrower definition, one more often assumed in text-critical studies, such as that of Lindsey Askin: "A scribe can be defined as a person engaged professionally in tasks of written activity. Although education served to make both literate people and scribes, scribes can be said to be engaged professionally in tasks such as copying and accounting."[53] My narrower

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50. Brooke, "Demise," 37. See also Brooke, "What Is Editing? What Is an Edition? Towards a Taxonomy for Late Second Temple Jewish Literature," in *Insights into Editing in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East: What Does Documented Evidence Tell Us about the Transmission of Authoritative Texts?*, ed. Reinhard Müller and Juha Pakkala, CBET 84 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 23–39; Brooke, "Hot at Qumran, Cold in Jerusalem: A Reconsideration of Some Late Second Temple Period Attitudes to the Scriptures and Their Interpretation," in *Hā-ʾîsh Mōshe: Studies in Scriptural Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature in Honor of Moshe J. Bernstein*, ed. Binyamin Y. Goldstein, Michael Segal, and George J. Brooke, STDJ 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 64–77.

51. Tigchelaar, "The Scribes of the Scrolls," in *T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. George J. Brooke and Charlotte Hempel (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 524. See similarly, Leo G. Perdue, ed. *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World*, FRLANT 219 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

52. Tigchelaar, "Scribes of the Scrolls," 524.

53. Askin, *Scribal Culture in Ben Sira*, JSJSup 184 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 15.

focus in no way minimizes the multiple activities that scribes performed in the ancient world; I am simply interested in this monograph in their professional activity of copying and transmitting previously existing manuscripts.[54] Therefore, the real question I am interested in is What were scribes doing in their act of copying texts? This question is also asked by Crawford: "Did he feel free to edit, expand, and otherwise make changes to his received text, or was he attempting to copy his *Vorlage* as faithfully as possible?"[55] However, the way Crawford asked the question seems to assume some division between composition by authors and transmission by copyists—that is, like Schenker's question above, Crawford's question itself necessarily draws from the framework and language of the MT-priority paradigm with its anachronistic dichotomies. I should note that to some degree we all are trapped in the use of these dichotomies, because they are so integral to our way of understanding ancient literature. In fact, throughout the volume I continue to use some terms connected to these dichotomies, even as I strive to overcome these dichotomies. For example, I will continue to use "author" and "copyist," even though I prefer simply "scribes," because the use of even anachronistic terminology may prove helpful in my advocating for a different way of thinking about, in this case, those who write.

As just noted, the question What were scribes doing? needs further clarification, so I now want to turn to what I identified above as my third question: What is the role of textual plurality in the work of a scribe copying a manuscript? This is really a guiding question for this volume— that is, the answer demands, in my opinion, insights from the ideas of scribal performance and scribal memory combined with insights of word selection drawn from both the comparative study of oral traditions and conversation analysis. Furthermore, the previous two questions cannot be answered well without a clear answer to this question, because all three

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54. For my discussion of this broader understanding of scribes, see Raymond F. Person Jr., "Education and Transmission of Tradition," in *Companion to Ancient Israel*, ed. Susan Niditch (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 366–78.

55. Sidnie White Crawford, "Interpreting the Pentateuch through Scribal Processes: The Evidence from the Qumran Manuscripts," in Müller and Pakkala, *Insights into Editing*, 63. Here I should note that with Crawford and most other scholars, I assume that the vast majority of scribes were male, so that the use of masculine pronouns is acceptable in the historical description of what was likely a male-biased profession in the ancient world.

questions are so interrelated. That is, What is a text? is a question that must be asked when we consider scribal activity within the textual plurality present throughout the composition/transmission process.[56] Moreover, if scribes are not copying a text that is supposed to be closely connected to the original text (or even the *Vorlage* physically present), the question of What were scribes doing? becomes more important. Below I will give my preliminary answer to this third question that implies an answer to the other two questions, but before I do so I want to be more specific on the cognitive processes involved in the scribal act of copying manuscripts. I will explore two models proposed by Hendel and Jonathan Vroom, but I will adapt them further, including drawing from some important insights in Askin's recent work.

In his introduction to HBCE, *Steps to a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, Hendel constructed "a plausible typology that addresses how scribal errors happen" based significantly on the typology of Eugene Vinaver published in 1939 on his text-critical work on medieval English and French literature.[57] Vinaver's typology has four stages under which Hendel discussed the typology of scribal variants in the text criticism of the Hebrew Bible as follows, all of which will be noted in the text-critical apparatus of volumes in HBCE and which Hendel illustrated with examples from Fox's *Proverbs* volume in HBCE:

(A) The Reading of the Text
    Graphic Confusion
    Metathesis
    Dittography with Graphic Confusion
    Word Misdivision
    Aural Error
    Synonym with Graphic or Aural Trigger
(B) The Passage of the Eye from the Text to the Copy
(C) The Writing of the Copy
    Forgetting

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56. For an excellent discussion of the history of scholarship concerning textual plurality and the Hebrew Bible, see David Andrew Teeter, *Scribal Laws: Exegetical Variation in the Textual Transmission of Biblical Law in the Late Second Temple Period*, FAT 92 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 210–39.

57. Ronald Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, TCS 10 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 151.

      Dittography
      Distorted Dittography
      Haplography
      Synonym
  (D) The Passage of the Eye from the Copy Back to the Text
      Eye-Skip: homoioteleuton, homoioarchton, homoiomeson[58]

In this typology, Hendel explicitly discussed forgetting and memory slips. For example, he noted that he did not include any text-critical variants in "(B) The Passage of the Eye from the Text to the Copy" for the following reason: "Since slips of memory only show up in slips of the pen, the errors of memory that occur in this movement are only instantiated in the writing of the copy."[59] Then the first category of scribal errors in (C) is "forgetting," and the last category is "synonyms," which he described as follows: "synonymous variants are memory variants, because their generation relies on a lapse or misprision in the scribe's act of reading or in his short-term memory. But such memory slips are wholly at home in the setting of literary transcription."[60] Here we can clearly see how Hendel assumes that short-term memory plays an important role in the transmission process. Hendel then provided a further typology of scribal revisions, which he understood as exegetical changes (which usually expanded the text). From my perspective, Hendel's typology of scribal errors/transcriptional errors and scribal revisions/exegetical changes seems to be based too much on the composition-versus-transmission dichotomy and the author-versus-copyist dichotomy—that is, scribal errors are accidental variants from the

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58. Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition*, 153–62.

59. Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition*, 158.

60. Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition*, 167. I should simply note here that, in his long excursus (164–69), Hendel mostly rejected Carr's conclusions concerning memory variants with the exception of synonymous readings, something hinted at in this quotation ("wholly at home in the setting of literary transcript"). See David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 17–18. However, in my opinion, Hendel misunderstood Carr's argument significantly. Below I will discuss Carr's work in the section concerning scribal memory, so I will not engage in a thorough critique of Hendel's misreading of Carr here. As is clear in this section, Hendel is still operating under an assumption of the original text and variants, most of which are scribal errors; therefore, I think he misses important nuances in Carr's understanding of memory variants, especially in his narrow focus on short-term memory.

original text made by copyists and scribal revisions are intentional variants from the original text made by copyists who have abandoned their task of copying during the transmission process.

Drawing from cognitive psychology, Vroom described the copying process in more elaborate terms than Hendel. He first noted that there are two facts to any copying process: "(1) copying involves constant alternation between reading and writing; [and] (2) human eyes cannot simultaneously focus on two spatially distinct objects."[61] He then identified the following steps of the copying process.

Scribes had to:
1. Identify the appropriate place on their *Vorlage* (where they last left off)
2. Select the next unit of text to be transferred to the new copy (a transfer unit).
3. Hold that unit of text to their short-term memory.
4. Turn their eyes from the *Vorlage* to the new copy while retaining the memory of that transfer unit.
5. Convert the transfer unit from memory to writing on the new copy.
6. Turn their eyes back to the *Vorlage* while still retaining the memory of that text unit.
7. Repeat (locate that transfer unit on the *Vorlage*—the place they left off).[62]

Vroom insisted that these steps are "essential to all manner of *Vorlage*-based copying (i.e., they do not apply to dictation-based copying)" and provided references to similar observations by scholars in New Testament, classical Greek and Latin texts, and medieval literature.[63] Like

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61. Jonathan Vroom, "A Cognitive Approach to Copying Errors: Haplography and Textual Transmission of the Hebrew Bible," *JSOT* 40 (2016): 267. Here I should note that Vroom's use of "transfer unit" from cognitive psychology may have close connections to Foley's use of "word" (see pp. 57–62 below). E.g., the English lexeme "the" by itself is unlikely to be a transfer unit, because a transfer unit will be a unit of meaning and "the" would be selected as part of the noun phrase in which it is located pragmatically. In fact, we cannot know how to pronounce "the" without the following lexeme.

62. Vroom, "Cognitive Approach to Copying Errors," 267–68.

63. Vroom, "Cognitive Approach to Copying Errors," 268.

Hendel, Vroom understood the importance of short-term memory in the copying process.

Both Hendel and Vroom assumed that their typologies apply to *Vorlage*-based copying and Vroom explicitly stated that the steps he identified do not apply to dictation-based copying. In *Scribal Culture in Ben Sira*, Askin engaged in an excellent critique of the widely held assumption made by text critics that most (if not all) manuscript transmission was conducted by *Vorlage*-based copying—that is, a solitary activity in which a scribe has both a physical existing manuscript and the new manuscript-in-progress before him. Her critique included an excellent survey of ancient descriptions of reading and writing throughout the ancient Near East, especially focused on furniture that may have accompanied writing as well as bodily positions. In light of her survey of the material culture of reading and writing, Askin concluded as follows:

> The question of "simultaneous use" of scrolls for textual transmission, copying or translation as a solitary activity becomes rather difficult to maintain. The major issue of textual variants in manuscripts also becomes one of transmission through oral recitation, and visual mistakes in reading would be caused by the scribe reading aloud to a copyist.[64]

She also observed that "the solitary scribe, as we imagine it, quietly copying out a text without assistance, seems to be a product of the Middle Ages."[65]

Although I find Askin's conclusions quite convincing and a much needed corrective to an assumption that most (if not all) textual transmission occurred according to a *Vorlage*-based copying process, I am not yet ready to agree with her wholeheartedly that textual transmission rarely occurred in this way, but occurred primarily through dictation or memory.[66] Furthermore, for the purposes of this study, I do not think that I must come down firmly on one side or the other, because it seems to me that the copying process described by Hendel and Vroom would equally apply to a dictation-based copying process, despite Vroom's assertion to the

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64. Askin, *Scribal Culture*, 26.

65. Askin, *Scribal Culture*, 26.

66. See esp. my discussion of stichography below, which implies some likelihood of some cases of the same scribe visually copying a *Vorlage* physically present before him. Although stichography would not have necessarily required the narrower understanding of *Vorlage*-based copying (as understood by Vroom), it is a practice that might have been complicated by dictation of the *Vorlage*.

contrary. In fact, the following quotation from Askin illustrates my own assertion, in that she implicitly located some of the same scribal errors within the steps described by Vroom:

> It is not possible to be certain of whether a scribal mistake is due to visual or oral error, regardless of whether the scribe dictating is reading aloud or reciting from memory. Scribal errors and variants can be the result of hearing incorrectly (oral error), from a scribe disagreeing with the dictated manuscript, or from reading aloud incorrectly (visual error such as parablepsis).[67]

In fact, I will go a step further and argue that the phrase "*Vorlage*-based copying" can refer not only to what Hendel and Vroom imagine but also to Askin's dictation-based copying, because the scribe dictating the text may have a physical *Vorlage* before him. Therefore, when I apply Vroom's steps given above, I will adapt his wording by interpreting his use of the plural scribes to include not only solitary scribes, each of whom have both a *Vorlage* and a new manuscript before them (as he intended), but also at least two scribes, one with the *Vorlage* before him dictating to a scribe (or more) who has the new manuscript before him (as in Askin's work). For example, in the latter case, the scribe with the *Vorlage* would have to select a transfer unit to dictate and then wait for the copying scribe(s) to write that transfer unit before returning his gaze to the *Vorlage* to select the next transfer unit to dictate. That is, the process of moving from *Vorlage* to new manuscript does not differ that significantly whether there is one or more than one scribe involved in the copying process.

Even my reinterpretation of Vroom's steps for the copying process on the basis of Askin's work needs further refinement. Hendel and Vroom both assume that memory can contribute to scribal errors in the copying process, but they limit that influence to slips of memory based on short-term memory.[68] However, if no one manuscript can fully represent

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67. Lindsey A. Askin, "Scribal Production and Literacy at Qumran: Consideration of Page Layout and Style," *Material Aspects of Reading in Ancient and Medieval Cultures: Materiality, Presence, and Performance*, ed. Jonas Leipziger, Anna Krauß, and Friederike Schücking-Jungblut, Materiale Textkulturen 26 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 31. See similarly, Askin, *Scribal Culture*, 26.

68. In a later publication, Vroom drew more widely from memory studies, including both short-term and long-term memory. See Jonathan Vroom, "The Role of Memory in *Vorlage*-Based Transmission," *Textus* 27 (2018): 258–73. In this publica-

a literary text, then in a real sense any *Vorlage* that is physically present in its written form may not be the only text present in the copying process. If it is possible (no matter how unusual) that the production of a new manuscript can occur based strictly on memory, that is, with no written *Vorlage* present, then we certainly should consider that more than one *Vorlage* may be present during *Vorlage*-based copying. That is, the *Vorlage* that is physically present in its written form may be joined by other *Vorlagen* that reside in scribal memory.[69] In this sense, short-term memory may influence scribes' copying of the *Vorlage* physically present before them, but the other *Vorlagen*, those not physically present in written form but stored in long-term memory, may nevertheless influence the scribes' new manuscripts; therefore, the new manuscripts may be more than copies of even the one *Vorlage* that is physically present in written form. Therefore, it seems likely to me that the scribes' physical libraries (no matter how large or small; public or private) not only included different recensions or editions of literary texts, but these physical libraries were representations of the libraries of literary texts preserved in the collective memory of the scribes. Although access to physical libraries likely was greatly limited to a few resident scribes, the libraries held in scribal memory would have been libraries that the scribes could carry with them in all times and places; and even if they had access to the physical libraries, the mechanics of handling scrolls would have meant that the libraries stored in scribal memory would have been more often accessed for quotations in composition as well as corrections in transmission or, better, throughout the entire composition/transmission process.

What is the role of textual plurality in the work of a scribe copying a manuscript? *Even if* a scribe's act of producing a new manuscript includes *Vorlage*-based copying, textual plurality and textual fluidity remain a distinct possibility, because any physically present *Vorlage* in written form, that is, a manuscript, cannot adequately represent the textual plurality in

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tion, Vroom explicitly drew from my work on scribal memory in one of my book chapters directly connected to this project: Raymond F. Person Jr., "Formulas and 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, Publications of the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature 6 (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2022). Thus, I am confident that Vroom has accepted some of what I now argue in this work.

69. For a fuller discussion of scribal memory, see below.

which the literary text exists, of which the *Vorlage* is but one instantiation; therefore, any scribe may access the full textual plurality of the literary text that exists within scribal memory, even when he may not have access to other physical manuscripts of the literary text. Before I explicate further the ideas of scribal performance and scribal memory that are critical to my answer, I want to reflect on the following from Tov's essay, "Some Reflections on Consistency in the Activity of Scribes and Translators":

> I suggest that consistency was not part of their world. These persons sometimes display *tendencies* towards consistency, but no more than that. The absence of consistency did not disturb the ancients, since the aspiration for consistency is an invention of later centuries. Consistency is probably a product of schools, universities, and other frameworks that did not exist in the world of the ancient biblical scribes and translators and to the extent that such frameworks did exist, the ancients did not try to adhere to them.[70]

Consistency may not have been part of the scribes' world, but note that Tov cleverly does not conclude that inconsistency was. Something else must have been going on. When I apply this important insight to *Vorlage*-based copying, I explicitly note that much of the time scribes adhered closely to the *Vorlage*. However, their inconsistency (as we tend to perceive it) suggests that this verbal adherence to the *Vorlage* was *not* something that was ideologically required of copyists who were supposed to copy and expected themselves to copy the text of the *Vorlage* verbatim. Rather, they faithfully performed the literary texts in their very act of copying them within the composition/transmission process for their continued use in the communities that they served.

Scribal Performance and Scribal Memory

Above I have referred to both scribal performance and scribal memory in my preliminary answer to the question What were scribes doing? Here I will elaborate on these concepts that are so critical to my argument by

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70. Emanuel Tov, "Some Reflections on Consistency in the Activity of Scribes and Translators," in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint: Collected Essays*, vol. 3, VTSup 167 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 36, emphasis original. Here we see Tov undercutting the MT-priority paradigm significantly by implying that historical-critical assumptions are post-Gutenberg inventions.

reviewing the secondary literature and explicating further my own adaptation of these concepts.

The argument of scribes as performers coalesced most clearly in the work of Alger Doane, especially in his 1994 article, "The Ethnography of Scribal Writing and Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Scribe as Performer."[71] Doane applied insights from both the comparative study of oral traditions (especially by Foley) and performance studies (especially by Dell Hymes and Richard Bauman) to text-critical evidence in Anglo-Saxon literature, specifically two versions of the poem *Soul and Body* as one example of the type of textual plurality found in those rare cases in which a literary work in Anglo-Saxon is preserved in two or more manuscripts.[72] He concluded:

> performance … is to be understood as centering on the scribe as transmitter of traditional vernacular messages. Such a scribe differs in his behavior from a scribe preserving authoritative messages in Latin; the performing scribe transmits a tradition gist to an audience for present use, not for future generations. As such, the scribe is part of an emergent tradition, and he is responsible to that tradition, not to an unknown "author" or to a dead piece of sheepskin, as he exercises his memory and competence to produce the tradition for a particular audience on a particular occasion. The tradition itself is the dynamic but unrealized amalgam of lore and story frameworks, of linguistic and cultural competences that were stored in the heads of people linked with that tradition. The performing scribe produced the text in an act of writing that evoked the tradition by a combination of eye and ear, script and memory.[73]

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71. Doane, "The Ethnography of Scribal Writing and Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Scribe as Performer," *Oral Tradition* 9 (1994): 420–39.

72. See also, Alger N. Doane, "Oral Texts, Intertexts, and Intratexts: Editing Old English," in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, ed. Jay Clayton and Eric Rubinstein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 75–113; Doane, "Spacing, Placing and Effacing: Scribal Textuality and Exeter Riddle 30 a/b," in *New Approaches to Editing Old English Verse*, ed. Sarah Larratt Keefer and Kathleen O'Brien O'Keeffe (Rochester, NY: Brewer, 1998), 45–64; Doane, "Beowulf and Scribal Performance," in *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving*, ed. Mark Amodio and Kathleen O'Brien O'Keeffe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 62–75.

73. Doane, "Scribe as Performer," 435–36.

I provided this lengthy quotation because within it are various insights that may apply to the study of the Hebrew Bible, beyond the idea of scribal performance itself. For example, the contrast between Anglo-Saxon scribes writing in their vernacular language and writing in an ancient language associated with sacred texts (Latin) may prove insightful for the difference between scribes of Hebrew texts in the Second Temple period and the Masoretes of the medieval period—that is, a contrast between textual plurality and scribal performance found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the (relative) stability found in MT. Furthermore, Doane's conclusion implies scribal memory, even though he does not use the exact term.

Doane's idea of scribal performance has been influential beyond his own area of expertise in Old English literature, including in biblical studies. In my 1998 article "The Ancient Israelite Scribe as Performer," I applied Doane's arguments to text-critical evidence in the Hebrew Bible.[74] Other biblical scholars who have cited him include Susan Niditch, David Carr, Richard Horsley, Alan Kirk, and Shem Miller.[75] Since I will discuss Carr, Kirk, and Miller further below when I discuss scribal memory, here I will only summarize the work of the Homerist, Jonathan Ready, whose monograph *Orality, Textuality, and the Homeric Epics* is exemplary in its use of scribal performance. He provided an excellent survey of the secondary literature on scribal performance from Doane to the present, including the work of numerous biblical scholars.[76] He then applied scribal performance

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74. Raymond F. Person Jr., "Ancient Israelite Scribes as Performer," *JBL* 117 (1998): 601–9.

75. Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature*, LAI (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 74–75; David M. Carr, "Torah on the Heart: Literary Jewish Textuality within Its Ancient Nar Eastern Context," *Oral Tradition* 25 (2010): 27; Richard A. Horsley, "Oral and Written Aspects of the Emergence of the Gospel of Mark as Scripture," *Oral Tradition* 25 (2010): 95; Alan Kirk, *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 115, 146; Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition* (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 100, 114–17, 121, 123, 127–28, 132, 138–43; Shem Miller, *Dead Sea Media: Orality, Textuality, and Memory in the Scrolls from the Judean Desert*, STDJ 129 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 16, 32, 143–44, 232–33, 235; Marvin Miller, *Performances of Ancient Jewish Letters: From Elephantine to MMT*, JAJSup 20 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 158; and Pioske, *Memory in a Time of Prose*, 50.

76. Ready, *Orality, Textuality, and the Homeric Epics*, esp. 192–215. The following are a selection of biblical scholars whose work he referred to in his chapter on scribal performance: David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew*

to the Ptolemaic papyri of the Homeric epics, which are often viewed as containing wild variants from the received text. Ready concluded, "A scribe never stops performing; he never disclaims responsibility. He performs both when he sticks to his exemplar and when he departs from it."[77] He also stated, "I find it preferable not to restrict the use of the term '(re) performance' to a particular kind of scribal act."[78] Although this study concerns a particular kind of scribal act—*Vorlage*-based copying—I nevertheless agree with Ready that scribal performance should be understood as active in all scribal acts. In fact, in other publications I have explicitly included scribal activities like public readings and recitations of literary texts, so that scribal performance can relate to each of these (and other) activities.[79] However, this study is more narrowly focused on scribal performance in *Vorlage*-based copying as I have defined it above.

Although the application of memory studies is now getting more attention in biblical scholarship, memory has been understood as important in textual transmission for some time.[80] For example, in his 1957 formulation of his "law of scribes," Moshe Goshen-Gottstein insisted that for most text-critical variants "we have to suspect spontaneous creation"—that is, he assumed that most scribes intended to copy their *Vorlagen* verbatim, so that, whenever we cannot detect an ideologically motivated exegetical revision, the variants were so unintentional (i.e., scribal errors) as to "have

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Bible; Horsley, "Oral and Written Aspects"; Alan Kirk, "Manuscript Tradition as a Tertium Quid: Orality and Memory in Scribal Practices," in *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text: Beyond the Oral and Written Gospel*, ed. Tom Thatcher (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008); Shem Miller, "Oral-Written Textuality of Stichtographic Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSD* 22 (2015): 162–88; Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Person, "Ancient Israelite Scribe as Performer," 601–9; Person, "Formulas and Scribal Memory"; Ian Young, "The Original Problem: The Old Greek and the Masoretic Text of Daniel 5," in Person and Rezetko, *Empirical Models*, 271–301; Young, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible: The View from Qumran Samuel," *ABR* 62 (2014): 14–30.

77. Ready, *Orality, Textuality, and the Homeric Epics*, 213.

78. Ready, *Orality, Textuality, and the Homeric Epics*, 214.

79. E.g., Raymond F. Person Jr., "Character in Narrative Depictions of Composing Oral Epics and Reading Historiographies," in *Voice and Voices in Antiquity*, vol. 11 of *Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World*, ed. Niall W. Slater, MnSup 396 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 277–94.

80. For a fuller review of the combination of memory studies and biblical studies, see Person and Keith, "Media Studies and Biblical Studies."

arisen spontaneously" in the copying process as new readings.[81] Further-more, many of these new spontaneously created readings "rest solely on the memory and power of association of the copyist, who conflates the readings of different verses."[82] This possibility was so common that Gos-hen-Gottstein concluded, "Any copyist is liable to invent his share, and the better he knows his Bible, the better he knows its grammar—the more numerous may his inventions become."[83] That is, when a scribe has inter-nalized passages and biblical grammar so well in his memory, he is more likely to depend somewhat less on the exact wording of a *Vorlage* and more on his memory during *Vorlage*-based copying. Goshen-Gottstein's colleague, Talmon, reached a similar conclusion in 1991, "In the biblical milieu, and presumably also at Qumran, memory and manuscript were not conceived as alternatives, but rather as complementary means for the preservation of revered teachings. The two media existed one next to the other throughout the biblical era."[84] Although Goshen-Gottstein and Talmon wrote these insights before Doane's work on scribal performance, we can nevertheless see how Doane's terminology would apply to their insights, especially since Doane's understanding of scribal performance included "a combination of eye and ear, script and memory."[85]

Although Doane did not use the exact term "scribal memory," his understanding of scribal performance assumes scribal memory. Scribal memory refers to the knowledge of traditional texts (oral and/or written) held in the collective memory of scribes. Thus, scribal memory of tradi-tional texts is what underlies the scribal performance of texts, including during *Vorlage*-based copying of manuscripts that imperfectly represent the traditional literature as it exists in the collective memory of the tradi-tion, as it is embodied within the memory of individual scribes and the memory of all of the readers and hearers of the scribes' texts, whether they were written, read aloud, or recited. Scribal memory may influence how an individual scribe copied a physical manuscript before him, pro-ducing readings that may have differed from the *Vorlage* (variants) but were not necessarily new, because the so-called variants simply reflected the scribe's conscious or subconscious reappropriation of other versions

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81. Goshen-Gottstein, "Biblical Philology and the Concordance," *JJS* 8 (1957): 7.
82. Goshen-Gottstein, "Biblical Philology and the Concordance," 8.
83. Goshen-Gottstein, "Biblical Philology and the Concordance," 10.
84. Talmon, "Oral Tradition and Written Transmission," 148–49.
85. Doane, "Scribe as Performer," 436.

of the same text, other texts, or the broader tradition. Thus far, the term
scribal memory has rarely been used by biblical scholars and most of those
who have used it have done so infrequently.[86] Two important exceptions
are Kirk and Miller, both of whom have emphasized the role of scribal
memory in recent works. Before discussing their work, however, I should
begin with Carr's contribution concerning memory as applied to biblical
texts, especially since his work influenced both Kirk and Miller.

Although he infrequently used the term scribal memory, Carr's influ-
ence has been significant, especially on the basis of his 2005 monograph,
Writing on the Tablet of the Heart, and his coining of the term "memory
variants," which is most fully developed in his 2011 monograph, *The For-
mation of the Hebrew Bible*.[87] In *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, he
surveyed comparative data from ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece
and concluded that "many ancient texts were not written in such a way
that they could be read easily by someone who did not already know them
well."[88] Mesopotamian cuneiform, Egyptian hieratic script, and the conso-
nant-only Semitic alphabets are limited in their representation of how the
texts should be pronounced, thereby requiring a high degree of familiarity
with their content to facilitate reading. Thus, he concluded,

> this element of visual presentation of texts is but one indicator of the dis-
> tinctive function of written copies of long-duration texts like the Bible,
> Gilgamesh, or Homer's works. The visual presentation of such texts pre-
> supposed that the reader already knew the given text and had probably
> memorized it to some extent.[89]

Carr located the primary social location for many ancient literary texts
within educational settings in which they were used as mnemonic aids
for the internalization of the tradition, what he labeled as "the process of

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86. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 38; April D. DeConick, *The Original
Gospel of Thomas in Translation with a Commentary and New English Translation of
the Complete Gospel*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 24; George J. Brooke, *Reading
the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Method*, EJL 39 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature,
2013), 57.

87. In these two works, scribal memory occurs only once. See Carr, *Writing on
the Tablet of the Heart*, 38.

88. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 4.

89. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 5.

indoctrination/education/enculturation."[90] His understanding of memo-
rization within the educational process significantly influenced his notion
of both composition and transmission of literary texts:

> Rather than juggling multiple scrolls or having one scribe take dicta-
> tion from two or three others, this model suggests that Israelite scribes
> most likely would have drawn on their verbatim memory of other texts
> in quoting, borrowing from, or significantly revising them. Of course, as
> in other cultures, Israelite scribes probably visually copied certain texts
> that they wished to reproduce precisely. Yet, as in other cultures, Israel-
> ite scribes probably did not work with cumbersome scrolls when they
> needed to produce something new, something not bearing the claim of
> being a precise visual copy of an earlier document.[91]

As the above quotation from *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart* suggests,
Carr may have been assuming to some degree verbatim transmission not
only when "they wished to reproduce [their *Vorlagen*] precisely" but also
drawing from their verbatim memory. However, explicitly drawing from
scribal performance, Carr made more explicit how his understanding of
memory in the composition/transmission process moves us further from
the idea of verbatim transmission when he later coined the term "memory
variant."[92] He defined memory variants as follows: "the sort of variants
that happen when a tradent modifies elements of texts in the process of
citing or otherwise reproducing it from memory," such as "exchange of
synonymous words, word order variation, [and] presence and absence of
conjunctions and minor modifers."[93] The following clearly demonstrates
that Carr understood memory variants as something that occurred even
in the process of *Vorlage*-based copying:

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90. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 5.

91. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 161.

92. Carr, "Torah on the Heart"; Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 13–101. He
referred to Person, "Ancient Israelite Scribe as Performer" as a predecessor of his work
on memory variants in the Hebrew Bible (Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 24).

93. Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 17, 33. Below, I discuss the relation-
ship between Talmon's influential idea of synonymous readings and Carr's memory
variants, before applying scribal memory to some of their examples and examples
from other scholars. See Shemaryahu Talmon, "Synonymous Readings in the Textual
Traditions of the Old Testament," *Studies in the Bible 1*, ed. Chaim Rabin, ScrHier 8
(Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961): 335–83.

the massive verbatim agreement between different recensions testifies to the probable use of writing to support the transmission of these traditions, since the transmission of textual tradition through exclusively oral means produces wider forms of variety than most examples seen here. Yet the presence of memory variants testifies to the use of memory—at least at times—to reproduce traditions as well. In some cases, such memory variants may have been produced when scribes reproduced an entire text from memory, having mastered it as students or teachers.[94]

Although I agree with Carr that sometimes scribes may have reproduced texts based exclusively upon scribal memory—that is, without a *physical Vorlage*—in this work I am interested in *Vorlage*-based copying. However, as Carr concluded, even in *Vorlage*-based copying, memory variants occurred; therefore, even though he infrequently used the term scribal memory, his work continues to influence my own.[95]

Referring to both Doane and Carr in his 2008 essay, Kirk provided what appears to be the first sustained discussion of scribal memory.[96] He wrote that "scribal memory was the interfacial zone where writing and oral-traditional practices converged and interacted," "scribal memory was not a rote but a performative competence," and "scribal memory practices were not evidence of a special precocity but an acquired set of skills that marshaled the ordinary cognitive resources of the brain."[97] His understanding of scribal memory relativized the importance of manuscripts, presumably even in *Vorlage*-based copying. "As an unformatted, undifferentiated stream of letters, the manuscript text has only a weak representational correspondence to the composition that it recorded."[98] In this quotation, we can see the influence of Carr's work; in the following, Kirk quoted from Carr: "The manuscript was ancillary, it was the visual, material support—and external 'reference point'—for the primary existence and transmission of the text in the medium of memory."[99] If this is true, then the type of memory variants that occurs in the act of scribal performance in *Vorlage*-

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94. Carr, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 98.

95. In fact, in ch. 2 I provide some examples taken from Carr's work.

96. Kirk, "Manuscript Tradition as a Tertium Quid," 218–20.

97. Kirk, "Manuscript Tradition as a Tertium Quid," 219. See also Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, 146.

98. Kirk, "Manuscript Tradition as a Tertium Quid," 219.

99. Kirk, "Manuscript Tradition as a Tertium Quid," 219. Quoting Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 160.

based copying depends on scribal memory. "Manuscript tradition and oral tradition interfaced in scribal memory."[100] In his 2016 monograph, Kirk explored how scribal memory brings a new perspective to source-critical conclusions concerning the author of the Gospel of Matthew's use of Q, not as a loose collection of early Christian traditions in a manuscript, "but an intelligible sequence of composite deliberative speeches organized in accordance with conventional moral *topoi*."[101]

In his 2019 monograph *Dead Sea Media*, Miller drew extensively from Doane, Carr, and Kirk. Miller's important contribution is making the elements of performance and tradition in scribal memory even more explicit:

> Scribal memory includes texts, performance, and tradition. In ancient Judaism, scrolls were not the primary medium of texts; rather, texts chiefly existed in the human mind. Orbiting around the texts themselves, performance is also part of scribal memory—that is, the specific ways of reading or writing texts, as well as variations in a text's performance, also constituted scribal memory. Finally, scribal memory includes traditional associations of words and traditional interpretations of texts. A written text, a traditional text, and a performed text all interfaced with one another in the mind of the scribe during the copying process.[102]

When he applied scribal memory to the Dead Sea Scrolls, he concluded, "The Dead Sea Scrolls were mediums for scribal memory, and they functioned as reference points for performance, memorization, and recall."[103] In the following chapters, I draw significantly from Millers' work, using some of his examples as my own.

I will close with the following answer to the question What were scribes doing? by closely paraphrasing and combining quotations I have given above by Doane, Ready, Kirk, and Miller as follows: Performing scribes transmitted a living tradition to their contemporary audience as they exercised their scribal memory while copying their *Vorlagen*. Scribes never stopped performing. Whether they were sticking to their *Vorlagen* or departing from them, their *Vorlagen* were ancillary—that is, visual, material supports for the primary existence and transmission of the literary texts in the medium of memory. When performing their texts, they

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100. Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, 114.
101. Kirk, *Q in Matthew*, 183.
102. Miller, *Dead Sea Media*, 265.
103. Miller, *Dead Sea Media*, 30.

drew not only from the *Vorlagen* physically present before them, but also from those *Vorlagen* that existed within scribal memory, which included traditional associations of words and traditional interpretations of literary texts. When scribes copied their *Vorlagen* into new manuscripts, written texts, traditional texts, and performed texts all interfaced with one another in the mind of the scribes in ways that often produced what we understand as variants, but for them are simply alternative attestations of tradition and performance.

A New Cognitive-Linguistic Proposal

Above I asked three closely interrelated questions taken from text criticism—What is a text? What were scribes doing? and What is the role of textual plurality in the work of a scribe copying a manuscript?—and my preliminary answers drew significantly from recent studies that draw from scribal performance and scribal memory. However, I should note that, even though my answers to these questions remain in the minority, they are answers that have been given in previous recent scholarship, even though they are somewhat formulated on my own terms. In other words, the MT-priority paradigm continues to hold its own, despite what I and others who are also challenging it understand to be evidence to the contrary. These three questions all suggest that their answers must have some cognitive-linguistic basis, because literary texts participate in, what Troxel called, "sociological entailments," including cultural notions of what word, text, and variant mean in the ancient contexts. What is a word? and How are words selected in texts? remain important questions, because a text is understood as participating in textual plurality because the new text is somehow the same-but-different because the scribe may have selected different words. Therefore, I want to propose a unique cognitive-linguistic approach to these questions that is based on my combination of how word selection is understood in conversation analysis and the comparative approach to oral traditions, two disciplines that I will argue provide us with insightful lenses for reimagining what scribes were doing when they engaged in *Vorlage*-based copying that nevertheless resulted in textual plurality, not simply as an accident but as a characteristic of the literary tradition in which they performed/composed their texts in their very act of transmitting them. A literary text is more than any manuscript or combination of manuscripts, because it resides in scribal memory, so that, when scribes were performing their tradition in the act of copying

Vorlagen, they depended not solely on the *Vorlagen* that were physically present before them as they selected words, but also all of the *Vorlagen* as well as traditional words, phrases, and interpretations, all of which were held in scribal memory. Thus, we have a cognitive-linguistic process that requires further exploration in order to understand scribal memory and its effect on *Vorlage*-based copying and, as I will argue more fully in the next chapter, conversation analysis and the comparative study of oral traditions provide excellent (if not the best) observations that, when combined together, will provide us with a new conceptual tool for understanding how word selection functioned in scribal memory, including the production of variants that are much too often understood as scribal errors, but should be understood as alternative readings within the literary texts in their multiformity, textual fluidity, and textual plurality. In *From Conversation to Oral Tradition* I argued that the same process of word selection that occurs in everyday conversation (as described in conversation analysis) is adapted into the special grammar and traditional register of living oral traditions and literature with roots in oral tradition (as described in the comparative study of oral traditions) and I illustrated this observation with discussions of the living oral tradition of Serbo-Croatian epic as well as literature with roots in oral tradition, including Homeric epic, *Beowulf*, the *Arabian Nights*, and the Bible.[104] That is, both the poetics of oral performance and the composition of traditional literature were derived and adapted from cognitive-linguistic practices present in everyday conversation. In other publications, I have applied conversation analysis to literature to demonstrate close relationships between everyday conversation and literary discourse in works as varied as Shakespeare, American short stories, and the book of Jonah.[105] In these publications, my focus has been on composition and reception, generally ignoring transmission. However, in three forthcoming publications, I began my exploration of the application of these insights to scribal transmission based on the concepts

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104. Raymond F. Person Jr., *From Conversation to Oral Tradition: A Simplest Systematics for Oral Traditions*, Routledge Studies in Rhetoric and Stylistics (London: Routledge, 2016).

105. Raymond F. Person Jr., "'Oh' in Shakespeare: A Conversation Analytic Approach," *Journal for Historical Pragmatics* 10 (2009): 84–107; Person, *Structure and Meaning in Conversation and Literature* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999); Person, *In Conversation with Jonah: Conversation Analysis, Literary Criticism, and the Book of Jonah*, JSOTSup 220 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996).

of scribal performance and scribal memory combined with word selection in conversation analysis, discussing synonymous readings, harmonization, and variants in lists in ancient Hebrew and ancient Greek literature.[106] This monograph is the first devoted to a systematic application of this approach to text-critical variants in any literary tradition. Here I limit my exploration to the Hebrew Bible (broadly understood), but, as these forthcoming publications demonstrate, this approach can be easily applied to other literary traditions, including the New Testament and Homer. With this approach, I am confident in the conclusion that scribal performance and scribal memory draw from the same cognitive-linguistic approaches found in word selection in everyday conversation. In the first chapter, I will discuss word selection in everyday conversation and oral traditions by introducing to my readers relevant insights from conversation analysis and the comparative study of oral traditions. The following chapters will be organized according to my adaptation of conversation analyst Gail Jefferson's "poetics of ordinary talk" as applied to text-critical categories—that is, chapter 2 will concern category-triggering with a discussion of synonymous readings, harmonization, variants within lists, and variants related to person reference and chapter 3 will concern sound-triggering with discussion of variants containing alliteration and wordplay.[107] Chapter 4 will be my extension of Jefferson's poetics to visual variants in what I will call analogously visual-triggering with a discussion of homographs, confusion of similar letters, division of words, metathesis, haplography, and stichography. Chapter 5 will serve as the conclusion in which I demonstrate how what I discussed separately in the previous three chapters—category-triggering, sound-triggering, and visual-triggering—can occur together in a discussion of four passages with text-critical variants that illustrate the complexity and interaction of these gross-selection mechanisms.

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106. Person, "Formulas and Scribal Memory"; Person, "Harmonization in the Pentateuch and Synoptic Gospels: Repetition and Category-Triggering within Scribal Memory," in *Repetition, Communication, and Meaning in the Ancient World*, ed. Deborah Beck, MnSup 442 (Leiden: Brill, 2021); and Person, "Poetics and List Formation: A Study of Text-Critical Variants in Lists Found in the New Testament, Homer, and the Hebrew Bible," in *Bridging the Gap between Conversation Analysis and Poetics: Studies in Talk-in-Interaction and Literature Twenty-Five Years after Jefferson*, ed. Raymond F. Person Jr., Robin Wooffitt, and John P. Rae, Research in Language and Communication (London: Routledge, 2022).

107. Gail Jefferson, "On the Poetics of Ordinary Talk," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 16 (1996): 11–61.

Thus, I will demonstrate how word selection in everyday conversation and word selection in the composition/transmission process of *Vorlage*-based copying operate using the same gross-selection mechanisms in ways that suggest that what we identify as variant readings are better understood as same-but-different alternative readings in ways that the identification of the original reading should be abandoned and even the identification of earlier readings becomes extremely problematic methodologically.

Before turning to the next chapter concerning word selection, I want to explicitly identify some shortcomings and limitations of this study in relationship to my selective use of text criticism and biblical poetics. Concerning text criticism, the emphasis is on Hebrew manuscripts with secondary attention to LXX (especially when retroversion is more certain). I rarely refer to the Latin and Syriac traditions. I generally avoid discussions of orthography and different vocalizations of the consonantal text. In some cases, I have done my own limited search of variants, but most of my examples come from secondary sources and are somewhat skewed because of that—for example, the only volume of HBCE to be published at this writing is Fox's *Proverbs*, so Proverbs is overrepresented. When I make reference to LXX, I generally depart from common practice in LXX studies—that is, translating the Greek literally rather than the purported *Vorlage*—because I generally use LXX for the purpose of reconstructing a *Vorlage* different from the Hebrew manuscript traditions. That is, *in this study* I am more interested with what LXX can tell us about the transmission history of the Hebrew *Vorlage* than with how it was interpreted into the Old Greek and its transmission in the Greek. Therefore, I sometimes vary from the secondary sources in this way. Furthermore, despite acknowledging the bias in reconstructions of lacuna in the Dead Sea Scrolls based on the MT-priority paradigm, I nevertheless continue to use the published reconstructions; even if the reconstructions are problematic, the reconstructions nevertheless fit within the broader literary tradition of the manuscripts.[108]

Although my work is informed by biblical poetics, this is not a study in biblical poetics in general, because it is limited to selective passages with

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108. For an excellent discussion of the problem of reconstructing lacuna, see Corrado Martone, "Textual Plurality and Textual Reconstructions: A Cautionary Tale," *RevQ* 30 (2018): 131–41. Because of this, I focus on variants which are not reconstructed, but nevertheless use the published text (including reconstructions) for my discussion of the larger literary context.

text-critical variants in the Hebrew manuscript tradition (and in the LXX-*Vorlage* as reconstructed in the secondary literature). As noted further below in chapter 3 concerning sound-triggering, few text-critical studies pay much attention to poetics and few studies in biblical poetics pay much attention to text criticism, reflecting the higher criticism-versus-lower criticism dichotomy. Therefore, the examples for this chapter were not only harder to find, but often required my own combination of insights from text criticism and biblical poetics.

Despite these limitations, I am confident that my conclusions are highly suggestive concerning the cognitive-linguistic processes that were operative throughout the composition/transmission process, including when scribes engaged in *Vorlage*-based copying.