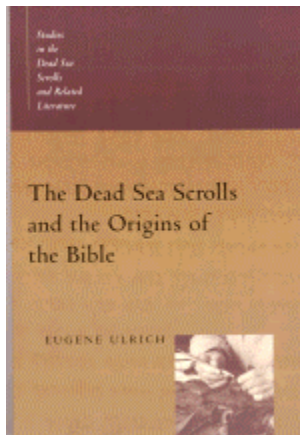


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Ulrich, Eugene

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible

Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Leiden: Brill, 1999. Pp. xviii + 309, Paperback, \$25.00, ISBN 0802846114.

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There are few scholars in the field of textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible with more breadth and depth of knowledge than Eugene Ulrich. As chief editor of the biblical scrolls from Qumran Cave 4, Ulrich has spent the past twenty years studying the oldest biblical manuscripts yet discovered, in the process accumulating a wealth of information about the history of the biblical text. His careful work is familiar to text critics from the excellent editions in the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series (Oxford at the Clarendon Press); however, his theoretical writings on the subject of text criticism have been scattered in various Festschriften and other volumes. The present volume does a welcome service in bringing together these essays into one collection. The collection consists of fourteen reprinted articles, ranging in date from 1980 to 1998.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part, "The Scrolls and the Hebrew Bible," contains eight articles that concern the Qumran biblical scrolls and their impact on the understanding of the textual history of the HB. The point that Ulrich emphasizes again and again in this section is that the various books of the HB in the Second Temple period were pluriform in character; and that in some cases that pluriformity consisted not just in individual textual variants but in multiple literary editions. To quote Ulrich, "By double literary editions I mean a literary unit—a story, pericope, narrative, poem, book, and so forth—appearing in two (or more) parallel forms in our principal textual witnesses, which one author, major redactor, or major editor completed and which a subsequent redactor or editor intentionally changed to a sufficient extent that the resultant form should be called a revised edition of that text" (p. 35). The parade examples in this regard emerging from

the Qumran evidence are the books of Jeremiah and Exodus. Ulrich shows that Jeremiah existed in two literary forms in Hebrew; the shorter form (which appears as 4QJerb at Qumran) was translated in the

Septuagint, while the longer form (which appears at Qumran as 2QJer, 4QJera and 4QJerc) became the received Hebrew form of the Masoretic Text. Exodus likewise existed in two variant editions: the Masoretic text type (displayed by the majority of Qumran Exodus manuscripts) and the Samaritan text type, a longer, harmonized version exemplified by the Qumran manuscript 4QpaleoExodm. These double literary editions pose a particular problem for the text critic or translator, according to Ulrich: Should the earlier or later edition be chosen? Should the MT (or some other form) be chosen by default? Ulrich argues for a critically established text based on the full and systematic comparison of the major textual traditions, with no one tradition being privileged over the others (p. 49). He therefore differs considerably in his text critical philosophy from projects such as the Hebrew University Bible Project or the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, which take as their premise that the goal of textual criticism should be the establishment of a critically sound diplomatic text (both projects have chosen the MT).

The second part of the book, "The Scrolls, the Septuagint, and the Old Latin," consists of six essays focused on the textual history of the Septuagint and its usefulness for the textual criticism of the HB. This is an area of scholarship often considered esoteric, but Ulrich demonstrates its particular relevance in light of the new information contained in the Qumran biblical scrolls. His essays not only discuss the Septuagint, but also the form of the Bible used by Josephus, Origen's Hexapla and the question of whether it contained a Hebrew column, and the Old Latin translation of the Septuagint. All of these chapters are highly technical, but reward careful reading for the light they shed on the value of the "versions" for text criticism. For example, in the chapter entitled "The Relevance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for Hexaplaric Studies," Ulrich gives a synopsis of the relationship of certain Hebrew manuscripts to the Old Greek text contained in Origen's Hexapla, which demonstrate first that the original LXX translations of the various biblical books were not "free" of existing Hebrew text types, and second the extent to which the later revisions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus moved translation away from the Old Greek and toward the MT. This is particularly apparent in the books of Kingdoms, Psalms, Jeremiah, and Daniel.

This is a book meant for specialists in the field of HB textual criticism. Ulrich presumes a great deal of knowledge on the part of his readers, not only of languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, as well as Spanish, French, and German), but also of the technical terms of textual criticism. The various chapters suffer from a certain amount of repetition, probably unavoidable in a volume of reprinted articles. The footnotes contain a large amount of bibliographical information; a cumulative bibliography at the end of the book would have been helpful. The non-specialist may find the book heavy going at times, while the less advanced student may well, become lost. The specialist or advanced

student in textual criticism, however, will find it amply rewarding. In fact, it is a “must-have” on any text critic’s shelf.