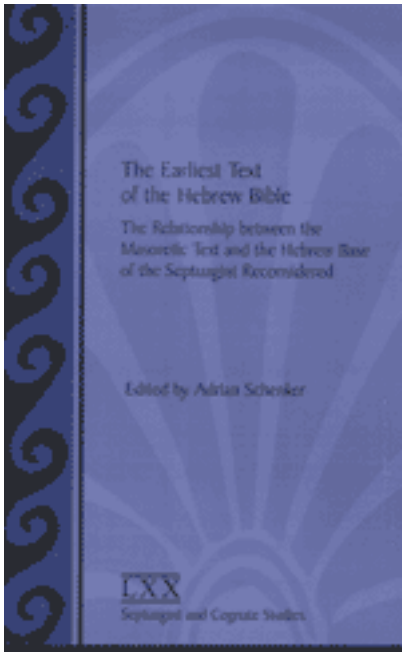


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Schenker, Adrian, ed.

The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible: The Relationship between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuagint Reconsidered

Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies 52

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The seven articles in this volume were originally given as papers at a panel discussion at the IOSCS congress in Basel in August 2001. The panel attempted to give an overview and evaluation of the evidence for the relationship between the text of the Septuagint (LXX) and the Masoretic Text (MT). All seven papers are fascinating and worthy of detailed consideration. Four are in English, two in French, and one in German. The English and German articles have summaries in English; the two French articles have summaries in French.

Natalio Fernández Marcos, in “The Hebrew and Greek Texts of Judges” (1–16), discusses the suggestion of J. Trebolle Barrera and others that 4QJudg^a’s omission of Judg 6:7–10 is evidence that Judges was transmitted in two different literary editions. Fernández Marcos argues that 4QJudg^a is too small a base on which to construct a theory about a shorter literary edition of the whole book. The omission of 6:7–10 may also be explained as a late, secondary abbreviation. Overall, the Old Greek translation of Judges was not typologically shorter than the MT. Thus there is no evidence beyond the small fragment of 4QJudg^a (4QJudg^a has, according to my count, a total of twenty-three

complete words and forty-three partially preserved words) that a short Hebrew edition of Judges existed.

Adrian Schenker, in “Junge Garden oder akrobatische Tänzer? Das Verhältnis zwischen 1 Kön 20 MT und 3 Regn 21 LXX” (17–34), discusses divergences between the MT and the LXX in 1 Kings 20 (LXX 21). He focuses on the different protagonists of the story. In the MT we hear of 232 “young warriors of the commanders of the provinces” and seven thousand troops (v. 15), whereas in the LXX we have a group of festive dancers and just sixty warriors. He argues that the LXX is the more original version of the story. Schenker suggests that references to dancing men have also been edited out of the MT in 2 Sam 6 and 1 Kgs 1:40 and that this represents a Jewish reaction against male dancing in the Hellenistic period. Schenker’s study and conclusions are an interesting illustration of the impact text criticism can have on other fields. For instance, in regard to language, scholars have noted that 1 Kgs 20 is the only core Standard Biblical Hebrew text where the word מדינה “province” appears. Some have explained this peculiarity as due to the appearance of a northern dialect in the text (G. A. Rendsburg, *Israelian Hebrew in the Book of Kings* [Bethesda: CDL, 2002], 61). Schenker would argue instead that this form tells us nothing about preexilic Hebrew but rather only about Hebrew of the Hellenistic era.

Dieter Böhler, in “On the Relationship between Textual and Literary Criticism: The Two Recensions of the Book of Ezra: Ezra-Neh (MT) and 1 Esdras (LXX)” (35–50), argues that MT Ezra-Nehemiah and LXX 1 Esdras represent two recensions of Ezra. He points out that the major difference between the two accounts is the absence of Nehemiah from 1 Esdras. He argues that many of the minor variants separating the two versions represent a systematic reworking of MT Ezra in order to accommodate the addition of the Nehemiah material. In this material, Nehemiah is the rebuilders of Jerusalem, in contrast to 1 Esdras where the rebuilding is already an accomplished fact. He suggests a second century B.C.E. date for the creation of MT Ezra-Nehemiah. Böhler’s interesting suggestion may be related to other peculiar features of the Ezra and Nehemiah traditions, such as the absence of Nehemiah from Qumran (some question whether Ezra is really there, too), the use by Josephus of separate Ezra (1 Esdras) and Nehemiah (memoir) material, and the notable absence of Ezra from places where he might be expected to appear, such as Sir 44–49 and 2 Macc 1–2.

Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, in “La *vetus latina* de Jérémie: Texte très court, témoin de la plus ancienne Septante et d’une forme plus ancienne de l’hébreu (Jer 39 et 52)” (51–82), argues that the Old Latin/Vetus Latina (VL) of Jeremiah, where preserved, attests the most ancient LXX version of the book and a third form of the Hebrew. The LXX of Jeremiah is famous for being some 15 percent shorter than the MT of Jeremiah. Bogaert

shows that the VL presents an even shorter text. Through detailed study of Jeremiah (MT) 39, 27, and 52, Bogaert makes a forceful case for the importance of the VL for reconstructing the text history of the Hebrew Bible.

Johan Lust's contribution, "Major Divergences between LXX and MT in Ezekiel" (83–92), argues that the shorter LXX text of Ezekiel as preserved in p967 offers a witness to an earlier Hebrew text. Major minuses in p967 discussed by Lust are Ezek 12:26–28; 32:25–26; and 36:23b–38. In addition, he discusses the series of minuses and transpositions in Ezek 7:1–11, a section not preserved in p967. He argues that the editor of MT-Ezekiel was particularly concerned with issues of eschatology, often toning down the apocalyptic nature of the earlier edition of Ezekiel. Lust's conclusions have consequences for the study of the language of the Hebrew Bible. Scholars of Hebrew have often worked on the assumption that the language of the MT is the language of the original authors of the biblical books and have constructed theories accordingly. The conclusions of modern textual criticism are quite devastating to this point of view (see my article: "Biblical Texts Cannot Be Dated Linguistically," *Hebrew Studies* [2005]: forthcoming). In regard to the pluses of MT-Ezekiel, if Lust is correct that they represent late additions to the text, note: (1) they contain the only example of the plural עתים "times" in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 12:27), which is considered to be a feature of Late Biblical Hebrew, in contrast to the singular עת found elsewhere in Ezekiel; (2) they contain the only example of the first person pronoun אנכי "I" in Ezekiel (Ezek 36:28), which otherwise is considered to follow Late Biblical Hebrew in preferring אני. In other words, the late addition contains the "early" linguistic form. The link between the current texts and the author's language is tenuous at best.

Olivier Munnich, in "Texte massorétique et Septante dans le livre de *Daniel*" (93–120), discusses evidence for the priority of the form of Daniel found in the LXX over that in the MT. He includes a detailed discussion of Daniel 4 and 5 and of the ordering of the chapters in the book, arguing that in all these cases the MT represents a later version of the book. He points to features in Dan 4 and 5 such as the growth in importance of the figure of Daniel in the MT, which he argues serves to link the various parts of the book more closely together. In regard to the order of the chapters of the book, he argues that p967's ordering of chapters (1–4; 7–8; 5–6; 9–12) is more original than that of the MT.

Emanuel Tov's article, "The Nature of the Large-Scale Differences between the LXX and MT S T V, Compared with Similar Evidence in Other Sources" (121–44), provides a fitting conclusion to the book. Tov gives a survey of the evidence and concludes with some general hypotheses to explain this evidence. Tov provides an impressive list of cases where the LXX and MT are redactionally different. He argues that the LXX preserves much more material relevant to the literary development of the biblical books

than even the Qumran scrolls. He then attempts to explain why the LXX has this special character. This he does on the basis that the LXX *Vorlage* comes from different circles than those which fostered the MT and that the translation was made relatively early (275–150 B.C.E.). The essay contains many other interesting ideas, some speculative, and merits careful reading and consideration.

In sum, this book is essential reading for all those interested in the origin and nature of the books of the Hebrew Bible. It makes a clear case that any attempt to understand the Hebrew texts without reference to the Greek (and Latin) evidence puts itself in danger of being irrelevant.