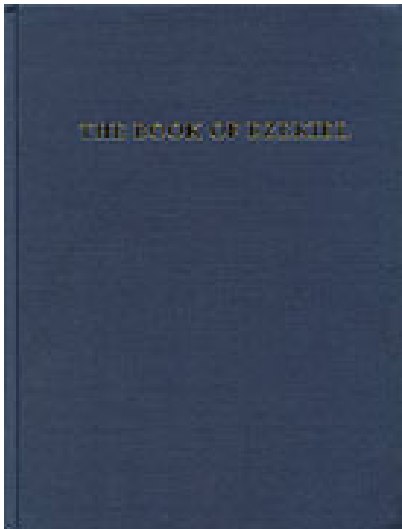


RBL 02/2005



Goshen-Gottstein, Moshe, and Shemaryahu Talmon, eds.; Galen Marquis, associate editor

Hebrew University Bible: The Book of Ezekiel

Jerusalem: Magnes, 2004. Pp. lxi + 231 + 40*. Cloth.
\$90.00. ISBN 9654931869.

James A. Sanders
Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center
Claremont, CA 91711

This volume from the Hebrew University Bible Project (HUBP) completes the critical publication of the major prophets in the *keter* 'aram-tsova', the Aleppo Codex (A) of the Hebrew Bible. Work on the Ezekiel volume was begun by Goshen-Gottstein, who provided data through Ezek 31 before his untimely death, but revised and completed by Shemaryahu Talmon, Magnes professor emeritus of Bible at the university. The first volume of HUB, *The Book of Isaiah*, was edited by Goshen-Gottstein and published posthumously by Chayim Rabin, Talmon, and Emanuel Tov in 1995; the second, *The Book of Jeremiah*, was edited by Rabin, Talmon, and Tov in 1997. Tov has now withdrawn from the project, and Talmon has begun work on the Minor Prophets. The Minor Prophets will present the HUBP for the first time with the problem of the lack of some inner leaves, from Amos, Jeremiah, and all of Jonah. This lack would not have been due to the fire that destroyed the most of the Pentateuch and some of Ezra/Nehemiah at either end of the codex; they might well have been taken or somehow procured by members of the synagogue in Aleppo. Therefore, it might still be possible to recover a few missing leaves of Aleppensis.

The present volume continues the tradition of excellence of the first two. The whole project is a model of how succinctly to present the history of the text of each book of the Bible without the distraction of a goal such as trying to reconstruct some kind of an "Urtext." Decisions necessary to establish a critically responsible text for today are left to

the reader of each volume, but the necessary data are provided to do so. It presents the evidence necessary to distinguish true variants from pseudo-variants, but even that crucial decision is left for the most part to the critical reader out of the data presented in the four apparatuses. The “fifth apparatus” unobtrusively offers critical observations that are helpful in making such decisions.

Following the format of the first two volumes, there are four apparatuses plus observations about some of variants in a “fifth apparatus” at the bottom margin of each page, presented in Hebrew and in English in parallel columns. The full masorah, magna, parva and finalis, is presented as nearly like what is in the codex as computers and the art of printing allow, thanks to the continuing work of Galen Marquis. As in the earlier volumes, the first apparatus presents variants from the ancient versions; the second, readings in the Judean Desert Scrolls and quotations from rabbinic literature; the third, the medieval Bible manuscripts (in which very few consonantal variants were found); and the fourth, variants in orthography, vowels, and accents in Hebrew text witnesses.

The “fifth apparatus” contains the editors’ observations about significant variants in the various apparatuses; here is where subjective judgments on the part of the editors are expressed. It is here that the editors (principally Talmon) make judgments about true and false variants, but nowhere, in contrast to the earlier *Biblia Hebraica* editions from Stuttgart, do they do so to attempt to force one particular reading over another.

The HUB is the opposite text-critically of the forthcoming Oxford Hebrew Bible (OHB) being edited by Ronald Hendel, in which the text is eclectic to reflect a particular, current school of thought about what the text ought to have been. In the HUB the text of A is presented as is except for the generally acknowledged anomalies made by the scribe or the masorete (accent signs, *dagesh* points, *circelli* to the masorah, and such), and those are duly noted in the apparatus no matter how unimportant they may seem. Since the translation of Ezekiel into Greek was quite literal, apparatus I reflects the editors’ care that there might be true variants in it as over against the Greek translations of Isaiah, which were quite free, even midrashic at times. LXX Isaiah and the large Scroll of Isaiah from Qumran Cave 1 show the textual fluidity of the premasoretic period of the history of the transmission of the text, which was curbed at “the great divide” after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which yielded to the protomasoretic period by the end of the first century C.E.

The introduction is structured the same as in the previous two volumes of the HUB but with the necessary modifications for the peculiarities of Ezekiel and some honing of concept and method. “As a result of ongoing discussions of the methodology of the edition, advances in research and changes in perception, definitions of phenomena were

revised where necessary, and some textual issues pertaining to aspects of the evidence recorded in the apparatuses have been added” (viii). Section V of the introduction in each volume presents the sources and method of presenting the data from medieval Bible manuscripts to explain apparatus III. In the Ezekiel volume, the editors take a stricter approach with fewer citations from rabbinic literature because many are of questionable text-critical value.

Open (*petuchah*) and closed (*setumah*) sections are noted by the conventional insertion of a *peh* for the former and a *samech* for the latter. A new feature in the Ezekiel volume is an appendix in the form of two running charts that show precisely where the open and closed sections are located in all the witnesses covered in apparatuses II (Judean Scrolls and rabbinic literature) and III (medieval manuscripts) and, separately, those in apparatus IV (variants in orthography, vowels, and accent). This is a very valuable addition to the introduction for those who are serious in pursuing the differences in meaning that such intervals make in the different witnesses to Hebrew texts of Ezekiel. It would be impertinent for apparatus I, of course, since the ancient versions offer in the receptor language differing understandings of intervals that may have been in the *Vorlagen* they used—or their lack of understanding of intervals. The extant editions of *Biblia Hebraica* (editions 1–4 from 1905 to 1977) gave greater weight to modern modes of scanning Hebrew poetry than to the intervals in the Hebrew manuscripts and often ignored them, as well as the accent marks, just as they ignored the masorah (until *BHS*) except for notations of *qere/ktiv*.

Fortunately, recent scholarship has recovered the importance of these givens of the text for grasping ancient understandings of it so that the forthcoming fifth edition of *BH*, that is, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ), will fully valorize the intervals and accents. Masoretic manuscripts have five integral factors: consonants, vowels, accents, intervals, and masorot. Martin Luther’s hermeneutic of text criticism, which he called *Res et Argumentum*, by which all could be ignored save the consonants in order to make the text of the First Testament “point to the gospel of Jesus Christ,” still persists among some text critics today. The appendix listing the intervals is a valuable addition to the HUB Ezekiel, and one can hope that it will be done for both Isaiah and Jeremiah in some future volume or separate publication. The Jeremiah volume had its own special feature that remains useful for apparatus II in all three—data for the abbreviations used to refer to rabbinic literature. As noted in the introduction, quotations there of Ezekiel are often unreliable due to modes of rabbinic exegesis.

The bibliographical abbreviations list is useful in providing full data to references made in footnotes to the introduction and in the notes to the text in the fifth apparatus. It also indicates those works to which the editors turned to clarify and explain their personal

judgments. Unfortunately lacking is any reference in any of the volumes to *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* authored by the late Dominique Barthélemy (reflecting the work of the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project), which is available in three volumes so far published (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982, 1986, and 1992).

BHQ, of which the first fascicle (no. 18, the Megillot) has appeared (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004), is being prepared on the basis of the findings of the HOTTP and the data provided in *CTAT*. The introductions to *CTAT* 1 and 3 provide fresh evaluations of all the witnesses to the text of the Hebrew Bible in the light of the impact of the Judean Desert Scrolls on text criticism and in the light of the hermeneutic of text criticism to which the HUBP also subscribes. *CTAT* 3 includes the textual problems in Ezekiel we were given to study for the sake of the work of the translations department of the United Bible Societies, plus other problems as well, and it offers evaluations of struggles with textual problems through the centuries, including, for example, works in Judeo-Arabic (Yefet ben Eli, Abulwalid, Saadya Gaon, etc.) that are not included in HUB but were exceptionally valuable because they were unsurpassed grammarians of classical Hebrew. Yefet often influenced Rashi, Radaq, and other medieval exegetes.

The introductions to *CTAT* are especially valuable in offering a global perspective on the history of the text of the Hebrew Bible and all its witnesses. One would have thought that it would be useful to the editors of HUB, but Talmon informs me that it was not consulted. Perhaps *CTAT* 3 may be useful in current preparations of the HUB volume on the Minor Prophets, especially in composing the “fifth apparatus.” The actual passages considered in each volume of *CTAT* present considerably more of the history of transmission of the text than in HUB and offer in-depth discussions of the history of each problem, which HUB is, of course, not designed to do. The passages treated in *CTAT* were selected by the translations department of the United Bible Societies because of the peculiar difficulties they present to translation committees around the world, often limited to nationals who frequently turned to modern translations in their former colonial languages to find a solution—the very practice in antiquity when translators would turn to “the Septuagint” to solve a difficult textual problem in the Hebrew text.

In working on the actual text of HUB Ezekiel, the student should be aware, as is carefully explained in the introduction, that Codex A does not always include the *soph pasuq* at the end of a verse, relying instead on the *silluq* in its last word to indicate the end of a verse. In those cases the editors placed a single raised dot where normally the double-dot *soph pasuq* would have been.

These volumes of HUB are officially called “The Hebrew University Bible.” The name was given to the Hebrew University Bible Project when it was launched in 1953 after the

damaged Codex Aleppensis was brought from 'aram tsova', Aleppo in Syria, to Jerusalem, and is properly placed at the head of the title page of each volume. According to a former president of the university, Ben Sasson, the title was used for a simple, facsimile edition of A published by the university in 1953, to give as gifts to donors and visiting dignitaries. That the same august title was also given to the results of the work of the HUBP was quite understandable because the 1953 facsimile printing was simply that, nothing more, and was viewed as an unannotated anticipation of the magnificent facsimile edition of A (1976). It is the proper title of these critical volumes, the closest the field has ever had to a true *editio critica maior* of the Hebrew Bible.

But causing some confusion, Ben Sasson granted the almost exact same title to an edition of A that appeared in 2000, edited and published by Nahum Ben Zvi, which he titled *Keter Yerushalayim*, or *Jerusalem Crown: The Bible of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem* (on which, see my March 2004 *RBL* review at <http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=4090>). The Jerusalem Crown edition (KeterJ) is a far cry from the HUB edition. It is not a critical edition but rather an attempt to convert the text of Aleppensis into a modern Jewish Rabbinic Bible. I say "Rabbinic" because it is still not certain if the masoretes were rabbanate or qaraite, and there are crucial differences between the classical Tiberian masoretic manuscripts and a traditional printed Jewish Bible. The order of the books in A is different from that in Rabbinic Bibles (that follow the listing given in *Baba Bathra* 14b), but the KeterJ follows the Talmud. It adds titles and sigla of the traditional *sedarim* and *parashiot* and inserts the late medieval numbering (in Hebrew) of chapters and verses. The full *soph pasuq* is provided where it is lacking in A, and each division within a *parashah* is numbered, as in a Rabbinic Bible, and the masorah is jettisoned entirely except for *qere/ktiv* notations.

By contrast, the HUB adds only chapter and verse numbers for ease of use by all serious students of the Hebrew text. Jewish students and congregations today may find the KeterJ familiar enough to use as they have long used the Koren edition of the Tanak. Where A lacks text (almost 40 percent), the KeterJ provides it from the complete Codex Leningradensis, scrutiny of the masorot in A and L, and notes by scholars who saw the codex when it was fully extant. One hopes that the KeterJ will be used in Torah schools and rabbinic seminaries, though it is not truly the text of A which is presented. One also hopes the edition of Leningradensis published by Aron Dotan (Hendrickson, 2001), which modified that codex in ways similar to what Ben Zvi did to A, will be useful as well in synagogues and talmud-torah classes. It should be noted that A is used as the base text for a new multivolume *Biblia Rabbinica* edited by Menachem Cohen of Bar-Ilan University titled *Miqra'ot Gedolot Ha-Keter* (Bar Ilan Press: 1992–), and, unusual for a traditional Rabbinic Bible, it includes the entire masorah of A where it is still extant; it is, however, not a critical edition showing the history of the text. The true Hebrew

University Bible edited by Shemaryahu Talmon, Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, et al. is the only one that is faithful to the text of A in its full masoretic richness.

The Hebrew University Bible is a massive undertaking of serious textual scholarship. It may be seen as a culmination of centuries of efforts to present in a useful form as complete a history of the text as the format allows. This Ezekiel volume continues, and in some ways improves on, the reliability and excellence of the earlier two volumes on Isaiah and Jeremiah. It would be hard to imagine the HUB being replaced in this century by human effort within the technology now at hand or within natural human abilities.