

TEXTUAL HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

PREVIEW

THB

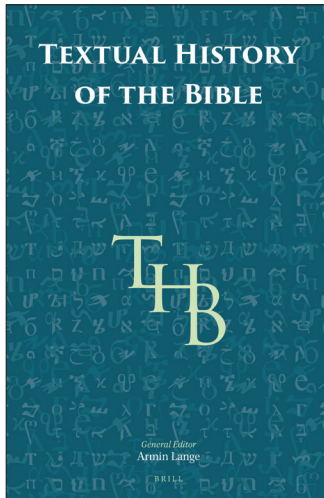
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Textual History of the Bible

Edited by: **Armin Lange** (General Editor), **Emanuel Tov**, **Matthias Henze**, **Russell E. Fuller**



- Vol. 1: The Hebrew Bible
- Vol. 2: Deuterocanonical Scriptures
- Vol. 3: A Companion to Textual Criticism
- Vol. 4: Indices, and Manuscript Catalogues

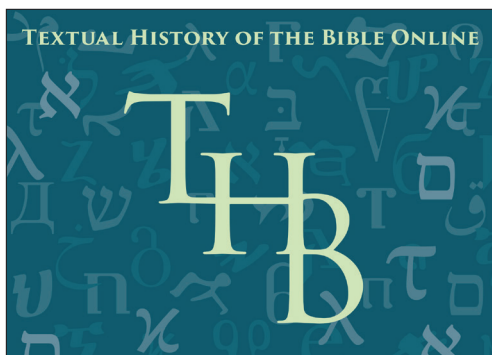
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The **Textual History of the Bible** brings together for the first time all available information regarding the textual history, textual character, translation techniques, manuscripts, and the importance of each textual witness for each book of the Hebrew Bible, including its deuterocanonical scriptures. In addition, it includes articles on the history of research, the editorial histories of the Hebrew Bible, as well as other aspects of text-critical research and its auxiliary fields, or Hilfswissenschaften, such as papyrology, codicology, and linguistics. The THB will be published by Brill both in print and in electronic form.

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Introduction to the Textual History of the Bible

Manuscript finds such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Cairo Genizah manuscripts, the discoveries at Nag Hammadi, and many more have radically changed our knowledge of the textual history of the Jewish and Christian Bibles. These new insights have led to several noticeable paradigm shifts in the field of textual criticism. Textual witnesses are no longer regarded as quarries for textual variants but are studied as texts and traditions in their own right. For instance, the study of the Septuagint is today a blossoming field of its own, with other versions of the Bible following suit. The biblical scrolls from Qumran testify to the plurality of the biblical texts during Second Temple times. Their study has also taught us that prior to the canonization of the Hebrew Bible, and, in some cases, even after it each biblical book had a textual history of its own. Textual critics focus not only on the reconstruction of a supposed biblical *Urtext* but aim equally to reconstruct the entire textual histories of the biblical books. In many cases, the early textual history of a biblical book also sheds light on its late redaction history, which leads to a merging of the so-called higher and lower criticisms. Biblical texts and translations are furthermore studied as a part of the reception history of the Bible.

In addition, the new text finds and the paradigm shifts in textual criticism open not only new ways to study the biblical texts but result also in the desideratum of a new reference work that answers old and new questions. Examples include: How does one find information about the Vulgate of Qohelet, the Septuagint of Esther, or the Targum of Jeremiah? Which biblical book was translated into which languages? What is the manuscript evidence and the text-critical value of each language tradition? Such information is readily available for some books and translations, but more often it is not. Overviews of recent research on a given textual version tend to be far from systematic and are prone to miss crucial information. In addition, many relevant studies are published in languages that few scholars can read or that can be accessed only in remote locations, for example, studies of versions in the less common languages. In textual criticism today, the study of the versions and of different manuscript traditions has become fragmented. For example, specialists in the Hebrew or Greek texts of the Hebrew Bible cannot be expected to be experts in the Old Slavonic or Arabic versions. With such fragmentation of expertise come boundaries that make communication between the various subfields of textual criticism increasingly difficult.

Therefore, the purpose of volume 1 for the Hebrew Bible and volume 2 for the deuterocanonical literature is to answer these questions.

Volume 1 (*The Hebrew Bible*, editors Armin Lange and Emanuel Tov) covers the books of the Hebrew canon. The volume opens with a series of overview articles on the history of the Jewish and Christian canons and on the ancient Hebrew and Aramaic texts. These entries are followed by articles on the different primary translations (Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, Latin, and Arabic) as well as the secondary translations (Latin, Coptic, Ethiopic, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Old Church Slavonic, and Arabic), most of which were sourced from the Greek. The main body of volume 1 is structured according to the sequence of the Hebrew canon, with entries on the Pentateuch, the Former Prophets, the Latter Prophets, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, the Five Scrolls, Ezra–Nehemiah, and First and Second Chronicles. For example, the Pentateuch section begins with articles on the ancient Hebrew texts of the Pentateuch, and on the medieval MT. It then discusses the primary translations (the multiple Greek versions, the Targumim, the Peshitta, Vulgate, and Arabic translations) and the secondary translations (the *Vetus Latina* and the Coptic, Ethiopic, Late Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Old Slavonic, and Arabic translations). *THB* aims at providing the reader with comprehensive information about *all* available versions of each biblical book, with a discussion of the extant manuscripts, the modern editions, the specific characteristics of each version, and their text-critical significance. *THB* 1 concludes with a series of articles on the biblical text as it is attested in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, in Josephus, Philo, the New Testament, rabbinic literature, the Greek church fathers, the Latin church fathers, the Syriac church fathers, and the Coptic church fathers.

Volume 2 (*Deuterocanonical Scriptures*, Editors Matthias Henze and Frank Feder) is dedicated to ancient Jewish literature that is *not* part of the Hebrew Bible but that *was* or *is* held in canonical esteem by at least *one* of the Christian churches. In some cases, such texts might have enjoyed scriptural authority in Judaism during the Second Temple period. The following deuterocanonical Scriptures are included: 1–2 Baruch, 4 Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Prophecy of Pashur, History of the Captivity in Babylon, Additions to Daniel, Ben Sira, 1 Enoch (+ Book of Giants and 2–3 Enoch), Additions to Esther, 3–6 Ezra, Jubilees, Judith, 1–4 Maccabees, the Ethiopic book of Maccabees, Prayer of Manasseh, Psalms 151–155, Psalms and Odes of Solomon, Tobit, and Wisdom of Solomon. As in *THB* 1, there will be an entry for each version of these books in addition to an article surveying their textual histories. In contrast to the Hebrew Bible, the translations of the deuterocanonical texts do not always form a coherent translational version such as the Vulgate but are more fragmented. The overview articles for *THB* 2 are therefore structured according to language only (Hebrew Texts, Aramaic Texts, Greek Texts, Syriac Texts, Latin Texts, Ethiopic Texts, Coptic Texts, Armenian Texts, Georgian Texts, Slavonic Texts, Arabic Texts). One of the biggest surprises and discoveries was how many different textual versions of the deuterocanonical texts are preserved. The existence of these versions was known at most to only a few specialists. *THB* 2 will introduce all versions of the deuterocanonical texts for the first time.

However, beyond the scope of its first two volumes, the *Textual History of the Bible* wants to be the first comprehensive reference work for the textual history and textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. Volume 3 (*A Companion to Textual Criticism*, editors Russell E. Fuller, Armin Lange, Hanna Tervanotko) will therefore cover a range of other matters that pertain to modern textual criticism. The student of text criticism might ask: When was the idea of an *Urtext* first suggested? What is a *homoiarkton* and why does it occur? When was a certain codex written, and what exactly does it contain? Which scribal materials and tools were used at a given time? How can the date of a manuscript be determined? Do biblical manuscripts employ a Hebrew idiolect? *THB* 3 attempts to address these and related questions. Its entries will span the history of research of textual criticism from antiquity until today. It will include entries on modern Bible editions, on textual criticism and textual transmission, on issues of science and technology, and on various languages and their linguistics. *THB* 3 addresses thus the history of research and the editorial histories of the Hebrew Bible, as well as other aspects of text-critical research and its auxiliary fields, or *Hilfswissenschaften*, such as papyrology, codicology, and linguistics.

The history of research on the textual criticism and textual history of the Hebrew Bible and its versions as well as their editorial histories are good examples to illustrate the purpose of *THB* 3. It is often difficult to find information about the early editions of the Hebrew Bible or its versions. Little information is available as to what motivated them or even on which manuscripts they were based. Surprisingly, no comprehensive history of the textual criticism and textual history of the Hebrew Bible has been published to date; only isolated studies exist. This situation leads to several misconceptions, such as the idea that the archetype theory was first formulated by Lagarde, while in reality the first to propose it was Eichhorn, as a response to Kennicott's edition.¹ Similarly Aptowitz² is regarded as the pioneer of the textual criticism of rabbinic biblical quotations, but in fact he was preceded by Strack³ and others.

In addition to the text-specific issues addressed in *THB* 1 and 2, and the issues addressed in *THB* 3, the fourth volume of *THB* will address Manuscripts and Manuscript Collections. An Indices volume will complete the set.

The *Textual History of the Bible* will be the first comprehensive reference work to cover all aspects of the textual history and textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible and its deuterocanonical Scriptures. The aim of *THB* is not to create a single coherent argument beginning with the earliest Hebrew manuscripts from Qumran addressed in volume 1 and ending with the contemporary history of research described in volume 3. Rather, *THB* is a reference work that allows for room for scholarly disagreement among its contributors. An example are the articles on the Hebrew and Greek texts of Jeremiah that understand either the consonantal text of MT-Jer (→ 1.7.2.2) or the Greek text of LXX-Jer (→ 1.7.3) as secondary. *THB* is thus both an encyclopedia and a handbook. It covers the textual transmission of both the Jewish canon and its deuterocanonical Scriptures in their original texts as well as in their translations. In addition, *THB* includes information about all other issues related to the textual criticism and textual history of these biblical texts. However, *THB* does not give practical instructions on how to do textual criticism or provide editions of biblical texts.

The above description shows that the *THB* is a multipurpose reference work that seeks to address the whole range of topics and questions related to the textual history and textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible and its deuterocanonical Scriptures. Two examples will illustrate the treasure of the information that the *THB* is able to provide and show how further conclusions can be reached based on the information included in the individual entries of the *THB*.

1) For the first time, the *THB* allows us to sketch a textual history of the Hebrew text of the Bible from its earliest documentation in manuscripts and employments of biblical texts in non-biblical literature through the master codices of the Ben Asher family. The individual articles on the Qumran manuscripts (→ 2.2.1; → 3.2.1; → 4.2.1; → 5.3.1; → 6.2.1; → 7.2.1; → 8.2.1; → 9.2.1; → 10.2.1; → 11.2.1; → 12.2.1; → 13.2.1; → 14.2.1; → 15.2.1; → 16.2.1; → 17.2.1; → 18.2.1; → 19.2.1; → 20.2.1) as well as article → 1.2.2 leave no doubt that until the reign of Herod the Great, and even beyond that time, the transmission of the Hebrew biblical text was dominated by textual plurality with non-aligned biblical manuscripts providing the largest group of textual witnesses. However, only few manuscripts attest to texts that are close to the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX (4QLev^d, 4QDeut^a, 4QSam^b, 4QJer^b, Nash Papyrus; → 2.2.1.6, → 2.2.5.2, → 5.3.1.3, → 5.3.3, → 7.2.1.3,

1 Kennicott, *1776–1780.

2 A. Aptowitz, *Das Schriftwort in der rabbinischen Literatur* (5 vols.; Vienna: A. Hölder [vols. 1–2] and Verlag der Israel-Theol. Lehranstalt [vols. 3–5], 1906–1915; reprint: New York: Ktav, 1970).

3 H.L. Strack, *Prolegomena critica in Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum quibus agitur 1) de codicibus et deperditis et adhuc exstantibus, 11) de textu bibliorum Hebraicorum qualis Talmudistarum temporibus fuerit* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1873), 70–72, 133.

→ 7.2.3.1) or to pre-Samaritan manuscripts (4QpaleoExod^m, 4QNum^b; → 2.2.1.3) that are related to the later Samaritan Pentateuch (→ 1.2.3). The predominance of texts that do not align with MT in the Second Temple period is underlined by the non-MT base texts of various rewritten Scripture compositions (→ 21.1.1, → 21.2.1, → 21.2.2.3; cf. → 2.1.5).

Beginning with the creation of the Jewish canon in the late first century B.C.E. (→ 1.1.2.1) and its proto-Masoretic standard text at the same time (→ 1.2.2.4.2), the manuscript evidence of the non-Qumranic sites around the Dead Sea as well as the few preserved late ancient and early medieval Hebrew biblical manuscripts document a coherent transmission of the proto-Masoretic biblical texts. The late ancient manuscript evidence is a corrective for the apparent textual variety of the Jewish Scriptures during the rabbinic period that is seemingly reflected in rabbinic quotations of the Jewish Scriptures (→ 21.6) and underlines that most of their readings do not reflect biblical variant readings but go back to scribal errors in the transmission of rabbinic texts or are due to the exegetical license with which the rabbis treated the quoted text. In Judaism, the increasing predominance of the proto-Masoretic text after the late first century B.C.E. is underlined by the fact that most primary translations and revisions of the Old Greek text are based on MT (→ 1.3.1.2, → 1.3.3, → 1.3.5, → 1.3.6).

2) The individual articles on the (proto-)Masoretic text demonstrate that MT is a heterogeneous text whose textual character and quality varies from book to book. In many if not most cases, the consonantal text of MT reflects a good text with a limited number of secondary readings, while in other cases it documents either a corrupt text or even a variant literary edition. Any exegetical study that is based on the consonantal text of MT needs to take its textual character into consideration or risks reaching misleading conclusions. The articles in *THB* 1 on the Hebrew biblical text illustrate the heterogeneous character of proto-MT and provide important information about the textual character of the proto-Masoretic text of each biblical book. Article → 7.2.2 argues that MT-Jer represents a variant literary edition that developed in several stages and that Egyptian Jews of the early third century B.C.E. were responsible for the bulk of the text. An earlier variant literary edition is preserved in LXX-Jer. Article → 14.2.2 shows that, despite a small number of scribal errors and a limited amount of linguistic and harmonizing editing, MT-Cant is very close to the supposed *Urtext* of Canticles. Only “4QCant^a points to an earlier textual stage of Canticles that employed asyndesis more often as a stylistic device and used rare Hebrew expressions and unusual constructions” (→ 14.2.2.5). MT-Qoh is also close to the *Urtext* of MT-Qoh but is most likely the result of an orthographic revision. Its secondary readings “attest to harmonizations, linguistic and stylistic corrections, as well as interpretative readings” (→ 15.2.2.3).

The articles of *THB* allow not only for similar and different observations for each textual version of each biblical and deuterocanonical book but also provide a wealth of additional information.

Armin Lange (slightly adapted from vol. 1A, 2016).

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(Volume editors: Armin Lange, Emanuel Tov)

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Area editors vol. 1: Alessandro Bruni (Georgian and Old Slavonic Translations), Ignacio Carbajosa Pérez (Syriac Translations: Peshitta, Syro-Hexapla, Syro-Lucianic, Jacob of Edessa), Claude Cox (Armenian Translations), Sidnie White Crawford (Samaritan Pentateuch), Steve Delamarter (Ethiopic Translations), Beate Ego (Targumim), Frank Feder (Coptic Translations), Peter Gentry (Pre-Hexaplaric Translations, Hexapla, Post-Hexaplaric Translations), Michael Graves (Vulgate), Armin Lange (Ancient Hebrew/Aramaic Texts), Meira Polliack (Arabic Translations), Michael Segal (The Biblical Text as Attested in Ancient Literature), Emanuel Tov (Septuagint), Julio Treballe Barerra and Pablo Torijano Morales (Vetus Latina).

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(Volume editors: Frank Feder and Matthias Henze)

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Contents of THB volume 3A to 3E: A Companion to Textual Criticism

(Volume editors: Russell Fuller, Armin Lange and Hanna Tervanotko.

Area editors: Steven Fassberg, Russell Fuller, Armin Lange, Marilyn Lundberg, Richard Weis)

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15.1 Textual History of Qohelet

15.1.1 Earliest Developments

Text-critical research on the Hebrew text of Qohelet has largely been confined to the commentaries on the book and articles on specific verses. Euringer's 1890 study goes through the book proposing corrections.¹ It is difficult to see any notable developments in the modern ideas of the *text* of Qohelet, but opinions have changed with regard to the formation of the book in its earliest stages (see further → 15.2.2.1).

The authorial unity of the book of Qohelet, though assumed by traditional commentators, was strongly contested in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some scholars argued on literary grounds that several important stages in the book's development can be identified.

In 1893, Siegfried employed source-critical methodology to identify numerous layers: the original Qohelet, a Sadducee influenced by Epicureanism, a "Chakham" (sage), a "Chasid" (an orthodox pietist), four main glossators, two epilogists, some unidentifiable glossators, and two editors.² Siegfried's working principle was that each writer must be absolutely consistent and represent a distinct point of view.

No one seems to have accepted Siegfried's intricate theory, but it did provide a grid for some more moderate proposals. The influential commentary of Barton,³ for example, affirmed the basic unity of the book, as assembled from Qohelet's words by an editor, but assigned third-person utterances, including the epilogue, to an editor or glossator. Further additions were by a Chasid glossator, who

added pietistic sentiments, such as the affirmation of retribution (Qoh 2:26), and a Chakham, a sage who affirmed the value of wisdom. The components that Barton (pp. 43–46) identifies as secondary can be listed as typical of commentators of his era: By the Chasid: Qoh 2:26; 3:17; 7:18b–26b, 29; 8:2b, 3a, 5, 6a, 11–13; 11:9b; 12:1a, 13, 13–14; by the Chakham: Qoh 4:5; 5:3, 7a; 7:1a, 3, 5, 6–9, 11, 12, 19; 8:1; 9:17–18; 10:1–3, 8–14a, 15, 18, 19; editorial addition: "says Qohelet" in Qoh 1:2; 7:27; and Qoh 12:8, 11–12. Podechard used a similar model, discerning three main stages: the original book, additions by a Chasid, and additions by a Chakham.⁴

A more restrained analysis distinguishes some pietistic glosses, but without major revisions or additions. Crenshaw, for example, regards the following as secondary: Qoh 2:26a; 3:17a; 8:12–13; 11:9b; perhaps Qoh 5:18 and 7:26b, as well as Qoh 12:9–11, 12–14.⁵

The literary-critical attempt to restore the original text of Qohelet assumes that Qohelet was a consistently radical, pessimistic, and skeptical thinker, so that statements that do not fit this image must be assigned to other writers. The problem with all the theories of later additions is that the statements considered traditional and conservative use vocabulary and style typical of ones considered in line with Qohelet's spirit. They are, moreover, often intertwined with observations of life's inequities and absurdities. Moreover, the putative additions do not fulfill the purposes ascribed to their authors, for they do not neutralize the skeptical statements but simply contradict them. They are, moreover, sometimes located *before* the unorthodox opinions they are supposed to neutralize.⁶ The fundamental problem with the source-critical assumption is that Qohelet is inconsistent throughout. He sees a

¹ Euringer, *Masorah text des Koheleth*. Though outdated in many ways, this book is valuable as a compilation of information. Euringer assembles a wide variety of sources, including some that get little attention in the commentaries, including the secondary translations, namely the Syro-Hexapla, Coptic, and Old Latin. He also cites rabbinic sources and has an extensive appendix with rabbinic citations of Qohelet.

² Siegfried, *Prediger und Hoheslied*, 2–12.

³ Barton, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*.

⁴ Podechard, *L'Éclésiaste*, 142–70, with a detailed survey of earlier research.

⁵ Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, 48.

⁶ For fuller argumentation, see Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes*.

world that is full of inconsistencies and contradiction, and these are what trouble him. His true consistency, in fact, lies in his insistence on observing both sides, positive and negative, of all that is valued in life, primarily work, pleasure, wisdom, justice, etc.

Most commentators regard the title (Qoh 1:1) and the epilogue (Qoh 12:9–14) as later additions to Qohelet's words. Many see two stages in the epilogue (Qoh 12:9–12 and 13–14). Among the commentators arguing for the essential unity of Qoh 1:2–12:8 are Gordis,⁷ Hertzberg,⁸ and Seow.⁹

There is no textual evidence for any of the literal-critical theories. LXX (→ 13–17.1.1.3) and the Peshitta (→ 13–17.1.4.3) include all of the 222 verses of MT-Qoh (and no more). 4QQoh^a (which covers Qoh 5:13–17; 6:1, 3–8, 6:12–7:6, 7–10, 19–20; → 15.2.1.1) includes Qoh 7:1a, 3, 6, 9, 19, which various scholars consider secondary (→ 15.1.2.2).

Fox has gone further and argued that the third-person statements, as well as Qoh 7:27, are authorial and constitute a frame narrative in the voice of the author, who is relaying the words of a fictional sage, Qohelet. Several ancient Near Eastern wisdom books use a framing device of this sort.¹⁰ Longman likewise regards the book as a unity, with Qohelet's words framed by the narrator's. He adduces the example of Akkadian fictional autobiographies.¹¹

The book is, in the view of the present writer, basically a textual unity that has reached us in a form that is probably close to the original. This does not exclude the possibility of minor changes,

⁷ Gordis, *Koheleth: The Man and his World*, 69–74. Gordis maintains the book's "integrity" by identifying many of the pietistic sentiments as unmarked quotations.

⁸ H.W. Hertzberg, *Der Prediger* (KAT 17; Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1963), 41. Hertzberg, 39–41, provides a good survey of the theories on the book's composition.

⁹ C.L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 38–43.

¹⁰ Fox, "Frame-Narrative and Composition in the Book of Qohelet," 83–106. A similar approach is taken by Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, who compares this text to Akkadian fictional autobiographies (pp. 18–20).

¹¹ Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*.

including additions, in the Hebrew transmission. One likely gloss is Qoh 11:9b, in which a statement disrupts a series of imperatives.

15.1.2 Hebrew Texts

In the absence of evidence for a text form that differs significantly from MT (→ 15.2.2), we can at most retrieve some early variants from the Qumran fragments and the ancient translations, particularly LXX, and suggest conjectural emendations. All the variants for which there is textual evidence are minor.

The only Hebrew manuscripts earlier than the medieval Masoretic codices are two sets of fragments from Qumran (→ 15.1.2.2). These agree with MT except insofar as they introduce (or perhaps preserve, → 15.2.2.3) features of non-Masoretic orthography and morphology that are in line with some Qumran practices (for a different view, see → 15.2.1 and → 15.2.3). Both LXX (→ 13–17.1.1.3) and Peshitta (→ 13–17.1.4.3) reflect Hebrew source texts close to MT.

The following survey begins with the Hebrew sources, then looks at the ancient versions, and finally offers a selection of plausible conjectural variants.

15.1.2.1 *Qere-Ketiv*

Most of the *Qere-Ketiv* pairs in Qohelet pertain to orthographic and morphological differences. The *Qere* is usually preferable in terms of the syntax and context (Qoh 4:8, 17; 7:22; 10:10).¹² (We should recognize, however, that these unproblematic readings may be later than the more difficult text.) There are minor consonantal differences at Qoh 5:8 (כ הִיא "is," Q הוּא "is" [Q preferable]); 5:10 (כ רִאִיתָ "seeing," Q רְאוּתָ "sight" [equal]); 6:10 (כ שְׁהִתְקִיף "one who is stronger," Q שְׁתִּתְקִיף "one who is stronger" [Q preferable]); 9:4 (כ יִבְחַר "is chosen," Q יִחַבֵּר "is joined" [Q preferable]); 10:3 (כ בְּשֶׁהִסְכַּלְתָּ "when the fool," Q בְּשֶׁסְכַּלְתָּ "when a fool" [equal]); 10:10 (כ הַכְשִׁיר

¹² For an evaluation of these readings, see A. Schoors, "Kethibh-Qere in Ecclesiastes," in *Studia Paulo Naster Oblata* (OLA 13; Leuven: Peeters, 1982), 215–22.

“to make suitable,” *Q* הַכְּשִׁיר “to make suitable” [*K* preferable¹³]; 10:20 (כ הַכְּנָפִים “the winged [creature],” *Q* כְּנָפִים “a winged [creature]” [equal]); 12:6 (כ רַחֵק “is distant,” *Q* יִרְתֵּק “is severed” [*Q* preferable]). The alternative readings affect interpretation only in Qoh 9:4 and 12:6.

The *Qere* variants serve to cue readers on pronunciation while protecting the text proper – the *Ketiv* – from graphic “correction” by alerting copyists to readings that might seem natural but should not be incorporated in the text. Evidence that the *Qere* forms are not textual variants is the abbreviated form in which they are sometimes cited in the MasP. In Qoh 10:10b, for example, where the *Ketiv* is הַכְּשִׁיר “making suitable,” MasP has יתיר “an extra *yod*.” This is a statement about the spelling of the *Ketiv*, directed to scribes. It is not a cue to readers, nor is it a way of recording a variant text. To be sure, some *Qere* forms may have existed in manuscripts known to the Masoretes, but this does not mean that the MasP cited these to preserve them.¹⁴ On the *Ketiv-Qere*, see → 1.5.4.2.

15.1.2.2 4QQoh^a and 4QQoh^b

The two sets of Qumran fragments, 4QQoh^a (4Q109; → 15.2.3.1) and 4QQoh^b (4Q110; → 15.2.3.2), are the only pre-medieval texts of Qohelet.¹⁵ In 4QQoh^a, there are ninety-five words that are legible or can be restored with certainty as words appearing in MT. Among them are at least thirteen consonantal variants as well as seventeen orthographic ones, all in plene spellings. There is one morphological difference (ה[ואה] for הווא in 7:2), which introduces a form common in Qumran documents. In 4QQoh^b, of the twenty legible or securely reconstructible words, there are two orthographic variants, both providing a plene writing, and one morphological variant.

Table 1 lists the substantial variants in the two manuscripts, excluding orthographical and morphological details.¹⁶

In most of the above variants, the Qumran reading is secondary. (Not noted above are Qoh 6:8, 12; and 7:6, where 4QQoh^a seems to differ from MT but is illegible.) In three cases, Qoh 7:5, 7, and 19, the Qumran reading seems earlier. The orthographical variants in Qumran are invariably later in character than the MT readings. In two cases, priority cannot be determined. The Qohelet scrolls show evidence of scribal modifications in the direction of simplification and updating in the first century of the book’s existence.¹⁷ Similar activity is visible in a few cases in MT (→ 15.2.2).

Although the variants of 4QQoh^a are few in number and statistical conclusions cannot be drawn, the *density* of its variants is worthy of attention. Among the readable ninety-five words in this manuscript, thirteen are substantive variants, or 13.6 percent of the total, and seventeen are orthographical variants, or 17.8 percent of the total, together 31.57 percent. It is suggestive to compare 1QIsa^a (→ 6.2.1.1; → 6.2.3), in which Ulrich and Flint count “well over 2600” textual variants.¹⁸ This is 15 percent of the 17,000 words in MT-Isa, in a manuscript characterized by frequent modifications of spelling and wording, mostly for the sake of easier study and understanding. Since most of the non-Masoretic readings in 4QQoh^a move from Masoretic readings toward greater simplification and clarification, we may tentatively categorize 4QQoh^a as deriving from proto-MT (→ 15.2.2).¹⁹

¹³ The correct vocalization is הַכְּשִׁיר “the skilled man” (as in Aramaic); hence “but the skilled man has the advantage of wisdom.”

¹⁴ Another example (of many) is in Prov 23:6, where the *Ketiv* is תִּתְּאוּ and the MasP has תִּתְּאוּ (both meaning “desire”). This cannot possibly be intended as a textual variant.

¹⁵ Published by Ulrich, “Qohelet.”

¹⁶ Based on Ulrich, “Qohelet,” 222–26. English translations are guided by *DSSB.

¹⁷ According to Ulrich (“Qohelet,” 221), F.M. Cross dated this manuscript to 175–150 B.C.E. Most commentators date Qohelet itself to the mid-third century B.C.E. See Schoors, *Preacher*, 499–502.

¹⁸ Ulrich and Flint, *JD XXXII, Part 2, 89.

¹⁹ For a slightly different view, see → 15.2.3.1.

TABLE 1 Qumran Variants

	MT	4QQoh ^a	Explanation of Qumran Variant
5:14	כְּאֲשֶׁר (= LXX) “as”	כִּי “because”	apparently an attempt to clarify the syntax of MT
5:15	וְגַם (= LXX) “and also”	גַּם “also” (MT ^{Kenn80, 147, 180, 188})	equally valid
6:3	מִמְּנוּ הַנֶּפֶל (= LXX) “[better] than he is a stillborn child”	הַנֶּפֶל מִמְּנוּ “a stillborn child [is better] than he”	word-order inversion; equally valid
6:6	וְאַלּוּ (= LXX) “and though”	וְאַם לֹא “and even if [לֹא]”	the variant represents the constituents of וְאַלּוּ even though לֹא וְאַם does not have the required sense of “if”
6:8	כִּי מָה (= LXX) “for what”	כַּמָּה “how much”	a copyist error creating a contextually inferior reading
7:2	מִשְׂתֵּה (= LXX) “feasting”	שְׂמֵחָה “leisure”	adjusting to 7:4
7:2	סוֹף כָּל (= LXX) “end of all”	כּוֹל סוֹף “all the end”	word-order inversion; inferior
7:4a	בְּבַיִת (= LXX) “in the house”	בֵּית “house”	haplography
7:5	מֵאִישׁ שֹׁמֵעַ (= LXX) “than a man who hears”	מִלְשֹׁמֵעַ, corr., “than to hear”	מִלְשֹׁמֵעַ is superior to MT. The supralinear correction shows that the variant was present in the source manuscript.
7:7	וְיֹאבֵד (= LXX) “and destroys”	וְיַעוּב “and perverts”	synonymous variants. MT may represent a simplification of the rare עוּב.
7:19	תְּעִז “strengthens”	תְּעִזֵר “helps” (= LXX βῶνθῆσῃσι)	synonymous variant. ²⁰ תְּעִזֵר represents a normalization of the rare עִזֵּל-.
7:19	אֲשֶׁר הֵיוּ “who are”	שֵׁנִי “who are”	morphological updating to LBH
7:20	אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה “that he does”	שֵׁנִי “that he does”	morphological updating to LBH
1:14	MT שֶׁנֶּעֱשׂוּ “that occur”	4QQoh ^b אֲשֶׁר נֶעֱשׂוּ “that occur”	MT updates the morphology to LBH.

15.1.3.1 Septuagint (→ 13–17.1.1.3)

The literalistic, mimetic character of LXX-Qoh justifies a fair degree of confidence in reconstructing its *Vorlage*, which was very likely close to MT

(→ 15.2.2). A few likely variants are listed in → 13–17.1.1.3.4. The list could be expanded by, for example, variants in Qoh 2:25 (παρεξ αὐτοῦ = מִמְּנוּ, “except for him” = Peshiṭta and some MT manuscripts, for מִמְּנִי, “except for me”); 5:5 (τοῦ θεοῦ = הַאֱלֹהִים, “God” for הַמַּלְאָךְ, “the messenger,” a significant variant); 5:16 (ἀλλὰ πένθει = וְאַבְל, “and

²⁰ On the interchangeability of these roots, see Brin, “The Roots עזר and עזו in the Bible.”

mourning” wrongly, for יֹאכֵל, “he eats”); and perhaps 5:19 (περισπῆ αὐτὸν = מענהו, “keeps him occupied” = Peshiṭta and Targum, for מַעֲנֶה, “answers”). There are also differences in implicit vocalization.

15.1.3.2 Peshiṭta (→ 13–17.1.4.3)

Kamenetzky’s careful study of the Syriac translation of Qohelet shows its *Vorlage* to have been close to MT.²¹ (Kamenetzky counts only forty-three minor variants in matters other than vocalization, and even some of these are doubtful.) According to Kamenetzky, the Peshiṭta often depends on LXX. Schloors argues that Peshita-LXX similarities are often better explained by factors other than dependence: shared variants, similar but independent interpretations, and a revision of the Peshiṭta toward LXX.²²

15.1.3.3 Other Translations

V-Qoh (→ 13–17.1.7) was translated by Jerome in 398 C.E., who consulted LXX while translating the Hebrew. It does not reflect any consonantal variants to MT. T-Qoh (→ 13–17.1.3) is highly paraphrastic and expansive.²³ It is in the midrashic tradition and in fact dependent on some Tannaitic midrashim. It cannot serve as evidence for the textual history of this book.

15.1.4 Conjectures

Numerous details can be reasonably conjectured. Following is a sample of conjectures especially worthy of the exegete’s attention. Frequently used in modern commentaries,²⁴ these conjectures are required by the context, and the mechanism of error is easily recognizable.

15.1.4.1 Consonantal Conjectures, with Implicit Vocalization

Qoh 2:24 מְשִׂיאֵכֶּל “than to eat” (MT שִׂיאֵכֶּל “to eat”); 5:6 כְּרוֹב “like a lot” (MT בְּרוֹב “in a lot”); 5:16 וְחָלִי “and sickness” (MT וְחָלָיו “and his sickness”); 7:19 מְעַשֵּׂר “more than the wealth of the magnates” (MT מְעַשְׂרָה שְׁלִיטִים “than ten magnates”); 7:27 אָמַר “said the Qohelet” (MT אָמְרָה קְהֵלֶת “says [feminine] Qohelet”); 7:28a אִשָּׁה “a woman” (MT אִשָּׁר “which”); 8:1 בָּה חָכָם “so wise” (MT בְּהַחָכָם “like the wise man”); 8:1b–2a יִשְׁנָאנוּ “changes it” (MT יִשְׁנָא “is changed. 1”); 8:8 עֶשֶׂר “wealth” (MT רְשַׁע “wickedness”); 8:10 קָבַר מוּבְאִים “being brought to the grave” (MT וּבָאוּ קְבָרִים “buried. And they came”); 10:1 זָבוּב יָמוּת “a fly dies” (MT זָבוּבֵי מָוֶת “flies of death”); 10:15 הַכְּסִיל מִיָּגְעוֹ “the fool’s [toil] exhausts him” (MT הַיָּגְעוֹנוּ “the fools [toil], exhausts him” [ungrammatical]); 11:5 בְּעַצְמַיִם “in the limbs” (MT^{mss}) (MT כְּעַצְמַיִם “like the limbs”).

15.1.4.2 Vocalic Conjectures

Qoh 3:21 הָעֹלָה “whether rises” (MT הֶעֱלָה “the rising one”); 3:21 הַיֹּרֶדֶת “whether goes down” (MT הִירֶדֶת “the one going down”); 8:10 וּמִמְקוֹם “from a place” (MT וּמִמְקוֹם “from a place of”); 10:10 הַבְּשִׂיר “the skilled man” (MT *Ketiv* הכשיר “making suitable”); 12:6 וְתָרַץ “and it is smashed” (MT וְתָרַץ “and it races”); 12:10 וְכָתוּב “and wrote” (MT וְכָתוּב “and it was written”).

15.1.5 Implications for Exegesis

All the witnesses are closely aligned to MT. The possibility that other textual forms with greater divergences in wording and quantity once existed cannot be disproved, but nothing in MT has the character of a later supplement, with the arguable (but uncertain) exception of the sentences that speak of Qohelet in the third person: Qoh 1:1, 2; 7:27; and 12:9–14, and perhaps Qoh 11:9b. Neither are such supplements reflected in the ancient versions and Hebrew manuscripts.

Qohelet is one of the few books in the Bible for which it is meaningful to speak of an *Urtext*, a textual form produced by a single author and from which all evidence ultimately derives (→ 1.1.1.2.4).

²¹ Kamenetzky, “Die P’šita zu Kohelet,” 181–239.

²² Schoors, “The Peshiṭta of Koheleth,” 345–57.

²³ For a translation and introduction, see Knobel, *The Targum of Qohelet*, and Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Qohelet*.

²⁴ For argumentation in support of these readings, see Fox, *A Time*, ad loc.

In support of this hypothesis is a literary argument for the book's unity. The book presents itself as the intellectual autobiography of a single person (not as a collection of proverbs) and shows considerable cohesion (even repetitiveness) in style and thought. The unmistakable tensions and contradictions within Qohelet's words are best explained as expressions of the writer's thoughts as he observes the strains and fissures in life itself. Indeed, Qohelet himself is aware of these contradictions and responds in frustration, calling them הַבֵּל "vanity/absurd."

Even apart from this hypothesis, MT is a solid basis for exegesis, while the other texts and translations provide little evidence for alternative textual traditions.

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Tov, *TCHB.

Ulrich, "Qohelet," *DJD XVI: 221–27.

Ulrich and Flint, *DJD XXXII, Part 2.

Michael V. Fox

15.6 Coptic

The Wisdom of Solomon was probably first translated into Coptic in the fourth century C.E., during the flourishing of the Sahidic (Upper Egyptian/Southern) dialect that would remain the classical, literary variant of Coptic through the seventh or eighth century C.E. This period witnessed the extensive production of Coptic literature, and particularly biblical translations (→ I.1.4.2), the latter deriving chiefly from the Old Greek (→ I.1.3.1.1) versions preserved in the uncial manuscripts. Beginning in the eleventh century or so, the Bohairic (Northern) dialect began to replace Sahidic, and remains to this day the liturgical language of the Coptic Orthodox Church.¹

15.6.1 Manuscript Evidence

The Wisdom of Solomon (together with the book of Ben Sira → 4.7) stands out among Coptic biblical texts insofar as it is preserved more or less completely in Sahidic, between two manuscripts. The first belongs to a sixth–seventh-century C.E. parchment codex that presently resides in Turin: Museo Egizio 7117 (Cop^{Sa} 98). This codex was published by de Lagarde in 1886 and contains practically the entire text of Wisdom of Solomon, as well as that of Ben Sira (together they comprise the “Turin Wisdoms”).² The second manuscript belongs to a roughly contemporary papyrus codex that can now be found in London in the British Library, BL Or. 5984 (Cop^{Sa} 75). Published by Thompson in 1908, this manuscript also contains both Wisdom of Solomon and Ben Sira, placed after the books of Job (→ I.11.4.2), Proverbs (→ I.12.4.2), Ecclesiastes (→ I.13–17.2.2), and Canticles (→ I.13–17.2); this same order is found in Codex Vaticanus (LXX^B).³ These two versions differ from one

another only slightly, but enough to indicate that their respective *Vorlagen* were not necessarily identical.⁴ Nonetheless, it can be said that Cop^{Sa} 98 contains somewhat fewer errors and lacunae than⁵, and therefore some hold that Cop^{Sa} 98 preserves an older text than Cop^{Sa} 75.⁶ There are additional leaves and fragments of the Sahidic version, but these are of only supplementary value to Cop^{Sa} 98 and Cop^{Sa} 75.⁷ A Sahidic ostrakon tells us that in the vicinity of seventh–eighth-century C.E. Thebes, the text of Wisdom of Solomon was regarded as consisting of seventeen chapters, whereas the standard text today has nineteen.⁸ Finally, a significant portion of the text (ca. 9–15%) survives in the Bohairic dialect, preserved in the lectionaries of the Coptic Church.⁹ Unpreserved in the later, paper Bohairic Bibles, Wisdom of Solomon has served in Coptic tradition primarily in the liturgical sphere.¹⁰

15.6.2 Translation Style

Our understanding of the Coptic versions of Wisdom of Solomon remains relatively primitive; there is no critical edition of the text (as with most of the Coptic Old Testament). Ziegler referred to the Sahidic versions and Bohairic lectionaries noted above in his Göttingen edition of Wisdom

⁴ Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” 54–56.

⁵ Although I give here the text of Cop^{Sa} 98, I use the more accurate verse numbering of Cop^{Sa} 75.

⁶ Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” 56; Ziegler, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 26.

⁷ Ziegler, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 26; for further leaves and fragments, see the continually updated series, Schüssler, **Biblica Coptica*.

⁸ See the discussion of Crum in Winlock and Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes*, 197. I thank Ivan Miroshnikov for alerting me to this reference. For a photograph of the ostrakon, see → 10.4.5.

⁹ Collected and published in Burmester, “Bohairic Pericopae.” See further Takla, “Coptic Old Testament,” 61; Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 66.

¹⁰ Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” 56; Ziegler, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 26.

¹ Nagel, “Old Testament,” 1836–38; Takla, “Coptic Old Testament,” 8–9.

² De Lagarde, *Aegyptiaca*, 65–106.

³ Thompson, *The Coptic (Sahidic) Versions*, 60–126; Takla, “Coptic Old Testament,” 62.

of Solomon.¹¹ Following Till, he recognized that the text-critical value of the Sahidic translation for a better reconstruction of the Greek text is negligible, since the translation from which our two major manuscripts derive does not aim at wooden literalism, but rather at a free and comprehensible rendering into Coptic.¹² Variance from the Greek uncial usually appears to result either from choices in translation or from scribal errors within Coptic transmission.¹³

Thus, for instance:

Cop^{Sa}-Wis 5:15(14): ⲛⲟⲉ ⲛⲟϩⲗⲗⲟϥ ⲉϩⲟⲟⲟⲙⲉ ⲉⲗϩⲟⲗⲟϩ
ⲉⲐⲐⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲛ ⲟϩϩⲁⲧⲏϥ¹⁴

“like a fine *spider’s web* scattered by a whirlwind”

LXX-Wis 5:14: ὡς φερόμενος χνοῦς ὑπὸ ἀνέμου

“like *chaff* blown about by the wind”

The word χνοῦς “chaff” was likely mistaken for ϩⲗⲗⲟϥ “spider’s web” in scribal dictation.

One can find similar examples in the Bohairic lectionaries, as noted by Burmester.¹⁵

On the other hand, Cop^{Sa}-Wis 17:(18)19 offers us a case in which the Coptic translator has followed a genuine variant in the Greek:

LXX-Wis 17:(18)19: ἡ ἀντανακλωμένη ἐκ κοιλότητος
ὀρέων ἠχώ,

“the echo bouncing from a hollow of the mountains
...”

Cop^{Sa}-Wis 17:19:¹⁶ⲛⲉϩⲣⲟⲟϩ ⲛⲉⲛⲉϩⲗⲗⲁⲧⲉ ⲉϩⲟϩⲟϩ ⲉⲓⲉⲩⲧⲏⲧ
ⲉϩϩⲏϩ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉϩⲉ¹⁷

“the sound of birds alighting, falling down ...”

The Greek *Vorlage* of Cop^{Sa} 98 seems to have featured a variant reading for Wis 17:(18)19: ὀρνέων ἠχος “the sound of birds.” Conversely, the Coptic witnesses themselves are at variance; Cop^{Sa} 75 preserves the slightly different ⲛⲉⲛⲉϩⲗⲗⲏⲧ ⲉϩⲛⲏϩ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ [...]ⲉⲓⲁ “birds descending [...]”

Equally interesting is what these Coptic translations reveal about the reception of the text in its later Egyptian context. The translators aimed to simplify the text, transmuting complex Greek into straightforward Coptic. For example, the Coptic language makes wide use of Greek loanwords, terms immediately recognizable to any student of the language and often used by the translators of our text to render more abstruse Greek terminology.¹⁸ Some of these renderings are more successful than others; observe the awkward compound ⲛⲁⲣϫⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲧⲧⲁⲙⲓ “ruler of creation” for γενησάραχης “creator” (Wis 13:3).¹⁹ Furthermore, the Greek passive is often rendered not with the bulky “dynamic passive” construction (a third-person plural commonly employed in Coptic to render a passive sense), but a crisper, second-person active voice (addressed to God as the agent of action).²⁰ Conversely, the translators’ attempt to clarify the meaning of the text tells us that at least one intended audience of Wisdom of Solomon in Late Antique Egypt must have been relatively unlearned,²¹ which raises interesting questions about the context in which this translation took place. A central topic of Wisdom of Solomon is Egyptian idolatry and its ostensible discontents; was the Coptic translator of this text spurred to action by the persistence of idolatrous practices among Egyptian peasants? Thus, the Coptic versions of Wisdom of Solomon

¹¹ Ziegler, *Sapientia Salomonis*.

¹² Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” esp. 52–53, 56. While my evaluation of the text follows that of Till, the examples I produce here to support it are my own.

¹³ Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” 63–64.

¹⁴ Cop^{Sa} 75: ⲟϩⲧⲏϥ, “wind.”

¹⁵ E.g., Burmeister, “Bohairic Pericopae,” 464–65.

¹⁶ Although I give here the text of Cop^{Sa} 98, I use the more accurate numbering of Cop^{Sa} 75.

¹⁷ The rest of the passage is not extant.

¹⁸ Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” 59–62; Ziegler, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 27.

¹⁹ Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” 60, includes this example in his list of Greek loanwords rendering more complex morphs in the original Greek, but it should rather be included in his list of Graeco-Coptic compounds on p. 61. As recognized by Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” 55, the scribe of Cop^{Sa} 75 must have been misled here by a sloppy dictation of the text, here writing *marenjō*].

²⁰ Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” 62.

²¹ Till, “Koptischen Versionen,” 58, 65.

command the attention not only of biblical text critics, but also of historians of Egypt in Late Antiquity.²²

- O.H.E. Burmester, "The Bohairic Pericopae of Wisdom and Sirach," *Bib* 15 (1934): 451–65; 16 (1935): 25–174.
- P. de Lagarde, *Aegyptiaca* (Göttingen: Arnoldi Hoyer, 1883).
- P. Nagel, "Old Testament, Coptic Translations of," *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 8:1836–40.
- Schüssler, **Biblica Coptica*.
- H. Takla, "An Introduction to the Coptic Old Testament," *Coptica* 6 (2007): 1–115.
- H. Thompson, *The Coptic (Sahidic) Versions of Certain Books of the Old Testament: From a Papyrus in the British Museum* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908).
- W.C. Till, "Die koptischen Versionen der Sapientia Salomonis," *Bib* 36 (1955): 51–70.
- H.E. Winlock and W.E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, Part 1: The Archeological Material* (Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Egyptian Expedition 3; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926).
- D. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 43; New York: Doubleday, 1979).
- J. Ziegler (ed.), *Sapientia Salomonis* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 12.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980).

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²² The author thanks Dr. Frank Feder (Göttingen) for comments on and criticisms of earlier drafts of this article.

5.1 Hebrew of the Hebrew Bible

5.1.1 Introduction

Linguistic periodization is the division of a language into its historical phases. All efforts at periodization – historical, literary, artistic – involve imposing somewhat artificial schematizations upon historical reality. Linguistic periodization is often compared with the drawing of isoglosses on dialect maps. Just as dialect variation is nearly always more gradual and continuous than the lines drawn on such maps suggest, yet still capture something important about the coming together of the geographical limits of multiple linguistic variables along a particular regional boundary, so periodization relies on idealizations about the coherence of individual chronological periods, as well as the possibility of grouping linguistic features and changes into binary oppositions that correspond to a chronological category. Likewise, just as dialectologists focus on linguistic data, relying only secondarily on geographical factors to draw dialect boundaries, so linguistic periodization is based primarily on evidence of a strictly linguistic nature, though, to be sure, certain historical events and social episodes known to have exerted profound influence on languages coincide with the historical breaks imposed on a language's history.¹

5.1.2 Difficulties in Biblical Hebrew Periodization²

Linguistic periodization requires the existence in the subject language of texts securely datable on the basis of non-linguistic evidence. Since there is relatively little biblical material that consensus assigns firmly to one period or another, as control data, Hebraists resort to the minority of bib-

lical books whose dating is universally accepted, i.e., the core post-exilic books of Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, all of which explicitly date themselves to the post-Restoration period of 450 B.C.E. and beyond, and to a combination of extra-biblical sources, including the ever-expanding, but still meager cache of pre-exilic Hebrew and cognate inscriptional evidence and a variety of Second Temple inscriptional, numismatic, documentary, and literary material, primarily in Hebrew and Aramaic. On the basis of such evidence scholars are reasonably certain of the main lines of differences between pre- and post-exilic Hebrew. With the profiles of securely dated biblical and extra-biblical texts as a baseline, scholars can often assign chronologically problematic compositions reasonably certain, if approximate, dates of composition.

Understandably, however, the transmitted nature of biblical textual witnesses raises doubts as to the viability of such an endeavor. Given that the earliest complete Hebrew witnesses of the Bible are medieval manuscripts from the end of the first millennium C.E., products of more than a thousand years of copying, during which time – unlike inscriptional and documentary texts discovered *in situ* – they were subject to the vagaries and vicissitudes of scribal transmission, one is justified in asking whether Biblical Hebrew (BH) as it has been preserved therein remains an accurate representation of the language as it was reflected in the earliest autographs, prior to whatever distortion has arisen from inadvertent corruption, not to speak of intentional modification.

While accidental corruptions have undoubtedly penetrated into all of the relevant textual witnesses, the most obvious language-related difference between pre-exilic epigraphic material and the biblical text in extant Hebrew manuscripts is a result of intentional adjustment, namely, orthographical reform. Compared to the spare use of *matres lectionis* in early extra-biblical material, especially in word-medial position, their use is

¹ This introduction is a summary of A. Bergs and L. Brinton, *Historical Linguistics of English* (Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science 34; 2 vols.; Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2012), 2.1234–35.

² For the following and other arguments against the viability of linguistic periodization and dating as they relate to the Hebrew Bible, see the minority position of Young, Rezetko, and Ehrensverd, *Linguistic Dating*.

fairly commonplace in the Bible, where no portion preserves the defectiveness of the pre-exilic epigraphic sources. Most scholars conclude that the once defective orthography of classical biblical texts was later revised by means of the, albeit inconsistent, insertion of *matres lectionis* to bring their spelling into line with the post-exilic orthographical conventions characteristic of the core post-exilic books. But if the spelling of old texts was indeed adjusted, it stands to reason that other aspects of the language may also have been modified. And if doubt attaches to the linguistic reliability of the consonantal text, then how much more attaches to the reading traditions represented in the various vocalization systems. Even if these are products of uninterrupted oral transmission, preserving the reflexes of early and authentic phonetic and phonological realizations, the respective traditions are so uniform, they cannot possibly reflect the presumably diverse diachronic and geographic origins of the varied material that makes up the Hebrew Bible. To be sure, in the case of several phenomena, the vocalization clearly calls for the replacement of an obsolete form with a more contemporary alternative.

Finally, how can biblical texts serve as reliable linguistic witnesses when so many are thought to be composite? Even a text whose early provenance is widely accepted may contain later glosses or lengthy interpolations. In view of the variety of opinions on the identification of literary seams, separating early from late appears a fool's errand.

Finally, as a literary language, BH was, no doubt, artificially conservative, masking vernacular variation, and facilitating continuity and homogeneity.

A few biblical scholars thus question the feasibility of tracing true linguistic history in the Hebrew Bible. Despite these obstacles and doubts, however, there is widespread agreement among Hebrew philologists that such phases as Classical (or Standard) Biblical Hebrew (CBH or SBH) and Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH) are useful and meaningful historical categories and, additionally, that texts of unknown date can, by adhering to certain methodological strictures, be approximately dated.

5.1.3 The Historical Periods of Biblical Hebrew and Methodology³

In its simplest and most widely accepted formulation, BH is divided into two historical phases: pre-exilic CBH and post-exilic LBH. Notwithstanding the very real textual, orthographic, and literary challenges outlined above, there is a vast array of philological evidence, representing the full spectrum of the language – orthography, phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon – and obtained by means of controlled procedures, that distinguishes classical texts from their post-classical counterparts. Scholars have assembled an inventory of characteristically late linguistic features on the basis of the criteria of late distribution, classical opposition, and extra-biblical confirmation, whereby a suspected late feature (including the frequent use of a previously rare element or the obsolescence of a once productive classical trait) can be shown to be exclusively (or especially) typical of late biblical material, absent (or rare) – in more than just a casual way – from purportedly early material, and generally characteristic of late extra-biblical documentary and literary sources. By way of example, the Babylonian month names – *Adar, Elul, Tebeth, Kislev, Nisan, Sivan, and Shebat* – (a) are found in the Hebrew Bible only in post-exilic texts (Zechariah, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah); (b) are absent from biblical texts thought to be earlier (though, crucially, use in such texts of alternative calendrical systems – like the Canaanite names, e.g., *Bul* [1 Kgs 6:38], *Ziv* [1 Kgs 6:1, 37], and *Ethanim* [1 Kgs 8:2], or months numbered ordinally, e.g., the first month [Exod 40:2] – shows that the Babylonian names *could* have been used there if they had been in use in Hebrew); and (c) are regularly employed in a variety of late extra-biblical Hebrew and Aramaic sources, including Biblical Aramaic. Use of the Babylonian month names is thus one of many distinctive markers of LBH. Having brought together an adequate assemblage of

³ Driver, *Introduction*, 156, 484–85, 504–08, 535–40, 553; Hadas-Lebel, *Histoire*, 63; Hornkohl, “Hebrew Language: Periodization”; Hurvitz, “Can Biblical Texts Be Dated?”; Kutscher, *A History*, 12, 77–86; Sáenz-Badillos, *A History*, 52.

characteristically late linguistic usages, any text exhibiting a concentration thereof may be safely categorized as post-exilic. Further, since no Hebrew text securely datable to the post-Restoration period on non-linguistic grounds fails to exhibit an accumulation of distinctively late linguistic features, the simplest and most obvious conclusion is that chronologically problematic texts that lack such an accumulation do so because they are products of the classical period.

In addition to the historical strata of the bipartite division just described, many scholars recognize a pre-classical stage of the language known as Archaic Biblical Hebrew (ABH). There is also justification for an independent category of Transitional Biblical Hebrew (TrBH) between the classical and late layers. The four strata are described here in chronological sequence.

ABH is posited as a stage of Hebrew chronologically prior to SBH, i.e., to the period before the tenth century B.C.E.⁴ Because it is reflected only partially and sporadically, especially in the apparently archaic poetry of the Pentateuch and Former Prophets, and due to the possibility that later writers could employ antiquated diction, not all Hebraists consider it a viable phase of the language. However, such works as *The Blessing of Jacob* (Genesis 49), *The Song of the Sea* (Exodus 15), *The Balaam Oracles* (Numbers 23–24), *The Song of Moses* (Deuteronomy 32–33), *The Song of Deborah* (Judges 5), *The Song of Hannah* (1 Sam 2:1–10), as well as Habakkuk 3 are characterized by accumulations of what appear, in comparison to more standard phenomena, as typologically early features, often paralleled in the pre-classical corpora of Ugaritic, Amarna Canaanite, or Old Aramaic. Whether these really are remnants of antiquated style preserved in genuinely old texts or archaistic usages employed in classical or late works is disputed.

CBH is the language of biblical and extra-biblical material from the pre-exilic period (tenth cen-

⁴ Hadas-Lebel, *Histoire*, 70–72; Kutscher, *A History*, 79–80; Mandell, “Biblical Hebrew, Archaic”; Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*; Sáenz-Badillos, *A History*, 56–62; cf. R.C. Vern, *Dating Archaic Biblical Hebrew Poetry: A Critique of the Linguistic Arguments* (PHSIC 10; Piscataway: Gorgias, 2011).

ture [?]-sixth century B.C.E.).⁵ Historically, its rise seems to be connected with the political and cultural centralization characteristic of the Monarchic Period. Its corpus includes the majority of the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomistic History, the works of the pre-exilic prophets, as well as various Psalms and a portion of Wisdom Literature (though poetry is more difficult to date than non-poetic material). It is reasonably comparable to the language of the relevant epigraphic material. CBH works may also contain secondary additions, the language of which may be demonstrably later than that of the rest of work.

The label TrBH has been coined to refer to the historical stratum of Hebrew that links CBH and LBH.⁶ Since material written in CBH is generally dated to the period up to the Babylonian Exile in 586 B.C.E., whereas LBH proper is reflected in biblical texts from after the Restoration, TrBH is defined as the language of biblical material written over the approximately 150 years from the close of the First Temple period through the years of the Exile and into the Restoration, i.e., about 600–450 B.C.E. The TrBH corpus is thought to consist of parts of Kings, Isaiah 40–66, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Lamentations. These works contain linguistic forerunners virtually unknown in CBH that anticipate still more pronounced trends in LBH and/or late extra-biblical sources, yet persist in regular use of classical features that fall into disuse in later works.

LBH is best represented by texts whose content dates them unequivocally to the Persian Period or later.⁷ Clear-cut cases are Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. Other texts exhibiting an accumulation of characteristically late features include Psalms 103, 117, 119, 124, 125, 133, 144, and

⁵ In addition to the principal grammars, see Hadas-Lebel, *Histoire*, 72–101; Kutscher, *A History*, 12–76; Sáenz-Badillos, *A History*, 50–75.

⁶ See Hornkohl, “Transitional Biblical Hebrew,” for bibliographic references relevant to the individual TrBH works.

⁷ Hornkohl, “Biblical Hebrew: Periodization”; Hurvitz, “Biblical Hebrew, Late”; Hurvitz, *A Handbook of Late Biblical Hebrew*; Kutscher, *A History*, 38–39, 45, 52, 71–76, 81–85; Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*; Sáenz-Badillos, *A History*, 112–29.

145; the narrative framework of Job (Job 1–2, 42:7–17); and Qohelet. The historical episode of the Exile and Restoration, whose effects were first seen in TrBH, are more pronounced in LBH. LBH shares distinctively late features, absent from or rare in CBH, with such post-biblical Hebrew sources as the DSS (Dead Sea Scrolls), Ben Sira, and Tannaitic Hebrew, as well as with Second Temple Aramaic material.

5.1.4 Periodization and Biblical Criticism

There is no denying the reality of the textual instability, orthographic adjustment, linguistic modification, and literary development to which the various biblical texts have been subject. Despite all this, however, the basic contours of Hebrew's historical strata represented in biblical literature remain discernible: characteristically late features are few and sporadic in the Pentateuch, Former Prophets, and those books associated with the pre-exilic Latter Prophets (with the notable exception of Isaiah 40–66); increase in concentration in texts dealing with the late pre-exilic, exilic, and early post-exilic periods; and occur in striking concentrations in works that date themselves to post-Restoration times. The processes of editing, compilation, leveling, and transmission have not irretrievably obscured the historical evolution of BH. A serious diachronic approach to BH need not contradict text- and literary-critical approaches to the Hebrew Bible—though it may demand reevaluation of certain critical conclusions reached unawares of the linguistic dimension. On the contrary, the methods of lower and higher criticism can be fruitfully combined with diachronic evidence to elucidate biblical cruxes and the processes by which certain biblical books arrived at their final form.

Contrary to the pluriform *textual* situation reflected in the extant witnesses, the *linguistic* picture they present is one of relative stability. In other words, in those domains of the language that can be assessed on the basis of manuscript evidence, the scribes responsible for transmission have largely succeeded in preserving the linguistic profile of the works they set out to copy. Dia-

chronically significant discrepancies between textual witnesses are the exception, rather than the rule. Moreover, where they occur between passages as represented in, say, MT and DSS, it is typically the former that preserves the early feature, the latter the typologically “updated” alternative. Crucially, medieval MT manuscripts, such as the Leningrad and Aleppo Codices, are consistently more linguistically conservative than the more ancient DSS. A similar, though less extreme relationship exists between MT and manuscripts of the Samaritan Pentateuch.

Now, while such general tendencies are not irrelevant in textual argumentation, obviously, individual instances of textual difficulty must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. In some of these, diachronic linguistics and textual criticism prove mutually illuminating.

For example, in ancient Hebrew sources the distribution of theophoric names ending in the abbreviated suffix יה- “-yah,” as opposed to יהו- “yahu,” is principally late. Preference for the short form in apparently early material is best explained as the result of editorial activity, retention of the long form in late texts as conditioned and archaistic. In Ezra 10:41 we read:

MT	עֲזַרְאֵל וְשֵׁלֶמְיָהוּ וְשֵׁמָרְיָהוּ “Azarel and Shelemyahu Shemaryah”
v	<i>Ezrel et Selemau Semeria</i> “Azarel and Shelemyahu Shemaryah”
s	אזרעל ושםריה “and Azarel and Shemaryah”
LXX	Εζερηλ και Σελεμια και Σαμαρια “Azarel and Shelemyah and Shemaryah”

MT is awkward, missing a conjunction between the second and third names in the list. There is no consensus among the Ancient Versions: v matches MT, s omits the second name, LXX has a conjunction before and after. In this case the diachronic evidence is helpful. While the possibility of an archaism should not be rejected out of hand, the expected form in Ezra is the short one – שֵׁלֶמְיָהוּ “Shele-

myah” rather than שְׁלֵמְיָהוּ “Shelemyahu” – conforming not only to the general trend in late sources, but also to the specific situation in Ezra-Nehemiah, where the long ending comes only here in 263 cases. The evidence thus combines to point to a probably underlying וְשִׁמְרִיָּה וְשֵׁלְמִיָּהּ אֲזַרְיֵאל “Azarel and Shelemyah and Shemaryah.”

A similar issue is found in 2 Sam 17:11:

“For I advise: Let all Israel from Dan to Beer Sheba – in number like the sand by the sea! – be mustered to you ...”

MT	וּפְנֵיךָ הַלְכִים בְּקֶרֶב “... and your face going <u>into</u> battle.”
TJ	וְאֵת תְּהִי אֲזִיל בְּרִישָׁנָא “... and you will be going <u>at our</u> head.”
S	אֲנִי אֲזִיל בְּחֶבְלֵי “... and you going <u>in the</u> middle.”
LXX	καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου πορευόμενον ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν “... and your face going <u>in their</u> midst.”
V	<i>et tu eris in medio eorum</i> “... and you will be <u>in their</u> midst.”

Again, MT is syntactically questionable. For their part, the principal Versions, though displaying some variety, unanimously contradict MT. Many critics suspect an underlying text incorporating the preposition קֶרֶב “among.” Critically, the secondary status of MT’s קֶרֶב “battle” is partially corroborated by diachronic evidence. Its *qēṭāl* nominal pattern is characteristic of Aramaic and of late and/or poetic Hebrew sources. Most of its apparent representatives in classical non-poetic material consist of imported technical terms, hardly typical of any phase of Hebrew. Thus, קֶרֶב in MT-Sam seems unlikely from multiple perspectives.

A further example, arguably on the border between textual and literary criticism, involves the placement of the appositional title מֶלֶךְ “king” before or after a proper name. The dominant order in the Bible, outnumbering its counterpart about four to one, is x הַמֶּלֶךְ “King x.” Be that as it may, in comparison to their classical counterparts, post-

classical compositions reveal a significant increase in examples of הַמֶּלֶךְ/הַמְּלִכָּה x “x the king/queen.” In the core late books, excluding cases of x הַמֶּלֶךְ in Chronicles paralleled in Samuel-Kings, the ratio of the classical to the late order is 49:45, as against 105:5 in Samuel, Kings, and Isaiah. Extra-biblical Hebrew and Aramaic sources present a similar picture.

Interestingly, doubt attaches to at least two of the five occurrences of the characteristically late order in classical texts. The words שְׂאוּל הַמֶּלֶךְ “Saul the king” (1 Sam 18:6) have no parallel in LXX and the phrase דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ “David the king” (2 Sam 13:39) is paralleled in LXX by τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως “the spirit of the king,” the latter apparently supported by דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ in 4QSam^a (4Q51). It is by no means certain that these cases are secondary in MT, but from both a philological and literary-textual perspective, it is at least curious that such characteristically late wording occurs precisely in the book of Samuel, whose MT edition is, in comparison with 4QSam^a and LXX, thought to be a product of late reworking.⁸

In a similar vein, there is linguistic evidence that those portions of the book of Jeremiah represented in MT, similar DSS fragments, and most of the Ancient Versions, but missing in LXX and similar DSS material, is of a somewhat later cast than the rest of the book. For instance, this “supplementary material” exhibits a stronger preference than the “short edition” for such late features as theophoric names ending in יָהּ- “-yah” (rather than יָהוּ- “-yahu”) and the spelling נְבוּכַדְנֶצְצַר “Nebuchadnezzar” with *nun* (rather than נְבוּכַדְרֶצְצַר “Nebuchadrezzar” with *resh*).⁹

F.I. Andersen and A.D. Forbes, “Matres Lectionis: Biblical Hebrew,” *EHL* 2:607–11.

⁸ Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization*, §7.7.

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