

The Texts of the Hebrew Bible: Perspectives in the Textual Criticism

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I. Introduction

The latest hitherto fully completed critical edition of the text of the Hebrew Bible is that of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.¹ The critical edition of the BHS is by biblical scholars considered as a summary of the previous text-critical and editorial effort. This edition may be seen as a unity lacking any disruption. Optically each page of the BHS looks perfect: the text, Masora parva (Mp) alongside it, indexes of Masora magna (Mm) below the main text and critical apparatus below Mm indexes. But already the first look at the critical apparatus shows "flaws" and "disconnection", or, said in a different way, many variants in which the text of the Hebrew Bible might also be read. But not only that, further scrutiny and knowledge of the backgrounds of the pre-history of the BHS (history of different Hebrew textual witnesses; some of them handed down into this edition) put other questions regarding the process and method used in critical editing. On the top of it, contemporary and future development of the critical editing of the Hebrew Bible exhibits to us at least fivefold vision of how to prepare a critical edition. This fact only underlines complexity of the work with the texts of the Hebrew Bible.

Let us approach these outlined problems more systematically. In the following considerations we would like to approximate to the problematic of the Hebrew Bible as much as possible purely from the positions of textual evidence leaving non-textual considerations to be only shortly dealt with at the end of this essay.

The first set of questions concerns the very origins of the Hebrew Bible. Is there a traceable *Urtext* that gave to rise to the process of transmission or is such a text not available? Did this *Urtext* correspond with later textual witnesses of the Hebrew Bible? And was there any *Urtext* at all? (See part II.)

The second set concerns possible witnesses of transmission of the texts we have now in the Hebrew Bible. Do we know texts, codices, books, editions of the Hebrew Bible which refer about the transfer of the *Urtext*, if there was any, from the ancient time to the end of twentieth century? Is

1 On DSSB see part IV.

there a traceable path showing a provable one-way process of transmission that brought the *Urtext* uncorrupted to these days? That is, the query how these textual witnesses correspond with the present text of the Hebrew Bible tries to find out to what for certainty can stand behind any assertion about continuity of the transmission of the biblical texts. (Part III.)

The third set, then, takes into account the ways how critical editions of the Hebrew Bible are prepared at present and what these manners might mean for the interpretation of the process of the transmission and of the modern editing of the Hebrew Bible. (Part IV.)

Three sets listed point to the similar direction and examine mainly textual evidence of the Hebrew Bible. One could call their common basis as a *textual-descriptive* one that tries to avoid going behind the materials given. As the following preview will show, such a purely textual-descriptive evidence can be advocated with difficulty and is not easy, if we do not want strictly stay in the field of the textual criticism, to be separated from non-textual realities hidden behind the texts. That is, there are many queries to be posed. Answering them is immensely intricate task that goes beyond the scope of this essay. Therefore, this questioning that necessarily implies, according to our persuasion, also problems connected with biblical interpretation and hermeneutics will be sketched only by several notices at the end of this essay as its necessary supplement.

II. Was there the *Urtext* of the Hebrew Bible?

According to our reading, majority of scholars share at present similar position in regard to the *Urtext*: *The* biblical text or the *first* text is not available.² There is not *the* text that could be considered as a basis and source of texts that followed it. The text-historical evidence presents only textual witnesses which could/could not be brought into connection with this hypothetical *Urtext*.³ The oldest textual witnesses of the presupposed *Urtext* are Qumran scrolls which themselves put the search for the *Urtext* into question. That is, the efforts of E. F. K. Rosemüller (*One Recension Theory*, 1797) and P. de Lagarde (*Archetype Theory*, 1863) failed. The plethora of the texts found in 1-11Q in the Judean Desert undermines confidence in a possible reconstruction of the *Urtext*. As J. A. Sanders puts in: "It is difficult any longer to say that the task of text criticism is to establish the original text, in fact, we now wonder how much sanguinity there

2 S. Talmon, "The Old Testament Text", in: *Cambridge Bible History*, eds. P. R. Ackroyd – C. F. Evans, Cambridge 1970, 163.

3 E. Tov, *Der Text der Hebräischen Bibel*, Stuttgart – Berlin – Köln 1997, 2, 9, 156. M. Saebo, "From Pluriformity to Uniformity: The Emergence of the Masoretic Text", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Sup* (JSOT, Sheffield), 191/1998, 40.

was in targeting such a goal.⁴ Similar point of view was envisioned as early as P. Kahle (1898) who pointed up, despite the fact that did not know Qumran scrolls, to existence of many variants and independent text traditions. Since 1950s the Qumran scrolls are the main evidence for tracing of the origins of the Hebrew Bible. These scrolls found between 1947 and 1956 represent the oldest set of materials available and are dated from the third century BC to the years around 68 AD. Archaeological and palaeographical evidence concerning dating of the scrolls has been followed by C 14 analysis and AMS (accelerator mass spectrometry) which are more or less coherent with dating proposed by the two first means of examination. The AMS analysis from 1990 not only confirms the palaeographical dating but its tests are also in some cases even more conservative.⁵ Thus, for example, the palaeographical date of 4QSam^c is 100-75 BC and that of AMS 192-63 BC. The newest research undertaken six years later only confirms and refines previous dating.⁶

Diversity of the texts found in the Judean Desert has been elaborated in an outstanding way by E. Tov who distinguishes on the basis of orthography, morphology, contextual adaptations and scribal practices five main categories of Qumran texts:

- a. *Texts written in the Qumran practice* (comprise 25 percent of Qumran biblical texts)
- b. *Proto-Masoretic texts* (comprise 40 percent). This category is considered regarding the process of the inception of the Masoretic Text (MT) and of the Hebrew Bible as the most important. It shares decisive consonantal similarities with the texts found in Masada, Wadi Murabbaat and Nahal Hever and with Masoretic codices which were produced thousand years later. Comparison of 1QIs^b (200-100 BC) with the Codex L (1009 AD) underlines this textual convergence.⁷
- c. *Pre-Samaritan texts* (5 percent)
- d. *Texts close to the presumed Hebrew Source of LXX* (5 percent)
- e. *Non-aligned texts* (25 percent).⁸

4 J. A. Sanders, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Biblical Studies", in: *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, eds. M. Fishbane – E. Tov, Winona Lake 1992, 331.

5 J. C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, Michigan 1994, 16-19.

6 See G. Douda, "Dating the Scrolls on the Basis of Radiocarbon Analysis", in: *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, eds. P. W. Flint – J. C. Vander Kam, Leiden 1998, 430-470.

7 E. Tov, *Der Text...*, 24-25 and 90. But Qumran scribal praxis is not the very same as that of the following textual witnesses. Many Qumran texts are characterised by a distinctive orthography that adds many *matres lectiones*. However, these orthographically different texts do scarcely differ in content.

8 E. Tov, *Der Text...*, 89-97.

Tov's thorough and in scholarly circles highly respected study gives very little space to the *Urtext Theory*. Not only that, his description requires re-examination of the *Theory of Three Local Recensions (Families)* introduced by W. F. Albright (1955) and developed by F. M. Cross (1965) as well.⁹ The coexistence of divergent textual forms in Qumran is itself sufficient evidence against these assumptions.¹⁰ Rejection of Cross' theory has already started to be evolved in 1960s and 1970s especially by S. Talmon. He stressed the complicated nature of the finds from Qumran and hinted on their diversity that locates all three branches of the local recensions posited by F. M. Cross in one geographical place.¹¹ Talmon's observations are mainly textual. His own critical analysis has led him to very sober conclusions bespeaking his awareness of the intricate nature of the Qumran scrolls. Talmon's contribution devoids far-reaching theories. There are more questions than answers in his studies.¹²

To sum up this part, even the oldest textual evidence does not positively provide us with the idea of the *Urtext* which might have been considered as a starting point and the first *Vorlage* for the texts of the Hebrew Bible. The Qumran scrolls, nowadays the utmost historical evidence of the biblical materials, do not give us such a notion. On the contrary, these scrolls are witnesses of an immense textual diversity of the last three centuries BC and of the beginning first century AD. Therefore, ideas of hypothetical unifying and of starting point of the *Urtext* have been replaced by the recognition of pluriformity¹³ that allowed cohabitation of very different textual materials. That is, the question concerning the traceable relationship between the *Urtext* and later textual witnesses, including the Hebrew Bible in the present shape, mentioned in the introduction must be

9 See his "The Fixation of the Text of the Hebrew Bible", in: F. M. Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel*, London 1998.

10 Cf. M. Saebø, "From Pluriformity to Uniformity...", 41.

11 Cf. E. Tov, "History and Significance of a Standard Text of the Hebrew Bible", in: *The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, ed. M. Saebø, Göttingen 1996, 54: "(I)n Qumran, located in Palestine, a mixture of texts, said to reflect all three local textual groups, has been found, and this fact contradicts the logic of the theory of local families."

12 See S. Talmon, "The Old Testament Text...", 163, 198-199.

13 On the term pluriformity cf. M. Saebø and especially recently published surveys by A. S. van der Woude whose hypothesis is a new challenge to thing differently about possible conclusions which consider the distinction uniformity and pluriformity in the Palestine in the time before the common era. See his "Fifty Years of Qumran Research", in: *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, eds. P. W. Flint – J. C. Vander Kam, Leiden 1998, 40-43 and also "Pluriformity and Uniformity, Reflections in the Transmission of the Text of the Old Testament", in: J. N. Bremmer – F. G. Martínez, "Sacred History and Sacred Texts in Early Judaism", *CBET* (Kampen) 5/1992 and most recently "Fakten contra Phantasien: Die Bedeutung der Rollen vom Toten Meer für die Bibelwissenschaft und die Kunde des Frühjudentums", in *FS for A. S. van der Woude*, eds. F. G. Martínez – E. Noort, VTSup 73/1998).

answered negatively. What is available is a huge amount of biblical texts from caves close to the Qumran settlement which do not give us any persuasive and positive textual clues to the questions concerning the *Urtext*. These materials have a decisive role for possible transmission of the biblical texts and represent thus constitutive textual basis beyond which there is hardly any evidence traceable. Nevertheless, the existence of the *Urtext* can not be excluded. Not available evidence is principally not non-existent evidence. On the other hand, argument from silence is an inadequate mean of the textual criticism.

III. Process of Continuous Transmission?

a. Masada + Wadi Murabbaat + Nahal Hever: The finds from these three locations do not exhibit a very wide spectrum of biblical texts. Masada (before 73 AD) provides us with remains of the texts of Psalms, Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Ezekiel, Wadi Murabbaat (132-135 AD) with remains of the Pentateuch (written probably on a single scroll), the Twelve Prophets and eleven lines from the book of Isaiah.¹⁴ Nahal Hever (132-135 AD) gives evidence of the bits of the books of Genesis, Numbers and Psalms. The consonantal texts from these three localities share similar features with proto-Masoretic texts from Qumran. As many scholars assert, these texts really correspond with pMT and are predecessors of MT. This argumentation is based on textual consideration of the consonantal text.¹⁵ E. Tov connects these three places and texts which were found there with scribal praxis which had the texts from Qumran as a *Vorlage*. These texts are assigned on the basis of textual comparison to the so called proto-Masoretic text family.¹⁶ According to finds in Masada, Wadi Murabbaat and Nahal Hever it is evident that only one of the scribal categories from Qumran is reflected in these texts (see II/b). However, these texts bear witness not only to a close link with Qumran but they also bear testimony toward an emerging *textus receptus*.¹⁷ This assumption was firstly expressed by R. de Vaux in 1953 who discovered very close consonant similarity between Qumran and Wadi Murabbaat. His contribution persuaded most scholars. In spite of this recognition, there are some sceptics who po-

14 J. M. O'Brien, Wadi Murabbaat (ABD), 863-864. See some of remarks to these finds: (a.) alternative spelling, (b.) presence or absence of vowel letters (25 times), (c.) 18 corrections toward the MT, (d.) similar qere ketib, (e.) The Twelve have the same order as the MT.

15 J. A. Sanders, Qumran Scrolls, 501 and *Studies in the Bible...*, 330. E. Tov, *Der Text...*, 23-24. E. J. Revell, „Masoretic Text...“, 598.

16 E. Tov, "History and Significance...", 63-64.

17 S. Talmon, "The Old Testament Text..." 169.

int to dissimilarities among these texts, and that, for instance, in respect to the texts of the Twelve Prophets found at these two localities.¹⁸

b. Masoretic Text + Codices + Rabbinic Bible: We have no biblical manuscript from the several centuries that followed after the finds in Wadi Murabbaat and Nahal Hever. Textual evidence from this time leans mainly on the ancient translations and on biblical quotations in rabbinic literature. That is, there is a horrible cleft of nearly eight hundred years between the discoveries in Judean Desert and the emergence of the Cairo Codex (C, 896 AD).¹⁹ This codex contains only prophets but is fortunately followed by others that are more complete, namely by the Codex Aleppo (A, 925 AD) and the Codex Petropolitanus (L,²⁰ 1009 AD) which epitomises the very first complete codex of the text of the Hebrew Bible. These codices share according to many scholars very similar features that allow to distinguish them as one stream of transmission and interpretation. They comprise not only the text of the biblical books but they are also characterized by very specific interpretative characters which offer possible interpretative clues. These characters are: (a.) consonant framework, (b.) vocalisation, (c.) para-textual elements, (d.) accentuation and (e.) apparatus of Masorah. The MT of the Hebrew Bible epitomised by these characters reached its full expression in the course of the Middle Ages. By scholars is the MT put in more or less close connection with the preceding textual witnesses from Qumran, Masada, Wadi Murabbaat and Nahal Hever. Thus the MT and its predecessors from Judean Desert provide us with the possible notion of the process of transmission. Precise definition of this process and its arrival to (preliminary) final MT form is given by Tov: "The MT, sometimes called the received text (*textus receptus*), is strictly speaking a medieval representative of an ancient text of the Bible which already at an early stage was accepted as the sole text by a central stream of Judaism. As a result, the slightly different forms of this text were copied and circulated more than other texts. The final form of this text was determined in the Middle Ages, and it is that form which is usually called the Masoretic text, while earlier forms found in the Judean Desert, lacking the later vocalization and accentuation, are named proto-Masoretic."²¹ However, the work of tradents responsible for the MT shape of the Hebrew Bible is a very intricate matter. The beginning of their activity is dated very differently (300-600 AD) and implies many questions that are

18 B. Albrektson, "Reflection on the Emergence of a Standard Text of the Hebrew Bible", *Vetus Testamentum Sup* 29, Leiden 1977, 58.

19 Remarks to Cairo Genizah see Tov, *Der Text...*, 26.

20 Cf. the suggestion of *BHQ*, Introduction, 2: "The Siglum F (for Firkovich) is used for this manuscript since the name of the city where it is housed in now St. Petersburg, and sigla S and P have other uses."

21 E. Tov, "History and Significance...". Cf. also following footnote.

answered on the basis of available codices and non-biblical passages from the Talmudic period. Basically said, the MT is connected with the Tiberian tradition of ben Asher. This tradition had prevailed over others (Babylonian, Palestinian) and constituted the main interpretative stream in Judaism. E. J. Revell describes this process in the following way: "The work of the Masoretes can be said to have been crowned by the production of the Aleppo Codex, to which the vowel and accent signs and Masoretic notes were added by Aharon ben Asher. Of all currently known texts, this was evidently the first copy of the whole Bible which had been produced complete with these details."²² But the process of transmission and interpretation did not stop at this stage. We are now facing another step of this process which leaves the material form of codices and removes itself at the stage of the Hebrew Bible as a book. This shift is not only a material one! The first printed Hebrew Bible was published in 1488. More decisive is the publishing of so called polyglots that give us insight into the different translations of the Hebrew Bible (first polyglot was Complutensum 1514-1517 followed by Antwerp 1569-1572, Paris 1629-1645, London 1654-1657). Another approach represents *Miqra'ot Gedolot* that comprises text editions with commentaries and translations. This *Miqra'ot Gedolot* is called Rabbinic Bible and was published at the press of David Bomberg in Venice by Felix Pratensis (1516-1517) and then by Jacob ben Hayyim ben Adoniyahu (1524-1525) as the Second Rabbinic Bible. This second edition differs from the first one by the addition of the Masorah. The Second Rabbinic Bible became the most decisive basis for all branches of Jewish life and subsequently also for the scholarly world²³ and as such represents the real crown and the end of the effort put in the Masoretic work. In this edition of the Hebrew Bible the process of the *textus receptus* arrived at its very end. This shape of the Hebrew Bible had a decisive influence on the ongoing process of editing.

c. *Subsequent Editions of the Hebrew Bible*: The Second Rabbinic Bible provided basis for other editions. Tov speaks about a hundred "uncritical" editions (J. Buxtorf 1611, J. Athias 1661, D. E. Jablonski 1699, A. Hahn 1831, E. F. C. Rosenmüller 1834...). Why uncritical? As many scholars before him, E. Tov asserts that the Second Rabbinic Bible editi-

22 E. J. Revell, "Masoretic Text...", 594. See. E. Tov, *Der Text...*, 61: "Die Masora entwickelte sich vom 6. bis 10. Jh. Stetig weiter, bis sie die heutige Form hatte. Wie auch bei Vokalisation und der Akzentierung kann man hauptsächlich drei verschiedene Überlieferungssysteme unterscheiden: tiberische, das palästinische, und das babylonische. Die tiberische Masora ist die bekannteste, und sie setzte sich zusammen mit dem tiberischen Vokalisations- und Akzentuierungssystem in allen jüdischen Gemeinden durch." See also J. Barr, *The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible*, Oxford 1989, 5-7.

23 E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Minneapolis, Assen/Maastricht 1992, 78.

on was derived from many different sources. But even more important is the fact that none of these sources have been found. Thus, the Second Rabbinic Bible does not provide us with any certain single source that might be a starting point of a critical editing. Therefore, E. Tov labels all following editions based on the Second Rabbinic Bible as uncritical.

IV. Critical Editing of the Hebrew Bible

Awareness of the necessity of a "critical" text of the Hebrew Bible has led scholars to an assumption that the most appropriate way is to base any new edition of the Hebrew Bible, if it is possible, on one single, complete and at best also the oldest textual source. Nevertheless, the following consideration will exhibit that such an assumption has not necessarily resulted in one critical edition of the Hebrew Bible which might be considered as a consensus among textual critics. Another sign distinguishing the critical edition from the uncritical one is a critical apparatus which enables at least limited comparison of edited text (=codex XY) with texts taken into critical account (= other codices, different translations of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament as LXX, V, S, α' , θ' , σ' etc.). This critical approach, anticipated by the attempt to reconstruct the text of ben Asher undertaken by S. Bauer and F. Delitzsch (1869-1894), has found its expression in several critical editions published, or being just published or prepared, mainly at the end of the twentieth century. Fivefold division mentioned in the introduction will be amplified on in the following paragraph. Since there is not a single version which could provide us with the full scope of the biblical books until the Codex Petropolitanus of the early eleventh century AD, there are many ways how to „produce“ a text of the Hebrew Bible. According to our persuasion based on survey of the most important critical editions, two factors appear to be crucial: (a.) which textual source of the Hebrew Bible is to be chosen as a basis of the critical edition, and (b.) which sources should be used as supplementary in order to complete the editing of the Hebrew Bible as a whole, if this completion is intended. These two factor divide, roughly said, modern critical editions into five main categories:

a. Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia and Biblia Hebraica Quinta: The first critical edition is, in Tov's terms, the third edition of BH(K) (ed. R. Kittel and P. Kahle) which leaves its previous source of the Second Rabbinic Bible and is newly based on L. The revised version of BH(K), so called BHS (ed. W. Rudolph and K. Ellinger), comes from the years 1967-1977 and represents nowadays a standard edition of the Hebrew Bible providing a good essence for the critical work. This edition comprises the text, Mp, Mm index and one critical apparatus (previous editions of BH(K) divided apparatus into three parts: less important remarks, more important re-

marks and after 1951 details from Qumran). The newest edition of the BHS is the fully reorganized *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* which has started to be elaborated in 1992. According to our last information not a single biblical book (except the example given on the basis of Habakkuk) has been published yet.²⁴ BHQ will contain two apparatuses led by four principles developed by fourfold schematization of the text of the Hebrew Bible: [a] Upper apparatus describing Tiberian Masoretic Text as a representative for the fourth period of the development. Lower apparatus {containing witnesses from the second and the third period} earliest attested texts and pMT. [b] Variants in the lower apparatus must be interpretationally significant. Purely orthographic variants will not be included. [c] The methodical starting point of the BHQ is to evaluate text critical cases of previous research. [d] The edition should be capable of use by a broad audience including not only specialists in the text criticism but also translation teams, clergy and students.²⁵

b. The Hebrew University Bible Project: Another attempt epitomises the voluminous work of HUBP that has prepared until 1997 critical edition of two biblical books: The Book of Isaiah (M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, 1995) and The Book of Jeremiah (C. Rabin, S. Talmon and E. Tov, 1997).²⁶ In the HUBP A is used as a source. This edition comprises besides the text four critical apparatuses: [a.] the ancient translation, [b.] Hebrew texts from the Second Temple period, rabbinic literature and texts from the Judean Desert, [c.] selection of medieval codices containing consonantal differences and [d.] selection of medieval codices containing mainly differences in vocalisation and accents.²⁷ Because A is incomplete there is a time bomb hidden in the inevitability of a problem how the lacunas will be filled. How will HUBP manage to issue in A nearly entirely missing books of the Pentateuch remains to us not quite clear. To take as a point of departure codex with considerable portion of the biblical texts missing causes many problems.²⁸ However, trying to avoid these problems is, according to Goshen-Gottstein, "ostrich policy" and short-sighted resolution, as he further ironically states: "As it happens, the Hebrew University Bible starts its edition with the first book of the latter

24 Y. Goldman (ed. + others), *Biblia Hebraica: Editio quinta funditus renovata* (An Introduction, Sample Text and Commentary offered for reaction and response, Stuttgart 1992). Cf. P. W. Flint, "The Contribution of the Dead Sea Biblical Scrolls to Biblical Studies, with Preliminary Editions of 4QPsP and 4QPs^m", *JSOT* 83, 1999 refers about the preparatory edition of Ruth by J. de Waard, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta editione cum apparatu critico novis curis elaborato*, Stuttgart 1998.

25 Y. Goldman, *Biblia Hebraica*..., 2-3.

26 See E. Tov, *Der Text*..., 63-64, 306-312.

27 E. Tov, *Textual Criticism*..., 378.

28 Cf. M. Goshen-Gottstein, "Edition of the Hebrew Bible-Past and Future Edition of the Hebrew Bible-Past and Future", in: *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East*..., 236.

prophets and as far as human foresight goes, **A** will suffice for most of the lifetimes of the present editors.²⁹ He himself offers several possibilities how combine **A** with other sources to fill missing texts: (a) **A** + best available single source, (b) restore **A** with help of few pages of the same codex found since, (c) **A** + codices from the same period, (d) **A** + **L**. These proposals are, according to Goshen-Gottstein, not to be understood as a supply for HUBP but for any new critical edition in future.³⁰

c. *The Oxford Hebrew Bible*: OHB project is, said with P. W. Flint, the first eclectic edition of the Hebrew Bible and epitomizes thus entirely different way of producing the Hebrew Bible. "The philosophy underlying this edition is to present the best or original text of each book. Since the Dead Sea Scrolls comprise our earliest texts of the various biblical books, they will feature extensively in the eclectic editions of the OHB."³¹ In other word, whereas BHQ and HUBP operate with one extensive codex and fill the lacunas with texts from other sources, OHB changes its point of departure and uses the technique of ample mixing. This edition has not been printed yet but an example of the way of textual work demonstrated on Gen 1-11 has been published in 1998.³²

d. *The Qumran Bible*: This edition is also still in press. Its strategy remarkably differs from the three previous. It follows neither extensive source nor it works in an eclectic way like OHB. QB will be deliberately fragmentary edition because of its source which are the finds from Qumran. There will be some books completely missing (Esther, Nehemiah) and some will be presented in a very limited scope (for instance the Chronicles). Nevertheless, QB will let us approach the oldest testimony of the Hebrew Bible one millennium older than **L** or **A**, which represents in fact the very starting point of the textual criticism with its extremely complex problems. The QB is an interesting and new way of the editing and is therefore welcomed.³³

e. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*: This edition, which is in English, is the latest completed form of the critical impression of the Hebrew Bible. This project has started in 1996 and its completion has been presented at the SBL Annual Meeting in November 1999. Also DSSB takes the finds from Qumran as its source. This edition also uses other biblical scrolls found not only in this locality and might be therefore succinctly, and surely a bit unprecisely, described as an enlarged English version of QB.

29 M. Goshen-Gottstein, "Edition of the Hebrew Bible-Past...", 241.

30 M. Goshen-Gottstein, "Edition of the Hebrew Bible-Past...", 241-242.

31 P. W. Flint, "The Contribution of the Dead Sea Biblical Scrolls...", 6.

32 R. S. Hendel (ed.), *The Text of Genesis 1-11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition*, New York: Oxford University Press 1998.

33 Cf. P. W. Flint, "The Contribution of the Dead Sea Biblical Scrolls...", 6: "Readers of the Qumran Bible will thus see at glance whether a given passage is preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and whether the scrolls contain any variant readings for the passage."

To sum up briefly this paragraph, the process of editing of the critical editions of the Hebrew Bible is, despite all scholarly erudition, full of incompleteness and disruptions that are caused by the object of the study. To admit this incompleteness and disruptions as an inherent nature of the object of textual criticism belongs to the seriousness of the scholarly enterprise especially when such a complex matter as the text of the Hebrew Bible and its critical editing are concerned. Also the awareness of the necessity of a "critical" text of the Hebrew Bible that has led scholars to an assumption that the most appropriate way is to base any new edition of the Hebrew Bible, if it is possible, on one single, complete and at best also the oldest textual source, mentioned above, has been exhibit in our brief survey as one of many existing ways of doing textual criticism. Contemporary approaches, which try to deal with the subject of the textual sources of the Hebrew Bible, have manifold possibilities to exert their task.

Some Questions going Beyond the Textual Criticism

The critical editions of HBQ, HUBP, OHB, QB and DSSB, however, mostly still not completed, disclose nowadays the very end of the process of transmission and critical editing of the Hebrew Bible. This process is traceable at least back to the middle of the third century BC. Whether this process is continuous or discontinuous, and whether the usage of the term the Hebrew Bible³⁴ is precise or imprecise is not only the task of textual criticism but also of such scholarly disciplines as biblical studies and biblical hermeneutics. In this sense a newly announced study *Text and Interpretation* (ed. E. Ulrich), which will be the first work dealing with critical editions comprising all biblical materials found in Qumran (QB and DSSB), is welcomed. The survey of the history of the text of the Hebrew Bible sketched above has tried to restrict itself only to textual evidence. In spite of that many non-textual and not purely text critical questions have been willy-nilly implied but intentionally not answered. Let us list just several of them at the end of this essay:

- Textual evidence requires a response from the literary, compositional and intertextual point of view. The texts found in Qumran, Masada, Wadi Murabbaat and also other places did have without dispute functions that more or less directly engraved its nature in the shape of the literature. That is, literary growth of the materials handed down and put together as the Hebrew Bible is to be involved. There is no doubt that the "biblical" books were interwoven in a larger context which is neither re-

34 See J. Maier, "Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation in the Qumran Literature" in: *The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, ed. M. Saebø, Göttingen 1996, 108-111. The author strongly criticises usage of terms such as Scripture and Bible in the context with Qumran scrolls, where, according to his point of view, such labels are inappropriate.

stricted to verse, chapter or book nor to a single biblical books. The importance of an internal biblical relations and that of inner-biblical exegesis as stressed by contribution of M. Fishbane³⁵ are to be observed. In other word, the living process of tradition (*traditio – traditum*) commencing at the very early stages of the Hebrew Bible is of an importance that must not be overlooked. There are also texts not comprised in the canon of the Hebrew Bible which immensely contribute, despite their canonical "externality", to the understanding of the process of the growth and transmission. Therefore, taking into account larger literary horizon and scope of the ancient literature than that of the Hebrew Bible is to be accentuated. That is, also the announced study *Text and Interpretation* will be very helpful.

- Textual evidence requires sociological and historical response that using its specific scholarly tools strives to find reasons for inceptions of texts of the Hebrew Bible.
- Textual evidence requires a religious-phenomenological response which could help us to understand the texts in their presupposed, surely intensively hypothetical, and, if provable, than going mainly back just primarily to the biblical texts, Setting in Life. This response will take into consideration the way the biblical texts reacted on and vied with their cultural and religious geographically more or less adjacent counterparts.

Texty Hebrejské bible. Perspektivy textové kritiky

Článek se snaží uvést základní informace o současném, ale i do budoucna plánovaném vydávání kritických edic Hebrejské bible. Předtím si ale klade otázky, které s editací neodmyslitelně souvisejí: (a.) Máme k dispozici původní text (*Urtext*) Hebrejské bible, který se stal prokazatelnou předlohou (*Vorlage*) jejich dalších textových svědectví? (b.) Jak lze charakterizovat proces transmise biblických materiálů? Je možné hovořit o kontinuálním pohybu nebo jsou dějiny textových svědectví spíše plně diskontinuit a přerývů? Odpovědi na obě otázky, které se řídí textovou evidencí zejména Kumránských spisů, ale i nálezů z Masady, Wadi Murabbaat a Nahal Hever, vyznívají negativně, s tím, že zodpovězení druhé otázky se výrazně odvíjí od definice pojmu kontinuity. Pět chystaných a zčásti již publikovaných kritických edic Hebrejské bible (HBQ, HUBP, OHB, QB a DSSB) plně ukazuje složitost, ale i napínavost textové kritické práce.

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35 M. Fishbane, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis" (in: *The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, ed. M. Saebo, Göttingen 1996).