

RUSSEL R. FULLER – ARMIN LANGE (edd.), *Textual History of the Bible. A Companion to Textual Criticism. 3A. The History of Research of Textual Criticism*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2023, pp. 604, € 318, ISBN 978-90-04-42278-0.

The present work belongs to the series *Textual History of the Bible* (THB), a broad project comprising three volumes, ten books in total. There is also an accompanying series of Supplements to THB, with multiple volumes already published. The THB series constitutes a monument of OT textual criticism, gathering an impressive amount of information and offering an in-depth introduction to the current state of the discipline. One of the merits of the chief editors of the project has been their engaging of an awe-inspiring line-up of scholars to write the articles, some of the best in the field. “Bible” in the title of the series is to be understood as the collection forming the Hebrew Bible, although works considered deuterocanonical literature by at least one of the Christian Churches are treated among the books covered in THB 2.

Edited by Russel Fuller and Armin Lange, THB 3A is devoted to the history of research into OT textual criticism. All the articles are written in English. After the introductory material (preface, a brief introduction by the editors of the volume, the list of authors, a list of abbreviations and the collective bibliography), the book is divided into articles discussing, first, the Hebrew and Greek texts, and, then, the ancient versions in Latin, Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Old Church Slavonic, Gothic and Christian Palestinian Aramaic. The work concludes with an article dedicated to some of the polemics along the history of OT textual criticism.

The first article, “Hebrew and Greek texts in Judaism and Christianity”, is subdivided with the parts authored by many scholars: Armin Lange, Viktor Golinetz, Russel Fuller, Michael Graves, Pablo Torijano Morales and Andrés Piquer Otero. It is by far the longest in the book (pp. 11-230). This is understandable since it discusses research on the Hebrew texts themselves and, in the same article, on the Septuagint and other Greek versions. The rationale for this choice is that the history of Septuagint scholarship is too entangled with research on the Hebrew text to be treated separately. This is a legitimate choice but probably not a mandatory one: in other books of the THB series previously published, the LXX has been discussed in separate sections. In any case, this choice underscores the relevance of the LXX to textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. The authors show how the text critical work of Jewish scholars in antiquity is perceived in corrections annotated in the manuscripts and in the preparation of recensional texts in Hebrew or Greek. Rabbinic literature also refers to variant readings, and the *ketiv-qere* system may sometimes reflect variants. The concern of early Jewish scholars was not textual criticism as practised today but the preservation of the proto-MT. Some early scholars responsible for proofreading and textual maintenance were called Soferim by

Rabbinic sources. As for Christian authors, Jerome and Origen are counted among early text critics of the Hebrew or Greek texts. The work of the Masoretes in medieval times is discussed at length. Among Christians, in the Middle Ages, the Hebrew text was of only indirect interest to scholars seeking the reconstruction of Jerome's Latin text (e.g. Alcuin of York, 735-809 CE). With the printing process with movable types, modern times saw an increase in research and in publications of the Hebrew text such as the editions of the Rabbinic Bible and the Polyglots, the latter including also the LXX. The contributions of pioneers such as Louis Cappel and others are noted, and the discovery of the Samaritan Pentateuch by Western scholarship is also underscored. The collections of Hebrew variants by Kennicott and de Rossi showed that the Hebrew manuscripts extant at that time go back to the same type of text. This fact, in turn, highlighted the importance of the ancient versions for textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. The field developed thanks to the discovery and/or publication in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries of new Greek witnesses (e.g. Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Sinaiticus), but also new Hebrew manuscripts, including the Firkovitch collections, the Cairo Geniza manuscripts, the Aleppo Codex and so on. Theories about the history of the text from distinguished scholars like Geiger and de Lagarde are explained. However, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provoked a wave of studies leading to new theories on textual transmission, new projects (e.g. HOTTP) and fresh editions. The research on the *kaige* and Lucianic texts and the relevance of the LXX for textual criticism is covered. The article also describes the various editions of the Hebrew text and the Septuagint.

The second article presents the history of research on the Latin texts (pp. 231-291). Here, too, the organization of the volume differs from THB 1A where translations made from the Hebrew, "primary translations", were discussed first, and "secondary translations", like the daughter versions of the LXX, were presented afterwards. Thus, in THB 1A, the treatments of the Vulgate and the OL are given in separate sections whereas, in 3A, they are studied together. Michael Graves's presentation of the Latin texts is one of the highlights of the volume. After discussing Jerome's work as a translator, Graves shows how the Church Father also acted as text critic. The presentation continues with the engagement with text-critical problems through medieval times, such as the annotations in the margins of Theodulphian manuscripts of the 9<sup>th</sup> century or the works of Pseudo-Jerome, Andrew of St. Victor and Nicholas of Lyra. As for modern times, the presentation focuses more on the editions of the Vulgate and OL published in the period.

The third article concerns the Aramaic texts (pp. 292-335). According to Garvin McDowell, previous surveys of the history of research into the Targumim focused on the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. McDowell begins with the Second Temple period, when we have "texts but no context", and then moves on to the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods when "we have only context" (p. 296). The discussion continues with medieval times, with prominent figures like Rashi. In the early modern period, the Targumim were more disseminated among Christians also thanks to the invention of the printing press and their inclusion in

Polyglot Bibles. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by three important discoveries: the Cairo Genizah manuscripts (1896), the DSS (1947) and the Targum Neofiti in the Vatican library (1949). McDowell presents the topics that attracted the attention of scholarship most in the last century. The list concludes with discussion of the value of the Targumim for textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, ending with the gloomy note on how contemporary text critics consider them little value for academic enterprise: the reference of the Targumim is almost always MT, deviating from it purely for religious reasons; they reflect early Jewish exegesis more often than different *Vorlagen*. Therefore, in a period with a larger quantity of material, interest in these translations inevitably diminished.

The next article presents the Syriac texts (pp. 336-388): the Peshitta, the Syro-Hexapla, the translation of Jacob of Edessa and the Philoxenian. There is not much about the history of research in pre-modern times. There is a longer description of the Peshitta, its printed editions and the work of the Peshitta Institute. The scholarly discussions concerning the Peshitta of each biblical book (including deuterocanonical literature) are also conveniently presented. For example, the Peshitta is relevant for the study of the deuterocanonical material in Daniel, 1-2 Maccabees, Ben Sira and so on. Jerome Lund then discusses the remaining Syriac versions more briefly.

The history of research on the Arabic texts is surveyed in the fifth article (pp. 389-424). According to Miriam Hjälms, these translations did not receive much scholarly attention in the past. The history of research proceeds through the medieval, early modern, late modern and contemporary periods in succession. The distinct types of Jewish and Christian Arabic translations are mentioned in the presentation, just as their editions and their presence in the Polyglots. For Hjälms, the study of the Arabic Bible is still in its infancy. There are, however, new projects which are promising for the development of the field.

The sixth article is dedicated to the Coptic texts (pp. 425-475). Research on the Coptic Bible began in the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries among Arabic-speaking Christian scholars. Frank Feder helpfully situates the developments in research into the Coptic texts within larger cultural and historical contexts. He also describes the discovery of manuscripts (e.g. in the White Monastery, and the Bodmer Papyri), the production of editions and the contacts with Septuagint research. More recent international projects are also mentioned, such as the cooperation that produced the *Coptic Encyclopedia*, online databases like the CMCL and the Coptic Old Testament Project.

In the following article, co-authored by Steve Delamarter, Ralph Lee and Jeremy Brown, the research on the Ethiopic texts is presented (pp. 476-497). Ours is a propitious time for the development of studies on the Ethiopic texts, thanks, not least, to the availability of digital images of the manuscripts. Historically, the Ethiopic OT has been analysed mostly on account of its relationship with the LXX, not much for its own value. The editions of these translations are also listed in the article. According to the authors, the number of variants between manuscripts diminishes from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: a process of standardization was in play. The article contains an appendix with a list of Ethiopic manuscripts cited in THB.

In the eighth article, Claude Cox covers the Armenian texts (pp. 498-512). The history of research into the Armenian version relates to the development of textual criticism in general (also of NT textual criticism) and was partly determined by the Armenian text's relationship with the LXX, the Lucianic text or the Peshitta. This article too contains an appendix with a list of the Armenian manuscripts.

Anna Kharanauli discusses research on the Georgian texts in the ninth article (pp. 513-550). Research on these texts began already in medieval times. The Hebrew text was not relevant in the practice of the Georgian Church whereas the Greek had more importance. The diversity between manuscripts required a work of standardization of the text, as shown in the editorial work behind the Oshki Bible. Kharanauli presents the editions, printed or electronic, and the current challenges for research into the Georgian texts, such as the existence of multiple translations for some biblical books. As in the previous articles, a list of Georgian manuscripts is given in an appendix.

The last, and brief, article about the versions discusses the Old Church Slavonic texts (pp. 551-557). According to Alessandro Maria Bruni, the study of these translations still lacks a more grounded text-critical methodology, and the approach of the article is more prospective than retrospective. Some Slavists tend to accept the Methodian translation as the original text of the Church Slavonic Bible, but a thorough and coherent study of all the evidence is still wanting.

The history of research into the Gothic and Christian Palestine Aramaic texts is cross-referenced to the discussions in previous THB volumes.

The last article of the book is dedicated to the polemics accompanying the history of research (pp. 558-604), a break from the structure of the rest of the book, which is organized according to the various textual witnesses. This article is divided into three parts. The first, longer one discusses Antisemitism, and slander against the Jews: historically, they have been accused by Christians or Muslims of forging the biblical text. Armin Lange sees the influence of these ideas even in contemporary authors such as Heinz-Josef Fabry who maintained that the Jewish canon was defined as result of anti-Christian bias. While a critical assessment of Fabry's arguments is valid, associating his ideas with Antisemitic bias, especially in such a reference work as THB, strikes this reviewer as excessive and inappropriate. Lange reminds us that this slander is still found among Christian fundamentalists. The second part of the article discusses the bias against Samaritans and Christians. According to Günther Sternberger, there are no examples of the Rabbis accusing Christians of changing the biblical text, and only one accusation of the sort against the Samaritans. In Rabbinic literature, more often, it is remarked that the Samaritans interpret the Scripture incorrectly. The last part, written by Russell E. Fuller and Michael Graves, is devoted to the Anti-Protestant and Anti-Catholic polemics, which focused on topics like the canon or the antiquity of the vowel points.

The high quality of the editing of THB 3A is patent, and this reviewer found only a handful of typos. I do not know the languages of all the versions treated in the book but appreciated the scholarship on those texts and the rich-

ness of the information offered to the reader. Another aspect to be celebrated in the work is the extensive and pertinent scientific literature cited alongside the articles and in the bibliographical lists. The articles are dense and more suited to readers with some previous exposure to OT textual criticism than to the complete beginner. Some of the articles touch on NT textual criticism as well, for the histories of research into both testaments are entangled in the case of some of the versions, like the Syriac or the Coptic texts.

It is to be expected that a work devoted to the history of research into the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible will contain repetitions of material from the book that discusses the history of the text in itself. In this case, it is unsurprising that THB 3A partly overlaps with THB 1A, which contains the overview articles on the various textual witnesses. The repetition is unavoidable to some degree, but it felt unnecessary and excessive for some articles (e.g. Hebrew and Greek texts). If all articles in THB 3A had a summary presentation of the history of the text, the book could be used as a stand-alone volume. However, in some articles, such as the one about the Ethiopic texts, the authors focus more on the history of research proper, even making cross-references to THB 1A in order to avoid repetition (e.g. the article on the Armenian texts). The uneven approach in this regard makes THB 3A bulkier than necessary though, at the same time, not independent from THB 1A.

THB 3A is presented by its editors as the first complete survey of the history of research into the text of the OT for all its important versions. It is true that previous surveys have not encompassed all the versions treated in this work, although, for this subject, D. Barthélémy's study in French in *CTAT (Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament, vol. I: Josué, Juges, Ruth, Samuel, Rois, Chroniques, Esdras, Néhémie, Esther, 5 voll., Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg-Göttingen 1982, \*1-63*; later translated into English: *Studies in the Text of the Old Testament. An introduction to the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project [Textual criticism and the translator 3], Winona Lake [IN] 2012*) and, in Italian, Chiesa's *Filologia storica della Bibbia ebraica* ([Studi biblici 125, 135], 2 voll., Paideia, Brescia 2000-2002) deserve an honourable mention. Otherwise, the history of text critical research could be included in chapters distributed in volumes dealing with the history of biblical interpretation in general, such as the series *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*. Therefore, by its range and depth, THB 3A is to be celebrated as a great accomplishment.

The book briefly advances notions concerning the goals and method of the discipline (pp. 9, 131, 229). It is maintained that a paradigm shift in the understanding of OT textual criticism has occurred, and text critics are now more concerned with textual history as a whole than with establishing the oldest attainable text. In this scenario, the versions are considered in their own right. Such themes were briefly discussed in THB 1A and, it seems, will have a further book in this series dedicated to them (the forthcoming THB 3C). I am looking forward to a deep and more nuanced epistemological discussion of the discipline as programmed for this series.

This work offers many excellent insights into the history of research on OT textual criticism. It is both comprehensive in its range and profound in the

treatment of the subject. The book is strongly recommended to all those interested in biblical textual criticism. Undoubtedly, THB will become a mandatory reference work for all OT scholars engaged with textual matters.

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RUTH EBACH, *Trügende Prophetenworte. Zum Umgang mit falscher und unerfüllter Prophetie im Alten Testament im Kontext altorientalischer und antiker Divination* (FAT 165), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2023, pp. 396, € 164, ISBN 978-3-16-161177-3.

La riconoscibilità della parola nella sua origine divina e, di conseguenza, la sua corretta ed autorevole interpretazione sono fra le questioni centrali che interessano la profezia biblica. In questo quadro si inserisce anche il tema più specifico degli annunci considerati «incompiuti», la cui trattazione risulta necessaria, per una comprensione più complessiva del fenomeno profetico nelle sue articolazioni. Infatti, fra i criteri che la tradizione biblica – in part. di matrice deuteronomista – ha elaborato per valutare l'affidabilità di un annuncio profetico, spicca quello del compimento; ma spesso riconoscere o smentire la realizzazione di una parola profetica nella storia è meno scontato di quanto possa sembrare. Lo studio di R. Ebach, che si concentra in modo specifico sul «non compimento» delle parole dei profeti, non va a toccare solo la cosiddetta «falsa profezia», perché nel canone sono conservati diversi pronunciamenti profetici, confessati dalla tradizione come ispirati e canonici, che, tuttavia, nel concreto della storia non paiono aver conosciuto una puntuale realizzazione.

Questa ricca monografia è focalizzata sulla modalità con cui il pensiero biblico si rapporta a tali profezie «incompiute», con un occhio di riguardo per la corrente deuteronomista, che su questo fronte ha maturato una specifica sensibilità. Sotto il profilo della metodologia adottata sono tre le sottolineature meritevoli di menzione. In primo luogo, la ricerca di Ebach appropria la profezia biblica come un fenomeno profondamento inserito nel quadro più ampio della divinazione dell'antico Vicino Oriente, pur con tutte le sue indubbe specificità. In secondo luogo, lo studio punta a soppesare la concreta applicazione dei criteri valutativi della profezia all'interno della narrazione biblica; in modo particolare, nella storiografia deuteronomista, che a più riprese collega in maniera intenzionale l'emissione di parole profetiche al compiersi di puntuali eventi storici. In terzo ed ultimo luogo, come in ogni matura indagine sulla profezia, anche in questo caso si tiene conto dell'indubbia variazione con cui questo fenomeno è stato vissuto e pensato dalla società israelita nel corso dei secoli.