

FOREWORD TO THE HEBREW EDITION

The central aim of this book is to understand the process of editing in the book of Judges. An examination of this issue might shed light upon the editing of other books in the Bible as well. The work is based on a doctoral dissertation written between the years 1978-1984 under the supervision of Prof. Meir Sternberg. The main innovation in this revised version lies in the focusing on the issue of editing. In the earlier version, I attempted to elucidate the importance of examining biblical texts, both on the basis of those criteria by which one examines any text, and as a text with a special history of transmission. I thus emphasized the importance of the tools developed by the study of literature and of evaluating their contribution to the understanding of the biblical text and its presentation as a text meeting rhetorical and aesthetic criteria. Already at the earlier stage, one of my points of departure was the understanding of the biblical text as having been repeatedly edited over the course of generations; this time, however, this viewpoint became primary. My emphasis is therefore upon an understanding the methods and goals of the editing, as expressed in various biblical books and, particularly, in the book of Judges.

In the first chapter I present those methods of editing which became evident to me from study of various parts of the biblical literature. In the second chapter I suggest certain editorial tendencies of the book of Judges. This suggestion is on the order of a hypothesis, which is then tested in light of the materials of which the book is composed. The third to sixth chapters examine the various sections of Judges by order of their appearance, from the exposition to its ending, in light of the hypothetical editorial tendencies, as well as the degree of their suitability and contribution to these tendencies. The seventh chapter deals with the specific question as to who were responsible for the decisive stage of the book's editing, and when they were active. This issue is examined in light of the principal question—namely, at what stage did the recognition arise in ancient Israel that past events needed to be documented within the framework of a systematic historiography, and that the events' significance needed to be transmitted to succeeding generations.

As mentioned, I was guided in the preparation of the original work by Prof. Meir Sternberg. The publication of this revised version provides me with an additional opportunity to thank him for his

unflagging efforts in teaching, guidance and advice, for his being such an attentive listener, and also for being a friend and colleague.

To my teachers and colleagues in the Departments of Bible in the Hebrew University and in Tel-Aviv University, my praises and thanks for their efforts and support throughout my path. A special place is due to the late Prof. Jacob Licht, who encouraged me to seek unfamiliar paths, where I discovered a source of living waters.