

PREFACE

This volume presents the reader with a much revised and updated version of my Hebrew book, ביקורת נוסח המקרא – פרקי מבוא, published in 1989 by Mosad Bialik, Jerusalem.

The revision and updating turned out to be much more pervasive than was originally planned. Almost every paragraph was revised, including the adding, omitting, or changing of examples. Further insights were introduced and some views were changed. The present formulation of the *Urtext*, for example, is more refined. Special attention was paid to the exegetical aspects of the textual transmission which were treated too briefly in the Hebrew edition (pp. 262-275 in the present edition). Chapter 6C (preferable readings) is new, and in chapter 4 the section "Additions to the body of the text" (pp. 275-285) is almost completely new. Chapter 7, dealing with textual and literary criticism, has been expanded and refined. From the outset literary issues are so far removed from the topics usually treated by textual critics that the relevance of textual data to literary criticism would seem to be remote. Chapter 7, however, demonstrates that this is not the case. The delicate relation between the problems of the original shape of the biblical text, discussed in chapter 3B and chapter 7, has been defined better. Finally, with the publication of many new texts from the Judean Desert, and with new insights on previously published texts, the description and analysis in this edition are even more indebted to the discoveries from the Judean Desert than the Hebrew edition.

In the previous edition several examples have been presented as part of the running text of the discussion. Now almost all of them are presented in a graphically clear fashion. The differences between the readings are graphically highlighted by the use of bold characters and italics.

Most of the examples are translated into English, and the very translation has helped me to better understand the examples themselves. As for the translation itself, while I am responsible for the English translations of the biblical verses, most of them follow the lead of the NJPST (see p. xxxi). The NRSV (see p. xxxii) has guided my translations as a second choice. The NJPST is preferable for our purpose as it follows **m** without exception and its exegesis is reliable. It is one of the few translations which breaks away from the chain of translations into modern languages, most of which influence each other; the NJPST

reflects thorough and fresh thinking about the meaning of words in their contexts. Our own translations deviate from time to time from existing ones when the literal translation is necessary in order to highlight a certain textual variation.

Textual criticism is a dynamic area, and many views change with new studies carried out and with the discovery of new texts. Therefore some data and views expressed in this book may need to be updated or corrected in the years to come. Furthermore, the book may even contain an occasional error. The stages of editorial and textual transmission, even of a book devoted to textual criticism, are not flawless.

The English version of this book has benefited from the remarks by several colleagues. I am grateful to Professors A. van der Kooij of Leiden University and M. Vervenne of the University of Leuven for their critical observations on the complete manuscript. Prof. Y. Maori of Haifa University made many helpful remarks on chapter 2. Prof. I. Yeivin of the Hebrew University read the first section of chapter 2. Prof. M. Haran of the Hebrew University and Dr. J. Biemans, curator of manuscripts of the University Library of Amsterdam, remarked on the first fifteen pages of chapter 4. Prof. J. W. van Henten of the University of Utrecht and Dr. F. Polak of the University of Tel Aviv sent me many helpful remarks on chapters 3 and 4 respectively. Prof. L. Schiffman of NYU and Dr. M. Zippor of Bar-Ilan University shared with me some criticisms of the Hebrew book which I was able to incorporate in the present version. To all these scholars I express my sincere gratitude.

I am also grateful to several graduate students at the Hebrew University who helped me in various ways. Ms. Nehamah Leiter made many valuable remarks on matters of content and style in most of the chapters. At an earlier stage Ms. Ruth Henderson stylized sections translated by myself and translated other sections. Mr. Chang Shih-hsien and my son Amitai checked the biblical references, Mr. C. Hutt verified the bibliographical references, Mr. T. van der Louw checked several cross-references, and Mr. G. Hartman stylized several chapters and checked other references. Mr. Hartman and Ms. Miriam Berg helped me in compiling the indexes.

Mr. O. Joffe, Ms. Ronit Shamgar, Ms. Sandra Rovin, and Mr. G. Marquis assisted me very ably with all questions relating to the computer files and the preparation of the camera-ready manuscript.

My son Ariel typed in many of the corrections and he also manipulated some of the computer files.

A special word of thanks is extended to Fortress Press, which has accompanied my work on this edition for the past two years. Mr.

Marshall Johnson, Th.D. was a source of constant encouragement and he guided the work from the first stage of my contact with the press onwards. The copy editor of the press, Ms. Lenore Franzen, carefully read the manuscript and found many an inconsistency.

The first stage of the translation was prepared during my research stay at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1989-90. At the end of that year I was in possession of a rough draft of the book. At that point I thought that the book was more or less ready. However, as remarked above, the material was extensively rewritten in the next year, during my research stay in 1990-1991 at NIAS, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in Wassenaar. The various facilities provided by NIAS enabled me to complete the manuscript of the book. To both of these fine institutions I would like to express my gratitude.

In the course of my sabbatical year in Holland in 1990-91, I gave many lectures at universities and learned societies in Holland, England, and Germany on sections of this book. Many of the revisions carried out derived from insights gained in the course of preparations for these lectures, response to them, and in some cases my own insights jotted down while lecturing.

This book is dedicated to Elisabeth Koekoek-Toff and Juda Koekoek, who raised me with much love and affection.

Jerusalem, Pesach 5752, April 1992.