

PREFACE TO THE SECOND REVISED EDITION

After almost a decade of continuing research on the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible and its versions by others and myself, a revised edition of the present textbook became mandatory. The urgency of this revision became apparent not only because of the new publications of biblical texts from the Judean Desert, all of which have now been released, but also because in some areas I changed my views in light of these new publications, the research of others, and clearer insights gained. Larger revisions are visible in pp. 97–100 (Pre-Samaritan Texts), 100–117 (The Biblical Texts Found in Qumran), 171–172, 177–181 (The Original Shape of the Biblical Text [change in my position]), and 201–219 (The Copying of the Biblical Text). Two sections were added on pp. 345–346: A Different Recension of Joshua Reflected in 4QJosh^a, and Rearranged and Shorter Texts (?).

Many small details in the wording and bibliography have been changed or added in this edition, especially in the wake of recent studies and new details which have become known through the texts from the Judean Desert. The bibliographical abbreviations on pp. xxix–xxxiv have been updated and expanded. Indexes 1 and 2 have been changed accordingly.

Concrete suggestions by scores of reviewers have been taken into consideration (thanks are due especially to the suggestions by N. Stratham in many small details). It should be admitted, however, that this second revised edition was limited by the boundaries of the individual camera-ready pages which were submitted to the publisher. Had we not been bound by these technical limitations, many additional small changes would have been inserted. These small changes have found their way into the German (trans. H.-J. Fabry; Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln: Kohlhammer, 1997) and Russian (trans. C. Burmistrov and G. Jastrebov; Moscow, St. Andrews Theological Seminary, 2001) editions of this handbook, although in other, often more important, details (changes made in 1998–2000) the present version is more up-to-date.

Thanks are due to Fortress Press of Minneapolis for their fine work on the initial edition and their consent to publish a revised version and to the Van Gorcum publishing company of Assen/Maastricht for their careful work in the production of this revised edition and their constant encouragement. I am especially grateful to Mr. T. Joppe, and at an earlier stage to Mr. A. Pilot, of Van Gorcum who piloted this work through the press.

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