Philology and Textual Criticism

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Philology and Textual Criticism

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Abbreviations

ATD	Altes Testament Deutsch
Barb	Barberini text of Habakkuk 3 (the BHQ siglum)
BCE	Before the Common Era
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHK	R. Kittel, Biblia Hebraica
BHK³	R. Kittel and P. Kahle, Biblia Hebraica, 3rd edition (1937)
BHQ	Biblia Hebraica Quinta
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BJ	Bible de Jérusalem
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CTAT	Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
ELO	*Elementa Linguarum Orientis*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
G	Old Greek / Septuagint (the BHQ siglum)
G^B	Septuagint *Codex Vaticanus* and typologically related manuscripts
G^L	Lucianic manuscripts of the Septuagint
HALANT	*Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament,* 3rd edition
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
Hie^{hebr}	A Hebrew text reported in Jerome (the BHQ siglum)
HOTTP	Hebrew Old Testament Text Project
HSS	*Harvard Semitic Studies*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
indet	Indeterminate (i. e., the testimony of the witness cannot be assigned)
InfAbs	Infinitive Absolute
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JB	Jerusalem Bible
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JSOT.Supp	Journal of the Studies of the Old Testament. Supplements
JSS.Supp	Journal of Semitic Studies. Supplements
KBL	Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*

KJV	King James Version
LD	Lectio Divina
LHB/OT	Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament
LXX	Septuagint
m	Masculine
M	Masoretic Text (the BHQ siglum)
M^{ket}	*kətîb* (the BHQ siglum)
Mm	*Masora magna*
M^{qere}	*qərê^{ʾ}* (the BHQ siglum)
ms	Manuscript
mss	Manuscripts
MT	Masoretic Text
NAB	New American Bible
NBS	Nouvelle Bible Segond
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
O	Hexaplaric Text-type of the Septuagint
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OLA	*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*
OTE	Old Testament Essays
Part	Participle
pass	Passive
PL	Patrologia Latina
pl	Plural
prep	Preposition
ptc	Participle
RevQ	*Revue de Qumran*
S	Syriac (i. e., the Peshitta; the BHQ siglum)
SCSS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
sfx	Suffix
sg	Singular
Smr	Samaritan Pentateuch (the BHQ siglum)
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
ST	Samaritan Targum
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
subj	Subject
T	Targum (the BHQ siglum)
T-N	Targum Neofiti
T-O	Targum Onqelos
T-PsJ	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
TB	Babylonian Talmud
TCT	Text Criticism and the Translator
TOB	Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible
V	Vulgate (the BHQ siglum)
vrss	versions
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VT.Supp	Vetus Testamentum. Supplements
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Introduction

The Hebrew Bible is written in an ancient language that is otherwise almost completely unattested, and it has come down to us through a very long and complicated history of textual transmission. As a result, many words and phrases are obscure: the meaning of rare words or expressions may have been forgotten early on, and many passages would appear to have suffered textual corruption (as is indeed confirmed when we compare the received Hebrew text to other ancient witnesses). It is not always easy to say which of the two factors – the obsoleteness of the language or the deterioration of the text – cause the obscurity. More often than not, both may come into play.

Textual transmission is a hermeneutical process. To scribes, the text they were copying was not a mere sequence of graphemes to imitate as well as they could, but a meaningful whole handed down by tradition. While reproducing the text in a new manuscript, they would at the same time be aware they were transmitting the word of God, revealed to their ancestors long ago, to their contemporaries. This attitude created a strong tendency among scribes to alter the text in places where its meaning was not clear to them. Hebrew philology and textual criticism should always be practiced in combination, completing one another and challenging one another.

In his book, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (1968), James Barr underscored the interconnectedness of Semitic philology and textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. His work was at once a warning against certain abuses and a road map for best practice in the two fields. Since the days of Barr, textual criticism has made great strides, notably thanks to the publication and exploitation of the Qumran Biblical texts. Hebrew Philology too has continued to develop, and its fruits have been collected in a series of new dictionaries (particularly the *Sheffield Hebrew Dictionary* and the eighteenth edition of Gesenius's *Handwörterbuch*). At the same time, the connection between these two fields of research has become less and less self-evident. In the orbit of biblical studies, they are practiced by different guilds of scholars. Because they tend to focus upon the same items in the biblical text, philology and textual criticism are at times perceived as competing approaches. An exegetical problem is solved either by finding a different meaning for the attested Hebrew, or by adopting a variant reading. Philologists tut-tut textual critics for venturing to emend a received Hebrew text they manifestly have not fully understood, while textual critics wonder at philologists' desperate eagerness to make sense of passages that are obviously corrupt.

An international meeting held in Fribourg, Switzerland, on 10 and 11 October 2013 sought at once to document the progress in the two fields and to bring some of their foremost practitioners into dialogue with one another. The colloquium on *Philology and Textual Criticism* had the objective to put the connection between the two approaches on the agenda one again. Various questions were discussed. How can philological study guide the textual critic? And how does textual criticism come to the aid of the philologist? Are philology and textual criticism necessarily linked, or are the connections between them merely accidental? Can philology justify conjectural emendations, and if so, on what conditions? Do philological hypotheses have a place in a text-critical apparatus or commentary? The contributors discussed theoretical questions and analysed case studies illustrating the principles at issue.

In "The Intersection of Philology and Textual Criticism in *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*: Background, Theory, and Practice," Richard Weis explores the relation between philology and textual criticism in the principles and practice of the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ). Discussing a number of issues broached by Barr, he eventually homes in on the question of conjectural emendations. While these were once regarded as a legitimate component of textual criticism – and are still so regarded by some – BHQ tends to exclude them as belonging not to textual criticism but to other branches of historical criticism. Nevertheless, they may be included in the textual commentary, and in a few cases where there is circumstantial evidence they find their way into the apparatus as well. The discussion is illustrated with well-chosen examples from various books, and gives real insight into the practice of BHQ editors.

Abraham Tal demonstrates his extensive expertise in the Samaritan Pentateuch in "Some Reflections on the Textual Traditions of the Samaritan Pentateuch." After some reflections on textual "tradition" or *masorah/masoret*, he shows by the help of examples that the Samaritan Pentateuch is not as unified as is often thought. The older state of the text, which is often independently reflected in the MT, was known to the Samaritans, but proved problematic for various reasons. Variant readings, often incorporating a degree of interpretation, were generated and disseminated. The resulting textual variety can sometimes be retrieved by comparing manuscripts of the Samaritan Pentateuch. In other instances, the Samaritan Targums, ancient opinions of Samaritan sages or quotations in Samaritan writings need to be exploited to see how the text evolved within the Samaritan tradition.

Philological treatments of biblical Hebrew are often based on distant members of the Semitic family such as Akkadian and Arabic, both of them languages with an abundant attestation. But Hebrew itself, although attested less richly, has some resources that need to be exploited. Notably the book of Ben Sira, the "non-biblical" Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Mishna and early Midrashim contain many genuine Hebrew expressions that do not depend on the biblical text. In

"Post-biblical Hebrew as a controlling factor in the arbitration between variant readings," Jan Joosten explores some methodological considerations and illustrates with a few case studies the various types of help post-biblical Hebrew can bring. In some instances, textual criticism and Hebrew philology seem to point in opposite directions, and a choice must be made. In other cases, however, the two methods reinforce one another, with the former indicating the correct reading and the latter helping to give it a meaning that fits the context.

Viktor Golinets draws attention to several sets of variant forms for which it is hard to determine textual priority. In his contribution "Some Considerations on Questions Philology Cannot Solve While Reconstructing the Text of the Hebrew Bible," he identifies the problem and provides a wealth of material to establish the phenomenon beyond doubt. Normative grammar as taught in the Handbooks may seem to indicate which forms are genuine and which ones are mistakes. But if the same variation recurs again and again, one starts asking whether perhaps the grammar books are too schematic. The variation itself is genuine, while the rejection of either form would be erroneous.

In "Between the Archaic and the Literary. The 'Narrative' Infinitive Clause in the Text(s) of the Bible," Andrés Piquer Otero evaluates a number of usages involving the "infinitive absolute" in the books of Samuel-Kings. He sagaciously brings in the concept of language evolution. The Hebrew written by the biblical authors represents a chronolect different from the Hebrew of the copyists who penned the earliest manuscripts to which we have access, and from the Hebrew known by the translators of the ancient versions. It is not always possible to determine the earliest available text, nor to interpret the variants, but at least on some points the history of the language can be approximately retraced.

Adrian Schenker, in "L'incidence de la critique textuelle sur le lexique hébreu biblique. Les cas de שָׁלֵם, Gn 33,18, וְהֶחֱרִים, Is 11,15; חֶרְמִי, 1 R 20,42", evaluates three passages that have posed problems to exegetes and shows the necessity for both philological information and text-critical acumen. In Gen 33:18, שָׁלֵם is probably a toponym, but it does not designate Jerusalem. In Isa 11:15, וְהֶחֱרִים should probably be corrected to וְהֶחֱרִיב with the versions against all Hebrew manuscripts. In 1 Kgs 20:42, חֶרְמִי may be an adjective, as the Greek evidence indicates, and not a substantive followed by a suffix as most exegetes have thought.

Noam Mizrahi focuses on a single minute variation in the Hebrew text of Exod 12:9, where 4Q11, also known as 4QpaleoGen-Exod[l], has a conjunctive *waw* that is absent in the MT. In "Text, Language, and Legal Interpretation: The Case of Exod 12:9," he combines a diachronic approach of the Hebrew language with a diachronic approach of the halakhic interpretation of the verse in question. He shows how detailed knowledge of the later rabbinic exegesis of the verse illuminates the problems the additional *waw* may have been intended to solve. The Qumran scribe meant to transmit the biblical text as accurately as possible,

yet he was also struggling to make sense of the text in its biblical context and in regard to its impact on Jewish worship.

In "Textual readings and challenge of biblical philology. Some cases in Isaiah and Leviticus," Innocent Himbaza shows how textual criticism and Hebrew philology clash and interact in different ways. Two verses in Isaiah, Isa 14:4 (notably the difficult word מדהבה) and 59:19c, and two verses in Leviticus, Lev 25:31 and 6:20, are analysed at length to illustrate the problem.

Innocent Himbaza
Jan Joosten

The Intersection of Philology and Textual Criticism in *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*

Background, Theory, and Practice

Richard D. Weis

The colloquium in which this paper originated sought to put the question of the connection between philology and textual criticism in the study of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament on the agenda of scholarship once again.[1] The organizers of the colloquium put a series of questions for discussion: How can philological study guide the textual critic? How does textual criticism come to the aid of the philologist? Are philology and textual criticism necessarily linked, or are connections between them merely accidental? Can philology justify conjectural emendations, and if so, on what conditions? Do philological hypotheses have a place in a text-critical apparatus or commentary?

This essay addresses these questions by examining the editorial principles and practice of the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ). I contend that BHQ offers significant scope both in principle and in practice for the productive interaction of the fields of textual criticism and philology. Thus, it offers a useful vantage point from which to address the overall theme and the specific questions posed. I will begin by noting some significant points of contact between BHQ and the position of James Barr in his work *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*.[2] This will lead to a fuller consideration of certain principles and practices in the published volumes of BHQ, focused in particular on those relating to conjectures. A concluding summary will address the specific questions of the colloquium.

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[1] Consideration of the relations between the two disciplines and the development of concrete results from their interaction has been enjoying a renaissance of late. See, for example, the essays by Joosten, Schorch, Talshir and Talshir, and Yuditsky in the volume by J. Joosten and J.-S. Rey, *Conservatism and Innovation in the Hebrew Language of the Hellenistic Period* (STDJ, 73; Leiden: Brill, 2008). An even more recent example is the study by R. D. Holmstedt, "The Nexus between Textual Criticism and Linguistics: A Case Study from Leviticus," *JBL* 132 (2013): 473–494.

[2] J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987; orig. pub.: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

1. Barr and BHQ – Points of contact

It has been observed that "James Barr showed the interconnectedness of Semitic philology and textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. His work is at once a warning against certain abuses and a road map for best practice in the two fields."[3] Thus it seems appropriate to orient ourselves by observing some points of contact between the positions of BHQ and of Barr on the subject of the interconnectedness of philology and textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. There are five to which I call attention: the need for significant restraint in the use of conjectural emendations or their philological equivalents, the undoubted capacity of philology to explain difficult forms in the extant witnesses, the importance of historical philology alongside comparative philology, the value of the vowels and accents in the Masoretic Text, and the definition of a text critical case. On the first four of these, BHQ and Barr may be said to agree. On the last, the definition of a text critical case, they disagree.

Conjecture, the extrapolation from existing evidence, whether textual or philological, back to a form for which there is not otherwise external evidence in the Hebrew text of a particular passage, has been a significant practice in so-called "lower criticism" from the nineteenth century well into the twentieth. Indeed, some would even say that it is a necessary practice because in both textual criticism and philology we are working with incomplete data, in the one case for the reading of the Biblical text, in the other for the Hebrew language in the Biblical era. Although Barr and BHQ differ in the degree of caution they would impose and in the reasons for that caution, both are suspicious of past practices of conjectural emendation of the text. The scholarly tradition that finds its roots particularly in the work of Wellhausen and Cornill started from the reality that the extant witnesses to the text did not reach back to its presumed original. That goal could only be reached by conjectural extrapolation back beyond the external evidence for the text. That extrapolation might be disciplined and grounded by multiple sets of criteria, some exegetical and stylistic, some based on knowledge of the processes and vicissitudes of copying texts, and some based on philological insight, especially from comparative Semitic philology.[4] Barr does not rule out conjecture in principle, but would be far more cautious in its practice.[5] BHQ, on the other hand, rules out conjecture in principle, but then in practice makes allowance for its use in very restricted ways in its apparatus.

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[3] The prospectus for the colloquium.

[4] R. D. Weis, "'Lower Criticism': Studies in the Masoretic Text and the Ancient Versions of the Old Testament as a Means of Textual Criticism," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, vol. III/1 (edited by M. Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 363–367; M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, "The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: Rise, Decline, Rebirth," *JBL* 102 (1983): 373, 378.

[5] Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 3, 301–304.

The eighth chapter of Barr's work criticizes the previous practice, often invoked in conjecture, of regarding only the consonantal text of the MT as ancient, and disregarding the vowels and accents encoded in the Masoretic points as a late medieval phenomenon.[6] BHQ specifically regards the vowels and accents as reflective of ancient reading traditions that, even though only encoded in written form much later, are demonstrably as old as the consonantal text found in our earliest surviving Hebrew manuscripts.[7]

Barr and BHQ share a confidence in the capacity of philology to explain satisfactorily difficult readings in the Hebrew Bible, readings that previously might have been assumed to represent a corrupted text, and thus to be in need of emendation. In the case of BHQ, this is very much a part of its inheritance from the earlier Hebrew Old Testament Text Project, and especially the work of Dominique Barthélemy.[8] For explaining extant readings seen as "difficult," Barr calls attention not only to the possibilities offered by comparison with cognate Semitic languages, but also and especially by comparison with forms from later periods of Hebrew.[9] If anything, this latter emphasis on historical comparison is more characteristic of BHQ and its predecessor project (HOTTP) than comparison with Semitic cognates. The BHQ volume on Genesis offers numerous examples of this particular form of interaction of textual criticism and philology.[10] Outside of the scope of the BHQ project, the recent study by Jan Joosten on Jeremiah 39 offers another excellent example of the interaction of textual criticism and historical philology.[11]

On one major point BHQ and Barr disagree, namely, on what constitutes a text critical case. For *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, a text critical case is constituted only by a divergence among the extant witnesses for how a text reads at a particular

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[6] Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 188–222, at 219–222.

[7] See R. D. Weis, Gerard J. Norton, and Adrian Schenker, eds., *Guidelines for Contributors* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), 20, BHQ guideline III.1.2 "Criterion for Inclusion in Apparatus: Text-Critical Significance: In order for a case to be included in the apparatus, one or more of its variants must be text-critically significant, that is, the variant arguably, but not necessarily (nor even in the editor's final judgment), witnesses a Hebrew text that differs from the lemma. This embraces variations in vocalization and syntax as well as in consonants. When a variant in the reading of a version is deemed to have a variant Hebrew text behind it, then that variant to the versional reading will be reported in addition to the version's main reading."

[8] D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, vol. 1 (OBO, 50/1; Fribourg: Éditions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), xiii–xv [= D. Barthélemy, *Studies in the Text of the Old Testament* (TCT, 3; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 591–594].

[9] Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 223–228, 237.

[10] A. Tal, *Genesis* (*Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, vol. 1; ed. A. Schenker, et al.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2015).

[11] J. Joosten, "L'excédent massorétique du livre de Jérémie et l'hébreu post-classique," in *Conservatism and Innovation in the Hebrew Language of the Hellenistic Period* (STDJ, 73; ed. J. Joosten and J.-S. Rey; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 93–108.

point.[12] Barr acknowledges that this is the ordinary definition of a text critical case, but argues that when the text is uniform, one must generate text critical cases in another way, namely, by identifying a perceived "difficulty" with the text.[13] In this difference, we see how Barr is still using the definition of a text critical case that characterized the nineteenth and twentieth century schools that made so much use of the patterns of conjecture that he has criticized. For a work published in 1969, this is not surprising; this definition was still operant in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, which was being edited in the same era. It is only with the work of the Hebrew University Bible Project, the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project, and others – whose publications mostly came after Barr's book – that we see the conceptual shift in the field of textual criticism that is reflected in the principles of BHQ. This shift came about in part because the diversity of the text visible in the Dead Sea Scrolls undermined the assumption about the uniformity of the text that made the older approach seem necessary.

2. Defining cases and making conjectures in BHQ

This difference in the definition of what constitutes a textual case, taken together with the edition's goal of establishing "the earliest attainable text" rather than a putative original, is the root of the specific stance toward conjectural emendation seen in BHQ. More explicit attention to the guiding principles of the edition, and some examples of their implementation, will allow us to approach answers to the more specific questions about the relation of philology and textual criticism.

    An obvious consequence of BHQ's definition of a textual case is this guideline for the edition:

III.4.4 Decisions Limited to the Textual Forms Attested by the Extant Witnesses
PRINCIPLE: In general, decisions concerning textual cases should confine themselves to working with the textual forms attested by the existing witnesses. Since the apparatus is concerned with the presentation and evaluation of the available evidence of the text's transmission, indirectly attested forms and hypothetical forms have a place in the apparatus only as they are needed to explain the surviving evidence.[14]

As a result of this definition of a text critical case, many cases that in previous editions were included in the apparatus as text critical either do not appear at all in the apparatus of BHQ, or appear only as a lemma followed by a reference to the commentary. In the commentary, the remarks on such cases follow a common pattern. After recounting substantial prior discussion of the case as in some

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[12] A. Schenker, et al., "General Introduction," in *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, vol. 18, General Introduction and Megilloth (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004), xii–xiii.
[13] Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 3.
[14] Weis, Norton, and Schenker, *Guidelines,* 32.