



Since the conclusions based upon the full study are not yet available, Schoors provides an interim conclusion, confirming the general consensus among critical scholars. Of Fredericks he says, "His argumentation is too analytical, showing the evident weakness of most of the arguments taken on their own" (222). In place of that, Schoors presents what he calls the "the argument of convergency, viz, the general picture presented by the combination of all pertinent features" (*ibid.*).

The volume calls for Hebrew study on the part of the reader/student measured in years, not quarters, including a facility with post-biblical Hebrew. In addition, a good grasp of the cognate languages such as Aramaic and Syriac is desirable. Thus it is best suited to a graduate course, especially when coupled with the works of Fredericks and/or Whitley.

The choice of Qoheleth as a subject for linguistic analysis is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the book is not central to the curriculum in most seminaries. On the other hand, if it were included, the absence of prior knowledge might permit a greater degree of objectivity in interpreting it. However, this would be by no means automatic. Given the works of two careful scholars with diametrically opposing views, it is all too easy to accept the one that aligns with one's own presuppositions.

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Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press; Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1992. xl + 456 pp. \$40.00.

The goal of textual criticism is to establish as accurately as possible the original form of ancient texts, and, though this is often overlooked, it is the basis for all further studies of any given text. Because of the paucity of material available prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible was often seen as primarily synonymous with the study of the various daughter translations, especially the Greek Septuagint (LXX); but only secondarily concerned with what is known of the Hebrew text itself—if students had the requisite command of Hebrew.

It is not surprising, then, that when Tov published his *The Text-critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies, 3 [Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 1981]), it was hailed as a definitive work on textual criticism. This perception seemed confirmed by the fact that on the first page of the introduction, Tov began by talking about the aims of OT textual criticism. As a result, when this current volume based on the Hebrew Bible was published, not a few scholars felt that Tov had perhaps betrayed them. When the book was publicly reviewed in Tov's presence, scholar after scholar focused on the relation between the LXX and the Hebrew Text, claiming that Tov had given undue priority to the latter over the former. As Tov makes abundantly clear in the book, this criticism is unwarranted and unjustified, given the focus of the present study.

The standard advice for someone wishing to come to terms with a new book is to study the table of contents. Nowhere is that advice more important than in the present volume. The book is divided into nine chapters of unequal length: chapter 1, "Introduction" (20 pp.); chapter 2, "Textual Witnesses of the Bible" (134 pp.); chapter 3, "The History of the Biblical Text" (43 pp.); chapter 4, "The Copying and Transmitting of the Biblical Text" (87 pp.); chapter 5, "The Aim and Procedures of Textual Criticism" (5 pp.); chapter 6, "The Evaluation of Readings" (19 pp.); chapter 7, "Textual Criticism and Literary Criticism" (37 pp.); chapter 8, "Conjectural Emendation" (19 pp.); and chapter 9, "Critical Editions" (8 pp.). Thirty plates are included, along with separate lists of ancient sources, authors, and subjects.

The sequence of chapters is interesting. In contrast to Tov's previous volume, the nature of what constitutes textual criticism is not explored until chapter 5. Seen in this light, the first four chapters lay out the evidence, and the next four evaluate it—a felicitous arrangement. Chapter 2 is the heart of the first section. It is gratifying to see the evident depth, comprehensiveness and evenhanded approach. One of the dangers inherent in the undertaking is the temptation to give undue emphasis to one area over another, such as the impact of the Masoretes upon the Hebrew text. This Tov has assiduously avoided.

On the other hand, Tov addresses one of the greatest and most pressing needs in the field: the integration of the DSS material into the current discussion. He is eminently qualified to do this, since he is, among other things, currently editor-in-chief of the DSS publication project. His presentation of the evidence is comprehensive and his evaluation in depth.

Apart from the sheer physical weight of the volume, two other characteristics are clearly in evidence even to the casual observer: the illustration of every aspect by numerous examples throughout the book, and the extensive bibliographies at the beginning of each major section which make a separate bibliography at the end of the book unnecessary.

With the publication of this volume, some will wonder if Tov has not in some way lost contact with his roots, since it was for his work in Septuagintal studies that he was first and best known to the scholarly world. Should this be the case, there is more than a touch of irony. It was the discovery of the DSS that brought the LXX back into prominence just when it seemed doomed to oblivion. Will the source of the rejuvenation be its demise? Personally, I think not.

One can but envy students of the Hebrew Bible who enter their studies after the publication of this volume. The amount of work previously necessary to begin to pull together a basic awareness of all the topics covered in this single volume gives some idea of how much scholarship Tov has packed into this book. No serious student of the OT text can afford to be without it.