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Paul E. Kahle and Federico Pérez Castro: The Origins of the Madrid School of Biblical Text Criticism

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We have frequently been asked about the origins of the Madrid School of Biblical Text Criticism. We have limited the content of this paper to Masoretic studies. Research into the files of the former Instituto Arias Montano of the CSIC disclosed a series of unedited letters between Professors Kahle and Pérez Castro; a paper by F. Pérez Castro and F. Cantera Burgos on “Prof. Paul E. Kahle y los estudios de crítica textual bíblica en España,” and a description by F. Pérez Castro of the first project to edit the Cairo Codex of the Prophets. Through these materials we can trace the main steps of the relationship between these two relevant scholars and the role that such a relationship played in the origin and late development of these studies in Madrid.

KEYWORDS: Kahle; Pérez Castro; Masoretic Studies; Madrid School.

PAUL E. KAHLE Y FEDERICO PÉREZ CASTRO: LOS ORÍGENES DE LA ESCUELA DE CRÍTICA TEXTUAL BÍBLICA DE MADRID.— A menudo se nos ha preguntado por los orígenes de la escuela de crítica textual bíblica de Madrid. Hemos limitado el contenido de este artículo a los estudios masoréticos. Investigando en los archivos del antiguo Instituto Arias Montano del CSIC hemos encontrado una colección de cartas inéditas entre los Profesores Kahle y Pérez Castro; un artículo escrito por F. Pérez Castro y F. Cantera Burgos titulado «Prof. Paul E. Kahle y los estudios de crítica textual bíblica en España», y la descripción hecha por Pérez Castro del primer proyecto para editar el Códice de Profetas de El Cairo. Gracias a estos testimonios hemos podido documentar las principales fases de la relación entre estos dos eminentes profesores y el papel que tal relación desempeñó en el origen y posterior desarrollo de estos estudios en Madrid.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Kahle; Pérez Castro; estudios masoréticos; escuela de Madrid.

Spain in the 16th century could boast a particularly brilliant school of Hebrew and Oriental scholars; we need only recall the editions of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible (1514-1517) produced under the auspices of Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, and the *Biblia Regia*, also known as the Antwerp Polyglot Bible or the Bible of Arias Montano (1569-1573), produced under the patronage of Philip II. However, until the second half of the 20th century the Spanish

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contribution to Biblical Philology in the original languages was not especially significant.¹

In international forums we are frequently asked what circumstances brought about the revival in those studies which led to what is known today as “the Madrid School of Biblical Text Criticism.” Leaving aside other areas of Biblical research, we will concentrate on Masoretic studies, since, in Spain, these reached a particular level of importance. In the words of Professor H. M. Orlinsky, “this country [Spain] along with Israel, constitutes one of the two most important centers of Masoretic activity in the scholarly world.”²

We dug deep into the archives of the former Instituto Arias Montano of the CSIC where we found a series of unpublished correspondence between Professors Kahle and Pérez Castro: an article written by Professors F. Pérez Castro and F. Cantera Burgos entitled “Prof. Paul E. Kahle y los estudios de crítica textual bíblica en España,” and the outline (a ‘white paper’ produced by Pérez Castro) of the initial project for the edition of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets.

It was evident from these documents, that the role played by Kahle in Oxford was a major factor in the setting up of the Madrid school, where Pérez Castro together with other Spanish philologists, specialists in Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Syriac and Coptic, had already the publication of a new Polyglot in their minds, the *Biblia Polyglotta Matritensia*. Kahle was very enthusiastic about the project and set out the paths to be followed by the directors of the different languages concerned.

As Díez Macho wrote: “From the first moment, Kahle accepted the project of the *Poliglota matritense* as his own. He was always much inclined to support those who were in charge of a critical edition of various texts: he sent to Professors Cantera Burgos and Pérez Castro of Madrid for the edition of the Hebrew text photocopies of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets [...] and of the Leningrad Codex B19a [...] and he was prepared to support Professor Fernández-Galiano in his Septuagint edition as well, and P. Urbina in his edition of the Peshitta. Concerning the Targum, he put himself at our disposition and then already offered his rich material of the Samaritan Targum to the young Spaniard [José R. Díaz] whom he found inclined to continue the critical edition of this Targum which he had started many years ago.

¹ Cf. “Hebraístas españoles,” in E. WEINFELD (ed.), *Enciclopedia Judaica Castellana*, Vol. V (México 1949), pp. 325-328.

² “Opening Remarks,” in E. FERNÁNDEZ TEJERO (ed.), *Estudios Masoréticos (V Congreso de la IOMS)*. Dedicados a Harry M. Orlinsky (Madrid 1983), p. 17.

The plan for the edition of the Onkelos Targum which was put before the CSIC, after our return from England, resumes the ideas of Kahle for this project.”³

But let us consider, in chronological order, the role played by Kahle in the first publications of the Madrid team. The first contacts with Pérez Castro date from 1948. Already in 1946 Kahle had received a photograph of part of the colophon of the *Sefer Abisa* ‘ from the Samaritan priest Amram Ishak of Nablus. In October 1951, Pérez Castro visited Nablus and, through the intervention of the then Director of the Instituto Arias Montano, F. Cantera Burgos, he managed to obtain a photographic reproduction of the complete scroll, a reproduction acquired and financed by the CSIC.⁴

Three years later, Kahle succeeded in convincing F. Díaz Esteban of the interest in publishing an edition of the *Sefer Oklah we-Oklah*, based on the Halle manuscript and the manuscripts of the Leningrad Public Library. Kahle had in his possession the photographs of the Leningrad manuscripts. He could thus “prove –in extenso– a certain recensional diversity as well as a basic unity in the transmission of the *Sefer Oklah we-Oklah*,”⁵ in comparison with the edition of S. Frensdorff, based on the Paris manuscript.⁶

The photographs made available to Pérez Castro by the Bonn Orientalisches Seminar were essential for the edition of the Cairo Codex, and these were obtained through the good offices of Kahle.⁷ Between 1979 and 1988, the team led by Pérez Castro published seven volumes of text; in 1992, the alphabetic index of its Masoras; in 1995, a monograph on the Masora Magna of the codex by E. Fernández Tejero; and in 1995 and 1997, two monographs on its Masora Parva by M. T. Ortega Monasterio and M. J. de Azcárraga Servert.⁸

³ Cf. A. Díez Macho, “Magister-Minister. Prof. P. E. Kahle through Twelve Years of Correspondence,” in M. P. Hornik (ed.), *Recent Progress in Biblical Scholarship* (Oxford 1965), 15-53, pp. 14-15.

⁴ F. Pérez Castro, “El Séfer Abisa ‘,” *Sef* 13 (1953), 119-129, pp. 124-125; id., *Séfer Abisa* ‘. Edición del fragmento antiguo del rollo sagrado del Pentateuco hebreo samaritano de Nablus (Madrid 1959), pp. XIV-XV; id., “Das Kryptogramm des Sefer Abisha ‘,” *Congress Volume Oxford 1959* (Leiden 1960), pp. 52-60.

⁵ F. Díaz Esteban, *Sefer 'Oklah we-'Oklah*, Madrid 1975, p. XI; the second part of the Halle manuscript was published by B. Ognibeni, *La seconda parte del sefer 'Oklah we'Oklah* (Madrid - Fribourg 1995).

⁶ S. Frensdorff, *Das Buch Ochlah W'ochlah* (Hannover 1864).

⁷ Cf. P. E. Kahle, *The Cairo Genizah* (2nd ed., Oxford 1959), pp. 91-92.

⁸ The full bibliographical references can be consulted in the catalogue of the series *Textos y Estudios Cardenal Cisneros* (TECC) of the CSIC.

UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence between Pérez Castro and Kahle and his sons covers the period 23 July 1959 to 19 April 1967. The letters did not only deal with scholarly matters, and they show the affection that existed between the two families and the frequent visits that Pérez Castro made to Kahle's home in Charlbury, near Oxford, and those that Kahle made to Madrid. Kahle was invited to Madrid by the CSIC in 1951, where he discussed at length with his colleagues there all matters concerning the process of the edition of the Hebrew text, the Septuagint and the Targum of the Polyglot Bible in preparation. Later, he was to be awarded the title of "Consejero de Honor" of the CSIC.

The letters also confirm the already known fact that Charlbury was the pole of attraction for many scholars such as Murtonen, Rengstorf, Dietrich, Vermes, Sperber, Aland, Meyer, Black, Díez Macho, Millás Vallicrosa, Fernández-Galiano, Ortiz de Urbina, Díaz Esteban, and, of course, Pérez Castro. Some of the letters, although addressed to Pérez Castro, go into detail about Kahle's participation in various projects as advisor to the corresponding directors.

As for the edition of the Cairo Codex, several letters were exchanged in December 1959 concerning the basic material needed for the edition: microfilms and photographs. The first microfilms that were received in Madrid were reversed (*Rückphotographie*). When in the 70s we started to work on the Cairo Codex we had to have recourse to mirrors to be able to read the text. Later, Kahle managed to obtain black and white photographs, one could call them 'normal,' taken from the original of the codex, property of the Library of Berlin. It is possible that these were the photographs that Pérez Castro intended to use for a facsimile edition of the codex, together with a brief prologue and a possible contribution by Kahle on the problems of the manuscript,⁹ as an initial step before the scholar edition of the text.¹⁰ On September, 22 1961 Kahle wrote, "[...] it is quite clear to me how important it is that you take as the basis for your

⁹ "Der besagte Faksimile-Band des Kairoer Kodex enthält ein kurzes von mir geschriebenes Vorwort, aber, wenn Sie wünschen, geben wir Ihnen natürlich gern die Möglichkeit, auch einen Beitrag über die Probleme, die die Handschrift aufwirft, darin zu veröffentlichen."

¹⁰ "Ich glaube, dass die nicht ganz befriedigende Form des Prophetenkodex, den ich als meine Rückphotographie Ihnen seinerzeit geschickt habe, der Grund dafür gewesen ist, dass Ihnen Ihr Mikrofilm besser geraten zu sein scheint. Ich habe mir jetzt ein paar Bände der ursprünglich in Kairo 1926 hergestellten schwarz-weiss Photographien herkommen lassen, die der Berliner Bibliothek gehört und jetzt in Marburg ist. Diese schwarz-weiss Photographie ist natürlich sehr viel besser und zuverlässiger als meine Rückphotographie und hat ausserdem den grossen Vorzug, dass keine Schwierigkeit irgendwelcher Art besteht, sie zu publizieren."

edition of the Bible the codex of the Prophets of Cairo [...] this is undeniably the most ancient of this class of text that has been preserved and in this lies its great value.”¹¹

Paul E. Kahle died on September, 24 1964, just before his 90th birthday. Nevertheless, Pérez Castro continued to correspond with the family. In the letter of condolence he sent on 26 October 1964 he refers to Kahle as “my venerable master, the Professor admired and held in high esteem by all the scholarly world,” he continues: “many years working together, first as a respectful disciple and then as a young colleague and collaborator, I always had my eyes on him, he taught me to consider him as a fatherly friend and it is as such that he remains in my memory,” and he finishes with, “For you, your sons and for ourselves, his scientific sons, there is a void which cannot be filled with silent commiserations.”¹²

It is in a letter to the eldest son, the Reverend William Kahle, dated 12 January 1965, that we learn of what will later become the project to publish a book to Paul E. Kahle’s memory under the direction of Marcel P. Hornik. Pérez Castro and Cantera Burgos had prepared a contribution, “Prof. Paul E. Kahle y los estudios de crítica textual bíblica en España,” which was never published. We get a good idea of one of the reasons for this from a letter written by T. B. Kahle to Pérez Castro on 27 January 1965: “You have received a rather peculiar letter from Dr. Hornik in Oxford. There had been a plan for him, as director of the Richard Kronstein Foundation, to bring out a small Memorial Volume at comparatively short notice. Since then Dr. Hornik has changed this project and for various reasons the idea of the project was shelved, as the organisation of which he is a director did not really prove a suitable one for the publication of such volume.” Hornik’s project was reduced to *Recent Progress in Biblical Scholarship*, a book which only included two contributions, one by A. Díez Macho and another by R. Meyer.

At the same time, however, another memorial volume, *In Memoriam Paul Kahle* (Berlin 1968) was in the preparation stage under Matthew Black and

¹¹ “Es ist mir dabei besonders deutlich geworden, wie wichtig ist, dass Sie als Grundlage für Ihre Bibelausgabe den Kairoer Prophetenkodex nehmen [...] ist unbestreitbar der älteste Text dieser Art, der uns erhalten ist, und darin besteht sein grosser Wert.”

¹² The letter is dated 26 October 1964, when Pérez Castro knew the sad news coming back from a long stay in America: “[...] meines verehrten Meisters, des von der ganzen wissenschaftlichen Welt hoch geschätzten und bewunderten Professor Kahle [...] Lange Jahre gemeinsamen Schaffens, als sein erfurchtsvoller Schüler zuerst und später als immer zu ihm aufschauender jüngerer Kollege und Mitarbeiter, haben mich gelehrt, in ihm einen väterlichen Freund zu sehen und als solcher lebt er in diesen Augenblicken in meiner Erinnerung fort... Für Sie, seine Kinder, und für uns, seine wissenschaftlichen Söhne, bleibt die unausfüllbare Leere. Im stillen Mitgefühl.”

Georg Fohrer. This volume did not include Pérez Castro and Cantera's joint paper, but a study entitled "The Edition of the *Kitab al Khilaf* of Mishael Ben Uzziel," written by F. Pérez Castro and M. J. de Azcárraga Servert.¹³

Paul E. Khale's library was sold to the University of Turin. Pérez Castro was informed of this in a letter from E. F. Khale on 19 April 1967.

OTHER DOCUMENTS

"Prof. Paul E. Kahle y los estudios de crítica textual bíblica en España," the aforementioned work of F. Pérez Castro and F. Cantera Burgos, confirms what we already know from the letters previously cited, and it has the added merit of being signed by the most representative researchers of the former Instituto Arias Montano.

Here is a brief résumé of the contents of the article. It starts with the history of the beginnings, in 1940, of the Instituto Benito Arias Montano, named after the great 16th century Spanish specialist in Oriental studies. From the inception of the Institute, two lines of research were to be followed: 1) the study of the Bible in all its many aspects (philological, historical, archaeological and literary) as well as its relationship with the Ancient Near East; 2) the history and literature of the Jews in Spain.

It was evident that in the field of Biblical research there were a number of gaps, both at the level of working materials and at the level of researchers. One of these affected the history of the text of the Old Testament, more precisely that which covered Masoretic studies.

As for the edition of the *Biblia Polyglotta Matritensis*, the first decision to be taken after consulting Prof. Kahle, was that the texts should appear in separated series according to the different languages (the original and the ancient versions) but with a link between them, thus constituting rather a library of scholarly editions of Biblical texts than a traditional form of a Polyglot Bible.

These would not be published under the name *Biblia Polyglotta Matritensis* –although under this title the *Prooemium* and nine volumes corresponding to the Aramaic, Syriac, and Vetus latina were published – but in the series *Textos y Estudios Cardenal Cisneros de la Biblia Políglota Matritense* (TECC).

¹³ Cf. F. PÉREZ CASTRO and M. J. AZCÁRRAGA, "The Edition of the *Kitab al Khilaf* of Mishael Ben Uzziel", in M. BLACK und G. FOHRER (eds.), In *Memoriam Paul Kahle* (Berlin 1968), 188-200, p. 189.

As for the Hebrew text, the editing project went through several stages, an initial, very ambitious one¹⁴ which Kahle resumed and described to a number of researchers who could have been interested in the subject. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find Kahle's document.

We have several references attesting to the different stages of the project for the edition of the Hebrew text: the section of the *Prooemium* corresponding to the Hebrew text (1957); the original and unpublished version of the paper read by Pérez Castro to the Third World Congress of Jewish Studies (Jerusalem 1961); another, internal document, a sort of 'white paper' with a detailed description of how the edition could have been; and, finally, the paper read at the founding congress of the IOMS (Los Angeles 1972), "A Diachronic Edition of the Hebrew Old Testament."¹⁵

In the *Prooemium* to the *Biblia Polyglotta Matritensia*, it is stated that the Spanish edition will use the Leningrad Codex B19a as the basic text together with its Masoras, and that the critical apparatus will contain Hebrew Masoretic sources (those cited above, the known Babylonian and Tiberian fragments, and fragments of the Cairo Genizah), extra-Masoretic sources, with Talmudic and Midrashic variants, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and non-Hebraic sources (the ancient versions).¹⁶

During the Congress of Jerusalem (1961), Pérez Castro admitted: "[...] it has been no easy task deciding on the orientation and the content of our edition and it is to be understood that during the years we have given to the preparatory studies, our criteria have changed direction on repeated occasions."¹⁷ During the same Congress, he showed how, at that time, circumstances had forced him to renounce what was initially the ideal plan of work and confine himself to a single textual form, the Tiberian text with a critical apparatus integrated with Tiberian elements. The congress was attended by many representatives of those coun-

¹⁴ Cf. the description of the projects for the ten planned series in *Biblia Polyglotta Matritensia. Prooemium*. Cura et studio Ayuso T, Cantera F, Díez Macho A, Fernández-Galiano M, Millás Vallicrosa JM, O'Callaghan J, Ortiz de Urbina I, Pérez Castro F, aliisque plurimis collaborantibus peritis. Matriti M DCCC L VII.

¹⁵ H. M. ORLINSKY (ed.), *International Organization for Masoretic Studies (IOMS). Proceedings and Papers of 1972 and 1973 Meetings*. Masoretic Studies 1 (Missoula, MO 1974), pp. 79-86.

¹⁶ Cf. the *Prooemium* quoted in n. 14, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷ "Doch ist es für uns durchaus kein Leichtes gewesen, uns zu entscheiden, welche Orientierung und welchen Inhalt wir unserer Ausgabe geben sollten, und es ist verständlich, dass während einiger, den Vorbereitungsstudien gewidmeten Jahre unser Kriterium mehrfach der Richtung gewechselt hat."

tries that had spent most time over the years working on editions of the Hebrew Biblical text, Germany for the Leningrad Codex B19a and Israel for the Aleppo Codex. This, together with the fact that Pérez Castro had obtained a complete photographic reproduction of the Cairo Codex, led him to state that he would take the Cairo Codex and its Masoras as the basis for the Spanish edition, and that he would include the variants of the Aleppo and Leningrad texts and their Masoras, together with Masoretic treatises, in particular the *Sefer Diqduqe ha-Te'amim*, the *Sefer 'Oklah we-'Oklah*, the Treatise of Mishael Ben Uzziel, etc.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the team was working on a much more complex project, one in which the principal stages of the history of the text would be edited in a parallel edition so as to present the important textual forms of the Hebrew Bible in distinct significant phases: it begins with a textual form which is at the end of the line, codex M1 of the Universidad Complutense of Madrid, corresponding to an important tradition, that of the Sefarad, and goes back to previous forms: 1) the so-called Ben Asher, based on the most authoritative witnesses, codices and treatises; 2) the Babylonian and Palestinian Bible; 3) the Hebrew Samaritan Pentateuch; 4) the texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Masada. The parallel edition means that these different textual forms can be seen separately and / or simultaneously, thus facilitating the comparison between them; “[...] in this way it is possible to have a historical view of the process of the transmission of the Hebrew Bible from the initial documented phases to the present day.”¹⁹

This orientation was presented in the congress of Los Angeles (1972) where the decision to use a Spanish codex, M1, was explained: “[...] a codex which is not only complete, dated, and with a colophon of the scribe and the naqdan, but is also one that belongs to a known *scriptorium* and to a well-known and perfectly documented family of manuscripts [...]. This manuscript must be reproduced with its own Masora, Parva and Magna, both, of course, explained, identified, developed and cross-connected with one another and with the texts.”²⁰ The Cairo Codex would be reduced to a parallel column which would not reflect the continuous text of the manuscript but just the variants with regard to the basic text, following Kennicott’s layout.

The project was still too ambitious, especially given the limited number of scientists working in each team. In the 70s, those of us who had started out as disciples of the directors of the different columns of the *Biblia Polyglotta*

¹⁸ Cancelled in the original: “nuestro campo de actividad ha sido heroicamente limitado.”

¹⁹ Taken from the ‘white paper’, which also supplies minute instructions on the *modus procedendi* and diagrams on the synoptic arrangement of the even and odd pages.

²⁰ PÉREZ CASTRO, “A Diachronic Edition,” p. 84.

Matritensia, began to consider ourselves experienced enough to disagree with our mentors, and to back more realistic projects which could be brought to fruition in a reasonable period of time. N. Fernández Marcos managed, without too much trouble, to reduce the initial objective of the Greek series of the Septuagint to the edition of the Antiochene text. Somewhat more difficult for E. Fernández Tejero was the task of persuading Pérez Castro that the Hebrew team should limit itself to publishing *only* the codex of the Cairo Prophets and its Masoras. At times, the discussions reached such a point that E. Fernández Tejero thought that her friendship with F. Pérez Castro could be at risk. He did finally accept, in what must have been one of the most difficult scientific decisions of his life. It may well be for that reason that he wished to appear as “Director” in the edition of the different volumes, in such a way as it would seem that it was mainly the work of the team. E. Fernández Tejero saw it more as a testimony of his sadness at not having been able to bring his great project to fruition in the way that he would have dreamed.

We feel that we are responsible for the changes that had been brought about to the initial projects, but at the same time, we feel both heirs and successors of our mentors.

If the generation of Pérez Castro, Díez Macho, Fernández-Galiano, Díaz Esteban and so many other Spaniards are in debt with Professor Kahle, our own generation recognizes the merit that our predecessors had in establishing a magnificent library in the field of biblical philology, in creating teams of people who were then young research workers in different languages, and of opening up to us the paths to international forums through their scientific relations with other countries, a situation so uncommon in the Spain of that period.

Although we have concentrated on the figures of Kahle and Pérez Castro, we should not forget another great scholar and a man of extraordinary human qualities, Professor Harry M. Orlinsky, who gave us the opportunity to follow along those paths that our Spanish masters had opened for us.

In 1968, Orlinsky established in Berkeley the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies (IOSCS) and was its first president from the year of its foundation until 1972. Then, once having stepped down from the presidency of the IOSCS, he founded the International Organization for Masoretic Studies. In a letter to Professor A. Dotan in 1971, he wrote “one ought not to dance at so many weddings.”²¹ He presided over the organization until his death

²¹ A. DOTAN, “*In Memoriam Harry M. Orlinsky*,” in E. FERNÁNDEZ TEJERO and M. T. ORTEGA MONASTERIO (eds.), *Estudios Masoréticos (X Congreso de la IOMS)*. En memoria de Harry M. Orlinsky (Madrid 1993).

in 1992. From the beginning, he and A. Dotan shared the destiny of the IOMS. Orlinsky had a very high opinion of him both as scholar and as person.

One example of this was when Orlinsky was not able to attend the Salamanca IOMS Congress (1983), organized by E. Fernández Tejero. As the person responsible, she sent him a detailed report about the development of the sessions. In his answer Orlinsky wrote, among other things: “I love your description of Dr. Dotan. You have a keen eye and a wonderful sense of humour. I remember about 15 years ago or so, when I first met Dr. Dotan in Jerusalem, and had read some of his publications. Although there were older scholars around at the time, and associated with the top Hebrew University in Jerusalem, I felt that he would make a better associate for helping to organize a group of scholars who were interested in aspects of Masora.”

Aron Dotan took over as president after the death of Orlinsky. Our friendship with Professor Orlinsky resulted in a long-standing correspondence full of personal and friendly words, which goes back to 1973. He was a friend me shall never forget. But this is not the place to speak of our own past; that is easy to learn about through the publications in the series *Textos y Estudios Cardenal Cisneros* (TECC), through national and international journals, and our constant presence in those congresses relating to our respective fields of research.²²

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²² For the recent history, see N. FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS, “Recent Spanish Research on the Biblical Texts,” *BIOSCS* 26 (1993), pp. 22-34, and his “Un siglo de investigación bíblica en España,” *Razón y Fe* (Septiembre-Octubre 2001), pp. 129-142.