1. In his 1966 book *Old and New in Interpretation*, James Barr calls for a reexamination of thinking about the two testaments, focusing especially on the areas of history, revelation, and exegesis, and their influence on Christian theology. Barr criticizes the facile differentiation of ideas into the categories of “Hebrew” and “Greek” as a caricature (Barr 1966:35), but he also decries the simplistic identification of OT and NT terms and concepts as “highly artificial” (ibid.:154). The OT and the NT themselves are collages of overlapping ideas and structures, and the relationship of OT thought to that of the NT is both varied and complex. The reading of the OT informs NT interpretation, but so does the reading of the NT inform OT interpretation. Unfortunately, as biblical scholars increasingly focus on smaller and smaller areas of study, fewer cross-discipline investigations occur, and the gap between the testaments grows.

2. One casualty of the persistent tendency within biblical scholarship toward ever greater specialization is the discipline of textual criticism, which is almost universally divided into the camps of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and New Testament. This separation of the two from each other (and from other areas of textual criticism, such as of the classics) has resulted in profoundly varying approaches to the task of textual analysis. In and of itself, the variety is not detrimental, but the lack of cross-pollination among textual critics is.

3. This study aims to point out some of the differences, stress the significant similarities, and suggest some fruitful prospects for cooperation between practitioners of OT and NT textual criticism. Above all, it is hoped that scholars on both sides of the canonical aisle will be sensitized to what those on the other side are doing, and so strengthen the exercise of their own discipline.

**Different Data**

4. First of all, OT and NT textual critics deal with different data. The most obvious example, of course, is the fact that OT textual critics study the OT (which itself varies, depending on whether one includes the apocryphal/deuterocanonical books, and which ones), and NT textual critics study the NT. Although this division seems natural enough, it is by no means a necessity. A few textual critics of the past (Julius Wellhausen) and the present (Bruce Metzger) have bridged the gap in their own work, with rewarding results.

5. One area of evident overlap between the two disciplines is OT citations present in the NT. It has long been noted that NT writers tend to quote the OT from the LXX rather than the MT. For this reason, readings that reflect a text different from that of the LXX are generally preferred to those that mirror the LXX (Aland and Aland 1989:290). One often unnoticed prerequisite of this procedure is to establish the text of the LXX in the passage in question. It is especially dangerous to assume that the text of the Cambridge edition is *the* LXX, since it reflects the text of a single ms (Vaticanus in most instances); the Göttingen edition, or even Rahlfs’ manual edition, are preferable to the Cambridge edition if the reading of the text (as opposed to one of the readings of the apparatus) is to be accepted. In contrast to NT textual critics’ use of OT quotations, OT textual critics rarely avail themselves of this data, despite the fact that these quotations are valuable, and ancient, witnesses to both the LXX and pre-Masoretic Hebrew texts. Methodologically, the use of these passages by OT textual critics involves a detailed investigation of the NT context, a determination of whether the citation is intended to be a direct quotation, and an assessment of the reliability of NT author's memory or source. Both NT and OT textual critics could make greater and more effective use of the OT quotations found in the NT.

6. Not only are the specific texts that biblical textual critics study different, but the state of preservation of those texts is as well. The NT is unique among all ancient and classical literature in regard to the abundance of original language witnesses that date from the first few centuries after composition. More than one hundred Greek NT mss that were written within five hundred years of composition are extant, and hundreds more exist that stem from the next five hundred years. In contrast, mss of the Greek and Latin philosophers, historians, and orators are rare and late. Whereas NT textual critics have a large cache of old original language mss at their disposal, the vast majority of Hebrew mss of the OT are more than one thousand years younger than the date of composition of the various books they contain. The discoveries in the Judaean desert, particularly at Qumran, have added mss of immense importance and antiquity to the OT textual critic’s repertoire, but even these are generally several hundred years younger than the earliest written texts of the books they contain. Moreover, the only books from the Judaean desert that are complete are Isaiah and most of the Minor Prophets (a scroll containing a nearly complete Book of the Twelve was found at Wadi Murabbaat, more than twenty km from Qumran).

7. The respective natures of the original language mss of the OT and the NT differ from one another as well. Early NT mss, particularly those from before the fourth century C.E., vary greatly in regard to the to the type of text they contain (cf. Aland and Aland 1989:56-64). In contrast to this situation, the vast majority of Hebrew mss, those that fall within the pre-Masoretic/proto-Masoretic/Masoretic continuum, are practically monolithic in character. Thus, the number of interesting and/or valuable variants found in original language mss of the NT far surpasses that of the original language OT mss. This phenomenon, which in reality is an accident of historical preservation, leads...
8. The versions of the NT are regularly quoted in modern critical apparatuses, but they play at best a supporting role in determining what is considered to be the preferred text. This attitude is well stated by the Alands: "The value of the early versions for establishing the original Greek text and for the history of the text has frequently been misconceived, i.e., they have been considerably overrated" (Ibid.:186). Although not all NT textual critics would assess the value of the versions as so limited, few NT textual critics would propose a reading based solely on versional evidence without Greek ms support. How different is the situation in the OT camp! While many OT textual critics are reluctant to abandon the reading of the MT without strong proof, even these scholars could cite passage after passage where the reading of one or more of the versions, and especially of the LXX, is preferable to that of the MT. Other scholars are even more prone to suggest that readings of the LXX, and occasionally of other ancient versions such as the targums, the Peshitta, or even the Vulgate, should be preferred over readings of the MT or other Hebrew witnesses. The importance of the versions to OT textual critics, in contrast to the relative insignificance attached to the versions by NT textual critics, is one of the most important distinctions between the two disciplines.

9. A final matter related to the issue of the data used by textual critics is the availability of mss for scholarly examination. The recent release to the public of photographic images of the Dead Sea Scrolls under the influence of scholars in the field, other interested academics, and even the popular mass media is a well known and fortuitous turn of events. From a text-critical point of view, the most important aspect of this development is that all of the unpublished mss--most of which are fragmentary--are now accessible for scholarly perusal from various sources (Tov 1993; Wacholder and Abega 1991). The Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center in Claremont has been instrumental in the effort to make the scrolls from the Judean desert, as well as other biblical mss, available to the scholarly community as a whole. A similar role has been played on the NT side by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, Münster/Westphalia. Under the direction of Kurt and Barbara Aland, the institute has compiled a large number of images (microfilm and photographic copies) of NT mss. In addition to these two projects, new critical editions of various versions (arm, syr, cop, V) and patristic writers ("The New Testament in the Greek Fathers") are adding a wealth of textual data for the textual critic. While these projects, and other similar efforts, are of immense importance to scholarly research, some of the most exciting work in the field is in the area of electronic publication, particularly wide-area publication on the Internet (e.g., the Electronic New Testament Manuscript Project, work of the Syriac Computing Institute). The potential of publishing ms images, critical texts, and textual studies that are instantly available worldwide to everyone with a computer open doors of access to scholarly information hitherto undreamed of. Both OT and NT scholars can join in existing projects or initiate new projects that use the technology of the Information Age to aid scholarship.

Different Goals

10. In addition to working with different data, OT and NT textual critics often see themselves in pursuit of different goals. Many, perhaps most, NT textual critics speak about the recovery of the original text, which they see as possible to a large degree (Aland and Aland 1989:280). OT textual critics, on the other hand, generally shy away from the phrase "original text," believing that only a form of the text somewhat removed from the original (if in fact there was an original) is all that is recoverable and all that should be sought (Barthélemy 1982:1.69). Those OT textual critics who pursue an "original text" generally understand the term in a nuanced way. Textual evidence suggests that multiple literary editions of several OT books circulated in different locales at different times (though perhaps concurrently to some extent). OT books for which multiple literary editions seem to have existed include Exodus, Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Proverbs, Esther, and Daniel (Tov 1992; Ulrich 1992:278-286). The circulation of multiple literary editions of a biblical book, as opposed to the transmission of the oral tradition behind the composition, creates a tension in the term "original text" that strains its meaning. The concept of authorship and the role of the scribes are also involved in this increasingly complex scenario (Fishbane 1985:87 and passim), as is the issue of parallel passages (e.g., Samuel-Kings and Chronicles: 2 Kgs 18-20 and Isa 36-39: Ps 14 and Ps 53).

11. Similar difficulties with the concept of the "original text" exist for certain NT books, though these problems are seldom noted. The book of Acts is the most obvious NT example of multiple literary editions in concurrent circulation, with Western and Alexandrian versions of the book (Metzger 1975:259-272). As for parallel passages and the complex relationship among author, scribe, oral tradition, and literary influence, no set of books in either the OT or the NT compares with the intertwinings of the synoptic gospels (Fee 1993b:174-182). Other NT phenomena that call for a closer examination of the question of the nature of the "original text" include the relationship between Jude and 2 Peter, the multiple accounts of Paul's Damascus road experience in Acts, the reconstructed text of Q, the question of an Ur-Markus or a Secret Mark, and the present form of the gospel of John, in which chapter 21 at least is clearly a later addition to some earlier version (cf. Petersen 1994:136-137).

12. Setting aside for the moment the question of oral antecedents to the written text, the existence of multiple literary editions of a text raise a number of fundamental issues for readers of biblical material. Which one is original? Which is authoritative? Which is properly the focus of the text-critical enterprise? The question of authority, though logically secondary to the question of originality, may be dealt with briefly before the others, because it is not properly a text-critical question at all. Though there is a tendency in some circles to equate "original" with "authoritative," the two are by no means the same. For example, the longstanding Roman Catholic predilection for the Vulgate, the traditional Jewish preference for the Masoretic Text, and the conservative Protestant championing of the Textus Receptus or the King James Version or the Majority (Greek) Text all indicate that the issue of authority often has little connection to the question of originality. It is true that arguments for one particular form of the text are sometimes couched in language about the "original text," but it would be more accurate to admit that the acceptance of a particular text as authoritative is a theological, not a text-critical decision.

13. The question of originality in regard to literary editions is, on the one hand, a question about the relative age of one edition in
comparisons with others. If it can be determined, for example, that the Alexandrian version of Acts is older than the Western one, or that
the shorter version of Jeremiah represented by the LXX is older than the longer version present in MT, one can say that the older is
more original than the younger and that oldest of all editions is the original text. Of course, achieving scholarly consensus regarding
which version is older is often difficult, but in many cases such consensus does exist. However, age is not the only issue in discussions
about the original text, at least as far as OT textual critics are concerned. In his essay on the relationship of text and canon, Eugene
Ulrich notes that the issue of canon is both a historical and a theological matter (Ulrich 1992:270), so the question of a "canonical text"
(a term comparable in connotation to "original text" in the present discussion, and one which he says should generally be avoided)
involves more than just determining the relative age of a set of readings (ibid.:273). Emanuel Tov believes that the version of a book that
has been accepted as authoritative by Judaism should determine which "original text" is to be sought (Tov 1992:172, 179), whereas
Ulrich elsewhere discusses a variety of possible ways to select the "original text," that is, the one that should be translated (Ulrich

14. The foregoing discussion leads to the question of which text is properly the focus of textual criticism. That the choice of one "original
text" among two or more possibilities is not strictly a matter of age, nor is it an issue that can be addressed solely by textual critics, is
evident from what has been said. This situation leads to the observation that the "original text," whichever text that may be, is not the
only valid target of text-critical concern. It is true that textual critics have often set intermediate text-critical goals, such as establishing the
text of the NT as it stood in the fourth century (Bentley) or the LXX texts of Hesychius, Lucian, and Origen, also in the fourth century (de
Lagarde). In these cases, however, the intermediate goal was either chosen as a stepping-stone on the way to the "true" original text or
was settled for because scholars felt it was all that could be achieved. It is just as valid, though, to attempt to reconstruct each of the
literary editions of the books that have more than one, without regard for the question of the authority of one or the other. Other possible
targets include the Hebrew text of 100 C.E., the original form of each of Jerome's translations, and the predominant text of the NT in
Egypt at the time of Athanasius. Although such texts may not be fully recoverable, even their partial reconstruction could be illuminating
from the standpoints of history and historical theology.

15. One other note concerning multiple literary editions is that the textual critic should treat groups of variants together within a particular
apparatuses do not indicate in any way the possible existence of multiple literary editions. Text-critical judgments about a particular
reading, which might be sound on other grounds, can be completely wrong if the proper literary edition to which the variants belong is
not first determined. For example, judgments about the inclusion or omission of 1 Sam 17:55-18:5 cannot be addressed without first
understanding their relationship to the shorter Greek and longer Hebrew traditions of the story of David and Goliath. Likewise, Western
readings in Acts should often not be considered at all if it is the Alexandrian versions that is being reconstructed. The best solution from
a text-critical perspective would be to create separate texts and separate apparatuses for each of the literary editions. The implications of
such a critical edition for exegetes and translators would be substantial.

Different Terminology

16. A third major difference between textual criticism of the OT and the NT is the terminology. Words such as group, family, text-type,
and recension often have different meanings in the two disciplines, and some words and phrases that are technical terms in one area
(e.g., group profile, retroversion) are uncommon or even largely unknown in the other. In a 1976 article, D. W. Gooding points out some
of the differences in terminology between OT and NT textual critics in regard to groupings of related mss. He notes that, whereas
Colwell makes a distinction among the terms text-type, sub-text-type, tribe, and family for NT mss (Colwell 1969:11, 15), OT textual
critics tend to use terms like text-type and family without any apparent distinction (Gooding 1976:15-25). Tov likewise notes that studies
of the OT text often suffer from vague terminology, such as the use of the terms family and recension interchangeably (Tov 1992:157).
He identifies the term text-type with recension and suggests that "the use of these terms requires that the witnesses actually differ from
each other typologically, that is, that each of them be characterized by distinctive textual features" (ibid.:160). NT textual critics would not
use the term recension in the same way: for them, a recension is "the result of deliberate critical work by an editor" (Metzger 1968:115 n.
2). James Davila, in a 1993 article, studies the relationships among several Qumran mss of Genesis and Exodus, comparing them as
well with the MT, SP, and LXX (Davila 1993:4-5). Despite Gooding's assertion that, because of the different natures of OT and NT
textual criticism, "it would be both inappropriate and impossible for Old Testament critics to use their technical terms in the sense in
which New Testament critics use them" (Gooding 1976:16), Davila does not propose a new set of terms but instead uses those that
Colwell has suggested. Though the problems of OT terminology with regard to the grouping of witnesses are greater than those in the
NT arena, it should be noted that the use of these terms by NT textual critics is not always uniform, either, and that the additional term
group is often used as more or less equivalent to family.

17. Part of the problem with terminology in OT textual criticism with respect to NT textual criticism revolves around the different nature
of the extant witnesses. Numerous historical and sociological reasons exist for the different development of the texts of the OT and the NT,
respectively. For one thing, the large number of Greek NT mss produced before the fifteenth century are largely the product of
uncontrolled copying for many centuries, whereas Hebrew OT mss were copied in a relatively uncontrolled manner for only a few
centuries, up until the first century C.E. In addition, the need for multiple copies of their scriptures was not as great in Judaism, which was
more geographically centered (as least insofar as Jews who spoke Hebrew are concerned) than was the early church. Furthermore, the
picture that scholars have of the development of the Hebrew scriptures is changing as a result of more thorough studies of the mss from
the Judaean desert. OT scholars prior to the initial discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 grouped OT witnesses into three camps:
the MT, the SP (in the Pentateuch), and the LXX. Initially, scholars tried to fit the newly discovered mss into one of these three
categories as well, but Shemaryahu Talmon points out that the library of Qumran testifies to a plurality of forms of the text (Talmon
attest to three groups of textual witnesses, but rather to a textual multiplicity, relating to all of Palestine to such an extent that one can
almost speak of an unlimited number of texts (Tov 1992:161). He suggests five different categories into which the Qumran mss fall, three corresponding roughly to the MT, SP, and LXX, and two other previously unattested categories: texts written in the “Qumran practice” and non-aligned texts (ibid.:114-117). The non-aligned texts, as the name suggests, are not really a distinct category at all, but include witnesses that differ significantly from any of the established categories and from one another. The texts written in the Qumran scribal practice present a methodological problem, since their differences from mss in one of the other categories, the proto-Masoretic texts, are primarily orthographical and morphological rather than substantive. Nevertheless, Talmon and Tov have conclusively demonstrated the complex nature of the development of the Hebrew text. What remains is for someone to develop a “stricter terminology” for the grouping of mss in OT textual criticism, one that parallels established NT usage where possible but deviates from it when necessary.

18. Aside from matters of textual grouping, another set of terms that might cause communication problems between OT and NT textual critics involves describing both the methodology used by various textual critics and the published editions they produce. Most NT textual critics see themselves as practitioners of the eclectic method of textual criticism, that is, one that draws upon both external and internal evidence in making text-critical decisions. The text they usually publish is an eclectic text, identical to no single ms, but drawn from the mass of NT witnesses. OT textual critics, when they use the term eclectic at all, often use it in a quite different manner. For them, eclecticism means picking and choosing among different readings in an unscientific and, therefore, illegitimate way. Thus F. E. Deist warns readers, “Mixing different [textual] theories without inquiring into their presuppositions may result in eclecticism” (Deist 1988:206 n. 10). So also Tov criticizes modern eclectic translations that choose which variants are to be translated without looking at patterns of textual variation among the witnesses (Tov 1981:310). It is important that OT textual critics understand that their NT counterparts are not advocating random, uncontrolled selection of variants when they promote eclecticism. It is likewise necessary that NT textual critics know that when OT textual critics reject eclecticism, and when they publish diplomatic editions of their texts, they are not denying the need to examine carefully all extant witnesses.

19. It is the nature of textual criticism to deal with variant readings, but the terminology OT and NT scholars employ to classify different types of variants is far from uniform. Colwell and Tune state that traditional distinctions such as intentional and unintentional variations do not suffice to describe the qualitative differences that exist among the variants found in NT mss. They propose instead to speak of significant and insignificant variants, the latter of which are divided into nonsense readings, dislocated readings, and singular readings (Colwell and Tune 1969:100-104). Eldon J. Epp and Gordon Fee enlarge on this classification, adding categories for scribal errors and orthographic variants (Epp 1993c:57-60; Fee 1993c:66). Epp goes on to define significant variants as “meaningful or useful for the broad tasks of NT textual criticism, including the determination of a MS’s relationship with all other MSS, the location of a MS within the textual history and transmission of the NT, and the ultimate goal of establishing the original text” (Epp 1993c:57). Since most variants that OT textual critics deal with arise from the versions, their descriptions of variants are much more focused on the question of whether a particular reading in a version represents a varying Hebrew Vorlage. Tov classifies all apparent variations from the MT that appear in the versions as either true variants (those that presuppose a Hebrew text different from the MT, excluding orthographic variants), variants/non-variants (readings that might reflect a Hebrew text different from the MT, but for which no certainty can be obtained), and pseudo-variants (apparent variants that, although they can readily be retroverted into Hebrew, only existed in the translator’s mind) (Tov 1981:181-240). Tov’s last category is problematic, because, though the phenomenon he describes undoubtedly occurred, in almost every case it is methodologically impossible to determine whether a variant actually existed on parchment or arose in a translator’s mind. With this problem in mind, I proposed in my dissertation that Tov’s pseudo-variants should be treated as real variants in the initial stages of every case it is methodologically impossible to determine whether a variant actually existed on parchment or arose in a translator’s mind. (Adair 1992:8). Significant variants, then, are only those that reflect, or probably reflect, a distinct Hebrew reading. By definition, then, all readings of primary (i.e., Hebrew) witnesses are significant, as are the readings of all the secondary witnesses that can be retroverted reliably (Adair 1993:18-42). Terms used to classify textual variants is far from uniform in either OT or NT textual criticism, though a greater consensus exists in the NT camp. It is vital to consider the differences in usage, as well as differences in the data, when reading discussions of textual variants.

20. A couple of other terms that are largely peculiar to one or the other discipline may be noted in passing. First, NT textual critics often speak of group profiles as a means of classifying mss into text-types or smaller groups. One of the most common methods for determining group profiles is the Claremont Profile Method (see below; par. 33), though other approaches also exist. Second, the term retroversion, though not unknown to NT textual critics, appears much more frequently in OT literature, because of the nature of the extant textual data. OT textual critics define a valid retroversion as a Hebrew reading that can be derived from a versional witness in a methodologically sound manner. Many Hebrew reconstructions that look equivalent to a reading in a version are not true retroversions because the nature of the translation, aspects of the target language, or conditions of the versional text do not permit a reliable retroversion at that point in the text.

Different Methodology

21. Finally, a comparison of the work of the bulk of OT and NT textual critics reveals an entirely different methodology. To use NT terminology, most NT textual critics follow the path of rational eclecticism, while OT textual critics tend more toward rigorous eclecticism. The difference in methodology is not limited to this generalization, however, but also manifests itself in varying attitudes toward the textus receptus/majority text, the use of versional evidence, and textual emendation. The debate between rational and rigorous eclecticism revolves primarily around the relative importance given to internal and external evidence in making text-critical decisions. The use of external evidence involves determining the age of the various witnesses, looking at the geographic distribution of witnesses for each variant reading, counting the number of witnesses attesting each reading, and classifying each witness according to the type of text it represents (e.g., Alexandrian, Western, Byzantine, or mixed). Internal evidence includes such principles as preference for the more difficult reading, preference for the shorter reading, preference for the reading most in keeping with the author’s style, and, most importantly, preference for the reading that best explains the origin of the others. Although a few NT textual critics, most notably G. D.
Contemporary critics generally agree that questions of internal evidence should usually be asked first and that the weight of the manuscript evidence should be applied secondarily. What becomes obvious, however, is that on the grounds of internal evidence certain MSS tend to support the "original" text more often than others and that those MSS are the early Egyptian. Therefore, when internal evidence cannot decide, the safest guess is to go with the "best" MSS (Fee 1993:15-16).

22. The situation in OT textual criticism is the reverse of that in NT textual criticism. Most OT textual critics emphasize internal evidence to the practical exclusion of external evidence. Kyle McCarter, for example, under the heading "The Unreliability of External Criteria," says, "External criteria are based on the merits of the manuscripts in which the readings are found, not the merits of the readings themselves. . . . Such criteria, however, are unreliable" (McCarter 1986:71). He proceeds to advise the textual critic, "The critic must base his choice between readings solely on the readings of the manuscripts, that is, on internal criteria" (ibid.:72). Though this statement must be modified to exclude the vast majority of variants found in Masoretic mss, stemming as they do from the medieval period, it is one that most OT textual critics would accept. One exception to this generalization involves those critics who accept the local text theory of Frank Moore Cross (Cross 1975:306-320). Briefly stated, this theory proposes that extant witnesses can be divided into three large groups, which are associated with Babylonia, Palestine, and Egypt, the latter two being more closely related to one another than to the first. Agreement between witnesses on disparate branches of the local text tree suggests that the reading in question predates the split into local texts. This theory has been expanded upon by several of Cross's students, but it does not play a large role in the text-critical decisions of OT critics, and some reject it outright (cf. Talmon 1975:323).

23. The question of the relative merit of external evidence is one on which OT and NT textual critics will probably continue to disagree. The Alands' confidence in the efficacy of external criteria reflects their belief that no ancient readings, even stretching back as far as the beginning of the second century, have totally dropped out of the manuscript tradition. Thus, they say, "Major disturbances in the transmission of the New Testament text can always be identified with confidence, even if they occurred during the second century or at its beginning" (ibid.:295). Even more pointedly, "Every reading ever occurring in the New Testament textual tradition is stubbornly preserved, even if the result is nonsense" (ibid.:296). While these statements may accurately reflect the situation of the NT text (though they are debatable), they do not describe the feelings of OT textual critics for their own text. Passages throughout the OT stubbornly resist efforts at interpretation, often as a result of a corrupted text in all extant witnesses. The common methodological ground between OT and NT textual critics clearly lies in the area of the use of internal criteria. A tendency to accord more weight to the internal evidence is evident in a number of recent NT studies (Ehrman 1993; Petersen 1994).

24. Another area of difference in regard to methodology involves the importance accorded to the textus receptus. The term textus receptus originated in NT circles and is roughly equivalent to the Byzantine or Majority text. NT textual critics widely regard this text as textually inferior to other text-types, and readings unique to this tradition are almost universally rejected. The situation is otherwise in the OT camp, where the textus receptus is the MT. Many scholars, Jewish and Christian alike, treat the MT as the text of the OT. While few OT textual critics would agree with this approach, it is fair to say that a reading found in the MT is often more highly regarded than that found in another witness. Whether true in theory, it is often true in practice, and efforts to preserve the reading of the MT (though usually only the consonants, not the pointing) through philological study are rife. The reason for the different evaluation of the OT and NT majority texts lies in the histories of the respective texts. Whereas the Byzantine text-type is the product of the conflation, harmonization, and "smoothing out" of earlier texts, the MT represents the lone surviving ancient textual stream in Hebrew for the majority of OT books. The relative value of the MT vis-à-vis the Judaean desert mss, the LXX, and other witnesses varies from book to book, but in general it is regarded as the best overall witness to the OT. A primary reason for this is that it is the only complete extant Hebrew witness.

25. Textual value aside, the reverence some accord the majority texts of either the OT or the NT often has little to do with an honest textual evaluation and more to do with a misunderstanding of the history of the text, a misunderstanding of the methods of textual criticism, or simple theological preference. The most common misunderstandings probably revolve around the notion that "more is better," that is, because most NT mss contain a Byzantine text, or because almost all OT mss contain the MT, that type of text must be original. These misunderstandings can only be counteracted by detailed investigations of the history of the text, accompanied by reasoned explanations of the fallacy of counting mss. While misunderstandings can be corrected, the textual critic has no basis for rejecting the theological choice of the majority text on strictly text-critical grounds and must resort to other types of arguments.

26. Another major difference in approach between textual criticism of the OT and the NT involves the use of versions. The relative importance with which OT and NT textual critics regard the versions has already been discussed above, where it was noted that versions play a much larger role in OT textual criticism. This fact has led OT textual critics to have more developed methodologies for dealing with the versions than their NT counterparts. Tov, for example, has written a lengthy monograph on The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research (Tov 1981). In it, he discusses such topics as "literal" and "free" translations, criteria for the analysis of literal translations, distinguishing true variants from "pseudo-variants," and retroverting variants into Hebrew. The issue of retroversion in particular is one that several OT textual critics address (Margolis 1909; Miles 1985; Adair 1993). Several other books and articles also deal with various aspects of using the versions (especially the LXX) in a methodologically correct way (Olafsson 1990; Fernández Marcos 1985; Adair 1994; Adair 1994a). In contrast, few NT studies of any length are dedicated to the use of the versions in textual criticism. An exception is Metzger's excellent book on The Early Versions of the New Testament, which describes and assesses the text-critical value of all of the earlier versions of the NT (Metzger 1977; cf. also Ehrman and Holmes 1995). A general methodology for using versions in the text-critical task is not developed, however. This assessment of the situation does not imply that OT textual critics always make use of these methodological studies. In fact, a rather unbridled, almost haphazard use of versional evidence has plagued
many OT studies, as well as many NT studies, from the beginning of modern biblical textual criticism. Past abuses have often led modern critics to shy away from using the versions, but the correct approach would rather seem to be to develop methodologically sound ways of dealing with the versions, then to follow those methods in all textual evaluations.

27. An example of the uncritical way in which textual critics across canonical lines sometimes deal with versional evidence may be illustrated by looking at the way in which the Syriac preposition l( in the Peshitta (P) is treated. Tov notes the difficulty of retroverting prepositions and other "grammatical words" with any accuracy (Tov 1981:100-101; but cf. Adair 1993:25-27), and an analysis of P's text of 1 Samuel 3 bears this generalization out to a large extent (Adair 1992:264-265). However, S. R. Driver, in his Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel suggests that l( in P supports the reading epi in the LXX against the reading l( in the MT (Driver 1913:43). The evidence of P itself does not support this interpretation of the evidence, since l( renders l three times in this chapter alone, as well as several times in the surrounding chapters. Moreover, the semantic range of the Syriac l( is broader than that of its Hebrew cognate l( and includes the dative meaning associated with the Hebrewl (Adair 1992:138-139). Although it is certainly possible that the translators of P had a Hebrew reading l( in front of them, the evidence of P itself is indeterminate. In a similar vein, Tjitze Baarda, in his insightful analysis of the critical apparatus used in the International Greek New Testament Project, proposes that the reading l( in syr of Luke 23:48 reflects the epi of the textus receptus, while the l of syr "may indicate that the reviser of the Old Syriac had a Greek text with epi before him" (Baarda 1994:68). The reviser may in fact have had such a Greek text before him, but tests on the translation technique of syr in the NT, plus evaluation of the semantic range of l( would be necessary before one could conclude that the correspondence between epi and l is more than just coincidence.

28. As is the case with the use of versional evidence, so also OT textual critics tend to emend the text of their witnesses more frequently than their NT comrades do. Many textual emendations are proposed in the apparatus to BHS, with the editors of the respective books frequently suggesting that the emendation is preferable to the reading of the text. Many of these emendations are made with little or no versional support. Though many of them involve only differences in pointing or minor orthographical variations, others involve more substantial changes. For example, in Obadiah, the shortest book in the OT, the editor offers about forty possible emendations proposed by himself and others. Of these, he marks eight as emendations that should either definitely or probably be preferred to the text. By contrast, in the entire GNT, only one emendation (in Acts 16:12) is proposed by the majority of the editors as preferable to any of the extant texts (Metzger 1975:444-446).

29. It is true that OT textual critics exist who oppose all or most textual emendations, and that some NT textual critics would support more textual emendations, but the foregoing characterization is generally true. The difference in attitude towards emendations is a reflection once again of a significant difference in the nature of the respective texts. Whereas the text of the NT as reflected in the Greek mss is almost ubiquitously coherent, many OT passages in Hebrew mss are textually obscure. Some of this obscurity is undoubtedly the result of modern scholarship's lack of knowledge about certain aspects of ancient Hebrew, and it is at these points that philological research based on cognate languages, particularly other Northwest Semitic languages like Ugaritic and Eblaite, proves most helpful. Moreover, the semantic range of the Syriac a(l is broader than that of its Hebrew cognate l( and includes the dative meaning associated with the Hebrewl (Adair 1992:138-139). Although it is certainly possible that the translators of P had a Hebrew reading l( in front of them, the evidence of P itself is indeterminate. In a similar vein, Tjitze Baarda, in his insightful analysis of the critical apparatus used in the International Greek New Testament Project, proposes that the reading l( in syr of Luke 23:48 reflects the epi of the textus receptus, while the l of syr "may indicate that the reviser of the Old Syriac had a Greek text with epi before him" (Baarda 1994:68). The reviser may in fact have had such a Greek text before him, but tests on the translation technique of syr in the NT, plus evaluation of the semantic range of l( would be necessary before one could conclude that the correspondence between epi and l is more than just coincidence.

30. The mention of a critical text raises another important distinction between OT and NT textual criticism. Ever since the days of Lachmann, NT textual critics have produced editions based not on a single ms but on a critical comparison of numerous Greek mss, versions, and church fathers. Even Erasmus' first edition of 1516 was based on a comparison of several different mss in most cases. In other words, NT textual critics produce eclectic texts. In contrast, editions of the Hebrew OT universally reproduce the text of a single ms, or at most that of various mss of the Masoretic tradition, which is monolithic in character, more so than even the Byzantine family of the NT. All proposed changes to this text are relegated to the critical apparatus, which in the most commonly used editions is a mélange of references to rabbinic notes, readings from the Dead Sea Scrolls, quotations from the versions (either in the language of the version or retroverted into Hebrew), and proposed emendations by the editors.

31. The detriments of this situation are obvious. First, the protestations of editors of diplomatic texts notwithstanding, many people who use such editions tend to think of the base text as preferable simply because it is the base text, whereas the readings in the apparatus are generally secondary. They are correct: readings in the apparatus should be secondary. Reasons for diplomatic texts do exist, of course. For example, when one wants to emphasize the reading of a single ms in comparison to the rest of the ms tradition, a diplomatic text is a necessity. Similarly, as a provisional step in the process of collating a large amount of material that will eventually be used to create an eclectic text, a diplomatic text may again be necessary. One can argue with some justification that a major critical edition like the International Greek New Testament Project will primarily be used by specialists who understand the nature of a diplomatic text and that the readings in the base text are not inherently superior to those in the apparatuses. However, the most common Hebrew edition, BHS, does not meet any of these criteria.

32. A second major problem with modern editions of the Hebrew Bible involves the nature of the critical apparatus(es). First of all, as noted above, the critical notes are too variegated. The different types of information should be segregated into separate apparatuses, for example, one for Hebrew readings (natural and retroverted), one for versional evidence in the original languages, and one for proposed emendations (cf. Adair 1993:117-124; Baarda 1994:49). Second, the evidence is often presented in an unbalanced way that unduly emphasizes the readings that differ from the MT (Deist 1988:75-76). Third, versional evidence is presented sometimes in the original
Problems with Conjectural Emendation

33. A final methodological difference between OT and NT textual criticism involves the classification of witnesses. While OT textual critics do divide witnesses into large families on the basis of certain similarities and differences (Tov 1992:114-117; Cross 1975:306-315; Johnson 1963:19), they seem to do so mostly on the basis of the general observations about the text and perhaps a limited number of specific test passages. The fact of the matter is that, beyond general descriptions of the characteristics of a group of witnesses, specifics about how they are classified are not stated (cf. Tov 1992:84-97; Wevers 1974:9-157). This situation also prevailed for most of the history of NT textual criticism, until the advent of the Claremont Profile Method, developed by Paul McReynolds and Frederick Wisse under the supervision of E. C. Colwell. The Claremont Profile Method is a procedure for determining the textual affinities of a minuscule ms based on a comparison of its readings in a number of test passages with the textus receptus, the uncial, and a number of minuscules already assigned to known textual groups (Wisse 1982:33-46; Epp 1993a:211-220). Gordon Fee and Larry Hurtado use approaches similar to Colwell's in their analyses of witnesses to John and Mark, respectively, but with a few modifications. These modifications include a broader test base for comparison among mss (i.e., a whole book) and determining the quantitative relationships among mss before making qualitative judgments about them (Fee 1993a:225-226; Hurtado 1981:10-12). Finally, the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster has undertaken the massive task of comparing thousands of Greek minuscule mss in about one thousand test passages selected throughout the NT by means of computer (Wisse 1982:21; Epp 1993b:111). Despite differences in attitudes toward the use of external evidence between OT and NT textual critics, the former cannot deny the value of classifying mss, say of the LXX, into families on the basis of measurable evidence rather than general impressions. They may also be in a better position than NT textual critics to develop a methodology that would allow versional evidence to be evaluated alongside the primary witnesses.

Prospects for Cooperation

34. Though the preceding study has illustrated some of the similarities of OT and NT textual criticism, it is clear that significant differences in regard to their respective data, goals, terminology, and methodologies exist between the two disciplines. Perhaps these differences are part of the reason that OT and NT textual critics have interacted with one another so infrequently. Another and more probable cause of this lack of communication, however, lies in the modern climate of specialization among biblical scholars. Nevertheless, in light of the foregoing discussion, it should be clear to textual critics of both stripes that communication between scholars in the two camps is both beneficial and necessary. Each discipline can and should enlighten the other, since most of the problems faced in one have already been, or will eventually be, faced in the other. Both disciplines have lessons to contribute to, and lessons to learn from, the other.

35. What can OT textual critics teach NT textual critics? First, because the versions are so much more important to OT textual critics, they have led the way in studies that analyze the versions and that develop comprehensive methodologies for using them. Particularly important are studies that address translation technique and retroversion. It is interesting to note, however, that despite the number of OT studies devoted the use of the versions, it is NT scholars who have produced more complete studies treating the versions as a whole (Metzger 1977; Ehrman and Holmes 1995; cf. Fernández Marcos 1985). Just as versional evidence plays a vital role in the textual criticism of the OT, so does conjectural emendation. Aware of the excesses of past generations (and of some in the present generation), OT textual critics nevertheless continue to see emendations as potentially valuable in some cases for determining the reading that lies behind the readings of all extant witnesses. Their cautious use of emendations calls NT scholars to look again to Westcott and Hort and see why they, too, consider some passages to contain primitive corruptions which have entirely displaced the original reading from the ms tradition. Another area in which OT scholars have contributed to the development of the discipline concerns the existence and treatment of multiple literary editions of certain books and portions of books. Their observations suggest that the idea of the "original text" is far from a simple matter; furthermore, the existence of multiple literary editions demands that groups of variants belonging to a particular edition be identified as such and dealt with as a group, rather than individually. Next, OT scholars' studies of the canonical process and of the nature of the canon point out the need to appreciate more fully the relationship between text and canon. Finally, OT textual critics encourage their NT counterparts to give full consideration to internal evidence in making their textual decisions and not to rely too heavily on external considerations, particularly where internal evidence strongly suggests one particular reading.

36. OT students of the text also have much to learn from NT scholars. First, the care with which many NT textual critics examine the OT sources of NT quotations should remind OT scholars that later texts can also influence the transmission of earlier ones, so NT citations should be considered alongside the readings of the MT and of the versions as witnesses to the text. On a related matter, the many studies of the NT texts used by the church fathers (particularly the series "The New Testament in the Greek Fathers") demonstrate the importance of thoroughly examining such evidence. In the same way, OT textual critics should vigorously investigate the OT text that lies behind that found in both patristic and rabbinic sources. Another area in which NT textual critics have led the way is in the area of text-critical terminology. Although it is not always used consistently, Colwell's standard terminology for grouping of witnesses to the NT text does provide a common ground for communication among NT critics, and OT scholars could benefit by following their example. Third, although some extensive studies of particular groups of witnesses have been done on the OT side, NT scholars have set the standard for using precise, statistical methods for classifying mss. OT textual critics could apply similar approaches with little modification to LXX witnesses, and they could combine these approaches with methodologically sound retroversions to analyze witnesses of disparate languages. NT textual critics' drive to produce critical, eclectic texts has existed for well over one hundred fifty years. In contrast, OT textual critics have generally eschewed even the attempt to produce a text based on all the evidence rather than on the MT, restricting
37. One area in which both OT and NT textual critics can work together is the development of improved critical apparatuses for major editions. In a 1993 presentation to the text-critical seminar in Münster, Tjitze Baarda asked the question, "What kind of critical apparatus for the New Testament do we need?" (Baarda 1994). His analysis of the apparatus used in the International Greek New Testament Project's volume on Luke is thorough, and he offers a number of helpful suggestions for future critical apparatuses. These include segregating the apparatus into sections dealing with original language mss, patristic testimony, conjectural emendations, and versional evidence; the need for a methodologically more sound use of the versions; and the need to present the evidence from all previous major critical editions. To this list of desiderata could be added the need to be able to indicate the existence of multiple literary editions; a method for distinguishing significant versional readings from those that seem to support a particular reading but, for one reason or another, cannot be considered significant (see above, par. 19); and the necessity of recording the readings of the versions cited in both the original language and retroverted form.18

38. Finally, three additional proposals for promoting a scholarly interchange among all biblical textual critics may be suggested. First, the development of a classified, annotated text-critical bibliographical database, available both in print and online, would make textual critics of the OT and the NT aware of the work of their alter-canonical counterparts. Division between OT and NT works would be avoided for the most part, at least at the highest levels of organization. Major headings might include (1) general information on textual criticism, (2) history of textual criticism, (3) terminology, (4) methodology for dealing with primary witnesses, (5) methodology for dealing with secondary and tertiary witnesses, (6) commentaries that put an emphasis on textual criticism, (7) critical editions of biblical texts, (8) electronic resources, and (9) bibliographies.

39. A second suggestion involves the creation of a journal devoted entirely to biblical textual criticism. Such a journal would be peer-reviewed, with an editorial board consisting of both OT and NT textual critics from around the world. To reach the widest audience and to avoid the financial and scheduling problems of a print journal, the journal would be available electronically via the World Wide Web, File Transfer Protocol, or electronic mail (if interest demanded it, periodic printed versions of the articles could be made accessible as well). It would provide a forum for discussing any topic of interest to either OT or NT textual critics, and it would encourage OT and NT scholars to interact with one another. In particular, it would foster communication regarding the development of common methodological approaches, and it would make one group of scholars aware of, and appreciative of, the other group's work. This goal has begun to be realized in the present journal.

40. Third, a mailing list on biblical textual criticism could be created on the Internet. This list would encourage scholarly interchange among textual critics on theoretical and methodological issues, as well as enable scholars to compare ideas about specific passages. Limited as it would be to the area of textual criticism, it would avoid the problems inherent in some mailing lists whose subject area is too broad. The mailing list tc-list has been created to address this concern.19

41. OT and NT textual criticism, though divided by a canonical wall, are not inherently different disciplines. Though differences in data, goals, terminology, and methodology currently exist, many of these differences could be surmounted if the two groups began working more in concert and less in isolation from one another. To mix metaphors from both the OT and the NT, perhaps it is time for the wall that separates OT and NT textual critics from each other to come tumbling down and for the veil that separates them to be ripped in two. Then OT and NT textual critics will be able to engage in a continual and fruitful conversation, to the benefit of both groups.


Endnotes

1"Quotations from the Old Testament which differ from the text of the Septuagint popular in the Church were often corrected to agree with it." But see also the caveat, "Neither should the commonly accepted rule of thumb that variants agreeing with . . . the Septuagint in Old Testament quotations are secondary be applied in a purely mechanical way" (Aland and Aland 1989:281).

2Cf. Metzger, "It is the textual critic, however, for whom the early versions of the New Testament are of prime importance" (Metzger 1977:vii).

3A distinction must be made between text-critical importance, that is, importance for reconstructing earlier forms of the text, and text-historical importance, the importance of a reading in tracing the historical development of the text (as well as the history of exegesis). The term "importance" is used in the former sense here.

4Especially the facsimile edition on microfiche, published by E.J. Brill (Tov 1993). This edition may be compared with that of the Biblical Archaeology Society: (Wacholder and Abegg: 1991-).

5"Only one reading can be original, however many variant readings there may be. Only in very rare instances does the tenacity of the New Testament tradition present an insoluble tie between two or more alternative readings."
The tendency to draw excessively determinate distinctions between scribes and authors is rooted in excessively determinate notions of what the authoritative status of the traditum meant in ancient Israel. A scribe who was concerned with transmitting the traditum to the community of faith for observance and memory would want that traditum to be properly understood and regarded. The scribe would then be a co-author of the traditum to which his traditio is allied (Fishbane 1985:87).

7 Fee notes that the relationship between textual criticism and the Synoptic problem is underemphasized in most studies. "That there is an interrelationship between textual criticism and the Synoptic Problem is the presupposition of most Synoptic studies. Nonetheless the specific nature of that relationship, especially as it affects the finding of solutions, is seldom spelled out, and, it would seem, is frequently neglected" (Fee 1993b:174).

8 Though the existence of oral antecedents lies properly in the realm of literary criticism, the theological question of authority, which is dealt with briefly below, must not gloss over the problem that many of the words that were written down deviated, often quite substantially, from the spoken words of Jesus or the prophets, for example. Instructive in this regard is the well-known statement of Papias stating his preference for the oral over the written record: But if I met with any one who had been a follower of the elders any where, I made it a point to inquire what were the declarations of the elders. What was said by Andrew, Peter or Philip. What by Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any older of the disciples of our Lord. What was said by Aristion, and the presbyter John, disciples of the Lord; for I do not think that I derived so much benefit from books as from the living voice of those that are still surviving (Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 3.29).

9 Gooding, who bases his article on an analysis of Cross's work on the local text theory, sometimes draws unwarranted conclusions and criticizes Cross's use of terminology unfairly. For example, his ranking of the relative merit of witnesses to the text of Samuel on the basis of Cross's comments about them does not follow from what Cross actually says (Gooding 1976:22-23). Moreover, his criticism of Cross's comment that text-types (to use Colwell's term; Cross says families) are "exceedingly fragile creations" on the grounds that text-types necessarily contain a large number of mss is not accurate. Colwell defines a text-type not in terms of the number of mss it contains (though usually this is a large number) but in terms of differences from other text-types. Text-types that contain few witnesses could then be fairly characterized as fragile, in the sense that it would not take the influences of many witnesses of a different text-type to corrupt the characteristic readings of the first text-type. Despite these problems with his analysis, however, Gooding does effectively demonstrate his central thesis, that terminology in OT textual criticism is unnecessarily vague.

10 At this point I also differ with Tov in including the reading of the MT among the variants in a particular unit of variation. As noted above, he defines variants as differences from the MT.

11 Certain caveats must be added to this statement: purely orthographic variants are not considered significant in most cases, nor are variants found in the vast majority of medieval Hebrew mss, except those mss which M. H. Goshen-Gottstein identifies as containing important variant readings (Goshen-Gottstein 1967:287; Adair 1992:238-239).

12 The true textus receptus is the 1624 edition of the Elzivir brothers, which basically reproduces the earlier editions of Beza and Stephanus. The Byzantine (earlier: Syrian) text is not one specific text, but rather a text-type, originating in the fourth century, which became the dominant form of the Greek NT in the Middle Ages. The Majority Text is a modern extraction from the Byzantine text, containing those readings that appear most frequently in the extant ms tradition. Though not the same, all three terms refer to an almost identical set of readings.

13 Cf. especially the works of Dahood and Barr's response to these efforts (Barr 1968).

14 Two of the five editors, Bruce Metzger and Kurt Aland, oppose the majority view, preferring instead the reading supported by many Greek mss (Metzger 1975:446).

15 Interestingly, the critical editions of the secondary witnesses of the OT are also usually diplomatic texts, the primary exception being the Göttingen edition of the LXX. Is it only coincidence that it is the Greek version that the editors have chosen to produce as an eclectic text, or is some influence by NT textual criticism possible?

16 The twofold apparatus of BHK, in which "less important" notes were separated from the "more important" ones, was abandoned as unhelpful by BHS, with good reason.

17 John William Wevers does an extensive study of the Greek text of Genesis, identifying several different groups of mss that are more or less closely related. He offers summaries of comparisons of the characteristic readings of the various groups to one another, but he does not attempt to identify the precise relationship of individual mss to the groups he identifies, other than to say that a ms belongs to one group and not to another. He does present the raw data, however, that would allow some conclusions regarding individual ms to be drawn.

18 Surprisingly, Baarda advocates rendering all the versional evidence that is presented in the critical apparatus in Latin. Though he would apparently prefer that the reading in the original language also be printed, he rejects the feasibility of this approach on the basis of excessive cost. He also rejects the use of either retroverted Greek or of modern languages such as English, German, or French (Baarda 1994:60-61). The cost of using multiple fonts can be reduced by communicating with the typesetter beforehand and by producing electronic texts that use standard word processing formats. In particular, using postscript fonts largely eliminates the cost barrier. Moreover, although his observation that Greek retroversions have often been misleading is salient, the same could be said for Latin translations. His argument that the reader might mistake the retroversion for an actual reading ignores the fact that it will be primarily text-critical experts who peruse the apparatus, and so hopefully they will not be led astray, particularly if the original language reading is also present. Finally, another advantage of readings retroverted into Greek is that the editors will be strongly encouraged to develop a solid methodology for retroverting readings from the various versions, leading in turn to more accurate and helpful
presentations of the versional evidence and to better-informed text-critical decisions.

Information on subscribing to tc-list can be obtained from the TC home page (http://purl.org/TC#tc-list).

Bibliography


Archaeology Society.


^ Strugnell Collection in the City Seminary of Sacramento Archived 20070706024410 at www.cityseminary.org Error: unknown archive URL.